

THE
NEW TESTAMENT
POCKET COMMENTARY :

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. MATTHEW.

Matthew, surnamed Levi, before his conversion was a publican, or tax-gatherer, under the Romans at Capernaum. In this gospel are particularly selected such parts of our Saviour's history and discourses as were best suited to awaken the Jewish nation to a sense of their sins; to remove their erroneous expectations of an earthly kingdom; to abate their pride and self-conceit; to teach them the spiritual nature and extent of the kingdom of Christ; to prepare them for the admission of the Gentiles into the church; and to show the fulfilment of prophecy.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—17. *The genealogy of Jesus.*—This is not a needless genealogy of our Saviour. It was promised to Abraham that Christ should descend from him, Gen. 12. 3; 22. 18; and to David that Christ should be his son, 2 Sam. 7. 12; Psa. 89. 3, 4; 132. 11; therefore, unless Jesus is a son of David, and a son of Abraham, he is not the Messiah. That he is so is here proved from well-known records. While we read the names in his genealogy, we should not forget how low the Lord of glory stooped to save the human race. Christ was born when the seed of Abraham was a despised and tributary people, Isa. 53. 2. Man's extremity is God's opportunity.

18—25. *An angel appears to Joseph.*—The mystery of Christ's becoming man is to be received, not curiously inquired into. It was so ordered that Christ should partake of our nature, yet that he should be pure from the defilement of original sin, which has been communicated to all the race of Adam.—It was while Joseph "thought on these things," that he was directed by an angel. It is the thoughtful, not the unthinking, whom God will guide. God's time to come with instruction to his people, is when they are at a loss. Divine comforts most delight the soul when under the pressure of perplexed thoughts.—Jesus is the same name as Joshua. And the reason of that name is clear; for those whom Christ saves, he saves from wrath and the curse, and from despair here, and misery hereafter. Christ came to save his people, not *in* their sins, but *from* their sins; and so to redeem them from among men,

to himself, who is separate from sinners.—Joseph did as the angel had bidden him, without dispute. By applying the general rules of the written word, we take direction from God, and we shall find this safe and comfortable.

1. Jesus means Saviour; Christ, the Anointed. Both titles are mentioned Heb. 3. 13.—17. The names in the New Testament are spelled after the Greek; those in the Old Testament, after the Hebrew. There are some difficulties in the genealogies, but they have all been explained in books purposely written thereon. This genealogy shows that Christ was the son [descendant] of David.—18. Espoused, that is betrothed, or engaged to marry, Jud. 14. 7, 8. In the east this is usual, months, or even years, before the marriage.—19. Privily, privately, not to subject her to punishment, Deut. 22. 21.—21. Jesus in the Greek is the same as Josiua in Hebrew.—22. Done, etc., though Joseph had no intention to fulfil the prophecy.—23. Immanuel, or God with us, Isa. 7. 14; God in our nature.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—8. *The wise men's search after Christ.*—We must learn of Christ by attending to the word of God, and by seeking the teaching of the Holy Spirit. And those in whose hearts the day-star is risen, to give them anything of the knowledge of Christ, make it their business to worship him.—Herod understood not the spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom. Let us beware of a dead faith. A man may be persuaded of many truths, yet may hate them, because they interfere with his ambition, or sinful indulgences. Such a belief will make him oppose the truth and the cause of God; and he may be foolish enough to hope for success therein.

9—12. *The wise men worship Jesus.*—The humble inquirer after Christ will not be stumbled at finding him and his disciples in poor cottages. After having in vain sought them in palaces and cities. Is a soul seeking after Christ? Does it say, "I am a foolish and poor creature, and have nothing to offer?" Nothing? Hast thou not a heart, though unworthy of him, dark, hard, and foul? Give it to him as it is, be willing that he use and dispose of it as it pleases him. He will take it, and will make it better. No one shall ever repent having given it to him.—The gifts the wise men presented were gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Providence thus sent a relief to Joseph and Mary in their poor condition. Our heavenly Father, who knows what his children need, can provide for them.

13—15. *Jesus carried into Egypt.*—Egypt had been cruel to the infants of Israel; yet it is to be a place of refuge to the holy Child Jesus. God, when he pleases, can make the worst places serve the best purposes. The faith of Joseph and Mary being tried, was found firm.

16—18. *Herod causes the infants of Bethlehem to be massacred.*—Unbridled wrath, armed with unlawful power, often carries men to absurd cruelties. It was no unrighteous thing with God to permit this; every life is forfeited to his justice as soon as it begins. The diseases and deaths of little children are proofs of original sin. But the murder of these infants was their martyrdom. How early did persecution against Christ and his kingdom begin! But whatever crafty, cruel devices are in men's hearts, the counsel of the Lord shall stand.

19—23. *Death of Herod, Jesus brought to Nazareth.*—Egypt may serve to sojourn in, or take shelter in, for awhile, but not to abide in. The family must settle in Galilee, at Nazareth, a place held in bad esteem. Wherever Providence allots the bounds of our habitation, we must expect to share the reproach of Christ; yet we may glory in being called by his name; and if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him.

1. Bethlehem, a small town about six miles south of Jerusalem. David's family were of Bethlehem, 1 Sam. 16. 1. Wise men, magi, learned men in the east so called, especially in Persia, who studied astronomy and other sciences.—3. Troubled lest some one should come to disturb the existing government.—4. Chief priests and scribes. This expression often means the sanhedrim, or great council of the Jews.—6. See Micah 5. 2.—7. Privily, privately.—9. In appearance like a star; probably a meteor miraculously directed for the purpose. There was a general expectation of some great personage in the east, and perhaps some way connected with Balaam's prophecy, Num. 24. 17.—15. Hos. 11. 1—7. Jer. 31. 15. This prophecy had a primary fulfilment in the captivity.—16. All the children; that is, the male children. The murder of the infants is confirmed by the pagan historian Macrobius, and by Celsus the opponent of the early Christians.—19. Herod died at this time in a miserable state.—23. Num. 6. 13; 1 Sam. 1. 11. A Nazarene was a term of contempt, Nazareth being a despised place, John 1. 46.

CHAPTER III.

Vcr. 1—6. *John the Baptist, his preaching, manner of life, and baptism.*—After Malachi there was no prophet until John the Baptist came. The wilderness of Judæa was not an uninhabited desert, but a part of the country not thickly peopled, nor much inclosed. The doctrine he preached was repentance; "Repent ye." The word used, means a total alteration in the mind, a change in the judgment, disposition, and affections, another and a better bias of the soul. Consider your ways, change your minds: you have thought amiss; think again, and think aright. True penitents have other thoughts of God and Christ, sin and holiness, of this world and the other, than they had. The change of the mind produces a change of the way.

That is gospel repentance, which flows from a sight of Christ, from a sense of his love, and from hopes of pardon and cleansing through him. There is a great deal to be done, to make way for Christ into a soul; nothing is more needful than the discovery of sin, and a conviction that we cannot be saved by our own righteousness.—Many came to John's baptism, but few kept to the profession they made. There may be many forward hearers, where there are few true believers. Those only are ready to receive Jesus Christ as their righteousness, who are brought with sorrow and shame to own their guilt. John washed them with water, in token that God would cleanse them from all their iniquities, thereby intimating, that by nature and practice all were polluted. None could be admitted among the people of God, unless washed from their sins in the fountain Christ opened, Zech. 13. 1.

7—12. *John reproves the Pharisees and Sadducees.*—To make application to the souls of the hearers, is the life of preaching; so it was of John's preaching. The Pharisees laid their chief stress on outward observances. The Sadducees ran into the opposite extreme, and were the scornful infidels of that time and country.—There is a wrath to come. It is the great concern of every one to flee from that wrath. God warns by the written word, by ministers, by conscience. And those are not penitents, who say they are sorry for their sins, but persist in them. Multitudes, by resting in their being members of an outward church, come short of heaven.—Here is a word of terror to the careless and secure. Our corrupt hearts cannot be made to produce good fruit, unless the regenerating Spirit of Christ graft the good word of God upon them. And every tree, however high in gifts and honours, however green in outward professions and performances, if it bring not forth the fruits meet for repentance, is hewn down and cast into the fire of God's wrath, the fittest place for barren trees: what else are they good for?—John shows the design of Christ's appearing, which they were now speedily to expect. No outward forms can supply the want of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire. The purifying and cleansing power of the Holy Spirit alone can produce that purity of heart, and those holy affections, which accompany salvation.—True believers are as wheat, substantial, useful, and valuable; hypocrites are as chaff, useless and worthless, carried about with every wind: these are mixed, good and bad, in the same outward communion. The last judgment will be the distinguishing day, when saints and sinners shall be parted for ever. In heaven the saints are brought together, and no longer scattered; they are safe,

and no longer exposed; separated from corrupt neighbours without, and corrupt affections within, and there is no chaff among them. Hell is the unquenchable fire, which will certainly be the portion and punishment of hypocrites and unbelievers.

13—17. *The baptism of Jesus.*—Christ's gracious condescensions are so surprising, that even the strongest believers at first can hardly believe them; so deep and mysterious, that even those who know his mind well, are apt to start objections against the will of Christ.—Our Lord Jesus looked upon it as becoming him to fulfil all righteousness, to own every Divine institution, and to show his readiness to comply with all God's righteous precepts.—This descent of the Spirit showed that Christ was endued with his sacred influences without measure. At Christ's baptism there was a manifestation of the three Persons in the sacred Trinity. The Father confirming the Son as the Mediator; the Son solemnly entering upon the work; the Holy Spirit descending on him, to be, through his mediation, communicated to his people.

1. Those days; about twenty-eight years after the events last mentioned, to which it refers. Wilderness, waste, uncultivated land, 1 Sam. 23. 14, etc.—2. Kingdom of heaven means here, and in many other places, the spiritual reign of Christ, the times of the gospel.—3. It was customary, when a monarch was about to travel, to prepare his way by removing obstacles, filling up hollows, etc., Isa. 40. 3.—4. The camels' hair was spun and woven into coarse cloth. Locusts, an insect like a grasshopper, but much larger, often eaten.—7. Pharisees, a sect among the Jews, strict in outward forms. Sadducees, another sect, who were men of pleasure, and infidels.—9. The Jews boasted much of their descent from Abraham.—12. Fan, or a sort of shovel used to turn over the thrashed grain, so that the chaff might be blown away.—16. Like a dove, or with the hovering motion of a dove; the appearance probably was like a flame of fire, as Acts 2. 3.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—11. *The temptation of Christ.*—Directly after Christ was declared to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, he was tempted. Privileges and tokens of Divine favour will not secure any from temptation. But if the Holy Spirit witness to our being adopted as children of God, that will answer all suggestions of the evil spirit.—Christ was directed to the combat. If we presume upon our own strength, and tempt the devil to tempt us, we provoke God to leave us to ourselves. Others are tempted, when drawn aside of their own lust, and enticed, Jam. 1. 14; but our Lord Jesus had no corrupt nature, therefore he was tempted only by the devil. Christ suffered, being tempted; thus it appears that our

temptations, if not yielded to, are not sins, they are afflictions only. Satan aimed to bring Christ to sin against God.—1. He tempted him to despair of his Father's goodness, and to distrust his Father's care. Those who are brought into straits have need to double their guard. Christ answered all the temptations of Satan with "It is written;" to set us an example, when at any time we are tempted to sin. Let us not take any wrong courses for our supply, when our wants are ever so pressing: in some way or other the Lord will provide.—2. Satan tempted Christ to presume upon his Father's power and protection, in a point of safety. No extremes are more dangerous than despair and presumption, especially in the affairs of our souls. Satan has no objection to holy places as the scene of his assaults. Let us not, then, in any place, be off our watch. It is possible to have the head full of Scripture notions, and the mouth full of Scripture expressions, while the heart is full of enmity to God and to all goodness. If we go out of the way of our duty, we forfeit the promise, and put ourselves out of God's protection. Satan misquoted Deut. 8. 3: as the whole passage made against him, he left out part.—3. Satan tempted Christ to idolatry. The glory of the world is the most charming temptation to the unthinking and unwary; by which they are most easily imposed upon. Be quick and firm in resisting temptation; for if we resist the devil he will flee. But the soul that deliberates is almost overcome. Few decidedly reject such baits as Satan offers; yet what is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?—Christ was succoured after the temptation, for his encouragement to go on in his undertaking, and for our encouragement to trust in him.

12—17. *The opening of Christ's ministry in Galilee.*—It is just with God to take the gospel and the means of grace, from those that slight them. Christ will not stay long where he is not welcome. Those who are without Christ, are in the dark. They were sitting in this condition, a contented posture: they chose it rather than light; they were willingly ignorant. Light discovers and directs; so does the gospel.—The doctrine of repentance is true gospel doctrine. The gracious Jesus preached repentance.

18—22. *Call of Simon and others.*—When Christ began to preach, he began to gather disciples, who should hear, and afterwards preach his doctrine; also, who should witness his miracles, and afterwards testify concerning them. He went not to Herod's court, nor to Jerusalem, among the chief priests and the elders, but to the sea of Galilee, among the fishermen.—Diligence in an honest calling is

pleasing to Christ, and no hindrance to a holy life. Idle people are more open to the temptations of Satan than to the calls of God. Those who would follow Christ aright, must, at his command, be ready to part with them and leave all things to follow him.

23—25. *Jesus teaches and works miracles.*—Wherever Christ went, he confirmed his Divine mission by miracles, which were emblems of the healing power of his doctrine, and the influences of the Spirit which accompanied it. Sin is the sickness, disease, and torment of the soul: Christ came to take away sin, and so to heal the soul.

1. This wilderness was an uninhabited desert, Mark 1. 13. Some suppose a rugged mountainous district to the north-east of Jerusalem.—3. Satan probably appeared in the form of a man.—5. The holy city means Jerusalem, Isa. 48. 2; 52. 1; 66. 10. Pinnacle, a sharp point, probably the roof of the southern porch 150 feet high, which hung over a valley many hundred feet in depth.—6. Psa. 91. 11, 12. This passage was misquoted and misapplied by Satan.—7. Deut. 6. 16.—8. Of the world, that is, of the land of Judæa, and the neighbouring parts. Rom. 4. 13 has the same expression.—10. Deut. 6. 13.—12. See John the Baptist's history, ch. 14.—13. Sea of Galilee, or Sea of Tiberias, or lake of Gennesareth.—15. Galilee of the Gentiles, so called from the number of Gentiles there settled. Isa. 9. 1, 2. Most of our Lord's miracles were wrought in these parts.—18. Jesus had seen them before near Bethabara, John 1. 42. They were now told to give up their trade.—25. Galilee was the north part of Palestine; Decapolis, or the ten cities, was east of the Jordan.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—12. *Christ's sermon on the mount.*—*Who are blessed.*—Our Saviour gives eight characters of blessed people, which represent the principal graces of a Christian. 1. The poor in spirit bring their minds to their condition. They are humble and lowly in their own eyes. They see their want, bewail their guilt, and thirst after a Redeemer.—2. Those that mourn are happy. That godly sorrow seems here intended, which worketh true repentance, watchfulness, a humble mind, and continual dependence on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, with constant seeking the Holy Spirit, to cleanse away the remaining evil. Such mourners shall be comforted by their God.—3. The meek are happy; those who quietly submit to God; who can bear insult, are silent, or return a soft answer; who, in their patience, keep possession of their own souls, when they can scarcely keep possession of anything else. These meek ones are happy, even in this world.—4. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are happy. Righteousness is here put for all spiritual blessings. These are purchased for us by the righteousness of Christ, confirmed

by the faithfulness of God.—5. The merciful are happy. We must not only bear our own afflictions patiently, but do all we can to help those who are in trouble.—6. The pure in heart are happy. Here holiness and happiness are fully described and put together. Create in me such a clean heart, O God. None but the pure are capable of seeing God, nor would heaven be happiness to the impure.—7. The peace-makers are happy. They love and delight in peace; and study to be quiet. If the peace-makers are blessed, woe to the peace-breakers!—8. Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake are happy. This saying is peculiar to Christianity. Yet there is nothing in sufferings that can merit of God; but those who lose *for* him, though life itself, shall not lose *by* him in the end. Blessed Jesus! how different are thy maxims from those of men of this world! May we find mercy from the Lord; may we be truly his children, and inherit his kingdom.

13—16. *Exhortations and warnings.*—Mankind, lying in ignorance and wickedness, were as a vast heap, ready to putrify; but Christ sent forth his disciples, by their lives and doctrines to season it with knowledge and grace. If they are not such as they should be, they are as salt that has lost its savour. If a man can profess Christ, and yet remain graceless, no other doctrine, no other means, can make him profitable.

17—20. *Christ came to confirm the law.*—The law is the Christian's rule of duty, and he delights therein. If a man, pretending to be Christ's disciple, encourages himself in any allowed disobedience to the holy law of God, or teaches others to do the same, he can be no true disciple. While Christ's righteousness, imputed to us through faith alone, is needed by every one that enters the kingdom of grace or of glory, the new creation of the heart to holiness, produces a thorough change in temper and conduct.

21—26. *The sixth commandment.*—Christ showed the full meaning of this commandment; according to which we must be judged hereafter; and therefore ought to be ruled now. All rash anger is heart murder. By our brother, here, we are to understand any person. "Raca," is a scornful word, and comes from pride: "Thou fool" is a spiteful word, and comes from hatred. If at any time we quarrel, we should confess our fault, making or offering satisfaction for wrong done in word or deed. And when preparing for any religious exercises, it is good for us to make that an occasion of reflection and self-examination. What is here said is applicable to being reconciled to God through Christ. While we are alive, we are in the way to his judgment-seat; after death, it will be too late.

27—32. *The seventh commandment.*—Victory over the desires of the heart, must be attended with painful exertions. Everything is bestowed to save us *from* our sins, not *in* them. All our senses and powers must be kept from those things which lead to transgression. Those who tempt others to sin, or leave them in it, or expose them to it, make themselves partakers of their sin.

33—37. *The third commandment.*—Oaths taken without necessity, or in common conversation, must be sinful, as well as all those expressions which are appeals to God. Our Lord does not enjoin the precise terms wherein we are to affirm or deny, but such a constant regard to truth as would render oaths unnecessary.

38—42. *The law of retaliation.*—Suffer any injury that can be borne, for the sake of peace, committing your concerns to the Lord's keeping. Christians must avoid disputing and striving; and those who act on right principles will have most peace and comfort.

43—48. *The law of love explained.*—The Jewish teachers by "neighbour" understood only those who were of their own country, nation, and religion, whom they were pleased to look upon as their friends. The Lord Jesus teaches that we must do all the real kindness we can to all, especially to their souls. Others salute their brethren, and embrace those of their own party and opinion, but we must not so confine our regards.—It is the duty of Christians to desire and press towards perfection in grace and holiness, 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16. Surely more is to be expected from the followers of Christ than from others. Let us beg of God to enable us to prove ourselves his children.

2. Taught them what should be their practice.—8. Shall see God to see the face, or to be in the presence of a king, was a term expressive of great favour, Prov. 22. 29.—13. Rock salt, or a bituminous salt from the Dead Sea.—14. Cities in Judæa were mostly built on the sides or tops of hills.—15. Candle should be rendered lamp.—17. To fulfil, by doing and suffering what the law and the prophets had declared; to become obedient to the word of God, ch. 3. 15.—18. The word 'jot' is the name of the letter I (jod), the smallest in the Hebrew alphabet. The Hebrew letters were written with small points, or tittles.—19. The least; that is, shall have no place there.—22. Raca, a Syrian word of contempt, a vain fellow. The judgment was the common court of justice among the Jews. The council, or the sanhedrim, their supreme court. Hell fire originally referred to the Gehenna, or valley of Hinnom, the place of burning, and signifies a more terrible kind of punishment: it was considered an emblem of hell, as ver. 30.—26. A farthing was equal to two mites, or about three halfpence of our money.—31. Deut. 24. 1; Matt. 19. 8.—33. Deut. 6. 13.—34. Swear not. The Jews at that time had many regulations about oaths, which promoted equivocation, or untruths. This injunction does not forbid solemn declarations in courts of justice.

—38. Deut. 19. 21.—43. Lev. 19. 18; Deut. 23. 6. See Prov. 24. 17; 25. 21, 22.—46. Publicans, in the Gospels, denotes those who collected the Roman taxes; they were hated by the Jews.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1—8. *Against hypocrisy in almsgiving, and in prayer.*
—Our Lord warns against hypocrisy and outward show in religious duties. The doom Christ passes, at first may seem a promise, but it is *their* reward; not the reward God promises to those who do good, but the reward hypocrites promise themselves, and a poor reward it is: they did it to be seen of men, and they are seen of men. When we take least notice of our good deeds, God takes most notice of them. He will reward thee; not as a master who gives his servant what he earns, and no more; but as a father who gives abundantly to his son that serves him.—All who are disciples of Christ pray. If prayerless, then graceless. If in so great a matter as is between us and God, when we are at prayer, we can look to so poor a thing as the praise of men, it is just that this should be all our reward. Yet there is not a secret, sudden breathing after God, but he observes it. If he does not give his people what they ask, it is because he knows they do not need it, and that it is not for their good.

9—15. *How to pray.*—Christ saw it needful to show his disciples what must commonly be the matter and method of their prayer. Not that we are tied up to the use of this only, or of this always; yet it is good to use it. This prayer teaches us, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and that all other things shall be added.—Every word here has a lesson in it. We ask for *bread*; not for what we do not need. We ask for *our* bread; not for the bread of others, nor the bread of deceit, Prov. 20. 17; nor the bread of idleness, Prov. 31. 27; but the bread honestly gotten. We ask for our *daily* bread; which teaches us constantly to depend upon Divine Providence. We beg of God to *give* it us. The greatest of men must be beholden to the mercy of God for their daily bread. Give it to *us*. This teaches us compassion. Also, that we ought to pray with our families. *This day*; we could better go a day without food than without prayer.—We are taught to hate and dread sin while we hope for mercy, to distrust ourselves, to be prepared to resist the tempter, and not to be tempters of others. Those who desire mercy from God, must show mercy to their brethren.

16—18. *Respecting fasting.*—Religious fasting is sometimes required of the disciples of Christ, but not so much a duty itself, as a means to dispose for other duties. Fasting is

the humbling of the soul, Psa. 35. 13 ; that is the inside of the duty ; let that, therefore, be thy principal care.

19—24. *Evil of being worldly minded.*—Something the soul will have, which it looks upon as the best thing ; in which it has pleasure and confidence above other things. There are treasures in heaven. It is our wisdom to give all diligence to make our title to eternal life sure through Jesus Christ, and to be content with nothing short of it.—The worldly man is wrong in his first principle ; therefore all his reasonings and actions therefrom must be wrong. It is equally to be applied to false religion ; that which is deemed light is thick darkness.—God requires the whole heart, and will not share it with the world. When two masters oppose each other, no man can serve both. He who holds to the world and loves it, must despise God ; he who loves God, must give up the friendship of the world.

25—34. *Trust in God commended.*—Disquieting, distracting, distrustful cares about the things of this life often insnare the poor as much as the love of wealth does the rich. But there is a carefulness about temporal things which is a duty, though we must not carry these lawful cares too far. Refer it to God to lengthen or shorten your life as he pleases ; our times are in his hand, and they are in a good hand. As to this life, leave it to God to make it bitter or sweet as he pleases. Be not anxious how you shall live next year, or when you are old, or what you shall leave behind you. As we must not boast of to-morrow, so we must not anxiously care for to-morrow, or the events of it. We must reconcile ourselves to our worldly estate, as we do to our stature. We cannot alter the disposals of Providence, therefore we must submit and resign ourselves to them.—Thoughtfulness for our souls is the best cure of thoughtfulness for the world. Seek first the kingdom of God, and make religion your business : it is the way to be well provided for, even in this world. It is the will and command of the Lord Jesus, that by daily prayers we may get strength to bear us up under our daily troubles, and to arm us against the temptations that attend them, and then let none of these things move us.

2. The Pharisees sounded trumpets to attract attention when giving alms.—5. Synagogues, the places where the Jews met for the public and spiritual worship of prayer, reading, preaching, and praise. To build one was a worthy action, Luke 7. 5.—6. Closet, some retired place —7. Such was the custom used in idol worship, 1 Kings 18. 26—25 —12. Obedience is a debt to God.—16, 17. Isa. 58. 5 ; Luke 18. 12. The custom of anointing is frequent in the east ; it means, as we should say, dress thyself.—19. It is usual in the east for people to amass stores of clothes, etc., Jas. 5. 1—3. The walls of some houses were formed of clay, through which thieves could dig.—22. Eye be single. be simple in thy endeavour —23. Evil, diseased.—24. Man-

mon, a Syrian name given to an idol, the god of riches, and is used as a term for worldly gain.—27. A cubit was equal to about twenty inches.—28. The lily in eastern lands is particularly beautiful, Hos. 14. 5; Song 2. 1.—30. The Jews frequently heated their ovens by burning dry grass in them. Fuel in the east is scarce.—32. Gentiles, other nations, not the Jews.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1—6. *Christ reproves rash judgment.*—We must judge ourselves, but not make our word a law to everybody. We must not judge rashly nor make the worst of people. Here is a just reproof to those who quarrel with their brethren for small faults, while they allow themselves in greater ones. Not that there is any sin little; if it be a mote, or splinter, it is in the eye; if a gnat, it is in the throat we cannot be easy or well till they are got out. It is as strange that a man can be in a sinful, miserable condition, and not be aware of it, as that a man should have a beam in his eye, and not consider it; but the god of this world blinds the mind.

7—11. *Encouragements to prayer.*—Prayer is the appointed means for obtaining what we need. Pray; pray often; make a business of prayer; be serious and earnest in it. Ask, as a beggar asks alms. Ask, as a traveller asks the way. Seek, as for a thing of value that is lost; or as the merchantman that seeks goodly pearls. Knock, as he that desires to enter into the house knocks at the door. Whatever you pray for, according to the promise, shall be given, if God see it fit for you, and what would you have more? All are alike welcome to the throne of grace, if they come in faith.—Parents are often foolishly fond, but God is all-wise; he knows what is best for us. Let us never suppose our heavenly Father would bid us pray, and then refuse to hear, or give us what would be hurtful.

12—14. *The broad and narrow way.*—We must, in our dealings with men, suppose ourselves in the same case and circumstances as those we have to do with, and act accordingly.—There are but two ways, right and wrong, good and evil; the way to heaven and the way to hell; in the one or other of these all are walking: there is no middle place hereafter, no middle way now.—See concerning the way of sin and sinners, that the gate is wide, and stands open. You may go in at this gate with all your lusts about you. It is a broad way; there is choice of sinful ways. There is a large company in this way. But what profit is there in being willing to go to hell with others, because they will not go to heaven with us?—The way to eternal life is narrow. Self must be denied, the body kept under, and corruptions mortified. Daily temp-

tations must be resisted ; duties must be done. We must walk with care ; we must go through much tribulation. This way invites us all ; it leads to present comfort in the favour of God, which is the life of the soul ; to eternal bliss, the hope of which, at the end of our way, should make the difficulties of the road easy. In all ages, the disciple of Christ has been looked on as a singular, unfashionable character ; and all that have sided with the greater number, have gone on in the broad road to destruction.

15—20. *Against false prophets.*—Nothing so much prevents men from entering the strait gate, and becoming true followers of Christ, as the carnal, soothing, flattering doctrines of those who oppose the truth. They may be known by the drift and effects of their doctrines. Those opinions come not from God that lead to sin.

21—29. *To be doers of the word not hearers only.*—It will not be enough to own Christ for our Master, only in word and tongue. It is necessary to happiness that we believe in Christ, that we repent of sin, that we live a holy life, that we love one another. Let us take heed of resting in outward privileges and doings, lest we deceive ourselves, and perish eternally, as multitudes do. Let every one that names the name of Christ, depart from all sin.—This parable teaches us to hear and do the sayings of the Lord Jesus. Christ is laid for a firm foundation, and every other dependence is sand. Some build their hopes upon worldly prosperity ; others upon an outward profession of religion. Upon these they venture ; but they are all sand too weak to bear such a building as our hopes of heaven.—There is a storm coming that will try every man's work. When God takes away the soul, where is the hope of the hypocrite ? The house fell in the storm, when the builder expected it would be a shelter to him, and when it was too late to build another. May the Lord make us wise builders for eternity.—This sermon, ever so often read over, is always new. Every word proves its Author to be Divine. Let us be more and more decided and earnest, making some one or other of these blessednesses and Christian graces the main subject of our thoughts.

3. A mote is a light substance, as a small splinter ; a beam is a large piece of timber.—6. Dogs and swine are often used as terms for bad men, those who hate the truth, Prov. 11. 22 ; Phil. 3. 2. Pearls here mean the blessed experiences of the gospel.—15. Ravening, ravenous.—23. I never knew you ; I never approved of you.—27. Mountainous lands are subject to sudden floods, which sweep away all that is in their course ; and the houses in Palestine being often slightly built are not unfrequently destroyed by sudden floods.—29. Scribes were the learned men among the Jews, ch. ii 4, who interpreted the law.

CHAPTER VIII.

Vcr. 1—4 *Multitudes follow Christ. He heals a leper.*—The cleansing of the leper directs us not only to apply to Christ, who has power over bodily diseases, for the cure of them, but it also teaches us to apply to him as one who has Divine power. When we cannot be sure of God's will, we may be sure of his wisdom and mercy. No guilt is so great, but there is that in Christ's blood which atones for it; no corruption so strong, but there is that in his grace which can subdue it. We cannot demand to be made clean as a debt, but we must humbly request it as a favour.—Those who by faith apply to Christ for mercy and grace, may be sure that he is willing to give freely. Afflictions are blessed that bring us to know Christ, and cause us to seek help and salvation from him.

5—13. *A centurion's servant healed.*—This centurion was a heathen. Though a soldier he was a godly man. No man's calling or place will be an excuse for unbelief and sin. We should concern ourselves for the souls of our children and servants, and bring them to Christ by faith and prayer.—Observe his self-abasement. Humble souls are made more humble by Christ's gracious dealings with them. Observe his great faith. The more diffident we are of ourselves, the stronger will be our trust in Christ. Herein the centurion owns him to have Divine power, and a full command of all the creatures and powers of nature.—The servant got a cure of his disease, and the master got the approval of his faith. What was said to him is said to all, Believe, and ye shall receive; only believe.

14—17. *Cure of Peter's wife's mother.*—The church of Rome, which forbids ministers to marry, goes contrary to that apostle upon whom they rest so much. He had his wife's mother with him in his family, an example to be kind to our relations. In spiritual healing, the Scripture speaks the word, the Spirit gives the touch, touches the heart, touches the hand. There is more in the declaration that Jesus Christ bore our sicknesses and carried our sorrows, to support and comfort under them, than in all the writings of the philosophers.

18—22. *The scribe's zealous proposal.*—Many resolutions for religion are produced by sudden convictions, and taken up without due consideration; these come to nothing. Christ saw the heart of this scribe, and answered to its thoughts. His resolve seems to have been from a worldly, covetous principle. We have reason to think this scribe went away.—Another was too slow. Delay in doing is as

bad on the one hand, as hastiness in resolving is on the other. If Christ requires our service, affection even for the dearest relatives, and for things otherwise our duty, must give way. An unwilling mind never wants an excuse. Jesus said, Follow me; and, no doubt, power went with this word to him. The scribe said, I will follow thee; to this man Christ said, Follow me. It shows that we are brought to Christ by the force of his call to us, Rom. ix. 16.

23—27. *Christ in a storm.*—Those who are passing with Christ over the ocean of this world, must expect storms.—His human nature, like to ours in everything but sin, was wearied, and he slept at this time to try the faith of his disciples. They, in their fear, came to their Master. Thus is it in a soul, when lusts and temptations are swelling and raging. Then it cries, Lord Jesus, keep not silence to me, or I am undone! Many that have true faith, are weak in it. Christ's disciples are apt to be disquieted with fears in a stormy day; to torment themselves that things are bad with them, and with dismal thoughts that they will be worse.—The disciples were astonished. They never saw a storm so turned at once into a perfect calm. He that can do this can do anything, which encourages confidence in him, in the most stormy day, within or without, Isa. xxvi. 4.

28—34. *He heals two possessed with devils.*—Oh the depth of this mystery of Divine love; that fallen man has so much to do with Christ, when fallen angels have nothing to do with him! Heb. ii. 16. Surely here was torment, to be forced to own the excellence that is in Christ, and yet they had no part in him. The devils desire not to have anything to do with Christ *as a Ruler*. See whose language those speak, who will have nothing to do with the gospel of Christ. But they have to do with Christ *as a Judge*; and they know it.—Satan and his instruments can go no further than Christ permits; they cannot enter even a swine without leave. But God, for wise and holy ends, often permits the efforts of Satan's rage.—A great many prefer their swine before the Saviour, and so come short of Christ and salvation by him. They desire Christ to depart out of their hearts, and will not suffer his word to have place in them, because he and his word would destroy their brutish lusts. Justly will Christ say hereafter, "Depart, ye cursed" to those who now say to the Almighty, Depart from us.

2. A full account of the disease of leprosy is given Lev. 13.—4. Lev. 14. 10, 21, 22.—5. A centurion was a Roman officer set over one hundred soldiers.—6. There are different sorts of palsy. This was probably a violent attack.—12. The "children of the kingdom" was a title which the Jews gave to themselves, to the exclusion of the

Gentiles.—15. Ministered, waited on, showing she was perfectly cured.—16. It was at this time thought to be unlawful among the Jews to carry the sick on the sabbath day, which lasted till evening, Lev. 23. 32.—17. Isa. 53. 4.—22. The dead, those who are insensible to the danger of their souls.—24. The sea, or lake, was subject to sudden squalls.—28. Gergesenes, on the east of the sea of Galilee, were descended from the heathen Gergashites, Deut. 7. 1. Also called Gadarenes, from one of their chief towns, Mark 5. 1. The tombs were usually at a distance from the cities, small buildings, or cut out of the rocks, and frequently afforded shelter to the insane in ancient times.—30. The Jews were forbidden to eat or to keep swine: see Lev. 11. 7; Deut. 14. 8.—34. Their coasts, their neighbourhood.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1—8. *Jesus returns to Capernaum, and heals a paralytic.*—A strong faith regards no obstacles in pressing after Christ. With humble and active faith these men brought the paralytic to attend on Christ. If we have the comfort of peace with God, with the comfort of recovery from sickness, this makes the healing a mercy indeed. But this is no encouragement to sin.—Our Lord Jesus has perfect knowledge of all that we say within ourselves. In sinful thoughts there is a great deal of evil, very offensive to him. Christ's great errand to the world was, to save his people from their sins.—He turned from disputing with the scribes, and spake healing to the sick man.

9. *Matthew called.*—Matthew, or Levi, was in his calling, like the rest of those whom Christ called. Christ comes with his calls to those who are employed. Speak by the word of thy Spirit to our hearts, the world cannot hold us down, Satan cannot stop our way, we shall arise and follow thee. A saving change is wrought in the soul, by Christ as the author, and his word as the means. Matthew left his place, and though we find the disciples, who were fishers, fishing afterwards, we never more find Matthew at his sinful gain.

10—13. *Matthew's feast.*—Matthew knew by experience what the grace of Christ could do, and those who are effectually brought to Christ, cannot but desire that others also may be brought to him. The Pharisees despised Christ, because they thought themselves whole; but the poor publicans and sinners felt that they wanted instruction and amendment. It is easy and common to put the worst constructions upon the best words and actions.—The gospel call is a call to repentance. If the children of men had not been sinners, there had been no need for Christ to come among them. Let us examine if we have learned to follow the directions of our great Physician.

14—17 *Objections of John the Baptist's disciples.*—John was in prison; his circumstances and the message he was sent to deliver, led those attached to him to keep frequent fasts.

Though Jesus and his disciples lived in a frugal manner, it would be improper for his disciples to fast while he is with them; then all is well. The presence of the sun makes day, and its absence produces night.—Our Lord further reminded them of common rules of prudence. A piece of rough woollen cloth would not join well with a soft, old garment, but would tear it further. Nor would men put new wine into old leathern bottles; they would be liable to burst from the fermenting of the wine. Young converts should not receive gloomy and forbidding ideas of the service of our Lord; but duties are to be urged as they are able to bear them.

18—26. *Christ raises the daughter of Jairus, and heals the issue of blood.*—The variety of methods Christ took in working his miracles, perhaps was because of the different frames and tempers of mind those were in who came to him, and which He who searches the heart perfectly knew.—If we do but touch, as it were, the hem of Christ's garment by living faith, our worst evils will be healed there is no other real cure, nor need we fear his knowing things which are a grief and burden to us, but which we would not tell to any earthly friend. When Christ entered the ruler's house, he said, Give place. Thus when the sorrow of the world prevails, it is difficult for Christ and his comforts to enter. The maiden was really dead; but the death of the righteous is to be looked on as only a sleep. Dead souls are not raised to spiritual life, unless Christ take them by the hand: this is done in the day of his power. The words and works of Christ may not at first be understood, yet they are not therefore to be despised.

27—31. *Christ heals two blind men.*—Those who, by the providence of God, have lost their bodily sight, may, by the grace of God, have the eyes of their understanding enlightened. And whatever our wants and burdens are, in Christ is enough for all. They followed Christ, and followed him crying; but the great question is, Do you believe? Nature may make us earnest, but it is only grace that can work faith. Those who apply to Jesus Christ, shall be dealt with, not according to their fancies, nor according to their profession, but according to their faith.—Christ sometimes concealed his miracles, because of the conceit which prevailed among the Jews that their Messiah should be a temporal prince.

32—34. *Christ casts out a dumb spirit.*—Of the two, better a dumb than a blaspheming devil. Christ's cures remove the effect by taking away the cause. Nothing can convince those who are under the power of pride. They will believe anything, however false or absurd, rather than the Holy Scriptures—thus showing the enmity of the heart.

35—38. *He sends forth the apostles.*—Jesus visited not only the great and wealthy cities, but the poor obscure villages; there he preached and healed. There were priests, Levites, and scribes, all over the land; but they were idol shepherds, Zech. xi. 17; therefore Christ had compassion on the people as perishing for lack of knowledge. The multitudes formed a plenteous harvest, needing many active labourers; but few deserved that character. Christ is the Lord of the harvest. Let us pray that many may be raised up and sent forth, who will labour for souls.

1. His own city was Capernaum, after he was rejected at Nazareth, Luke 4. 16.—3. Blasphemeth, if Christ had been no more than man.—6. An eastern bed was often nothing more than a mat or roll of cloth.—9. Receipt of custom; that is, the place where tribute to the Romans was paid. The publicans who collected this tribute were much despised.—13. Hosea 6. 6.—16. A new piece means a piece of new cloth, rough, not filled or cleansed.—17. The eastern bottles were made of skins, Josh. 9. 4; Psa. 119. 83.—18. A ruler: one who had charge of a synagogue.—20. The hem was the fringe worn by the Jews on their garments, Num. 15. 38, 39.—23. Minstrels, musicians usually employed in the east when a death had taken place.—30. Straitly, strictly.—34. Pharisees, a proud and self-righteous sect among the Jews.—36. This state was foretold, Ezek. 34. 5; Zech. 10. 2.—37. The harvest—of souls.

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1—15. *The apostles called, instructed, and sent forth.*—The word apostle signifies messenger; the disciples were Christ's messengers, sent forth to proclaim his kingdom. He gave them power to heal all manner of sicknesses. There is no spiritual disease, but there is power in Christ for the cure of it. The Gentiles must not have the gospel brought them, till the Jews have refused it. This restraint on the apostles was only in their first mission. They *preached*, to establish the faith; *the kingdom*, to animate the hope; *of heaven*, to inspire the love of heavenly things, and the contempt of earthly; which *is at hand*, that men may prepare for it without delay. Christ gave power to work miracles for the confirming of their doctrine. It showed that the intent of the doctrine they preached was to heal sick souls. The servant of Christ is the ambassador of peace to whatever place he is sent. It becomes us to pray heartily for all, and to conduct ourselves courteously to all. The whole counsel of God must be declared, and those who will not attend to the gracious message, must be told that their state is dangerous.

16—42. *Directions to the apostles.*—Our Lord warned his disciples to avoid all meddling with worldly or political concerns, all appearance of evil or selfishness, and all underhand measures. Christ foretold troubles, not that the trou-

bles might be a surprise, but tend to confirm their faith. Thus Christ has dealt fairly and faithfully with us, in telling the worst we can meet with in his service.—Persecutors are worse than beasts, in that they prey upon those of their own kind. The strongest bonds of love and duty have often been broken through from enmity against Christ; and sufferings from friends and relations are very grievous. With these predictions of trouble, are counsels and comforts for a time of trial. The disciples of Christ need the serpent's wisdom, and to be harmless as doves; to bear no one any ill-will.—Prudent care there must be, but not an anxious, perplexing thought; cast your care upon God. The disciples of Christ may go out of the way of danger, though they must not go out of the way of duty; no sinful, unlawful means may be used to escape. The whole counsel of God must be made known, Acts 20. 27.—Christ shows why they should be of good cheer. When God calls us to speak for him, we may depend on him to teach us what to say. A believing prospect of the end of our troubles, will be of great use to support us under them. They may be borne to the end, because the sufferers shall be borne up under them.—See how the care of Providence extends to all creatures, even to the sparrows; this should silence the fears of God's people. And the very hairs of your head are all numbered: this denotes the account God takes and keeps of his people. That denial of Christ only is here meant which is persisted in; and that confession only can have the blessed recompense promised which is the real and constant language of faith and love. Christ will lead us through sufferings, to glory with him. Those are best prepared for the life to come, that sit most loose to this present life. Let us then boldly confess Christ, and show love to him in all things.

1. Christ gave this power of himself, showing his Divine nature.—
 2. Apostles; persons sent forth as missionaries. These twelve were especially such. First in order, or first called, not first or superior in dignity or authority.—3. Thaddæus, also called Jude; Bartholomew, perhaps Nathanael is meant, John 1. 46.—5. The Samaritans were a mixed race, mentioned 2 Kings 17. 24; Ezra 4. 2—11. Samaria was the middle district of Palestine.—9. The girdle was made to serve as a purse. Inferior pieces of money were made of brass.—10. Scrip, bag for food.—13. House, worthy. If the family are thankful for the privilege.—16. Serpents were commonly regarded as emblems of wisdom.—17. Scourging or whipping by rods or thongs.—23. This coming probably refers to the judgments about to befall the land.—25. Beelzebub the prince of the devils; also, a heathen idol, 2 Kings 1. 2.—27. The houses in the east have usually flat roofs, where neighbours often converse in the evening.—29. Sparrows were birds of small value, used by the Jews for food.—38. His cross, his difficulties, or trials. A malefactor was compelled to carry his cross.

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1—6. *Christ's preaching, and answer to John's disciples*—Some think that John sent this inquiry for his own satisfaction. Others think that John sent his disciples to Christ for their satisfaction. Where there is true faith, yet there may be a mixture of unbelief. Those things which men see and hear, if compared with the Scriptures, direct in what way salvation is to be found.

7—15. *Christ's testimony to John the Baptist.*—It becomes people to be consistent with their character and their situation. John was a great and self-denying man, yet not perfect; therefore he came short of glorified saints. By the kingdom of heaven here, is rather to be understood the kingdom of grace, the gospel dispensation in its power and purity. We have reason to be thankful that we have such advantages of light and love. Those who will have an interest in the great salvation, will have it upon any terms, and not think them hard, nor quit their hold without a blessing. The things of God are of great and common concern; but people are ignorant, because they will not learn.

16—24. *The perverseness of the Jews.*—Christ likens the behaviour of the scribes and Pharisees to children at play; who being out of temper without reason, quarrel with all the attempts of their fellows to please them. The cavils of worldly men are often very trifling, but show great malice. Something they have to urge against every one, however excellent and holy. While the Lord exercises his almighty power, he yet punishes none more than they deserve, and never withholds the knowledge of the truth from those who long after it.

25—30. *The gospel revealed to the simple, and the heavy-laden invited.*—God is Lord of heaven and earth, which obliges us to come to him with reverence; yet with confidence, as one able to defend us from evil, and to supply us with all good. We are indebted to Christ for all the revelation we have of God the Father's will and love.—Worldly men burden themselves with fruitless cares for wealth and honours; the gay and the sensual labour in pursuit of pleasures; while the slave of Satan and his own lusts is the merest drudge on earth. Those who labour to establish their own righteousness also labour in vain. The convicted sinner is heavy-laden with guilt and terror; and the tempted and afflicted believer has labours and burdens. Christ invites all to come to him for rest to their souls. This is the gospel call; Whoever will, let him come. All who thus come will receive rest as Christ's gift, and obtain peace

and comfort in their hearts. But in coming to him they must take his yoke, and submit to his authority. He accepts the willing servant, however imperfect the services. Here only can we find rest for our souls. It is a yoke that is lined with love; a yoke of pleasantness; and his commandments are holy, just, and good. The way of duty is the way of rest. The truths Christ teaches are such as we may venture our souls upon. Such is the Redeemer's mercy; then come to Jesus to find rest for your souls.

2. See Matt. 14. 3, 4.—3. Or, He who cometh; a Jewish title for the expected Messiah.—5. Isa. 35. 4-6; 61. 1, 2.—6. Offended; does not take a dislike to the truth.—10. Mal. 3. 1.—14. Elias, Elijah; the Jews expected that prophet to come again, Mal. 4. 5.—18, 19. John the Baptist was reserved and severe; Jesus was generous, and mixed freely with the people.—21. Sackcloth was a sign of mourning.—23. Exalted; highly favoured, or blessed.—25. Wise; those who were so in the esteem of the world, or who thought themselves so. Babes; those little in their own eyes, and humble in their station.

CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1—8. *Jesus defends his disciples for plucking corn on the sabbath day.*—The Pharisees did not quarrel with the disciples for taking another man's corn, (see Deut. 23. 25,) but for doing it on the sabbath. Christ came to free his followers from unscriptural rules, and justified what they did. Those labours are lawful on the sabbath day which are necessary, and sabbath rest is to forward, not to hinder sabbath worship. Needful provision for health and food is to be made; but many things common among professors are to be blamed. The resting on the sabbath was ordained for man's good, Deut. 5. 14. As Christ is the Lord of the sabbath, it is fit the day and the work of it should be dedicated to him.

9—13. *Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the sabbath.*—Works of mercy are lawful and proper to be done on the Lord's day. There are more ways of doing well upon sabbath days, than by the duties of worship: attending the sick, relieving the poor, helping those who need speedy relief, teaching the young to care for their souls; all these are doing good. By nature our hands are withered, and we are unable of ourselves to do anything that is good. Christ heals the withered hand by putting life into the dead soul; and he works in us both to will and to do.

14—21. *The malice of the Pharisees.*—Aware of the design of the Pharisees, as his time was not come, Jesus retired from the place. The character of Christ drawn by the prophet exactly answers to his temper and conduct as described by the evangelists. Let us with cheerful confidence commit our souls to so kind and faithful a Friend; let us

lay aside contentions and angry debates; let us receive one another as Christ receives us.

22—30. *Christ heals a demoniac.*—Satan blinds the eyes by unbelief, and seals up the lips from prayer. If Satan aided Jesus in casting out devils, the kingdom of hell was divided against itself; how then could it stand! When unclean spirits are cast out by the Holy Spirit, in the conversion of sinners to a life of faith and obedience, the kingdom of God is come unto us.

31, 32. *Blasphemy of the Pharisees.*—Here is a gracious assurance of the pardon of all sin upon gospel terms. But humble and conscientious believers, at times are tempted to think they have committed the unpardonable sin. We may be sure that those who repent and believe the gospel, have not committed this sin, or any other of the same kind; for repentance and faith are the special gifts of God, which he would not bestow on any man, and refuse to pardon him; and those who fear they have committed this sin, give a good sign that they have not.

33—37. *Evil words proceed from an evil heart.*—Men's language discovers what country they are of, likewise what manner of spirit they are of. The heart is the fountain, and words are the streams. Nothing but the salt of grace will season the speech. Lusts and corruptions, dwelling and reigning in the heart, are an evil treasure, out of which the sinner brings forth bad words and actions, to dishonour God and hurt others.

38—45. *The scribes and Pharisees reproved for seeking a sign.*—Signs were granted to those who desired them to confirm their faith, as Abraham and Gideon; but denied to those who demanded them to excuse their unbelief. The resurrection of Christ from the dead by his own power, was the great proof of Christ's being the Messiah. As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale, and then came out again alive, thus Christ would be so long in the grave, and then rise again. The Ninevites would shame the Jews for not repenting; the queen of Sheba, for not believing in Christ.—We come not to Christ upon uncertainties. This parable is applicable to all who hear the word of God, and are in part reformed, but not truly converted. The heart is swept by outward reformation, but the man becomes a more decided enemy of the truth. Every heart is the residence of unclean spirits, except those which are temples of the Holy Ghost, by faith in Christ.

46—50. *The disciples of Christ are his nearest relations.*—Christ's preaching was plain and easy, suited to his hearers. His mother and brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him, when they should have been standing within,

desiring to hear him. Frequently, those who are nearest to the means of knowledge and grace are most negligent. Christ was so intent on his work, that no other duty took him from it. Not that, under pretence of religion, we may be disrespectful to parents, or unkind to relations; but the lesser duty must stand by, while the greater is done.

1. This was permitted by the law of Moses, Deut. 23. 25.—2. This was one of the minute regulations of the Pharisees, which rendered the sabbath burdensome.—4. 1 Sam. 21. 1-7.—5. Profane, by killing and offering sacrifices, and other needful duties.—7. Hos. 6. 6.—8. The Son of man, a Jewish expression for the Messiah.—17. Isa. 42. 1-4.—22. At that time Satan often exercised peculiar influence on the mind.—23. Son of David; the Messiah was to be a descendant of David.—31. Blasphemy, evil speaking; when applied to God, is the speaking impiously of him.—35. Like poisonous reptiles, with a corrupt and evil nature.—38. A sign, a miracle.—39. Adulterous is often used for false worship, or the heart being estranged from God.—40. Jonah 1. 17. The Jews used to speak of part of a day as a whole day.—41. Jonah 3. 10.—42. 1 Kings 10. 1. Sheba, probably a city of Arabia.—43. Dry places, barren, desert lands.—47. Brethren, often used as a general term for near relations.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1—23. *The parable of the sower.*—Christ taught in parables, and thereby the things of God were made more plain and easy to those willing to be taught. The parable of the sower is plain. The seed sown is the word of God; the sower is our Lord Jesus Christ, by himself, or by his ministers; preaching is sowing the corn. Some sort of ground brings forth no fruit, while the good soil brings forth plentifully. Careless, trifling hearers, are an easy prey to Satan; who is the great thief of sermons, and will be sure to rob us of the word, if we take not care to keep it. Hypocrites, like the stony ground, often make showy professions. But when some heavy trial threatens, or some sinful advantage may be had, they give up or disguise their profession, or turn to some easier system. Worldly cares are compared to thorns, they came in with sin, and are a fruit of the curse: they are good in their place to stop a gap, but a man must be well armed that has much to do with them; they are entangling, vexing, scratching, and their end is to be burned, Heb. 6. 8. Christ does not say that the good ground has no stones in it, or no thorns; but none that could hinder its fruitfulness. Good soil is soft, deep, cleared. The sense of hearing cannot be better employed than in hearing God's word; and let us look to ourselves, that we may know what sort of hearers we are.

24—30. 36- 43. *Of the tares.*—The parable of the tares

represents the present and future state of the gospel church, Christ's care of it, the devil's enmity against it, the mixture there is in it of good and bad in this world, and the separation between them in the other world. The servants complained to their master; Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? No doubt he did; whatever is amiss in the church, we are sure it is not from Christ; yet no human skill can make an exact separation. It is difficult to distinguish between the good and bad in this world, yet at the great day they shall be parted. At death, believers shall shine forth to themselves; at the great day they shall shine forth before all the world. May we be found of that happy number.

31—35. *Of the mustard-seed and the leaven.*—The parable of the seed sown shows that the beginnings of the gospel would be small, but its latter end great. In the soul where grace truly is, it will grow really; though perhaps at first not to be discerned, it will at last come to great strength and usefulness. The preaching of the gospel works like leaven in the hearts of those who receive it. It works silently, and without being seen, Mark 4. 26—29, yet strongly; without noise, for so is the way of the Spirit, but without fail. Thus it was in the *world*. The gospel was made powerful by the Spirit of the Lord, who works, and none can hinder. Thus it is in the *heart*, where it works a thorough change, Rom. 6. 13. From these parables we are taught to expect a gradual progress: let us then inquire, Are we growing in grace; holy principles and habits?

44—52. *Of the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, the net cast into the sea, and the householder.*—Here are four parables. 1. Of the treasure hid in the field. Many slight the gospel, because they look only upon the surface of the field. 2. All the children of men are busy; but most are deceived, and take up with counterfeits for pearls. Jesus Christ is a Pearl of great price. When the convinced sinner sees Christ as the gracious Saviour, all things else become comparatively worthless to him. 3. The world is a vast sea. Preaching the gospel is casting a net into this sea, to catch something out of it. At the end of the world, hypocrites and true Christians shall be parted. 4. A good householder brings forth fruits of last year's growth and this year's gathering, abundance and variety, to entertain his friends. Old experiences and new observations, all have their use. Our place is at Christ's feet, there we must daily learn old lessons over again, and new ones also.

53—58. *Jesus again rejected at Nazareth.*—It is no disgrace to be the son of a tradesman; they should have respected Christ the more because he was one of themselves,

but therefore they despised him. Unbelief is the great hindrance to Christ's favours. Let us keep faithful to him as the Saviour, who has made our peace with God.

3. Parables were often used by eastern teachers to describe or explain difficult things, especially spiritual, by comparisons taken from common events or things, 2 Sam. 12. 1-7.—11. The kingdom of heaven means here, and elsewhere, the gospel of Christ.—14. Isa. 6. 9, 10.—17. Heb. 11. 13; 1 Peter 1. 10-12.—20. Anon, soon, presently.—21. Offended, hindered, stumbled.—25. The original word means a useless weed, like darnel, good for nothing.—31. The mustard plant, in warm climates, is much larger than in England.—33. Leave, or yeast, works unseen.—Each of the measures appears to have been about a peck and a half; a quantity enough for that baking.—35. Psa. 78. 2; fulfilled is sometimes used as meaning that such a passage may be so applied.—51. A scribe, in this passage, means one acquainted with the truth.—52. That is, a skilful, faithful minister, Ezra 7. 6.—55, 56. Brethren and sisters; that is, near relatives, as well as his own family.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1-12. *Death of John the Baptist.*—The terror and reproach of conscience are proofs and warnings of a future judgment. When men pretend to favour the gospel, yet live in evil, we must not favour their self-delusion; even though the world may say our faithfulness is only blind zeal. False professors, or timid Christians, may censure it as want of civility; but the most powerful enemies can go no further than the Lord permits. Herod feared that the putting of John to death might raise a rebellion among the people, which it did not; but he never feared it might stir up his own conscience against him, which it did. And times of carnal mirth and jollity are convenient times for carrying on bad designs against God's people. Herod would profusely reward a worthless dance, while sentencing to imprisonment and death the man who sought his salvation. It is better to be drawn to Christ by want and loss, than not to come to him at all.

13-21. *Five thousand people miraculously fed.*—When Christ and his word withdraw, it is best for us to follow, seeking the means of grace for our souls before any worldly advantages. This little supply of bread was increased by Christ's creating power, till the whole multitude were satisfied. See in this miracle an emblem of the Bread of life, which came down from heaven to sustain our perishing souls. The provisions of the gospel appear mean and scanty to the world, yet they satisfy all that feed on him in their hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

22-33. *Jesus walks upon the sea.*—It is no new thing for Christ's disciples to meet with storms in the way of duty,

but he thereby shows himself with the more grace to them and for them. Even appearances of deliverance sometimes occasion trouble and perplexity to God's people, from mistakes about Christ. Special supports are promised only in spiritual pursuits; nor can we ever come to Jesus, unless we are upheld by his power. He often lets his servants have their choice, to humble and prove them, and to show the greatness of his power and grace. When we look off from Christ, and look at difficulties, we begin to fall; but when we call to him, he will stretch out his arm, and save us. Those who would be saved, must come to Christ and cry to him, for salvation; but we are never brought to this, till the sense of need drives us to him. Could we but believe more, we should suffer less. And there is no good reason why Christ's disciples should be of doubtful mind, for even in a stormy day he is to them a very present help. None but the world's Creator could multiply the loaves, none but its Governor could tread upon the waters.

34—36. *Jesus healing the sick.*—Wheresoever Christ went, he was doing good. Let us from the experiences of others be directed and encouraged in seeking for Christ. Were men more acquainted with Christ, and with the diseased state of their souls, they would hasten to receive his healing influences. Those whom Christ heals, he heals perfectly.

1. Tetrarch, a ruler over a fourth part of a country. This was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the king, spoken of Mat. 2. 1, etc.—6. A very different dance is here meant from the joyful movements, Ex. 15. 20, etc. Modern promiscuous dancing was not known.—8. A charger, a large deep dish.—9. Meat, food in general.—10. This was in a fortress east of the Jordan.—19. The loaves or cakes of eastern bread are brittle, and are seldom cut.—25. Fourth watch, a little before daybreak.—26. Joh 9. 8.—34. Gennesaret was the district on the west of the sea of Galilee.

CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1—9. *Jesus discourses about human traditions.*—Additions to God's laws reflect upon his wisdom, as if he had left out something needful, and which man could supply: in one way or other they always lead men to disobey God. How thankful ought we to be for the written word of God! Never let us think that the religion of the Bible can be improved by any human addition, either in doctrine or practice.—When a parent's wants called for assistance, the selfish Jews pleaded, that they had devoted to the temple all they could spare, and their parents must expect nothing. This was making the command of God of no effect. Hypocrites neither please God, nor profit themselves.

10—20. *He warns against things which really defile.*—

Christ shows that the defilement to be feared, was not from what entered their mouths as food, but from that which came out of their mouths, and showed the wickedness of their hearts. Where a weak head doubts concerning any word of Christ, an upright heart and a willing mind seek for instruction. But there are no sins in word or deed, which were not first in the heart. They all come out of the man, and are fruits of that wickedness which is within him. When Christ teaches, he will show men the deceitfulness and wickedness of their own hearts.

21—28. *He heals the daughter of a Syrophenician woman.*—Though it is need that drives us to Christ, yet we shall not therefore be driven from him. Mercy, mercy, is what the Syrophenician women begged for: she pleads not merit, but depends upon mercy. It is the duty of parents to pray for their children, and to be earnest in prayer for them, especially for their souls. Have you a son, a daughter, grievously vexed with a proud devil, an unclean devil, a malicious devil, led captive by him at his will? You must bring them by faith and prayer to Christ, who alone is able to heal them. There may be love in Christ's heart while there are frowns in his face; and this encourages us, though he seems ready to slay us, yet to trust in him. Those whom Christ intends most to honour, he teaches to feel their own unworthiness. The state of this woman is an emblem of the state of a sinner, deeply conscious of the misery of his soul. Let such as seek help from the Lord, and receive no gracious answer, learn hence to turn even unworthiness and discouragements into pleas for mercy.

29—39. *He heals the sick, and miraculously feeds four thousand.*—Whatever our case is, the only way to find ease and relief, is to lay it at Christ's feet, and refer it to his disposal. See what work sin has made, what various diseases human bodies suffer; yet these were subject to the command of Christ. The spiritual cures that Christ works are wonderful. When blind souls are made to see by faith, the dumb to speak in prayer, the maimed and the lame to walk in holy obedience, it is to be wondered at.—All did eat, and were filled. Those whom Christ feeds, he fills. With Christ there is bread enough, and to spare; supplies of grace for more than seek it, and for those that seek for more. They must not look to miracles for their daily bread: let them go home to their callings and their own tables. Lord, teach us to live upon thy bounty, for all things pertaining to this life, and that which is to come.

2. Traditions were customs or precepts handed down from one age to another; the Jews had thus added many things to the law that were unnecessary, and even evil. The washing was not for cleansing,

but ordered as a religious ceremony.—4. Ex. 20. 12; 21. 17. Die the death, assuredly without mercy.—5. A gift; that is Corban, or dedicated to the use of the temple, as for the service of God, Mark 7. 11.—7. Isa. 29. 13.—15. A parable sometimes means a dark and obscure saying.—22. A descendant of the ancient Canaanites, who lived in Tyre and Sidon; called a Greek, a Syrophenician, Mark 7. 26.—30. Maimed, having lost a limb; to restore the hand, or arm, or leg, was indeed a striking miracle.—37. Here, as in the like miracle before, far more was left than there was at the beginning.—39. Magdala, supposed to have been a small town on the east side of the sea of Galilee.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1—12. *The Pharisees and Sadducees ask a sign. Jesus cautions against their doctrine.*—The Pharisees and Sadducees were opposed to each other in principles and in conduct; yet they joined against Christ. It is great hypocrisy, when we slight the signs of God's ordaining, to seek for signs of our own devising. Christ speaks of spiritual things under a similitude; the disciples misunderstand him of carnal things.

13—20. *Peter's testimony that Jesus was the Christ.*—Peter, for himself and his brethren, said that they were assured of our Lord's being the promised Messiah, the Son of the living God. They believed Jesus to be more than man. Our Lord declared Peter to be blessed, as the teaching of God made him differ from his unbelieving countrymen. Christ added that he had named him Peter, in allusion to his stability or firmness in professing the truth. Christ did not mean that *the person* of Peter was the rock. Christ himself is the Rock, the tried foundation of the church. Peter's confession is this rock as to doctrine. Our Lord declared the authority with which Peter would be invested. This related to his brethren, as well as to him. They had no certain knowledge of the characters of men, and were liable to mistakes and sins; but they were kept from error in stating the way of acceptance and salvation, and the final doom of unbelievers and hypocrites. But all pretensions of any man, to absolve or to retain men's sins, are blasphemous and absurd.

21—23. *Christ foretells his sufferings, and rebukes Peter.*—From the time when the apostles made the full confession of Christ, that he was the Son of God, he began to show them of his sufferings. He spake this to set right their mistakes about the outward pomp and power of his kingdom. Those that follow Christ, must not expect great or high things in this world. We mistake, if we measure Christ's love and patience by our own. Those that decline suffering for Christ, savour more of the things of man than of the things of God.

24—28. *The necessity of self-denial.*—A true disciple of Christ is one that does follow him in duty, and shall follow him to glory. If self-denial be a hard lesson, it is no more than what our Master learned and practised, to redeem us, and to teach us. The cross is here put for every trouble that befalls us. We are apt to think we could bear another's cross better than our own; but that is best which is appointed us. We must not by our folly pull crosses down upon our own heads, but must take them up when they are in our way. Thousands lose their souls for the most trifling gain, or the most worthless indulgence, nay, often from mere sloth and negligence. Yet one soul is worth more than all the world. Christ knew the price of souls, for he redeemed them; nor would he underrate the world, for he made it. Let us learn rightly to value our souls, and Christ as the only Saviour of them.

1. Some marvellous appearance, such as the prophets had shown, 1 Sam. 12. 16-18; Isa. 38, 8.—3. A red and lowering sky was, in Judæa, a sign of a tempest.—6. See Luke 12. 1; 1 Cor. 5. 6; Gal. 5. 9. Doctrine, like leaven (whether true or false), works secretly, gradually, and certainly.—13. Not Cæsarea, the Roman capital of the land, but another place, the site of the ancient city of Dan.—16. The living God, a term often used, in opposition to idols, Jer. 10. 9, 10.—17. Bar-jona, son of Jonas.—18. In Judæa it was usual to build on a rock, or firm foundation. Peter is not meant by the rock, but the doctrine he declared respecting Christ.—19. Keys were emblems of power or ability, as Isa. 22. 22. This refers to the apostles declaring the Divine judgments, for which they were specially empowered, Acts 5. Binding and loosing, in the common language of the Jews, signified to forbid and to allow, or to teach what is lawful or unlawful.—21. Elders were the men of the great council, or sanhedrim.—23. Savourest, hast a relish for.

CHAPTER XVII.

Ver. 1—13. *The transfiguration of Christ.*—The disciples beheld somewhat of Christ's glory. It was intended to support their faith, when they would have to witness his crucifixion. The apostles were overcome by the glorious sight. Peter thought that it was most desirable to continue there, but we are wrong, if we look for heaven upon earth. Whatever tabernacles we propose to make for ourselves in this world, we must always ask Christ's leave. We must pass through varied experiences in our way to glory; and when we return to the world after an ordinance, it must be our care to take Christ with us, then it may be our comfort that he is with us.

14—21. *Jesus casts out a dumb and deaf spirit.*—The case of afflicted children should be presented to God by faithful and fervent prayer. When all other helps and succours

fail, we are welcome to Christ, and may trust in his power and goodness. Christ is able to heal our children, and as willing as he is able. It is good for us to distrust ourselves and our own strength; but it is displeasing to Christ when we distrust any power derived from him, or granted by him. Do we wonder to see Satan's bodily possession of this young man from a child, when we see his spiritual possession of every son of Adam from the fall!

22-27. *He again foretells his sufferings, and works a miracle to pay the tribute money.*—Christ perfectly knew all things that should befall him, yet undertook the work of our redemption, which strongly shows his love.—Peter felt sure that his Master was ready to do what was right. Christ spoke first to give him proof that no thought can be withholden from him. He who knows all things alone could know the money was lodged in the fish, and only almighty power could bring it to Peter's hook. If called by providence to be poor, like our Lord, let us trust in his power, and our God shall supply all our need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

2. The word transfigured means changed in outward form or appearance, not in substance. Moses had a somewhat similar appearance, Ex. 24. 12-18.—3. Moses represented the legal, Elijah the prophetic, dispensations; both of which testified of Christ.—4. A tabernacle is a tent or booth, made of cloth or skins, stretched on stakes, Isa. 54. 2; but sometimes formed of boughs of trees.—5. This event is referred to, John 1. 14; 2 Pet. 1. 16, 17.—11. Mal. 4. 5, 6.—12. Come already, John the Baptist.—24. Ex. 30. 13. A small sum of about 15*d.* paid for the temple service.—25. Prevented, or spoke first.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ver. 1-6. *The importance of humility.*—Many love to hear and speak of privileges and glory, who are willing to pass by the thoughts of work and trouble. Children, when very young, do not desire authority, do not regard outward distinctions, are free from malice, are teachable, and willingly dependent on their parents. They soon begin to show other dispositions, and other ideas are taught them at an early age; but these are marks of childhood, and render them proper emblems of the lowly minds of true Christians. We need to be daily renewed in the spirit of our minds, that we may be simple and humble, as little children, and willing to be the least of all.

7-20. *Caution against offences.*—It is certain that there will be offences. Let us therefore be on our guard. God permits them for wise and holy ends, that those who are sincere, and those who are not, may be made known. We must, as far as lawfully we may, part with what we cannot

keep without being entangled by it in sin. Christ came into the world to save souls, he will reckon severely with those who hinder the progress of others. And shall any of us refuse attention to those whom the Son of God came to seek and to save! A father takes care of all his children, but is particularly tender of the little ones.—If a professed Christian is wronged by another, he ought to go to the offender privately, and state the matter kindly. The principles of these rules may be practised everywhere, and under all circumstances. But how few try the method which Christ has expressly enjoined on all his disciples!

21—35. *Conduct towards brethren—The parable of the merciful servant.*—There are three things in the parable: 1. The master's wonderful clemency. See here, the wages of sin, to be sold as a slave. It is the folly of many under strong convictions of their sins, to fancy they can make God satisfaction for the wrong they have done him. 2. The servant's unreasonable severity towards his fellow-servant, notwithstanding his lord's clemency towards him. Not that we may make light of wronging our neighbour, but we should not aggravate our neighbour's wronging us. 3. The master reproved his servant's cruelty. The greatness of sin magnifies the riches of pardoning mercy; and the comfortable sense of pardoning mercy, does much to dispose our hearts to forgive our brethren. We are not to suppose that God actually forgives men, yet afterwards reckons their guilt to them to condemn them; but this latter part of the parable shows the false conclusions many draw as to their sins being pardoned, though their after-conduct shows that they never entered into the spirit, or experienced the sanctifying grace of the gospel. Let us seek more and more for the grace of God, to teach us to forgive others as we expect forgiveness from him.

1. The disciples supposed Christ's kingdom would be an earthly government.—6. A mode of punishment practised in some ancient nations. The meaning is, that it were better to die than to sin.—17. Similar directions are given, Rom 16. 17; 2 Thess. 3. 6, 14.—20. A proof that Christ is God, or how could he be present everywhere?—22. A large fixed number is often put to express a great many.—24. Equal to two millions of our money. It was usual among the ancients to make slaves of debtors, 2 Kings 4. 1; Lev. 25. 39-46.—28. Not more than 3*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* of our money.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 1—12. *Jesus enters Judæa—The Pharisees' question about divorces.*—The Pharisees were desirous of drawing something from Jesus which they might represent as contrary to the law of Moses. That condition is best for us,

which is best for our souls, and most prepares us for, and preserves us to, the kingdom of heaven. When the gospel is really embraced, it makes men kind relatives and faithful friends; it teaches them to carry the burdens, and to bear with the infirmities of others.

13—15. *Young children brought to Jesus.*—It is well when we come to Christ ourselves, and bring our children. All Christians should bring their children to the Saviour that he may bless them with spiritual blessings. We can beg a blessing for them: Christ only can command the blessing. Let us learn not to discountenance any willing, well-meaning souls, in their seeking after Christ, though they are but weak. Those who are given to Christ, as part of his purchase, he will in no wise cast out.

16—22. *The rich young man's inquiry.*—Though this young man had got honestly what he possessed, yet he could not cheerfully part with it; by this his want of sincerity was shown. To sell all, and give to the poor, will not serve, but we are to follow Christ.—The gospel is the only remedy for lost sinners. Many abstain from gross vices who do not attend to their obligations to God. Thus numbers forsake Christ, loving this present world: they feel convictions and desires, but they depart sorrowful, perhaps trembling. It behoves us to try ourselves in these matters, for the Lord will try us.

23--30. *The recompense of Christ's followers.*—It should be a satisfaction to those who are in a low condition, that they are not exposed to the temptations of a high and prosperous condition. Christ's words show that it is hard for a rich man to be a true Christian, and to be saved. The way to heaven is a narrow way to all, and the gate that leads into it, a strait gate; particularly so to rich people. It is hard not to be charmed with a smiling world; and nothing less than the almighty grace of God will enable a rich man to overcome his temptations. If riches hinder rich people, are not unbelief, pride, and sinful lusts, as dangerous to the poor? Who can be saved? say the disciples. None, saith Christ, by human power. The beginning, progress, and perfecting the work of salvation, depend wholly on the almighty power of God, to which all things are possible.—Observe how Peter speaks. We have forsaken all, as if it had been some mighty thing. We are too apt to make the most of our poor services and sufferings, our expenses and losses, for Christ. Though it was but little that they had forsaken, yet it was their all. Christ took it kindly that they left it to follow him; he accepts according to what a man hath. Our Lord's promise to the apostles is, they shall sit with him in judgment on those who

will be judged according to their doctrine. Our Lord added, that every one who had forsaken possessions or comforts, for his sake and the gospel, would be recompensed at last. The heavenly inheritance is not given as earthly ones are, but according to God's pleasure.

1. Beyond Jordan, on the eastern side.—5. Gen. 2. 24. Twain means two.—7. Deut. 24. 1; Matt. 5. 31.—18. Ex. 20. 13, etc.—21. Luke 12. 33; Acts 2. 45.—24. An eastern saying, expressing very great difficulty. 28. Regeneration; the restoration, when all things are made new, Rev. 21. 5. There is an allusion here to the custom of princes having their great men ranged around them, as assessors or advisers, when sitting in council.

CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 1—16. *The parable of the labourers in the vineyard.*—This parable shows that though the Jews were first called, at length the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, and they should be admitted to equal privileges and advantages. It also shows, 1. That God is debtor to no man. 2. That many who begin last, and promise little in religion, sometimes, by the blessing of God, arrive at the greatest degree of knowledge, grace, and usefulness. 3. That the recompense of reward will be given to the saints, but not according to the time of their conversion. Till we are hired into the service of God, we are standing all the day idle: a sinful state. The market-place is the world, and from that we are called by the gospel. A man may go idle to hell, but he that will go to heaven, must be diligent. When we have done all, we are unprofitable servants; but this signifies that there is a reward set before us. The Gentiles came in at the eleventh hour; the gospel had not been before preached to them. Those that have refused earlier gospel offers, will not have to say at the eleventh hour, No man has hired us. *Now* is the accepted time.—If God gives grace to others, it is no injustice to us. Carnal worldlings agree with God for their penny in this world; and choose their portion in this life. Obedient believers agree with God for their penny in the other world, and must remember they have so agreed. God punishes none more than they deserve, and recompenses every service done for him; he does no wrong to any, by showing extraordinary grace to some.—Envy is a grief to ourselves, displeasing to God, and hurtful to our neighbours: it is a sin that has neither pleasure, profit, nor honour. Let us praise God for his mercy to others as well as to ourselves.

17—19. *Jesus again foretells his sufferings.*—When we consider the need of the sufferings of Christ, in order to the salvation of perishing sinners, surely we must be aware of the freeness and richness of Divine grace in our salvation.

20—28. *The ambition of James and John.*—Some cannot have comforts but they turn them to a wrong purpose. Pride is a sin that most easily besets us; it is a sinful ambition to outdo others. To put down the vanity of their request, Christ leads them to the thoughts of their sufferings. It is a bitter cup that is to be drunk of; but it is only a draught, soon emptied.—Baptism is an ordinance by which we are joined to the Lord in covenant and communion; and so is suffering for Christ, Ezek. 20. 37; Isa. 48. 10. Baptism is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace; and so is suffering for Christ, for unto us it is given to suffer for his sake, Phil. 1. 29.—Nothing makes more mischief among brethren, than desire of greatness. And, we never find Christ's disciples quarrelling, but something of this was at the bottom of it.—Our Lord's death is a sacrifice for the sins of men, which the sacrifices of the law faintly and imperfectly represented. A ransom for many, enough for all, and the poor trembling soul may say, Why not for me?

29—34. *Jesus gives sight to two blind men near Jericho.*—There is mercy enough in Christ for all that ask. The men who came to Christ cried out being in earnest; for cold desires beg denials. They were humble in prayer, casting themselves upon his mercy. They showed faith in prayer, by the title they gave to Christ. And they persevered in prayer. Christ encouraged them. Oh that we did as feelingly complain of our spiritual maladies, especially our spiritual blindness! None follow Christ blindly he first by his grace opens men's eyes, and so draws their hearts after him. These miracles are our call to Jesus; may we make it our daily prayer to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The church of God is his vineyard, Isa. 5. 1, etc.; John 15. Psa. 80. This parable is connected with the last verse of the preceding chapter.—2. The Roman penny was as much as 7½d. of English money; then fully enough for a day's support, or more.—3. The third hour; about nine o'clock, or three hours after dawn.—6. The day closed at six o'clock.—15. Evil; that is, envious.—16. The Jews expected to be always preferred to the Gentiles.—19. Gentiles; the heathens, or the Romans.—22. Baptized, etc.; that is, to have great and peculiar sorrows. To drink of the cup; to have the same measure of affliction.—26. Minister, servant, or assistant, John 13. 14; Phil. 2. 7.—29. The city mentioned Josh. 6. and 1 Kings 16. 34, and elsewhere.—30. Two blind men; Mark and Luke mention only one of these.

CHAPTER XXI.

Ver. 1—17. *Christ enters Jerusalem, and drives out those who profaned the temple.*—As meekness and outward poverty were fully seen in Zion's King, and marked his triumphal

entrance to Jerusalem, how wrong covetousness, ambition, and the pride of life must be in Zion's citizens! They brought the ass, but Jesus did not use it without the owner's consent. Those that take Christ for their King, must lay their all under his feet. Multitudes often seem to approve the gospel, but few become consistent disciples. All the city was moved; some perhaps with joy, others, with envy. So various are the motions in the minds of men upon the approach of Christ's kingdom.—The courts of the temple were turned into a market for cattle and things used in the sacrifices. Our Lord drove them from the place, as he had done at his entering on his ministry, John 2. 13—17. His healing in the temple was the fulfilling the promise, that the glory of the latter house should be greater than the glory of the former, Hag. 2. 9.

18—22. *The barren fig-tree cursed.*—Christ's just expectations from flourishing professors are often disappointed; he comes to many, seeking fruit, and finds leaves only. A false profession commonly withers in this world. This represents the state of the nation and people of the Jews in particular. After they rejected Christ, blindness and hardness grew upon them, till they were undone. The Lord was righteous in it. Let us greatly fear the doom denounced on the barren fig-tree.

23—27. *Jesus' discourse in the temple.*—Our Lord asked what they thought of John's ministry and baptism. Many are more afraid of the shame of lying than of the sin, and therefore scruple not to speak what they know to be false, as to their own thoughts and intentions. It is best to shun needless disputes with wicked opposers.

28—46. *The parables of the two sons, and of the wicked husbandman.*—The whole human race are like children whom the Lord has brought up; but they have rebelled against him, only some are more plausible in their disobedience than others. The daring rebel often is brought to repentance, and becomes the Lord's servant, while the formalist grows hardened.—The parable of the husbandman plainly sets forth the sin and ruin of the Jewish nation: what is spoken to convict them, is spoken to caution all that enjoy outward privileges. As men treat God's people, they would treat Christ himself. How can we, if faithful to his cause, expect a favourable reception from a wicked world, or from ungodly professors of Christianity! Do we who have the vineyard and all its advantages, render fruits in due season, as a people, as a family, or as separate persons?

1. Bethphage means a place of figs, which still abound in that country, v. 19; it was close to Jerusalem, on the east side.—2. The village over against Bethphage was Bethany.—3. Any man; the

owners were near, and consented.—5. Zech. 9. 9. Asses are valued for riding in the east, Judg. 5. 10; 10. 4.—9. Psa. 118. 25, 26. Hosanna means, Save now, we beseech thee.—8. Spreading the garments on the ground was an usual ceremony before kings.—12. The doves were sold for offerings, John 2. 14. The money-changers made a profit, by taking the money of people who came from a distance to worship, and changing it for the coin of the land.—13. Isa. 56. 7; Jer. 7. 11.—16. Psa. 8. 2.—21. To remove mountains was an Hebrew proverb expressive of overcoming great difficulties. 28. These two sons represent the Pharisees and the Publicans.—33. Winepresses are still dug in the ground.—41. This destruction came upon the Jews above forty years afterwards.—42. Psa. 118. 22.—44. Isa. 8. 14, 15.

CHAPTER XXII.

Ver. 1—14. *The parable of the marriage feast.* In the provision made for perishing souls in the gospel, there is enough and to spare, of everything that can add to our present comfort and everlasting happiness. The guests first invited were the Jews. Making light of Christ, and of the great salvation wrought out by him, is the damning sin of the world. Multitudes perish for ever who show no direct aversion to Christ, but are careless as to their souls. Also the business and profit of worldly employments hinder many: whatever we have of the world in our hands, our care must be to keep it out of our hearts, lest it come between us and Christ. Persecution of Christ's faithful ministers fills up the measure of guilt of any people. The offer of Christ and salvation to the Gentiles was such a surprise as it would be to wayfaring men, to be invited to a royal wedding-feast. It concerns all to prepare; and those only, who put on the Lord Jesus, who have a Christian temper of mind, and to whom he is all in all, have the wedding-garment. The imputed righteousness of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit, are both necessary. No man has the wedding-garment by nature, or can form it for himself. Those that walk unworthy of Christianity, forfeit all the blessings they may claim. Our Saviour passes out of the parable into that which it teaches. Many are called to the wedding-feast, that is, to salvation, but few have the wedding-garment, the righteousness of Christ, the sanctification of the Spirit. Then let us examine ourselves.

15—22. *The Pharisees question Jesus as to the tribute.*—The Pharisees sent their disciples with the Herodians, a party among the Jews, who were willing to be subject to the Roman emperor. Though opposed to each other, they joined against Christ. Whatever mask the hypocrite puts on, our Lord Jesus sees through it. His adversaries were reproved, and his disciples were taught that the Christian religion is no enemy to civil government. Christ is, and will be, the wonder, not only of friends, but of enemies.

23—33. *The question of the Sadducees as to the resurrection.*—The doctrines of Christ displeased the infidel Sadducees, as well as the Pharisees and Herodians. There is no arguing from the state of things in this world, as to what will take place hereafter. Having silenced them, our Lord showed the truth of the doctrine of the resurrection. God declared to Moses that he was the God of the patriarchs, who had died long before; this shows that they were then in a state of being, and proves that the doctrine of the resurrection is clearly taught in the Old Testament. But this doctrine was more fully revealed, after the resurrection of Christ. All errors arise from not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God.

34—40. *The substance of the commandments.*—Our love of God must be sincere, not in word and tongue only. There is a self-love, which is the root of the greatest sins, and it must be put off and mortified; but there is a self-love which is the rule of the greatest duty: we must have a due concern for the welfare of our own souls and bodies. And, in many cases, we must deny ourselves for the good of others. By these two commandments let our hearts be formed as by a mould.

41—46. *Jesus questions the Pharisees.*—If the Christ were to be a mere man, who would not exist till many ages after David's death, how could his forefather call him Lord? The Pharisees could not answer Christ's question; nor can any except he allow the Messiah to be the Son of God, and David's Lord equally with the Father. He took upon him human nature; in this sense he is the Son of man and the Son of David. "What think we of Christ?" Is he glorious in our eyes, and precious to our hearts?

2. Rev. 19. 7, 9. Christ's church is his bride, Eph. 5. 25.—3. Luke 14. 17; Prov. 9. 1-6; Isa. 25. 6.—4. At such feasts it was usual to send a second time to the guests when the time was come.—9. It was not uncommon to invite travellers and strangers to share in a feast.—11. 'A banqueting robe.' Ancient monarchs furnished their guests with suitable clothing to appear at a feast; to this the righteousness of Christ is compared, Isa. 61. 10.—13. To be cast out from a feast was considered a mark of the greatest contempt.—17. Cæsar, a general title of the Roman emperors. The tribute, or poll tax paid to the Roman power.—32. Ex. 3. 6, 16.—35. Lawyers were the scribes; those skilled in the law of Moses.—37. Deut. 6. 5; 30. 6.—39. Lev. 19. 18; Rom. 13. 9; Jas. 2. 8; Gal. 5. 14.—44. Psa. 110. 1.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Ver. 1—12. *Jesus reproves the scribes and Pharisees.*—The scribes and Pharisees explained the law of Moses, and enforced obedience to it. They are charged with hypocrisy in religion. We can only judge according to outward

appearance, but God searches the heart. Pride was the reigning sin of the Pharisees, which our Lord Jesus takes all occasions to rebuke. The true disciple of Christ is not ambitious of chief places.

13—33. *Crimes of the Pharisees.*—It is bad to keep away from Christ ourselves, but worse also to keep others from him. Yet it is no new thing for the show and form of godliness to be made a cloak to great wickedness. They were very busy to turn men to be of their party, that they might have the credit and advantage of making converts. They were very strict in smaller matters of the law, but careless and loose in weightier matters. Christ does not reprove the scrupling a little sin, but the committing a greater sin. We are really what we are inwardly. Outward motives may keep the outside clean, while the inside is impure; but if the heart and spirit be made new, there will be newness of life. The deceitfulness of sinners' hearts appears in that they go down the streams of the sins of their own day, while they fancy that they should have opposed the sins of former days.

34—39. *The guilt of Jerusalem.*—A hen gathering her chickens is an apt emblem of the Saviour's love to those who trust in him. He calls sinners to take refuge under his protection, keeps them safe, and nourishes them to eternal life. The present dispersion and unbelief of the Jews, and their future conversion to Christ, are here foretold. Their punishment has been signal; and ere long, deserved vengeance will fall on every church which is Christian in name only. In the meantime the Saviour stands ready to receive all who come to him.

2. To 'sit in Moses' seat,' means to be the public expounders of the law: the Jewish teachers taught sitting.—5. Phylacteries; slips of parchment, on which were written portions of the law.—6. Rooms; that is, the chief places or seats.—7. Rabbi, a title of respect given to a Jewish learned man or teacher.—14. Widows' houses, their property.—23. Tithes were the tenth part of the produce, set apart for sacred uses, Deut. 14. 22. These were herbs of little value.—24. Strain out a gnat; scrupulous at little matters that cannot be hurtful.—27. The Jewish tombs were whited, as a warning against ceremonial defilement by touching them.—35. Zacharias is supposed to mean the son of Jehoiada, 2 Chr. 24. 21.—37. A frequent scriptural emblem, Psa. 17. 8; 91. 4.—38. Your house—the temple.—39. Psa. 118. 26.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Ver. 1—3. *Christ foretells the destruction of the temple.*—A believing foresight of the defacing of all worldly glory, will keep us from admiring it and overvaluing it. Our Lord set before his disciples the order of the times con-

cerning the Jews till the destruction of Jerusalem ; and as to men in general till the end of the world.

4—28. *The troubles before the destruction of Jerusalem.*—The disciples asked concerning the times, *When* these things should be? Christ gave no answer to that ; but they had also asked, *What* shall be the sign? This question he answers fully. The prophecy first respects events near at hand, the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the Jewish church and state, the calling of the Gentiles, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world ; but it also looks forward to the general judgment. What Christ here said to his disciples, tended more to prepare them for the events than to satisfy their curiosity.—See what comes of refusing the gospel. Those who will not hear the messengers of peace, shall be made to hear the messengers of war. But it is against the mind of Christ that his people should have troubled hearts, even in troublous times. The end of the world shall not be till the gospel has done its work. It becomes Christ's disciples, in times of public trouble, to be much in prayer : that is never out of season. Though we must take what God sends, yet we may pray against sufferings. When a people, by their sin, make themselves as loathsome carcasses, nothing can be expected but that God should send enemies to destroy them. It is very applicable to the day of judgment, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in that day, 2 Thess. 2. 1.

29—41. *Christ foretells other signs and miseries, to the end of the world.*—Concerning Christ's second coming, it is foretold that there shall be a great change, in order to the making all things new. Sooner or later, all sinners will be mourners ; but repenting sinners look to Christ, and mourn after a godly sort ; and those who sow in such tears shall shortly reap in joy. The elect of God are in various places and nations ; and when that great gathering day comes, there shall not one be missing. The Jews should never cease to be a distinct people, until all the things he had been predicting were fulfilled. Christ's second coming shall do away every human scheme, and set aside for ever all that God forbids. Apply this, first, to temporal judgments, particularly those then hastening upon the Jews. Secondly, to the eternal judgment. Did we feel aright that all earthly things must shortly pass away, we should not set our eyes and hearts so much upon them as we do. What words can more strongly describe the suddenness of our Saviour's coming ! Am I prepared to meet him ? Can I stand before him ? What the day of judgment is to the whole world, the day of death is to every one.

42—51. *Exhortations to watchfulness.*—Our Lord's coming

will be happy to those that are found ready, but very dreadful to those that are not. Those who choose the world for their portion in this life, will have hell for their portion in the other life. May our Lord, when he cometh, pronounce us blessed.

3. From the mount of Olives there was a fine view of the temple and city.—5. It is recorded that many such false Christs arose soon after this time.—7. A famine is mentioned, Acts 11. 28. The other predicted events also took place.—9. These persecutions are noticed, 1 Thess. 2. 15; Heb. 10. 33, 34; 1 Pet. 4. 12-17.—10. Be offended; be apostates.—15. Abomination, means an idolatrous image, like the standard which the Romans carried with their armies, Dan. 9. 27; 12. 11; and which before the destruction of Jerusalem they had not brought into the holy city.—16. The Jewish Christians obeyed this direction, and were preserved.—17. There were stairs from the outside of many houses, and they could pass from one to another, all having flat roofs.—21. The calamities that befel the Jews were those foretold, Deut. 28. 44-68.—22. No flesh be saved; none live through those troubles.—24. Some of these deceivers are referred to, 2 Thes. 2; 1 John 2.—28. The Romans bore on their standard the figure of an eagle.—29. The luminaries of heaven are often used as emblems of great personages.—30. Dan. 7. 13.—41. It was usual for women to grind the corn at home, in a portable handmill: two women were employed at this work.—43. The Jews divided the night into four portions called watches, Mark 13. 35.—51. Cut him asunder, a mode of putting to death.

CHAPTER XXV.

Ver. 1—13. *The parable of the ten virgins.*—The parable of the ten virgins explains the great day of Christ's coming. As Christians we profess to attend upon Christ, to honour him, also to be waiting for his coming. Those are the truly wise or foolish that are so in the affairs of their souls. Our light must shine before men in good works; this is not likely to be long done, unless there is a fixed principle in the heart, of faith in Christ, and love to God and our brethren. Though Christ tarry past *our* time, he will not tarry past the *due* time. Many real Christians grow remiss; therefore dread the beginning of spiritual decays. Christ's approach, and the call to meet him, will be awakening. Even those best prepared for death have work to do to get actually ready, 2 Pet. 3. 14. Those that take up short of true grace, will certainly find the want of it one time or other. An outward profession may light a man along this world, but the damps of the valley of the shadow of death will put out such a light. Those only shall go to heaven hereafter, that are made ready for heaven here. But many will seek admission into heaven when it is too late. The unexpected summons of death may alarm the Christian; but, proceeding without delay to trim his lamp, his

graces often shine more bright ; while the mere professor's conduct shows that his lamp is going out.

14—30. *The parable of the talents.*—Christ keeps no servants to be idle ; for our receiving from Christ is in order to our working for him. We shall all be reckoned with as to what good we have got to our own souls, and have done to others, by the advantages we have enjoyed. Those who think it impossible to please God, and in vain to serve him, will do nothing to purpose in religion. Whatever they may pretend, the fact is, they dislike God's character and work.

31—46. *The judgment.*—There is a judgment to come, in which every man shall be sentenced to everlasting happiness or misery. Christ shall come, not only in the glory of his Father, but in his own glory, as Mediator. The wicked and godly here are not always to be known the one from the other ; but in that day they will be parted for ever. All other distinctions will then be done away ; but the great one between saints and sinners, holy and unholy, will remain for ever. The happiness the saints shall possess is very great. It is a *kingdom* ; the most valuable possession. *Prepared for them* ; adapted to the new nature of a sanctified soul. *From the foundation of the world* ; this happiness was for the saints, and they for it, from all eternity. They shall come and *inherit it* ; it is God that makes heirs of heaven. Good works done for God's sake, through Jesus Christ, are the effects of grace bestowed on those who do them. The wicked in this world were often called to come to Christ for life and rest, yet they would not come to him ; but then their punishment will be an everlasting punishment. Thus life and death, good and evil, the blessing and the curse, are set before us.

1. The kingdom of heaven ; the visible church. Marriages in the east are celebrated at night by torch light with the circumstances here mentioned.—4. Vessels, or small jugs, to supply the lamps.—15. A silver talent was a sum of money equal to about 187*l.*—25. Usury here means lawful gain or profit ; it often means any sort of advantage or increase.—27. The exchangers, or bankers who gave interest on money.—31. This is not a parable but a description—Throne of his glory, or his glorious throne.—33. In Jewish courts of law, those who were acquitted were placed on the right hand ; those who were to be sentenced on the left.—46. Everlasting was meant, and would be understood by the Jews to mean, lasting or enduring for ever, without end.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Ver. 1—16. *Christ anointed at Bethany, and betrayed by Judas.*—Where there is true love in the heart to Jesus Christ, nothing will be thought too good to bestow upon him. This act of faith and love would be reported to all future ages.—We must never expect any society to be

quite pure on this side heaven. The greater profession men make of religion, the greater opportunity they have of doing mischief, if their hearts be not right with God. It is not the *lack*, but the *love* of money, that is the root of all evil.

17—30. *Christ institutes his holy supper.*—Christ knows those hidden ones who favour his cause, and will graciously visit all who are willing to receive him. We know not how strongly we may be tempted, nor how far God may leave us to ourselves, therefore we have reason not to be high-minded, but to fear. The ordinance of the Lord's supper is to us the passover supper. "Take, eat;" accept of Christ as he is offered to you; receive the atonement, submit to his grace and his government. "This is my body;" it signifies and represents his body. We partake of Christ by partaking of his grace. The blood of Christ is signified and represented by the wine. "Drink ye all of it." The pardon of sin is conferred on all true believers. Christ takes leave of such communion, and assures them of a happy meeting at last. This will be in the kingdom of his Father; the consolation will there be always new.

31—46. *Christ warns his disciples. His agony in the garden.*—There is a proneness in all to be over-confident. But those fall soonest and foulest, who are the most confident in themselves. Those are least safe who think themselves most secure.—He who made atonement for the sins of mankind, submitted in a garden of suffering to the will of God, from which man had revolted in a garden of pleasure. According to this example of Christ, we must drink of the bitterest cup God puts into our hands. But it should be more our care to get troubles sanctified, and our hearts satisfied under them, than to get them taken away. Christ was a Surety, who undertook to be answerable for our sins. Accordingly, he was made sin for us, and suffered for our sins, the Just for the unjust. And did the load of imputed guilt so weigh down the soul of Him of whom it is said, He upholdeth all things by the word of his power? into what misery, then, must those sink whose sins are left upon their own heads! How will those escape who neglect so great salvation?

47—68. *Christ is betrayed and taken before Caiaphas.*—No enemies are so much to be abhorred as apostate disciples. If he had not been willing to suffer, they could not have compelled him. What folly, for fear of death to flee from Him, whom they knew to be the Fountain of life!—It looks ill, and bodes worse, when those who are willing to be Christ's disciples, are not willing to be known as such. It is more our concern to prepare for the end, whatever

it may be, than curiously to ask what the end will be. Christ was accused, that we might not be condemned; and let us not expect to fare better than our Master, nor be ashamed to confess him before men.

69—75. *Peter denies him.*—Peter's sin is truly related, for the Scriptures deal faithfully. Bad company leads to sin. Those who needlessly thrust themselves into it, may expect to be tempted and ensnared, as Peter. It is a great fault to be shy of Christ; to dissemble our knowledge of him is, in effect, to deny him. Conscience should be to us as the crowing of the cock, to put us in mind of the sins we had forgotten. Peter was thus left to fall, to abate his self-confidence, and render him more modest, humble, and useful to others. The event has taught believers many things ever since, and if some stumble at it or abuse it, it is at their peril. Little do we know how we should act in difficult situations: then let us all distrust our own hearts, and rely wholly on the Lord. Peter never denied Christ again, but confessed him often in the face of danger. True repentance for any sin will be shown by the contrary grace and duty.

2. The feast of the passover commemorated the deliverance of Israel from Egypt; see Ex. 12. It was a type of Christ, 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8, and of redemption from sin.—7. This was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, John 12. 3. The custom of anointing and using sweet ointment, or sweet-scented oils, was frequent in the east.—8. Judas is mentioned by John (ch. 12. 4, 6), as the speaker, on this occasion.—12. 'For my burial,' not knowingly, but it would prove to be so.—15. A sum of money equal to about 3*l.* 15*s.*; see Zech. 11. 12.—17. First day; the Jewish day began at sunset.—23. Psa. 41. 9. In eating, people in the east take the food with their hands.—26. Bread and wine were taken by the Jews at the close of the passover supper.—28. The new testament, that is, the new covenant or dispensation, Heb. 8. 13; Jer. 31. 31.—29. Drink it new, after a new and spiritual manner.—30. A hymn, that is the hallel, or song of praise, sung by the Jews at the passover, Psa. 113 and 114, during the meal; 115 to 118 after its close.—31. Zech. 13. 7.—34. The cock crow, the time so called, about three in the morning.—36. Gethsemane, this name means a fertile valley, and also an olive press.—39. The words denote one surrounded with sorrows, overwhelmed with miseries, almost swallowed up with terror and dismay.—39. Cup often means a portion, Psa. 75. 8.—53. A legion was a division of a Roman army, containing about 6000 men. The number twelve might allude to that of his disciples.—54, 56. Isa. 53. 7-12, and many other places, as Psa. 22. Gen. 3. 15.—60. Psa. 27. 12; 35. 11; Deut. 19. 15.—61. A perversion of John 2. 19.—63. The Messiah, the Son of God, of the Divine nature.—64. This was foretold, Dan. 7. 13.—68. They had already blindfolded him, as Mark and Luke relate.—73. *Bewrayeth*, betrayeth; the dialect manner of speech of the Galileans was very peculiar.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Ver. 1—10. *Christ delivered to Pilate—The despair of Judas.*—Wicked men see little of the consequences of their crimes, but they must answer for them all. Judas gave full testimony to the character of Christ; but the rulers were hardened. Thus many make light of Christ crucified. It is a common instance of the deceitfulness of our hearts, to make light of our own sin by dwelling upon other people's sins. Judas went far toward repentance, yet it was not to salvation. Let none be satisfied with such partial convictions as a man may have, and yet remain full of pride, enmity, and rebellion.

11—25. *Christ before Pilate.*—God has many ways of giving checks to sinners, and it is a great mercy to have such checks from Providence, from faithful friends, and from our own consciences. Multitudes who choose the world, rather than God, for their ruler and portion, thus choose their own delusions. All was so ordered to make it evident that Christ suffered for no fault of his own, but for the sins of his people. It was vain for Pilate to expect to free himself from the guilt of the innocent blood of a righteous person. The Jews' curse upon themselves has been awfully answered in the sufferings of their nation. None could bear the sin of others, except Him that had no sin of his own to answer for. Is not Barabbas preferred to Jesus, when sinners reject salvation that they may retain their darling sins? The blood of Christ is now upon us for good, through mercy, by the Jews' rejection of it. Oh let us flee to it for refuge!

26—34. *Christ mocked and led to be crucified.*—Crucifixion was a death very terrible and miserable. Christ thus answered the type of the brazen serpent raised on a pole.—He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. Make us ready, O Lord, to bear the cross thou hast appointed us, and daily to take it up with cheerfulness, following thee. And when we behold what manner of death thou hast died, let us in that behold with what manner of love thou hast loved us.

35—44. *Christ is crucified.*—God so overruled it, that even his accusation was to his honour. He was, at his death, numbered among the transgressors, that we, at our death, might be numbered among the saints. The enemies of Christ labour to make others believe that of religion which they themselves know to be false. Many people could like the King of Israel well enough, if they could have his kingdom without the tribulation through which they must pass to obtain it. But if no cross, then no Christ, no crown. In every minute particular recorded about the sufferings

of Christ, some prediction in the Prophets or the Psalms was fulfilled.

45—50. *The death of Christ.*—During the three hours of darkness Jesus was in agony, wrestling with the powers of darkness, and suffering his Father's displeasure against the sin of man, for which he was now making his soul an offer-

Never were there three such hours since the day God created man upon the earth; it was the turning point of that great affair, man's redemption and salvation. The believer can only form a feeble idea of the greatness of Christ's sufferings. Yet, hence he learns something of the Saviour's love to sinners; he gets deeper conviction of the vileness and evil of sin, and of what he owes to Christ, who delivers him from the wrath to come. Christ spake in his full strength, to show that his life was not forced from him, but was freely delivered into his Father's hands. The Son of God upon the cross, did die by the violence of the pain he endured. His soul was separated from his body, and so his body was left really and truly dead.

51—56. *Events at the crucifixion.*—The rending of the veil signified that Christ, by his death, opened a way to God. The dreadful appearances of God in his providence, sometimes work strangely for the conviction and awakening of sinners. Notice the terror that fell upon the centurion and the Roman soldiers. We may reflect with comfort on the abundant testimonies given to the character of Jesus; and, seeking to give no just cause of offence, we may leave it to the Lord to clear our characters, if we live to Him. That heart is harder than a rock that will not yield, that will not melt, where Jesus Christ is plainly set forth crucified.

57—66. *The burial of Christ.*—Our Lord Jesus, who had no sin of his own, had no grave of his own. If we remember how Christ by his burial has changed the nature of the grave to believers, it should make us rejoice.—The chief priests and Pharisees dealt with Pilate about securing the sepulchre. This was permitted that there might be certain proof of our Lord's resurrection. But to guard the sepulchre against the poor weak disciples was folly, because needless; while to think to guard it against the power of God, was folly, because to no purpose; yet the Jews thought they dealt wisely. Thus shall all the plans of Christ's enemies be made to promote his glory.

5. 2 Sam. 17. 23; Acts. 1. 18.—7. Strangers, foreigners, not of the Jewish religion.—9. Zech. 11. 12, 13. Jeremiah might have spoken these words, or the whole book of the prophets might have been called after his name.—11. Thou sayest—that which I really am. It was not enough that Jesus was called a blasphemer by the Jews; they also

laboured to make him odious to the Roman government, *Psa.* 2. 1.—16. Notable, notorious.—24. A weak attempt to clear himself; very different from the case in *Deut.* 21. 6.—26. Whipped in a most severe manner, *Isa.* 50. 6.—28. Scarlet or purple; probably a cast-off garment of that colour. The Tyrian purple, then famous, was nearly what we call scarlet. Stripped him; that is, took off his mantle, or upper garment.—29. *Isa.* 50. 6; 53. 3-5. This reed would be like a heavy cane.—33. *Golgotha* means a skull.—34. *Psa.* 69. 21. Gall, a bitter infusion, *Mark* 15. 23; the terms there are different, but the same appears to be meant; a medicated drink, given to criminals to stupefy them.—35. Crucifixion was by nailing the sufferer to a cross; the hands fixed to each end of the upper piece: the feet to the lower part of the long piece. It was then raised on the end; the sufferer usually lived for many hours in severe pain. The clothes of executed persons were the perquisites of the executioners, *Ps.* 22. 18.—39, etc. *Psa.* 22. 7, 8; 109. 25.—44. One of them repented, *Luke* 23. 43.—45. *Amos* 8. 9. An eclipse of the sun cannot take place at the time of the full moon. From noon till three o'clock.—46. *Psa.* 22. 1. Eli was mistaken by some for Elijah; but by others for a word meaning vinegar, or a very inferior wine, of which some was there, being the usual drink of the Roman soldiery.—51. The veil dividing the holy place from the most holy.—53. To whom they appeared, and how, we are not told, and must not desire to be wise above what is written.—60. *Isa.* 53. 9. The Jewish sepulchres or tombs were often of this kind, as that of Lazarus, *John* 11. 37.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ver. 1—8. *Christ's resurrection.*—On the first day of the week, He who is the Light of the world, shone out of the darkness of the grave. This day is from henceforward often mentioned as the day Christians religiously observed in solemn assemblies, to the honour of Christ, the Lord's day, *Rev.* 1. 10. The resurrection of Christ, as it is the joy of his friends, so it is the terror and confusion of his enemies. When we are ready to make this world our home, then let us remember our Lord Jesus is not here, he is risen; therefore let our hearts rise, and seek the things that are above. Let us never think that strange which the word of Christ has told us to expect; whether the sufferings of this present time, or the glory that is to be revealed.—It was good to be there, but the servants of God have other work appointed. Tell the disciples, that they may be comforted under their sorrows. Christ knows where his disciples dwell, and will visit them. Even to those at a distance from the means of grace, he will manifest himself.

9, 10. *He appears to the women.*—God's gracious visits meet us in the way of duty; and to those who use what they have for other's benefits, more shall be given. Christ was nigh them, and still is nigh us in the word. Christ rose from the dead, to silence his people's fears; he still condescends to call believers his brethren.

11—15. *Confession of the soldiers.*—Those men promise more than they can perform, who undertake to save a man harmless in doing a wilful sin. But this falsehood disproved itself. Had the soldiers been all asleep, they could not have known what passed. If any had been awake, they would have roused the others; and certainly if they had been asleep, the Jewish rulers would have been the first to call for their punishment, and would have prosecuted the apostles with severity. The continued enmity of those men shows that the plainest evidence will not affect men, without the work of the Holy Spirit.

16—20. *Christ's commission to his disciples.*—All that see the Lord Jesus with an eye of faith, will worship him. Yet the faith of the sincere may be very weak and wavering. But Christ gave such convincing proofs of his resurrection, as made their faith to triumph over doubts. The salvation they were to preach, is a common salvation; all are welcome to Christ Jesus. Baptism is an outward sign of that inward washing, or sanctification of the Spirit, which seals and evidences the believer's justification. Let us examine ourselves, whether we really possess the inward and spiritual grace of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, by which those who were the children of wrath become the children of God. There is no day, no hour of the day, in which our Lord Jesus is not present with his churches; if there were, in that day, that hour, they would be undone. Even so, Lord Jesus, be thou with us and all thy people.

1. The Jewish sabbath ended on the Saturday, at sunset. Two parties of the women visited the sepulchre; this was the first. See Luke 24. 1, for the second.—3. Dan 10. 6.—9 All hail; a friendly salutation.—14. It was death for a Roman soldier to sleep when on guard.—18. Heb 1. 2. Other appearances of Christ are mentioned by the other evangelists; this perhaps is that, 1 Cor. 15. 27.—19. Here the absolute unity and Divine character of the Sacred Three Persons are unequivocally marked.—20. I am with you alway: this fully proves the Divinity of our Lord.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S T. M A R K.

MARK was a son of a sister of Barnabas, Col. iv. 10; and Acts xii. 12 shows that he was the son of Mary, a pious woman of Jerusalem, at whose house the apostles and first Christians assembled. From 1 Pet. v. 13, the evangelist is supposed to have been converted by the apostle Peter. The general testimony is, that Peter having preached at Rome,

Mark, the apostle's companion, committed the particulars to writing. The great humility of Peter is very plain where anything is said about himself. This Gospel records more of the miracles than of the discourses of our Lord.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—8. *The office of John the Baptist.*—When God sent his Son into the world, he took care, and when he sends him into the heart, he takes care, to prepare his way before him. The most eminent saints have always been the most humble. They feel their need of Christ's atoning blood and sanctifying Spirit, more than others. The great promise Christ makes in his gospel is, they shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost; shall be purified by his graces, and refreshed by his comforts. We have his word that cannot fail, that our heavenly Father will give this light, his Holy Spirit, to those that ask it.

9—13. *The baptism and temptation of Christ.*—How much worth is there, which in this world is not known! But sooner or later it shall be known, as that of Christ was. We may see heaven opened to us, when we perceive the Spirit descending and working upon us. God's good work in us, is sure evidence of his good will towards us. Mark notices that Christ was with the wild beasts. It was an instance of his Father's care of him. Special protections are earnest of seasonable supplies. The serpent tempted the first Adam in the garden, the Second Adam in the wilderness; with different success indeed; and he still tempts the children of both, in all places and conditions.

14—22. *Christ preaches, and calls disciples.*—Observe the great truths Christ preached. By repentance we give glory to our Creator, whom we have offended; by faith we give glory to our Redeemer, who came to save us from our sins. Christ has joined these two together. Christ puts honour upon those who, though mean in this world, are diligent in their business and kind to one another. Those whom Christ calls, must leave all to follow him. Not that we must needs go out of the world, but we must sit loose to the world. Jesus kept the sabbath day, by sabbath work, in order to which the sabbath rest was appointed.

23—28. *Casts out an unclean spirit.*—The devil is an unclean spirit, he has lost all the purity of his nature, he acts in direct opposition to the Holy Spirit of God, and by his suggestions defiles the spirits of men. See whose language those speak, who say to the Almighty, Depart from us. A work as great often is wrought now, yet men treat it with contempt and neglect. The conversion of a notoriously

wicked man to a sober, righteous, and godly life, by the preaching of a crucified Saviour, should cause many to ask, What doctrine is this?

29—45. *Heals many diseased.*—Wherever Christ comes, he comes to do good. Those kept from public ordinances by sickness or other real hindrances, may expect the Saviour's gracious presence. Those who have the most business in public, and of the best kind, must yet sometimes be alone with God. See what to expect from Christ; that according to our faith it shall be to us. He readily wills favours to those who readily refer themselves to his will. No reasons now exist why we should hesitate to spread the praises of Christ.

1. Gospel means good news, or glad tidings, Luke 2. 10.—2, 3. Mal. 3. 1; Isa. 40. 3.—12. Not compelled against his will, but constrained, guided by the Holy Spirit.—14. John was imprisoned by Herod; it is supposed that Jesus was also threatened by the Jews, who were instrumental in betraying John to Herod.—21. Synagogue, a Jewish place of worship for prayer, reading the Scriptures, and preaching.—28. Round about—or, all over.—35. Christ was an example of early devotion. See Psa. 5. 3.—41. Even to touch the leper was, to men, uncleanness, Numb. 5. 2.—45. The life of Jesus had already been attempted at Nazareth.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—12. *Christ heals one sick of the palsy.*—Sin is the cause of all our pains and sicknesses. The way to remove the effect, is to take away the cause. Christ's curing diseases was a figure of his pardoning sin, for sin is the disease of the soul; when it is pardoned, it is healed. Most men think themselves whole; but the convinced, humbled sinner, who despairs of all help except from the Saviour, will show his faith by applying to him without delay.

13—17. *Levi's call.*—With God, through Christ, there is grace to change the greatest sinners, and make them holy. And it is no new thing for that which is both well done and well designed, to be slandered, and made a reproach to the wisest and best of men. If the world had been righteous, there had been no occasion for Christ's coming, either to preach repentance, or to purchase forgiveness. Our good Physician had the power of healing in himself, and was in no danger of taking the disease; but it is not so with us. In trying to do good to others, let us be careful we do not get harm to ourselves.

18—22. *Why Christ's disciples did not fast.*—Strict professors are apt to blame all that do not fully come up to their own views. We should attend to every part of our duty in its proper order and season.

23—28. *He justifies his disciples for plucking corn on the*

sabbath.—God never designed the sabbath to be a burden to us, and we must not make it so to ourselves. Every observance respecting it, is to be interpreted by the rule of mercy.

4. Eastern houses have flat roofs, and an awning is often drawn over the area, or large open space in the centre.—5. The Jews frequently used the words son and child to express tenderness.—14. The same as St. Matthew, Matt. 9 9. Jews had frequently two names—21, 22. New cloth, means rough or hard. These bottles were made of skins.—26. Abimelech was then high priest, but Abiathar, his son, was living at that time, and was of more note; or he bore both names.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—5. *The withered hand healed*.—Let those be helped that cannot help themselves. We hear what is said amiss, and see what is done amiss; but Christ looks at the root of bitterness in the heart, its blindness and hardness, and is grieved. The gospel command is like that recorded here: though our hands are withered, yet, if we will not stretch them out, it is our own fault that we are not healed. But if we are healed, the power and grace of Christ must have all the glory.

6—21. *The people resort to Christ, and the apostles called*.—The plagues and diseases of our souls are chiefly to be dreaded; but Christ can heal them by a word.—May the Lord send forth more and more of those who have learned of him to preach his gospel, to be instruments in his blessed work. Those whose hearts are enlarged in the work of God, can cheerfully bear self-denial.

22—35. *The blasphemy of the scribes. Christ's relatives*.—It is true the gospel promises, because Christ has purchased, forgiveness for the greatest sins and sinners; but by this sin they would oppose the gifts of the Holy Ghost after Christ's ascension.—It is a great comfort to all true Christians that they are dearer to Christ than mother, brother, or sister, as such.

4. To kill. He knew they were then plotting to kill him—8. Idu-mæa, or Edom, the country of the descendants of Esau.—9. A small ship or boat, probably belonging to one of his disciples.—17. Boanerges, or, sons of thunder. This name is nowhere else mentioned. It might refer to their eloquence of language, or to their natural zeal, Luke 9. 54.—18. Not Alphæus, the father of Matthew, 2. 14.—29. The sin against the Holy Ghost is commonly considered to be the wilful malice of those who, against the conviction of their consciences, imputed the miracles of Christ to the power of the devil. It shows wilful, entire, and persevering hatred to the Holy Spirit and his work.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—20. *The parable of the sower*.—In the great field of the church, the word of God is dispensed to all. Many

are much affected for the present, who yet receive no abiding benefit. The devil is very busy about careless hearers. Others are hindered from profiting of God, by the riches or cares of the world. And those who have but little of the world, may yet be ruined by indulging the body. Let us look to the Lord, that by his new-creating grace, the good seed of the word may produce in us those good words and works which are through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God the Father.

21—34. *Other parables.*—By Christ's thus instructing them, they were made able to instruct others; as candles are lighted, that they may give light. The parable of the good seed, shows the manner in which the kingdom of God spreads in the world. It grows gradually; when it is sprung up, it will go forward; it has mighty products even now, but what will there be when perfected in heaven!

35—41. *Christ stills the tempest.*—Those may suspect their faith, who can have such a thought as that Jesus careth not though his people perish. Faith and fear take their turns while we are in this world; but ere long, fear will be overcome, and faith will be lost in sight.

1—32 (See the notes on Matt. 13.) 25. That hath—diligently uses what he has.—28. Real believers grow in grace, 1st Prov. 4. 18; 2nd Thess. 1. 3—36. As he was; in the same small ship in which he had been teaching; one of the fishing boats, and on this lake. Storms there are frequent, as formerly.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—20. *The demoniac healed.*—What multitudes of fallen spirits there must be, and all enemies to God and man, when here was a legion in one poor wretched creature! We are not a match for our spiritual enemies in our own strength; but in the Lord we shall be able to stand against them. Long suffering and mercy may be seen, even in the corrections by which men lose their property, while warning is given them to seek the salvation of their souls. Many who cannot but wonder at the works of Christ, yet do not, as they ought, wonder after him.

21—34. *A woman healed.*—It is common with people not to apply to Christ till they have tried in vain all other helpers. Some run to diversions and gay company; others plunge into business, or even into intemperance; others go about to establish their own righteousness, or torment themselves by vain superstitions. Many perish in these ways; but none will ever find rest to the soul by such devices: while those whom Christ heals of the disease of sin, find in themselves an entire change for the better. As secret acts of sin, so secret acts of faith, are known to

the Lord Jesus. It is the will of Christ that his people should be comforted, and he has power to command comfort to troubled spirits.

35—43. *The daughter of Jairus raised.*—Have we not as much occasion for the grace of God, and the comfort of his Spirit, when death is in the house, as when sickness is there? Faith is the only remedy against grief and fear at such a time. Believe the resurrection, then fear not. Christ raised the dead by a word of power: such is the gospel call to those who are by nature dead in trespasses and sins.

1. Gadarenes, natives of Gadara, a town adjacent to the country of the Gergesenes.—2. Matthew speaks of two demoniacs; perhaps one was a worse case than the other, or one only became a follower of Jesus.—20. Decapolis, or, the ten cities.—26. The Jewish physicians offer prescribed expensive and useless remedies.—39. Not dead; not to be considered as really dead, being to be raised.—41. *Talitha cumi.* The language spoken by Christ was a mixture of Syriac and Chaldee.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1—13. *Christ despised in his own country.* *The apostles sent forth.*—Our Lord Jesus probably had worked with his reputed father. He thus put honour upon mechanics, and encouraged all persons who live by the labour of their hands. How much did these Nazarenes lose by obstinate prejudices against Jesus!—The apostles did not amuse people with curious matters, but told them they must repent of their sins, and turn to God.

14—29. *John the Baptist put to death.*—Herod feared John while he lived, and feared him still more when he was dead; but it is not enough to do many things, we must have respect to all the commandments. Many love good preaching, if it keep far away from their beloved sin. The ways of God are unsearchable; but we may be sure he never can be at a loss to repay his servants for what they endure or lose for his sake.

30—44. *The apostles return—Five thousand fed by a miracle.*—The people sought the spiritual food of Christ's word, and he took care they should not want bodily food. None are sent empty away from Christ, except those who come to him full of themselves. Though Christ had bread at command, he teaches us not to waste any of God's bounties.

45—56. *Christ walks on the sea—He heals those that touch him.*—We may have Christ for us, yet wind and tide against us. And no difficulties can hinder Christ's appearance for his people, when the set time is come. Let the disciples have their Master with them, and all is well. It is for want of rightly understanding Christ's former

works, that we view his present works as if there never were the like before.

1. Nazareth, "his own country."—3. The carpenter: the Jews were bound to teach each son a trade.—13. Oil was often applied in diseases, but was here to be used as a sign of miraculous healing, Luke 10. 34; James 5. 14.—37. Two hundred pence were about 6/ 5s. This was, probably, all that the disciples had.—40. Ranks, or squares.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1—23. *The traditions of the elders.*—One great design of Christ's coming was, to set aside the ceremonial law; and to make way for this, he rejects the ceremonies men added to the law of God's making. Jesus reproves them for rejecting the commandment of God. Our wicked thoughts and affections, words and actions, defile us, and these only. A spiritual understanding of the law of God, and a sense of the evil of sin, will cause a man to seek for the grace of the Holy Spirit, to keep down the evil thoughts and affections that work within.

24—30. *The woman of Canaan's daughter cured.*—Christ never put away any one from him that fell at his feet, which a poor trembling soul may do. Thus, while proud Pharisees are left by the blessed Saviour, he manifests his compassion to humble sinners, who look to him for children's bread. He still goes about to seek and save the lost.

31—37. *Christ restores a man to hearing and speech.*—These outward actions were only signs of Christ's power to cure the man, to encourage his faith, and theirs that brought him. Though we find great variety in the cases and manner of relief of those who applied to Christ, yet all obtained the relief they sought. Thus it still is in the great concerns of our souls.

3, 4. Mark wrote for the Gentiles, to whom these particulars were unknown. These Jewish purifications were to remove any accidental pollution.—6. Isa. 29. 13—11, 12. That is, if the ceremonial rites of the Pharisees were observed, they allowed other duties to be disregarded, even the plain commands of God. Corban means something devoted to God.—26. A Greek, that is, a Gentile, a heathen of Phœnicia, Syrophenician, belonging to that part of Syria called Phœnicia.—34. Looking up to heaven, to teach us so to do, Psa. 121. 1.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1—10. *Four thousand fed by a miracle.*—The bounty of Christ is always ready; to show that, he repeated this miracle. His favours are renewed, as our wants and necessities are. He knows and considers our frames.

11—21. *Christ cautions against the Pharisees and Herodians.*—Alas! what cause we have to lament for those around

us, who destroy themselves and others by their perverse and obstinate unbelief, and enmity to the gospel! How is it that we so often mistake the meaning of our Lord, disregard his warnings, and distrust his providence?

22—26. *A blind man healed.*—If those who are spiritually blind do not pray for themselves, yet their friends and relations should pray for them. This cure was wrought gradually; thus Christ showed in what method those commonly are healed by his grace, who by nature are spiritually blind. At first, their knowledge is confused; but, like the light of the morning, it shines more and more to the perfect day, and then they see all things clearly.

27—33. *Peter's testimony to Christ.*—Now the disciples are convinced that Jesus is the Christ, they may bear to hear of his sufferings, of which he here begins to give them notice. The wisdom of man is folly, when it pretends to limit the Divine counsels.

34—38. *Christ must be followed.*—The happiness of heaven with Christ, is enough to make up for the loss of life itself for him. And the gain of all the world in sin, will not make up for the ruin of the soul by sin. There is a day coming, when the cause of Christ will appear as glorious, as some now think it mean and contemptible.

12. Sighed deeply; his human soul was much grieved at their unbelief—17. He showed that the disciples might trust his providential care—24. As trees, confusedly.—32. Openly, so as to be plainly understood, without parables or figures.—34. The cross was then a badge of disgrace or reproach, and was carried by criminals on their way to execution, John 19. 17.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1—13. *The transfiguration.*—It is good to be away from the world, and alone with Christ. If it be good to be with Christ transfigured, only upon a mountain, with Moses and Elias, how good will it be to be with Christ glorified, in heaven, with all the saints! But when it is well with us, we are apt not to care for others; in the fulness of our enjoyments, we forget the many wants of our brethren.

14—29. *An evil spirit cast out.*—Very much is promised to our believing. If thou canst believe, thy hard heart may be softened, thy spiritual diseases may be cured; and, weak as thou art, thou mayest be able to hold out to the end. Those that complain of unbelief, must look up to Christ for grace to help them against it, and his grace will be sufficient for them.

30—40. *The apostles reprov'd.*—That men should thus shamefully treat the Son of man, who came to redeem and

save them, is wonderful. When Christ spake of his death, he always spake of his resurrection, which took the reproach of it from him, and should have taken the grief of it from his disciples. Those who are most humble and self-denying, most resemble Christ, and shall be most tenderly owned by him. Many have been like the disciples, ready to silence men who have success in preaching to sinners repentance in Christ's name, because they follow not with them. If sinners are brought to repent, to believe in Jesus, and to live sober, righteous, and godly lives, we then see that the Lord works by the preacher.

41—50. *Pain to be preferred to sin.*—Remorse of conscience and keen self-reflection are this never-dying worm. Our corrupt affections must be subdued and mortified by the Holy Spirit; and those that have the salt of grace, must show they have a living principle of grace in their hearts.

3. No fuller, that is, no bleacher or scourer.—4 The subject of their discourse is given, Luke 9. 31.—13. He spake of John the Baptist, Matt. 17. 11.—38 This man might have been converted under the ministry of the Baptist—44, 48. Loathsome and eternal sufferings, Isa 66. 24.—The worm; remorse of conscience.—49. 1 Pet. 4. 17, 18; Lev. 2. 13. Salted with fire—fire that will not destroy.

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1—16. *The Pharisees' question—Christ's love to little children.*—Preaching was Christ's constant practice. The bond which God has tied, is not to be lightly untied.—Children should be directed to the Saviour as soon as they are able to understand his words. Also, we must receive the kingdom of God as little children; we must stand affected to Christ and his grace, as little children to their parents and teachers.

17—31. *His discourse with the rich young man.*—Most ask for good to be had in this world. This young ruler asks for good to be done in this world, in order to enjoy the greatest good in the other world. Christ encouraged this promising young inquirer, and directed his practice. But is he willing to bear a present cross, in expectation of a future crown? Alas! no. Christ took this occasion to speak to his disciples about the difficulty of the salvation of those who have abundance of this world. Those who eagerly seek the wealth of the world, will never rightly prize Christ and his grace. Let us learn contentment in a low state, and to watch against the love of riches in a high one.

32—45. *Christ foretells his sufferings.*—If Jesus would gratify all our desires, it would soon appear that we desire

fame or authority, and are unwilling to taste of his cup, or to have his baptism; and we should often be ruined by having our prayers answered. But he loves us, and will only give his people what is good for them.

46—52. *Bartimeus healed.*—In coming to Christ for help and healing, we should look to him as the promised Messiah. The gracious calls Christ gives us to come to him, encourage our hope. Those who would come to Jesus, must cast away the garment of their own sufficiency, and the sin that, like long garments, most easily besets them, Heb. 12. 1. Thy faith has made thee whole: faith in Christ as the Son of David, and in his pity and power; not thy repeated words, but thy faith; Christ setting thy faith to work. Where the gospel is preached, or the written words of truth circulated, Jesus is passing by, and this is our opportunity, and when we are healed, we must continue to follow him.

4, 7. Deut. 24. 1; Gen. 2. 24.—11. Matt. 5. 32. This vice was very prevalent among the Jews.—15. Kingdom of God; the gospel.—16. It was usual to give a blessing by laying the hand on the head, Gen. 48. 14.—19. Exod. 20. 12, etc.; Lev. 19. 3-13—21. *One thing.* See Psa. 27. 4; Luke 10. 42.—24. See Job 31. 24; Psa. 62. 10; 1 Tim. 6. 17.—32. Went before, as ready for his sufferings. Amazed. See John 11. 8.—33. The Gentiles—the Romans.—35. With their mother, Matt. 20. 20—37. They meant earthly glory, which they foolishly expected.—42. John 18. 36; 2 Cor. 10. 4.—50. Heb. 12. 1.

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1—11. *Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem.*—How ill it becomes Christians to take state, when Christ was so far from claiming it! Let him have our best affections; he is a blessed Saviour, and brings blessings to us, and blessed be He that sent him!

12—18. *The barren fig-tree.*—*The temple cleansed.*—Christ looked to find some fruit, for the time of gathering figs, though it was not yet come, was near. He made this fig-tree an example to the men of that generation. When the Redeemer came to Zion, it was to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. The scribes and the chief priests sought how they might destroy him. A desperate attempt, which was fighting against God.

19—26. *Prayer in faith.*—All wither who reject Christ: the fig-tree represented the state of the Jewish church. We should rest in no religion that does not make us fruitful in good works. Faith justifies us, and so removes mountains of guilt, never to rise up in judgment against us. It purifies the heart, and so removes mountains of corruption, and makes them plain before the grace of God.

27—33. *The priests and elders questioned.*—Our Saviour shows how near his doctrine and baptism were to those of John; they had the same design and tendency, to bring in the gospel kingdom. These elders contended not for truth, but victory: the works Christ did, told them plainly he had Divine authority.

1. Bethany and Bethphage, villages near Jerusalem.—7. Judges and kings used to ride on asses, Judg. 5. 10; 10. 4; 12. 14.—10. Psa 148. 1.—17. Isa. 56. 7; Jer. 7. 11. The house of prayer for all nations.—25. Matt. 6. 14; Col. 3. 13. There were several postures for prayer among the Jews—standing was one.—50. John the Baptist testified of Jesus, John v. 32—36.

CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1—12. *The parable of the vineyard and husbandmen.*—Christ showed in parables, that he would lay aside the Jewish church. God at length sent his Son, his Well-beloved; but instead of honouring him because he was the Son and Heir, they therefore hated him. The Scriptures, and faithful preachers, and the coming of Christ in the flesh, call on us to render due praise to God in our lives.

13—27. *Questions about tribute and the resurrection.*—Nothing is more likely to insnare the followers of Christ, than bringing them to meddle with disputes about worldly politics. A right knowledge of the Scripture, as the fountain whence all revealed religion now flows, and the foundation on which it is built, is the best preservative against error. It is absurd to think that the living God should be the portion and happiness of a man if he be for ever dead; therefore it is certain that Abraham's soul exists and acts.

28—34. *The great command of the law.*—Loving God with all our heart, will engage us to everything by which he will be pleased. The sacrifices were of no power except as they expressed repentance and faith in the promised Saviour, and as they led to moral obedience. Right knowledge of the law leads to conviction of sin, to repentance, to discovery of our need of mercy, and to an understanding of the way of justification by Christ.

35—40. *Christ the Son and yet the Lord of David.*—If the common people hear these things gladly, while the learned and great oppose, the former are happy, and the latter to be pitied. As sin, disguised with the show of piety, is double iniquity, so its doom will be doubly heavy.

41—44. *The poor widow commended.*—Let us not forget that Jesus still sees the treasury. He knows how much, and from what motives, men give to his cause. The feeble efforts of the poor to honour their Saviour, will be

commended in that day, when the ostentatious actions of unbelievers will be exposed to contempt.

1. The Jewish nation and church is compared to a vineyard, Psa. 80. 8-19; Isa. 5. 1-7.—10. Psa. 118. 22.—15. A small piece of money, in value about 7½d.—26. Exod. 3. 6.—27. Deut. 6. 4, 5; Lev. 19. 18.—33. The Jewish teachers urged offering sacrifices, more than living holily.—36. Psa. 110. 1; 2 Sam. 23. 2.—41. The treasury was the chests which contained the money given for the service of God: they were placed in the second court of the temple.—42. A farthing was the tenth part of a Roman penny. 43. More, that is in proportion to her means.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1-4. *The destruction of the temple foretold.*—See how little Christ values outward show, where there is not real purity of heart. He looks with pity upon the ruin of precious souls, and weeps over them, but we do not find him look with pity upon the ruins of a fine house.

5-13. *Christ's prophetic declaration.*—The disciples of Christ may enjoy holy security and peace of mind, when all around is in disorder. They shall be hated of all men: this would be trouble enough. Yet the work to which they were called should be carried on and prosper. Though they may be crushed and borne down, the gospel cannot be.

14-27. *His prophetic declarations.*—The Jews by rebelling against the Romans, and by persecuting the Christians, hastened their own ruin apace. The more we consider these things, the more we shall see cause to flee without delay for refuge to Christ, and to renounce every earthly object, for the salvation of our souls. The disciples had confounded the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. This mistake Christ set right, and showed that the day of his coming, and the day of judgment, should be after that tribulation. Here he foretells the final dissolution of the present frame and fabric of the world.

28-37. *Watchfulness urged.*—As to the destruction of Jerusalem, expect it to come very shortly. As to the end of the world, do not inquire when it will come, for of that day and that hour knoweth no man. Christ, as God, could not be ignorant of anything; but the Divine wisdom communicated itself to his human soul according to the Divine pleasure. As to both, our duty is to watch and pray. Our Lord Jesus, when he ascended on high, left something for all his servants to do. We know not whether our Master will come to each of us in the days of youth, or middle age, or old age; but we must expect death. Our great care must be, that, whenever our Lord comes, he may not find us secure, indulging in sloth, mindless of our duty.

1. The stones used in building this temple were very large.—3. The Gospel of Mark was dictated to him by Peter.—8-15. See the notes

on Matt. 24.—22, 23. 2 Pet. 3. 17, 18.—32. To know, sometimes means, to make known, 1 Cor. 2. 2.—35. The four divisions of night, as marked by the Jews.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1—11. *Christ anointed at Bethany.*—Do we give Christ the precious ointment of our best affections? Charity to the poor will not excuse from acts of piety to the Lord Jesus. Covetousness was Judas' master lust, and that led him into the sin of betraying his Master.

12—21. *The passover—Jesus declares that Judas would betray him.*—Nothing could be less the result of human foresight than the events here related. But our Lord knows all things about us before they come to pass. God's permitting the sins of men, and bringing glory to himself out of them, does not oblige them to sin; nor will this excuse their guilt, or lessen their punishment.

22—31. *The Lord's supper instituted.*—The Lord's supper is food for the soul, therefore a very little of that which is for the body, as much as will serve for a sign, is enough. It was instituted with blessing and giving of thanks, to be a memorial of Christ's death. How comfortable is this to poor repenting sinners, that the blood of Christ is shed for many! If for many, why not for me? How very apt we are to think well of ourselves, and to trust our own hearts! Lord, give me grace to keep me from denying thee.

32—42. *Christ's agony in the garden.*—Christ began to be sorely amazed; words very full of meaning. He now tasted death, in all the bitterness of it. Can we entertain slight thoughts of sin, when we see the painful sufferings which sin, though but reckoned to him, brought on the Lord Jesus? Shall that sit light upon our souls, which sat so heavy upon his? Christ, as *Man*, pleaded, that, if it were possible, his sufferings might pass from him. As *Mediator*, he submitted to the will of God.

43—52. *He is betrayed and taken.*—Because Christ appeared not as a temporal prince, but preached repentance, and a holy life, and directed men's thoughts and affections to another world, therefore the Jewish rulers sought to destroy him. We see from the conduct of the disciples that it is easier to fight for Christ than to die for him. But there is a great difference between weak disciples and hypocrites.

53—65. *Christ before the high priest.*—The high priest's fire-side was no proper place, nor his servants proper company, for Peter: it was an entrance into temptation. For the proof of his being the Son of God, Christ refers to his second coming. In these outrages, we have proofs of

man's enmity to God, and of God's unspeakable love to man.

66—72. *Peter denies Christ.*—Peter's denying Christ began by keeping at a distance from him. Those that are shy of godliness, are far in the way to deny Christ. Peter's repentance however was very speedy. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall; and let him that has fallen think of these things, and of his own offences, and return to the Lord with weeping and supplication, seeking forgiveness, and to be raised up by the Holy Spirit.

7. Deut. 15. 11. See also the notes on Matt. 26.—14 At the passover, the houses were not to be let for hire, but were of common right for any one to eat the passover in them.—31. Vehemently, earnestly. Mark omits nothing humiliating to Peter.—36. Abba, a Syriac word, meaning father.—45. Kiss, a salutation of affection and respect.—51. The young men, was a phrase often applied to soldiers, 2 Sam. 2. 14.—72. Thought thereon; the word denotes a rapid movement.

CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1—14. *Christ before Pilate.*—Christ gave Pilate a direct answer, but would not answer the witnesses, because the things they alleged were known to be false. Let us judge of persons and things by their merits, and the standard of God's word, and not by common report.

15—21. *Christ led to be crucified.*—Christ met death in its greatest terror. God having been dishonoured by the sin of man, Christ made satisfaction by submitting to the greatest disgrace human nature could be loaded with. Shall a purple or scarlet robe be matter of pride to a Christian, which was matter of reproach to Christ? He wore the crown of thorns which we deserved, that we might wear the crown of glory which he merited. Did Jesus thus suffer, and shall I, a vile sinner, fret or repine?

22—32. *The crucifixion.*—Whenever we look unto Christ crucified, we must remember what was written over his head; he is a King, and we must give up ourselves to be his subjects. It was foretold that he should be numbered with transgressors, because he was made sin for us. They told him to come down from the cross, and they would believe; but they did not believe, though he gave them a more convincing sign when he came up from the grave.

33—41. *The death of Christ.*—Christ did not complain that his disciples forsook him, but that his Father forsook him. In this especially he was made sin for us. When Paul was to be offered as a sacrifice for the service of saints, he could joy and rejoice, Phil. 2. 17; but it is another thing to be offered as a sacrifice for the sin of sinners.—The veil of the temple was rent to the bottom.

This spake terror to the unbelieving Jews, and was a sign of the destruction of their church and nation. It speaks comfort to all believing Christians, for it signified the laying open a new and living way into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Right views of Christ crucified will reconcile the believer to the thought of death.

42—47. *His body buried.*—Those who hope for a share in its privileges, must own Christ's cause when it seems to be crushed. There was a special providence, that Pilate should be so strict in his inquiry, that there might be no pretence to say Jesus was alive. Special notice was taken of Christ's sepulchre, because he was to rise again.

3—5. Isa. 53. 7. See also Matt. 27.—16. Prætorium, the place where the Roman magistrate, or prætor, gave judgment.—17. Purple, that is, crimson or scarlet, the colour worn by magistrates.—19. Worshipped; bowed in mockery.—21. Alexander and Rufus; probably Christian converts, Rom. 16. 13.—25. Third hour from sunrise, about nine o'clock.—28. Isa. 53. 12.—40. James the Less, who wrote the Epistle, and is mentioned Acts 21. 18.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1—8. *Christ's resurrection made known.*—The respect others show to Christ, should not hinder us from showing our respect. And those who are carried by holy zeal, to seek him diligently, will find the difficulties in their way speedily vanish. Many times that which should be matter of comfort to us, through our own mistake, proves a terror to us. He *was* crucified, but he *is* glorified. A sight of Christ will be very welcome to a true penitent, and a true penitent is very welcome to a sight of Christ.

9—13. *Christ appears.*—We should study to comfort disciples that are mourners, by telling them whatever we have seen of Christ. While Christ comforts his people, he often sees it needful to rebuke and correct them for hardness of heart in distrusting his promise, as well as in not obeying his holy precepts.

14—18. *His commission to the apostles.*—Only he that is a true Christian shall be saved through Christ. Simon Magus professed to believe, and was baptized, yet he was in the bonds of iniquity, Acts 8. 13—25. Doubtless this is a solemn declaration of that true faith which receives Christ, and produces its right effect on the heart and life; not a mere assent, which is a dead faith, and cannot profit.

19, 20. *His ascension.*—After the Lord had spoken he went up into heaven. Sitting is a posture of rest, he had finished his work; and a posture of rule, he took possession of his kingdom. Whatever God does concerning us, gives to us, or accepts from us, it is by his Son. The apostles

went forth, and preached everywhere far and near; in a few years the sound went forth unto the ends of the earth. Christ's ministers do not now need to work miracles to prove their message: the Scriptures are proved to be of Divine origin, and this renders those without excuse who reject or neglect them.

3. They knew not of the guard.—5. In reality an angel.—7. See ch. 14, 28.—12. Luke 24, 13.—13. Some doubted that Jesus had really appeared till he stood in the midst, Luke 24, 36.—14. John 20, 19; 1 Cor. 15, 5.—18. This was fulfilled in Paul, Acts 28, 5.—20. Working with them, his power being with them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S T. L U K E.

THIS evangelist is supposed to have been a physician, Col. iv. 14. He was a Jew, while his knowledge of the Greek language and his name, show his Gentile origin. He is first mentioned Acts xvi. 10, 11, and was with Paul in his voyage. This Gospel appears to be designed to supersede many unauthentic narratives, and to give a genuine and inspired account of the life, miracles, and doctrines of our Lord, learned from those who heard and witnessed his discourses and miracles.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—4. *The Preface.*—Luke will not write of things about which Christians may safely differ from one another, and hesitate within themselves; but the things which are, and ought to be surely believed. The great events whereon our hopes depend, have been recorded by those who were from the beginning eye-witnesses, and were perfected in their understanding of them through Divine inspiration.

5—25. *Zacharias and Elizabeth.*—All the prayers we offer up to God, are acceptable and successful only by Christ's intercession in the temple of God above. We cannot expect an interest therein if we do not pray, and are not earnest in prayer. Prayers made when we were young and entering into the world, may be answered when we are old and going out of the world. The disobedient would be brought to attend to the wisdom of that Just One who was coming among them. In striking Zacharias dumb, God dealt *justly* with him, because he had objected against God's word. God dealt *kindly* with him, for thus he prevented his speaking any more distrustful, unbelieving words. We may admire the patience of God to-

wards us. If by the rebukes we are under for our sin, we are brought to give the more credit to the word of God, we have no reason to complain.

26—38. *Christ's birth announced.*—Though we are not to pray to the mother of our Lord, yet we ought to praise God for her. Christ must be born miraculously. The angel's address means only, Hail, thou that art the especially chosen and favoured of the Most High, to attain the honour Jewish mothers have so long desired. Jesus! the name that refreshes the fainting spirits of humbled sinners; sweet to speak, and sweet to hear. Jesus, a Saviour! Were we convinced of the huge mass of guilt that lies upon us, and the wrath that hangs over us for it, it would be our continual thought, Is the Saviour mine? Mary's reply to the angel was the language of faith and admiration, and she asked no sign for the confirming her faith. Without controversy, great was the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3. 16. In all conflicts, let us remember that with God nothing is impossible.

39—56. *Interview of Mary and Elizabeth.*—Mary broke out into joy, admiration, and gratitude. She knew her self to be a sinner who needed a Saviour, and that she could no otherwise rejoice in God than as interested in salvation through the promised Messiah. Christ will satisfy the desires of the poor in spirit who long for spiritual blessings, while the self-sufficient shall be sent empty away.

57—66. *The birth of John the Baptist.*—He shall be called Johanan, or "Gracious," because he shall bring in the gospel of Christ, wherein God's grace shines most bright. Unbelief closed Zacharias' mouth, and believing opened it again: he believes, therefore he speaks. Better be without speech, than not use it in praising God.

67—80. *The song of Zacharias.*—The gospel is *discovering*; it is to give light to those that sit in darkness, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. It is *reviving*; it brings light to those that sit in the shadow of death, as condemned prisoners in the dungeon. It is *directing*; it is to guide our feet in the way of peace, into that way which will bring us to peace at last, Rom. 3. 17. John gave proofs of strong faith, holy affections, and of being above the fear and love of the world. If it be the will of God that we live unknown to the world, still let us diligently seek to grow strong in the grace of Jesus Christ.

1. Many. There were early imperfect or false writers, who opposed the apostles.—2. Eye witnesses, Heb. 2. 3; 1 John 1. 1.—3. Theophilus, a friend of Luke, and a pious man, Acts 1. 1. Probably of rank, as the word "most excellent" was applied to rulers, Acts 23. 25.—4. Abia, or Abijah. His course or class is mentioned, 1 Chr. 24. 10;

2 Chr. 8. 14.—9. Incense was a sweet perfume, burned in the temple service, Exod. 30. 7, 34. See also Psa. 141. 2; Rev. 5. 8, and 8. 3.—13. John means "gracious."—17. Mal. 4. 5, 6.—19. Gabriel means "the man of God." This name is found in Dan. 8. 16; 9. 21.—25. Among the Jews it was a reproach to be childless, Isa. 54. 1-4; Gen. 30. 23.—31. Jesus means "a Saviour," Matt. 1. 21. It is the same name as Joshua.—32. Jesus was lineally descended from David, Isa. 11. 1; Rev. 22. 16.—35. Called the Son of God—shall be a partaker of the Divine nature.—39. Probably Hebron, which belonged to the Levites, was this city, Josh. 21. 9-11.—59. At circumcision it was usual to declare the name of the child, Gen. 17. 12.—69. Horn means strength, or power, Psa. 148. 14. The corners of the altar were so called, 1 Kings 1. 50; and taken hold upon by those who fled for refuge.—73. This promise is recorded Gen. 22. 17, 18.—76. Isa. 40. 3, Mal. 3. 1.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1-7. *The birth of Christ.*—Christ came into the world to sojourn here for awhile, as at an inn, and to teach us to do likewise. When we by faith view the Son of God being made man and lying in a manger, our vanity, ambition, and envy are checked. We cannot, with this object rightly before us, seek great things for ourselves or our children.

8-20. *It is made known to the shepherds.*—We are not out of the way of Divine visits, when we are employed in an honest calling, and abide with God in it. Other works of God are for his glory, but the redemption of the world is for his glory in the highest. God's good will in sending the Messiah, brought peace into this lower world. Peace is here put for all that good which flows to us from Christ's taking our nature upon him. We should be more delivered from errors in judgment and practice, did we more fully ponder these things in our hearts. It is still proclaimed in our ears that to us is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord. These should be glad tidings to all.

21-24. *Christ presented in the temple.*—Mary went up to the temple to offer the appointed sacrifices for her purification; as a first-born son, Christ was to be presented to the Lord, and redeemed according to the law. Let us present our children to the Lord who gave them to us, beseeching him to redeem them from sin and death, and make them holy to himself.

25-35. *Simeon prophesies concerning Jesus.*—Those who would see Christ must go to his temple. How poor does this world look to one that has Christ in his arms, and salvation in his view! A good man departs in peace with God, peace with his own conscience, in peace with death. Those that have welcomed Christ, may welcome death. Jesus, his doctrine, and people, are still spoken against;

his preached word is still the touchstone of men's characters. Men will be judged by the thoughts of their hearts concerning Christ.

36—40. *Anna prophesies concerning him.*—Let the example of Simeon and Anna, give courage to those whose hoary heads are, like theirs, a crown of glory, being found in the way of righteousness. The lips soon to be silent in the grave, should be showing forth the praises of the Redeemer. In all things it became Christ to be made like unto his brethren, therefore he passed through infancy and childhood, yet without sin, and with manifest proofs of the Divine nature in him. Other children have foolishness bound in their hearts, which appears in what they say or do; but he was filled with wisdom, by the influence of the Holy Ghost. Other children show the corruption of their nature; nothing but the grace of God was upon him.

41—52. *Christ with the learned men in the temple.*—Those that have lost their comforts in Christ, and the evidences of their having a part in him, must bethink themselves where, and when, and how they lost them, and must turn back again. Young persons should seek the knowledge of Divine truth, attend the ministry of the gospel, and ask such questions of their elders and teachers as may tend to increase their knowledge. Know ye not that I ought to be in my Father's house, at my Father's work. It becomes the children of God, to mind their heavenly Father's business, and make all other concerns give way to it. Though he was the Son of God, yet he was subject to his earthly parents; how then will the foolish and weak sons of men answer it, who are disobedient to their parents?

1, 2. Cæsar Augustus was the Roman emperor, and Cyrenius the Roman governor of Syria. The sceptre was departing from Judah, now Shiloh came, Gen. 49. 10.—4. Thus a striking prophecy in Micah 5. 2, came to pass.—7. The inns in the east are only buildings of small rooms round a court, where travellers may shelter themselves.—8. In that neighbourhood, probably near the tower of Edar, Gen. 35. 21; Micah 4. 8.—13. The heavenly host were angels, Gen. 32. 1, 2. See 1 Pet. 1. 12.—14. Peace. Christ is the Prince of Peace, Isa. 9. 6; Eph. 2. 17; Rom. 5. 1.—22. Purification, Lev. 12. 2—8; Exod. 13. 2.—25. Devout characters were still found in Jerusalem, Isa. 24. 13.—26. Not see death—should not die.—32. A light. Christ was thus foretold, Isa. 9. 2; 42. 6; 49. 6; 60. 1—3.—34. See Isa. 8. 14; 1 Pet. 2. 8; Matt. 21. 44. Fall into condemnation by rejecting Christ, rising again by being raised from sin and misery, John 19. 25.—35. A sword, etc.—How often must Mary have recalled to mind this prophecy.—37. Such characters as Anna are spoken of, 1 Tim. 5. 5.—38. These expectations were common at that time, Mark 15. 43; Luke 24. 21.—42. This custom is referred to, Deut. 16. 1, 16.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—14. *John the Baptist's ministry.*—John preached the necessity of repentance; and the baptism of water was an outward sign of that inward cleansing and renewal of heart, which attend, or are the effects of, true repentance. When way is made for the gospel into the heart, by taking down high thoughts, and removing all that hinders us in the way of Christ and his grace, then preparation is made to welcome the salvation of God.—The guilty race of mankind is become a generation of vipers; hateful to God, and hating one another. There is no way of fleeing from the wrath to come, but by repentance; and by the change of our way, the change of our mind must be shown. The gospel requires mercy, not sacrifice; and engages us to do all the good we can to all men. And the same principle which leads men to forego unjust gain, leads to restore that which is gained by wrong. As none can or will accept Christ's salvation without true repentance so the evidence and effects of this repentance are plainly marked out.

15—20. *John the Baptist testifies concerning Christ.*—John the Baptist could only exhort to repent, and assure of forgiveness upon repentance; but he could not work repentance in them, nor confer remission on them. Thus highly does it become us to speak of Christ, and thus humbly of ourselves. When we press duty upon people, we must direct them to Christ, both for righteousness and strength. But those who injure the faithful servants of God, add still greater guilt to their other sins.

21, 22. *The baptism of Christ.*—Christ did not confess sin, as others did, for he had none to confess; but he prayed, as others did, and kept up communion with his Father. The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and there came a voice from heaven, from God the Father, from the excellent glory. Thus was a proof of the Holy Trinity, of the Three Persons in the Godhead, given at the baptism of Christ.

23—38. *The genealogy of Christ.*—Christ was both the son of Adam and the Son of God, that he might be a proper Mediator between God and the sons of Adam, and might bring the sons of Adam to be, through him, the sons of God.

1. A tetrarch was the ruler of a fourth part of a kingdom.—4. Isa. 40. 3, 4, 5. See also the notes on Matt. 3.—17. Christ was thus foretold, Micah 4. 12.—23. The usual age among the Jews for entrance on the public ministry. "As supposed," by those ignorant of his Divine origin. Matthew's list of the forefathers of Jesus showed that Christ was the son of Abraham and heir to David; Luke traces the line up, beginning with Eli, or Heli, the father, not of Joseph, but of Mary.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—13. *The temptation of Christ.*—Christ was alone, none were with him by whose prayers and advice he might be helped in the hour of temptation. He who knew his own strength might give Satan advantage; but we may not, who know our own weakness. God has many ways of providing for his people, and is at all times to be depended upon in the way of duty. All Satan's promises are deceitful. We should reject at once, with abhorrence, every opportunity of sinful gain or advancement, as a price offered for our souls. Let not any abuse of Scripture by Satan, or by men, cause us to abandon its use; but let us study it still, seek to know it, and seek our defence from it in all kinds of assaults. Our victorious Redeemer conquered, not for himself only, but for us also. Satan saw it was to no purpose to attack Christ, who had nothing in him for his fiery darts to fasten upon. And if we resist the devil he will flee from us. Though Satan depart for a season, we shall never be out of his reach till removed from this present evil world.

14—30. *Christ in the synagogue of Nazareth.*—Christ taught in their synagogues, their places of public worship, where they met to read, expound, and apply the word, to pray and praise. Let sinners attend to the Saviour's invitation when liberty is thus proclaimed. We may well wonder that he should speak such words of grace to such graceless wretches as man'kind. The doctrine of God sovereignty, his right to do his will, provokes proud men. They will not seek his favour in his own way. Still is Jesus rejected by multitudes who hear the same message.

31—41. *He casts out an unclean spirit and heals the sick.*—Where Christ gives a new life, in recovery from sickness, it should be a new life, spent more than ever in his service, to his glory. Our business should be to use our influence in bringing sinners to him, that his hands may be laid upon them for their healing. We were not sent into this world to live to ourselves, but to glorify God, and to do good. A desert is no desert, if we are with Christ there.

1. See the notes on Matt. 4. The devil left Christ but for a season, Heb. 4. 15. He renewed his assaults, especially at last, ch. 22. 53; John 14. 30.—6. This power was given to another. See Rev. 13. 2, 7, (that is, to popery.)—16. Strangers were often invited to read and speak in the synagogues, Acts 13. 14; 17. 2.—17. Opened, or unrolled: books were formerly written on rolls of paper or parchment.—18. Isa. 61. 1, 2.—20. The teachers usually sat while instructing.—26, 27. Eliseus, the Greek mode of pronouncing Elisha. 1 Kings 17. and 2 Kings 5. All are not Israel who are of Israel.—29. This

mode of putting to death was sometimes used.—30. Overawing or restraining them.—31. This shows how different the possession by devils was from madness.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—11. *The miraculous draught of fishes.*—Peter, James, and John called.—Time spent on week days in public exercises of religion, need be but little hindrance in time, and may be great furtherance in temper of mind, as to our worldly business. With what cheerfulness may we go about the duties of our calling, when we have been with God! We must not abruptly quit our callings because we have not the success in them we desire. We are likely to speed well, when we follow the guidance of Christ's word. We must all, like Peter, own that Jesus Christ might justly depart from us. But we must beseech him that he would *not* depart; for woe unto us if the Saviour depart from sinners! When riches increase, and we are tempted to set our hearts upon them, then to quit them for Christ is thankworthy.

12—26. *A leper cleansed and a paralytic cured.*—Leprosy represents our natural pollution by sin; we are full of that distemper; there is no soundness in us. Strong confidence and deep humility are united in the words of this leper. If we are saved from the guilt and power of our sins, let us bring others to hear him and to be healed.—To many the gospel is as a tale that is told them, not as a message that is sent to them. In applying to Christ, we must be very pressing and urgent. We should desire the pardon of sin more than any earthly blessing, or life itself.

27—39. *Levi called—Christ's answer to the Pharisees.*—It was a wonder of his grace, that the call was made so effectual. It was a wonder of his grace, that he so patiently bore the contradiction of sinners against himself and his disciples. The Lord trains up his people gradually for the trials allotted them.

8. This is the fear which hath torment, which perfect love casts out.—12. Full of leprosy. Such is our spiritual state, Isa. 1. 6.—14. Lev. 14. 4, 10, 21, 22.—19. See Mark 2.; also Matt. 9. The same also as to v. 29, etc.—21. God alone forgives sin, for his name's sake, Isa. 43. 25; Psa. 32. 1—5.—27. The same as Matthew: it was not uncommon for a Jew to have two names.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1—11. *Works of mercy suitable to the sabbath day.*—Christ justifies his disciples in a work of necessity for themselves on the sabbath day, But Christ will have us to know and remember that it is his day, to be spent in

his service, and to his honour. Let us not be drawn either from duty, or usefulness by any opposition. We may well be amazed, that the sons of men should be so wicked.

12—19. *The apostles chosen.*—In serving God, our great care should be not to lose time, but to make the end of one good duty the beginning of another. Those who have not faithful preaching near them, had better travel far than be without it. There is a fulness of grace in Christ, and healing virtue in him, enough for all. Men regard the diseases of the body as greater evils than those of their souls; but the Scripture teaches us differently.

20—26. *Blessings and woes declared.*—All believers that take the *precepts* of the gospel to themselves, and live by them, may take the *promises* of the gospel to themselves, and live upon them. What a vast advantage will the saint have over the sinner in the other world, how much soever the sinner may prosper, and the saint be afflicted here!

27—49. *Christ exhorts to mercy, justice, and sincerity.*—Every one that comes to Christ for washing in his blood, and knows the greatness of the mercy and the love there is in him, can say, in truth and sincerity, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? If we are of a giving and a forgiving spirit, we shall ourselves reap the benefit. Though full and exact returns are made in another world, not in this world, yet Providence does what should encourage us in doing good. What the mouth commonly speaks, generally agrees with what is most in the heart. Those only make sure work for their souls and eternity, and take the course that will profit in a trying time, who think, speak, and act according to the words of Christ.

1. See Deut. 23. 25. So poor were the disciples, as to earthly treasure. It was a sabbath connected with the passover.—2. Plucking corn, as a kind of reaping, was condemned on the sabbath by the Pharisees, who had many superstitious notions as to that day.—20. This discourse is similar to that, Matt. 5-7; but is considered to have been on a different occasion.—22. Cast out your name, or excommunicate you, with curses.—23. The prophets: their examples are referred to, Heb. 11. 32, and Jas. 5. 10.—30. Deut. 15. 7-10 shows the application of this rule.—38. Bosom, the folds of the loose robe worn in the east, in which things are often carried.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1—10. *The centurion's servant healed.*—Servants should study to endear themselves to their masters. And masters ought to take particular care of their servants when they are sick. We may, by faithful and fervent prayer, apply to Christ, and ought to do so, when sickness is in our families. The building places for religious worship is a good work.

11—18. *The widow's son raised.*—See Christ's power over death itself. The gospel call to all people, to young people particularly, is, Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light and life. The young man began to speak: whenever Christ gives us spiritual life, he opens the lips in prayer and praise. Let us seek for such an interest in our Saviour, that we may look forward with joy to the time when the Redeemer shall call forth all that are in their graves.

19—35. *John the Baptist's inquiry.*—The spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, was clearly pointed out by the messenger he sent before him, who preached repentance and reformation. The ruin of multitudes is, they are not serious in the concerns of their souls.

36—50. *Christ anointed.—The parable of the two debtors.*—While the broken-hearted feel they cannot enough express self-abhorrence on account of sin, and admiration of the Divine mercy, the self-sufficient will be disgusted, because the gospel encourages repenting sinners. But without free forgiveness none of us can escape the wrath to come. Learn here, that sin is a debt; whether our debt be more or less, it is more than we are able to pay. Let us keep far from the proud spirit of the Pharisee, simply depending upon, and rejoicing in Christ alone, and so be prepared to obey him more, and more strongly to recommend him unto all around. The more we feel of sorrow for sin, and love to Christ, the clearer evidence we have of the forgiveness of our sins.

1. Audience, means hearing.—4. The centurion seems to have been what was called "a proselyte of righteousness."—11. Nain was near Capernaum, about two miles from Mount Tabor.—12. It was usual to bring dead bodies without the gate of the city, and to carry them on a frame or bier.—20. Probably John wished to confirm their faith rather than his own.—24. John was not a reed shaken with the wind, easily moved, Eph. 4. 14.—25. Gorgeously; richly, handsomely.—29. Acknowledged the justice of the Divine warnings by John.—37. A sinner, one of known bad character. There is nothing to show that this was Mary Magdalene.—38. Behind him—referring to the ancient custom of reclining when at table.—41. Creditor, one to whom money was owing. The five hundred pence were equal to about 15*l* 12*s*. 6*d*. or our money: the fifty pence to 1*l*. 11*s*. 3*d*.—44 16. These were the usual proofs of respect and regard.

CHAPTER VIII.

Vcr. 1—3. *Christ's ministry.*—Christ made teaching the gospel the constant business of his life. Tidings of the kingdom of God are glad tidings. It showed the mean condition to which the Saviour humbled himself, that he needed kindness, and his great humility, that he accepted it.

4—21. *The parable of the sower.*—There are many very

needful and excellent rules and cautions for hearing the word in the parable of the sower, and the application of it. We ought to take heed of the things that hinder profiting by the word, and of our spirits after we have heard the word, lest we lose what we have gained. The gifts we have, will be continued to us or not, as we use them for the glory of God, and the good of our brethren.

22—40. *Christ stilleth the tempest, and casteth out devils.*—There is no relief for souls under a sense of guilt, and fear of wrath, but to go to Christ. We may learn much out of this history concerning the world of malignant spirits, who though not working now exactly in the same way as then, yet must at all times be carefully guarded against. Those under Christ's government are sweetly led with the bands of love; those under the devil's government are furiously driven. What a comfort it is to the believer, that all the powers of darkness are under the control of Christ! But he will not stay with those who slight him.

41—56. *The daughter of Jairus restored to life.*—Many a poor soul is healed, helped, and saved by Christ, that is hidden in a crowd, and nobody notices it. There may be trembling, where there is saving faith. Observe Christ's words to Jairus. In perfect faith there is no fear; the more we fear, the less we believe. Those newly raised from sin, desire spiritual food, that they may grow thereby.

2. There is no proof that Mary Magdalene was a woman of bad character.—3. Ministered; assisted or helped.—23. Jeopardy; extreme danger.—25. Afraid; overawed.—31. The deep here means the bottomless pit.—33. A steep place; such places are found on many parts of the shores of this lake. See the notes on Matt. 8. 9, and Mark 4. 5.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1—9. *The apostles sent forth.*—The Lord Jesus is the fountain of power and authority, to whom all creatures must be subject. When truth and love go together, and yet the message of God is rejected and despised, it leaves men without excuse, and turns to a testimony against them. Herod desired to see Jesus; but probably he wished not to have any more reprovers of sin.

10—17. *The multitude miraculously fed.*—When we receive creature-comforts, we must acknowledge that we owe them all, and all the comfort we have in them, to Christ, by whom the curse is taken away. The blessing of Christ will make a little go a great way. He fills every hungry soul, and abundantly satisfies it.

18—27. *Peter's testimony to Christ—Self-denial enjoined.*—We must never be ashamed of Christ and his gospel. We often meet with crosses in the way of duty; and

though we must not pull them upon our own heads, yet, when they are laid for us, we must take them up, and carry them after Christ. The body cannot be happy, if the soul be miserable in the other world; but the soul may be happy, though the body is greatly afflicted and oppressed in this world.

28—36. *The transfiguration.*—Prayer is a transfiguring, transforming duty, which makes the face to shine. In our greatest glories on earth, let us remember that in this world we have no continuing city. What need we have to pray to God for quickening grace, to make us lively! Those know not what they say, that talk of making tabernacles on earth for glorified saints in heaven.

37—42. *An evil spirit cast out.*—Christ can do that for us which his disciples cannot. When children recover from sickness, it is comfortable to receive them as healed by the hand of Christ.

43—56. *Christ checks the ambition of his disciples.*—This prediction of Christ's sufferings was plain enough, but the disciples did not understand it, because it agreed not with their notions.—A little child is the emblem by which Christ teaches us simplicity and humility.—If ever any society of Christians in this world, had reason to silence those not of their own communion, the twelve disciples at this time had; yet Christ warned them not to do the like again. Those may be found faithful followers of Christ, and may be accepted of him, who do not follow with us. It is easy for us to say, Come, see our zeal for the Lord! and to think we are very faithful in his cause, when we are seeking our own objects, and even doing harm instead of good.

57—62. *Everything to be given up for Christ.*—One seems to have been hasty and rash, and not to have counted the cost. Let us not try to join the profession of Christ with seeking after worldly advantages. Religion teaches us to be kind and good, to show piety at home; but we must not make these an excuse for neglecting our duty to God. Another had worldly concerns upon his heart, he was willing to enter into a temptation leading him from his purpose of following Christ. Those who begin with the work of God, must resolve to go on, or they will make nothing of it. *Looking back, leads to drawing back.*

1-9. Compare Matt. 10. and Mark 6. 7-14.—10-17. Matt. 14. 15; Mark 6. 35; John 6. 5.—18-27. Matt. 16. 13; Mark 8. 27.—28-50. Matt. 17. and Mark 9. Eight days means six clear days.—51. Received up, that is, taken to heaven, Mark 16. 19; Acts 1. 11.—54. 2 Kings 1. 10-12.—60. Those ignorant and negligent of religion were said to be dead, Eph. 2. 1.—61. An excuse for delay, unlike the conduct of Elisha, 1 Kings 19. 20.—62. The ancient ploughs were rude and simple, and required much attention in working them.

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1—24. *Seventy disciples sent forth. The blessedness of Christ's disciples.*—Christ will surely come in the power of his Spirit to all places whither he sends his faithful servants. Let us beware of spiritual pride, which has been the destruction of many. It was fit that particular notice should be taken of that hour of joy; there were few such, for our Lord was a man of sorrows. In that hour in which he saw Satan fall, and heard of the good success of his ministers, in that hour he rejoiced. He has ever resisted the proud, and given grace to the humble.

25—37. *The good Samaritan.*—If we speak of eternal life, and the way to it, in a careless manner, we take the name of God in vain. The proud heart of man strives hard against convictions. The parable of the Samaritan is an explanation of the law of loving our neighbour as ourselves, without regard to nation, party, or any other distinction. It also sets forth the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards sinful, miserable men. We were like this poor, distressed traveller. Satan, our enemy, has robbed and wounded us: the blessed Jesus had compassion on us. The believer considers that Jesus loved him, and gave his life for him, when an enemy; and having shown him mercy, he bids him go and do likewise.

38—42. *Jesus at the house of Martha and Mary.*—A good sermon is not the worse for being preached in a house; and the visits of our friends should be so managed, as to make them turn to the good of their souls. Sitting at Christ's feet, signifies readiness to receive his word. Martha showed respect to our Lord Jesus and right care of her household affairs; but she was for much serving. What needless time is wasted, and expense often laid out, even in entertaining professors of the gospel! Though Martha was faulty, yet she was a true believer, and in her general conduct did not neglect the one thing needful. The things of this life will be taken away from us at the furthest when we shall be taken away from them; but nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ, and a part in that love. Men and devils cannot take it away from us, and God and Christ will not.

1. Other seventy—besides the twelve.—2. The preaching of the gospel is compared to harvest work, John 4. 35.—4. Saluting in the east is very tedious, and inconvenient to those on urgent business, 2 Kings 4. 29.—6. Son of peace; one who loves and desires peace. An Hebrew mode of speaking.—7. Eating and drinking are to be to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10. 31.—19. Scorpions are venomous reptiles, about four inches long.—24. 1 Pet. 1. 10; Heb. 11. 13.—27, Deut. 6. 5; Lev. 19. 18.—30. Travellers have described the dangers

this road ; it was also then beset with robbers.—31. Priests and Levites ought especially to have been kind. The Samaritans, on the contrary, were despised and treated by the Jews as enemies.—34. It was a common custom to carry provisions when on a journey.—35. Two pence, equal to fifteen pence, but enough then to pay for what was needful for some days. If the Samaritan was poor, his kindness would be the greater.—39. To sit at Jesus' feet was to learn from him. See Acts 22. 3.—40. Cumbered ; over anxious, uselessly taken up with providing more than was needful.

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1—13. *Christ encourages being earnest in prayer.*—“ Lord, teach us to pray,” is a good prayer, and a very needful one: for Jesus Christ only can teach us, by his word and Spirit, how to pray. Lord, teach me what it is to pray ; Lord, direct me what to pray for. Let us come to our heavenly Father, trusting in his power and goodness. We must come for what we need, as a man does to his neighbour or friend. We must come for bread ; for that which is needful. We must ask for the Holy Spirit, as all spiritual blessings are included in that one. For by the influences of the Holy Spirit we are brought to repent, believe in, and love Christ ; made comfortable in this world, and to seek happiness in the next.

14—26. *The blasphemy of the Pharisees.*—The heart of every unconverted sinner is the devil's palace, where he dwells and rules. There is a kind of peace in the heart of an unconverted soul, while the devil, as a strong man armed, keeps it. But the conversion of a soul to God, is Christ's victory restoring the soul to liberty, and recovering his own power over it. Here is seen the condition of a hypocrite. Sweeping takes off only the loose dirt, while the sin that besets the sinner, the beloved sin, is untouched. The house is not furnished with any true grace ; it is all paint and varnish, not real nor lasting. It was never given up to Christ, nor dwelt in by the Spirit. From such an awful state let all earnestly pray to be delivered.

27—36. *True happiness. Christ reproves the Jews.*—Though it is a great privilege to hear the word of God, yet those only are truly blessed, that hear it, and keep to it as their way and rule. Though Christ himself were the constant preacher in any congregation, and worked miracles daily among them, yet unless his grace humbled their hearts, they would not profit by his word.

37—54. *He reproves the Pharisees.*—While we attend to the great things of the law and of the gospel, we must not neglect the smallest matter God has appointed. When any enemies seek to insnare us, O Lord, give us thy prudence and thy patience, and disappoint their evil purposes.

1. The place was one of the *proseuchæ*, or houses of prayer, common in Judæa.—5. Loaves, or rather cakes, the sort of bread generally used.—6. Such things might often happen in the east, where travelling by night is usual, and there are no public places of refreshment like our inns.—12. The white scorpion is found in warm countries; the body is much like an egg.—17. A house; a family.—20. The finger, or arm of God, denotes his power, Exod. 8. 19; Isa. 51. 9.—22. Christ is spoken of as a conqueror, Isa. 53. 12; Col. 2. 15.—26. This sad state is referred to, 2 Pet. 2. 20; Heb. 10. 26.—30, 32. The queen of Sheba. See 1 Kings 10. 1; Jonah 3. 5.—40. Fools; men without discernment.—41. The duty of almsgiving is often enforced, Dan. 4. 27; Isa. 58. 7.—44. Touching a grave made a person unclean, Num. 19. 16.—45. Lawyers; interpreters of the law of Moses.—51. Gen. 4. 8; 2 Chron. 24. 20, 21.

CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1—12. *Christ reproves the interpreters of the law.*—Providence takes notice of the meanest creatures, and therefore of the smallest interests of the disciples of Christ. Those who confess Christ now, shall be owned by him in the great day, before the angels of God. But let no trembling, penitent backslider doubt of obtaining forgiveness. The wilful determined enmity, that is, blasphemy, against the Holy Ghost, shall never be forgiven, because it will never be repented of.

13—21. *A caution against covetousness. The parable of the rich man.*—Christianity does not encourage expectations of worldly advantages by religion. The rewards of Christ's disciples are of another nature. Happiness and comfort do not depend on the wealth of this world; for the things of the world will not satisfy the desires of a soul.—What shall I do now? The poorest beggar in the country could not have said a more anxious word. The more men have, the more perplexity they have with it. Carnal worldlings are fools; and the day is coming when God will call them by their own name, and they will call themselves so. It is the folly of most men, to mind and pursue that which is for the body and for time only, more than that which is for the soul and eternity.

22—40. *Worldly care reproved*—As in our stature, so in our state, it is our wisdom to take it as it is. An eager anxious pursuit of the things of this world, even necessary things, ill becomes the disciples of Christ. Fears must not prevail when we frighten ourselves with thoughts of evil to come, and put ourselves upon needless cares how to avoid it. Christ is our Master, we are his servants; not only working servants, but waiting servants. We are uncertain as to the time of his coming to us by death, we should therefore be always ready.

41—53. *Watchfulness enforced.*—No one is left so ignorant as not to know many things to be wrong which he does, and many things to be right which he neglects; therefore all are without excuse in their sin. The bringing in the gospel would occasion desolations; for though it is pure, peaceable, and loving; yet it is contrary to men's pride and lusts. Christ had a baptism to be baptized with, far different from that of water and the Holy Spirit. He must endure sufferings and death. It agreed not with his plan to preach the gospel more widely, till this baptism was completed.

54—59. *A warning to be reconciled to God.*—Christ would have the people as wise in the concerns of their souls as they are in outward affairs. Let them hasten to obtain peace with God before it is too late. While we are alive, we are in the way, and now is our time.

1. See the note on Matt. 16. 12.—4. Jer. 1. 8; Isa. 51. 7, 8, 12, 13.—9. 2 Tim. 2. 12.—14. John 18. 36.—20 Compare Eccl. 11. 9; James 4. 13, 14; Psa. 39. 6.—22—30. Matt. 6. 25—34. Doubtful mind; restless and anxious.—35. To gird up the loins, was to be ready for a summons, Exod. 12. 11; 1 Pet. 1. 13. The allusion is to the tying up of long garments, worn in the east, when travelling.—42. Every one is in some degree a steward of God, 1 Cor. 4. 2.—50. A baptism, that is, to pass through death, Col. 2. 12; Matt. 20. 22.—54. From the west, the Mediterranean sea.—55. Southward from the sandy desert was hot and scorching.—56. The outward events of "this time" must have been seen by the Jews.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1—9. *Christ exhorts to repentance.* *The barren fig-tree.*—Towers that are built for safety, often prove to be men's destruction. Christ cautioned his hearers not to blame great sufferers, as if they were therefore to be accounted great sinners. As no place or employment can secure from the stroke of death, the sudden removals of others warn ourselves.—The parable refers to the nation and people of the Jews. Yet it should awaken all. We cannot expect that God will bear with us always.

10—17. *The infirm woman strengthened.*—Bodily infirmities, unless very grievous, should not keep us from public worship. This woman came to Christ to be taught, and to get good to her soul, and then he relieved her bodily infirmity. When crooked souls are made straight, they will show it by glorifying God. If Jesus puts forth his healing power, sinners are set free. This deliverance is often wrought on the Lord's day; and whatever labour tends to put men in the way of receiving the blessing, agrees with the design of that day.

18—22. *The parables of the mustard seed, and leaven.*—May

grace grow in our hearts! May our faith and love grow exceedingly! May the example of God's saints be blessed to those among whom they live!

23—30. *To enter at the strait gate.*—Ask not, How many shall be saved? But, Shall I be one of them? Not, What shall become of such and such? But, What shall I do? and, What will become of me? All that will be saved, must strive to enter. Here are awakening considerations, to answer the question, Are there few that shall be saved?

31—35. *Christ's reproof to Herod, and to the people of Jerusalem.*—The greatest of men were accountable to God, therefore it became Christ to call this proud king by his own name; but it is not an example for us. It is good for us to look upon the time we have before us as but little, that we may thereby be quickened to do the work of the day in its day. Let us learn thankfully to welcome and to profit by all who come in the name of the Lord, to call us to partake of his great salvation.

1. At some tumult; but the particulars are not known.—4. Siloam, a place near Jerusalem.—3-5. Many, at the destruction of Jerusalem, perished as suddenly and awfully.—6. Unbelievers are often compared to unfruitful trees, Matt. 3. 10; Ezek. 15. 6. The Jewish nation is here primarily meant.—16. A daughter of Abraham, or one of the Jewish nation, John 8. 33, 37, 39.—18-22. See Matt. 13. 31-33, and the Notes on it.—24. Strive; agonize, exert your utmost strength. The Jews entered into a feast by a strait and narrow gate.—25. Psa. 32. 6; Isa. 55. 6.—33. The prophets had been destroyed in Jerusalem.—34. Matt. 23. 37. Christ often repeated the same truths.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1—14. *Christ heals a man on the sabbath and teaches humility.*—It requires care to understand the proper connexion between piety and charity in observing the sabbath, and the distinction between works of real necessity and habits of self-indulgence. Even in the common actions of life, Christ marks what we do, not only in our religious assemblies, but at our tables. We see in many cases that a man's pride will bring him low, and that before honour is humility.

15—24. *Parable of the great supper.*—This parable reproves the Jewish nation for their neglect of the offers of Christ's grace. It shows also the backwardness there is to close with the gospel call. The provision made for precious souls in the gospel of Christ has not been made in vain; for if some reject, others will thankfully accept the offer. The very poor and low in the world shall be as welcome to Christ as the rich and great; and many times the gospel has the greatest success among the poor and infirm.

25—35. *The necessity of consideration and self-denial.*—The

disciples of Christ all bear their cross, and must bear it in the way of duty. Jesus bids them count upon it, and then consider of it. Sit down and count the cost; consider it will cost the mortifying of sin, even the most beloved lusts. It is our interest to seek peace with God, and we need not send to ask conditions of peace; they are offered to us. In some way a disciple of Christ will be put to the trial. May we be careful not to grow slack in our profession.

3. The erroneous notions of the Pharisees as to the sabbath are well known.—7. Room here means place. See Rom. 12. 10.—8. There is much ceremony in an eastern feast in placing the guests according to their rank.—13. Call the poor, Neh. 8. 10.—15–24. Heavenly happiness is often compared to a feast, Isa. 65. 13; Rev. 19. 9.—19. The purchase of oxen is regarded as a matter of importance in the east.—26. That is, he must not love them so much as to make idols of them.—35. Salt is not used for manure, to make land fruitful.

CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1–10. *Parables of the lost sheep, and the piece of silver.*
—The parable of the lost sheep is very applicable to the great work of man's redemption. The lost sheep represents the sinner as departed from God, and exposed to certain ruin if not brought back to him. The lost piece of silver is one piece of small value compared with the rest. Yet the woman seeks diligently till she finds it. Christ is earnest in bringing sinners home.

11–16. *The prodigal son—his wickedness and distress.*
—The parable of the prodigal son shows the nature of repentance. It fully sets forth the riches of gospel grace; and it has been, and will be, while the world stands, of unspeakable use to direct and encourage poor sinners in returning to God. The great folly of sinners, and that which ruins them, is, being content in their life-time to receive their good things. A sinful state is a state of departure and distance from God. It is a spending state: for wilful sinners mispend their time and all their opportunities. It is a wanting state. Sinners want necessities for their souls. It is a vile, slavish state. The business of the devil's servants is to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, and that is no better than feeding swine. It is a state of constant discontent. Wealth and pleasures will not satisfy our bodies; but what are they to precious souls! It is a state which cannot look for relief from any creature. The world and the flesh have nothing to give which will feed and nourish a soul. It is a state of death; for a sinner is dead in trespasses and sins, destitute of spiritual life. It is a lost state. Souls that are separated from God, if his mercy prevent not, will soon be lost for ever.

7—24. *His repentance and pardon.*—The Lord opens the sinner's eyes and convinces him of sin; then he views him self and every object in a different light from what he did before. The repenting sinner quits the bondage of Satan and his lusts, and the Lord meets him with his forgiving love. The humbled sinner is clothed in the robe of the Redeemer's righteousness, made partaker of the Spirit of adoption, and feasted with Divine consolations. Holiness is wrought in him, to do, as well as to will.

25—32. *The elder brother offended.*—This part of the parable sets forth the kindness of the Lord, and the proud manner in which his gracious kindness is often received. The Jews, in general, showed the same spirit towards the converted Gentiles. It is the unspeakable happiness of all the children of God, who keep close to their Father's house, that they are, and shall be, ever with him.

1. Publicans, or the Roman tax-gatherers; and sinners, or persons of bad character, or the heathen, ch. 7. 29, 30.—4. Wilderness; waste land, where sheep were fed, Ezek. 34. 25; 1 Sam. 25. 21.—8. The ten pieces were worth about six shillings and three pence.—15. To feed swine was disgraceful, and among the Jews unlawful.—17. Came to himself; one who lives in sin is not in his right senses.—23. In warm countries it is usual to eat meat fresh killed, Gen. 18. 7. A fatted calf makes an important part of an eastern feast.—24. Sinners and backsliders are said to be dead, Eph. 5. 14; Rev. 3. 1.—28. The dancing, expressive of joy among the Jews, widely differed from modern promiscuous dancing.—29. The eldest son represents the Pharisees. Their privileges were not diminished by the reception and conversion of those who had been open sinners.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1—12. *The parable of the unjust steward.*—Worldly men, in the choice of their object, are foolish; but in their activity and perseverance they are often wiser than believers. The unjust steward is not set as an example in cheating his master, or to justify any dishonesty, but to point out the careful ways of worldly men. The riches of this world are deceitful and uncertain. Those are truly rich, and very rich, who are rich in faith, and rich toward God. rich in Christ in the promises.

13—18. *Christ reproves the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.*—Ye cannot serve God and the world, so divided are the two interests. There are many sticklers for the forms of godliness, who are bitter enemies to its power, and try to set others against the truth.

19—31. *The rich man and Lazarus.*—We are not told that the rich man got his estate by fraud or oppression; but Christ shows that a man may have a great deal of the wealth, pomp, and pleasure of this world, yet perish for

over. The sin of this rich man was his providing for himself only. It is often the lot of some of the dearest of God's saints and servants to be greatly afflicted in this world. We are not told that the rich man did him any harm, but we do not find that he had any care for him.—Here is the different condition of this godly poor man, and this wicked rich man, at and after death. This is to show the hopeless misery to which condemned spirits are brought. Sinners are now called upon to remember; but they do not, they will not. As wicked people have good things only in this life, and at death are for ever separated from all good, so godly people have often evil things in this life, and at death they are for ever put from them. How many would now desire to recall or to undo what they have written or done! Those who would make the rich man's praying to Abraham justify praying to departed saints, go far to seek for proofs, when the mistake of a damned sinner is all they can find for an example. And surely there is no encouragement to follow the example, when all his prayers were made in vain. A messenger from the dead could say no more than what is said in the Scriptures. Let us seek to the law and to the testimony, Isa. 8. 19, 20; that is the sure word upon which we may rest, 2 Pet. 1. 19.

6. The "measure" referred to was the bath, containing about nine gallons. Bill, engagement, perhaps a sort of lease.—7. Each measure of wheat contained about fourteen bushels.—8. The lord, that is the steward's master. The steward was commended, not for his fraud, but for his foresight.—9. Mammon, or riches, often gained by unrighteousness.—12. Another man's; this refers to the blessings which God has entrusted to us. If we do not use them faithfully, what proof is there that we are his?—14. See Matt. 23. 14, and Rom. 7. 7.—19. Fine linen was scarce, and chiefly brought from Egypt, Ezek. 27. 7. The word "dives" being the Latin for "rich," has occasioned this to be called the parable of Dives and Lazarus.—22. Abraham's bosom, the happiness of heaven; an allusion to the posture at feasts.—24. The Jews used to boast of their relationship to Abraham, Matt. 3. 9. Hell is often described as a devouring fire, Rev. 20. 15; Matt. 25. 41.—25. Evil things; poverty, contempt, and affliction.—26. A great gulf; a separation that cannot be passed.—29. Moses and the Prophets, or the writings of the Old Testament.—31. The Jews were not convinced by the raising of Lazarus, John 11. 53.

CHAPTER XVII.

Ver. 1—10. *To avoid offences. Humility taught.*—It is no abatement of their guilt by whom an offence comes, nor will it lessen their punishment, that offences will come. Faith in God's pardoning mercy will enable us to get over the greatest difficulties in the way of forgiving our brethren. Our Lord showed his disciples their need of deep humility.

The Lord cannot be in debt to men for their services, nor do they deserve any return from him.

11—19. *Ten lepers cleansed.*—A sense of our spiritual leprosy should make us very humble whenever we draw near to Christ. Let us refer ourselves to the compassions of Christ, for they fail not. Only one of those who were healed returned to give thanks. It becomes us, like him, to be very humble in thanksgivings, as well as in prayers. The others got the outward cure, he alone got the spiritual blessing.

20—37. *Christ's kingdom.*—The kingdom of God was among the Jews, or rather within some of them. It was a spiritual kingdom, set up in the heart by the power of Divine grace. The Divine judgments will be to the secure and sensual a dreadful surprise. So shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. But wherever the wicked are, who are marked for eternal ruin, they will be found by the judgments of God.

6. Sycamine tree; a species of fig, or, as some think, a mulberry tree. It was common in Canaan.—11. Perhaps along the borders of both these parts.—12. Afar off; lepers were not allowed to enter a town, Lev. 13. 46.—16. The Jews looked on the Samaritans with scorn and enmity, John 4. 9.—20. The progress of the kingdom of God is described 1 Cor. 14. 25. The Jews expected a temporal kingdom.—26. Gen. 7. 23.—29. Gen. 19. 16, 24. A warning to all careless sinners, Jude 7.—32. Lot's wife died for looking back, Gen. 19. 26.—35. The corn mills were two stones, turned by two women, sitting opposite each other.—37. The carcase was the mass of corruption in the Jewish nation; the eagles, the Romans, whom God used to punish them, Matt. 24. 28

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ver. 1—8. *The parable of the importunate widow.*—All God's people are praying people. Here earnest steadiness in prayer for spiritual mercies is taught; our earnest prayer is pleasing to our God. Even to the end there will be ground for the same complaint of weakness of faith.

9—14 *The Pharisee and the publican.*—God sees with what design we come to him in holy ordinances. This Pharisee was not accepted; and why not? He went up to the temple to pray, but was full of himself and his own goodness; the favour and grace of God he did not think worth asking. Let us beware of presenting proud devotions to the Lord, and of despising others. The publican's prayer was short, but to the purpose. Blessed be God that we have this short prayer upon record as an answered prayer. He who prayed it went to his house justified; so shall we be if we pray it, as he did, through Jesus Christ. He owned himself a sinner by nature, and practice. He had

no dependence but upon the mercy of God. And God's glory is to resist the proud, and give grace to the humble.

15—17. *Children brought to Christ.*—None are too little, too young, to be brought to Christ, who knows how to show kindness to those not capable of doing service to him. We must receive his kingdom as children, not by purchase, and must call it our Father's gift.

18—30. *The ruler hindered by his riches.*—Many who are loth to leave Christ, yet do leave him. They are very sorry that they cannot serve both him and the world; but if one must be quitted, it shall be their God, not their worldly gain. Men are apt to speak too much of what they have left and lost; we should rather be ashamed that there has been any regret or difficulty in doing it.

31—34. *Christ foreshows his death.*—The disciples were so intent upon the prophecies which spake of Christ's glory, that they overlooked those which spake of his sufferings. People run into mistakes, because they read their Bibles by halves, and are only for the smooth things. Self-love, and a desire of worldly objects, close our understandings.

35—43. *A blind man restored to sight.*—The prayer of faith shall not be in vain. We must come to Christ, like the blind man, earnestly beseeching him to open our eyes, and to show us clearly the value of his salvation.

1. This parable, like others, must be taken in its meaning, not literally.—7. Elect; chosen ones. These must not despair, if appearances seem against them.—9. Such was the character of the Pharisees, Isa. 65. 5.—11. Extortioners; those who defraud others.—12. The Jews fasted on the second and fifth days of the week.—14. Psa. 34. 18. Justified, means accepted, or approved of God.—15—43. See Matt. 19. and close of ch. 20. Also Mark 10.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 1—10. *The conversion of Zaccheus.*—Wherever Christ comes he opens the heart, and inclines it to receive him. He that has a mind to know Christ, shall be known of him. We may well receive him joyfully who brings all good with him. Zaccheus does not look to be justified by his works, as the Pharisee; but by his good works he will, through the grace of God, show the sincerity of his faith and repentance. Christ is come to his house, and where Christ comes he brings salvation with him. He came into this lost world to seek and to save it.

11—27. *The parable of the nobleman and his servants.*—This parable is like that of the talents, Matt. 25. 14—30. Those that are called to Christ he furnishes with gifts needful for their business; and from those to whom he gives power he expects service. The pound given to each seems

to point out the gift of the gospel, which is the same to all who hear it; but the talents, distributed more or less, seem to mean that God gives different capacities and advantages, by which the gift of the gospel may be differently improved.

28—40. *Christ enters Jerusalem.*—Christ has all men's hearts both under his eye and in his hand. Pharisees would silence the praises of Christ, but they cannot. God can turn the stony heart to himself; he can bring praise out of the mouths of children.

41—48. *Christ laments over Jerusalem.*—Surely those cannot be right who take up any doctrines of truth, so as to be hardened towards their fellow-sinners. But though Jesus wept over Jerusalem, he executed awful vengeance upon it. Though he delights not in the death of a sinner, yet he will surely fulfil his awful threatenings. The Son of God knows the value of souls, the weight of guilt, and how low it will sink mankind.

3. The press, or crowd that followed Jesus, verse 43.—8. False accusation was a deceitful usage among the publicans, ch. 3. 14. Zaccheus by his mouth professed, while his heart believed, Rom. 10. 10. Restitution of fourfold was the utmost required by the Jewish law.—9. All true believers are the children of Abraham, Gal. 3. 7.—12. A certain nobleman, etc. This was often done, under the emperors of Rome, who bestowed, in that city, the government of distant countries. It had been done by Archelaus, son of Herod, not long before.—28—48. See Matt. 21.; Psa. 118. 26. It seems that our Lord used the colt, though both ass and colt were brought.—43, 44. To this state Jerusalem was reduced, as once before, Jer. 6. 6; Isa. 29. 3, 4; Lam. 1. A trench, or embankment and ditch. Titus caused this to be done at the siege forty years afterwards.

CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 1—8. *The priests and scribes question Christ's authority.*—Men pretend to examine the truth of the gospel, when only seeking excuses for their own unbelief. They all knew the baptism of John was from heaven; nothing in it had an earthly tendency. Those that bury the knowledge they have, are justly denied further knowledge.

9—19. *The parable of the vineyard and husbandmen.*—Let all who are favoured with God's word, look to it that they make a proper use of their advantages. It is the folly of sinners that they persevere in sinful ways, though they dread the destruction at the end of those ways.

20—26. *Of giving tribute.*—The wisdom which is from above will direct all to avoid the snares laid by wicked men, and will teach our duty to God, to rulers, and to all men, so clearly, that opposers will have no evil to say of us.

27—38. *Concerning the resurrection.*—We wrong ourselves.

and wrong the truth of Christ, when we form our notions of the world of spirits by this world of sense. There is a present visible world, and a future unseen world; and let every one compare these and prefer that which deserves it. What shall be the happy state of the inhabitants of that world we cannot express or conceive. When there is perfection of holiness there will be no occasion for preservatives from sin. God never did that for these patriarchs in this world which answered the full extent of his undertaking; therefore there must be another life, in which he will completely fulfil his promises.

39—47. *The scribes silenced.*—Christ, as God, was David's Lord; but Christ, as man, was David's son. Dissembled piety is double sin. Then let us beg of God to keep us from pride, ambition, covetousness, and every evil; and to teach us to seek that honour which comes from him alone.

1. See Matt. 21. 23, etc.; Mark 11. 27, and ch. 12.—6. The feeling of the mass of the people is alluded to, ch. 19. 48.—18. Christ is compared to a stone, Dan. 2. 34, 35; 1 Pet. 2. 4—8.—20. Matt. 22. 15. The Jews now aimed to accuse Christ as having opposed the Roman tribute.—36. The heavenly body differs from the earthly, 1 Cor. 15. 42, 49; the heavenly life must wholly differ from the present existence.—45—47. This warning is given at greater length, Matt. 23.—46. Some of the Jewish doctors were noted for their long robes or trains.

CHAPTER XXI.

Ver. 1—4. *Christ commends a poor widow.*—What we rightly give for the relief of the poor, and the support of God's worship is given to God. Blessed Lord, the poorest of thy servants have two mites, they have a soul and a body; how happy shall we be in thine accepting of them!

5—28. *His prophecy.*—Christ answers with clearness and fulness, as far as was necessary to teach them their duty. Though spiritual judgments are the most common in gospel times, yet God makes use of temporal judgments also. Though we may be losers for Christ, we shall not, we cannot be losers by him, in the end. It is our duty and interest at all times, especially in perilous trying times, to secure the safety of our own souls.

20—28. Having given an idea of the times for about thirty-eight years to come, Christ shows what all those things would end in, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation; which would be a type and figure of Christ's second coming. The scattered state of the Jews proves that the words of Jesus shall not pass away. They also remind us to pray for those times when neither

the real nor the spiritual Jerusalem shall any longer be trodden down, and when both Jews and Gentiles shall be turned to the Lord.

29—38. *Christ exhorts to watchfulness.*—Christ cautions against being secure and sensual. We cannot be safe, if we are carnally secure. Our danger is, lest, when we are called to meet our Lord, that be the furthest from our thoughts which ought to be nearest our hearts. For so it will be as to most of men. Here see what should be our aim, that when the judgments of God are abroad, we may escape the common calamity. Watch therefore, and pray always. Watch against sin; watch in every duty. Pray always: those shall live a life of praise in the other world, who live a life of prayer in this world.

1. The treasury, or the chest placed to receive contributions for the repairs in the temple, etc., Mark 12. 41; 2 Kings 12. 9.—3, 4. This doctrine is also taught, 2 Cor. 8. 12. Penury—poverty.—5. See Matt. 24. and Mark 13.; also Deut. 28. 47-68.—9. Not by and by, that is, not immediately. There were many commotions soon after the death of Christ.—11. Josephus mentions several "fearful sights" previous to the siege of Jerusalem.—23, 24. In the siege of Jerusalem, a mother devoured her own child. More than 90,000 Jews were taken prisoners, and more than a million slain.—24. Jerusalem has been "trodden down" from that time till now.—34-36. These cautions refer in general to the last judgment, and to our individual removal by death, 1 Thess. 5. 1-6.

CHAPTER XXII.

Ver. 1—6. *The treachery of Judas.*—Christ knew all men, and had wise and holy ends in taking Judas to be a disciple. It is hard to say whether more mischief is done to Christ's kingdom by its open enemies, or by its pretended friends.

7—20. *The passover, and the Lord's supper.*—Those who rest on Christ's word, need not fear disappointment. Jesus bids this passover welcome. He desired it, though he knew his sufferings would follow, because it was in order to his Father's glory and man's redemption. He takes his leave of all passovers, signifying his doing away all the ordinances of the ceremonial law.—The Lord's supper is a sign or memorial of Christ's death.

21—38. *Christ admonishes the disciples.*—How unbecoming the character of a follower of Jesus is the worldly ambition of being the greatest. If Satan cannot destroy, he will try to disgrace or distress us. Unless we watch and pray always, we may be drawn in the course of the day into those sins which we were in the morning most resolved against; for if believers were left to themselves, they would fall.—Our Lord gave notice of a very great change

of circumstances approaching. He that has a purse, let him take it, for he may need it. Their enemies would be more fierce, and they would need weapons. But the sword of the Spirit is the sword with which the disciples of Christ must furnish themselves.

39—46. *Christ's agony*.—Here are three things not in the other evangelists. 1. It was a part of his humiliation that he was strengthened by a ministering spirit. 2. He prayed more earnestly. Prayer is in a special manner reasonable when we are in an agony. 3. His sweat was as great drops of blood falling down: this showed the travail of his soul. When next you think upon the delights of sin, consider its effects as you behold them here!

47—53. *Christ betrayed*.—Nothing can be a greater affront or grief to the Lord Jesus, than to be betrayed by those who profess to be his followers, who say that they love him. Corrupt nature warps our conduct; therefore we should seek for the Lord's direction before we act in difficult circumstances. Christ was willing to wait for his triumphs till his warfare was accomplished, and we must be so too. But the hour and the power of darkness were short, and such the triumphs of the wicked always will be.

54—62. *The fall of Peter*.—He that has once told a lie, is strongly tempted to persist: the beginning of that sin is as the letting forth of water. The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. It was a *convincing* look. It was a *chiding* look. It was an *expostulating* look. It was a *compassionate* look. It was a *directing* look, to go and bethink himself. Christ looked upon the chief priests, and made no impression upon them. It was not the mere look from Christ, but the Divine grace with it, that restored Peter.

63—71. *Christ declares himself to be the Son of God*.—Jesus referred them to his second coming for the full proof of his being the Christ, to their confusion, since they would not admit the proof of it to their conviction. He owns himself to be the Son of God, though he knew he should suffer for it. Upon this they ground his condemnation. Let us consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself.

1. The fourth passover in our Lord's ministry.—2. These secret plottings are mentioned John 11. 47.—3. See Matt. 26. and Mark 14.—4. Captains; heads of the bands of priests, not military officers.—19, 20. 1 Cor. 11. 23—25, and 10. 16.—25. Benefactors, doers of good. Such titles were taken by some of the vilest tyrants.—30. Eat at my table; enjoy communion with me in heaven.—31. Sift; to get all he could from him, as wheat only is left when shaken in a sieve, and the chaff is removed. Such was the effect of Peter's fall.—34. Crow this day; the Jewish day was from sunset to sunset.—36, 38. The Galileans often carried swords in their journeys. Our Lord spoke figura-

tively, that they should prepare for the worst.—44. This shows the earnestness with which the Saviour prayed, Heb. 5. 7.—48. A kiss was the token of duty and affection in those times.—53. Your hour; the time appointed for suffering. Power of darkness; Satan would prevail.—61. Looked, etc. Luke is the only evangelist who mentions this fact.

CHAPTER .

Vér. 1—25. *Christ before Pilate and Herod.*—The Lord brings his designs to a glorious end, even by means of those who follow the devices of their own hearts. All parties joined to prove the innocence of Jesus, who was the atoning sacrifice for our sins.—The poorest beggar that asked a miracle for the relief of his necessity, was never denied; but this proud prince, who asked for a miracle only to gratify his curiosity, is refused. The friendships of wicked men are often formed by union in wickedness. They agree in little, except in enmity to God, and contempt of Christ.—The fear of man brings many into the snare, that they will do an unjust thing against their consciences, rather than get into trouble. Pilate declares Jesus innocent; yet had not courage to go against so strong a stream.

25—31. *Christ speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem.*—The death of Christ was his victory and triumph over his enemies: it was the purchase of eternal life for us. Therefore weep not for him, but let us weep for our own sins, and the sins of our children, which caused his death; and weep for fear of the miseries we shall bring upon ourselves, if we slight his love, and reject his grace. The best saints, compared with Christ, are dry trees: if he suffer, why do not they expect to suffer? And what then shall the damnation of sinners be!

32—43. *The Crucifixion. The repentant malefactor.*—The great thing Christ died to procure for us, is the forgiveness of sin. This he prays for. In the crucifixion of Jesus between two thieves, we are shown the different effects the preaching of the gospel would have upon the children of men. One was made a monument of Divine mercy. This gives no encouragement to any to put off repentance to their death-beds. It is certain that *true* repentance is never too *late*; but it is as certain that *late* repentance is seldom *true*. We see the uncommon effects of God's grace upon this man. Observe his faith in this prayer; though Christ was in the depth of disgrace, suffering as a deceiver, and not delivered by his Father. He believed in a life to come, and desired to be happy in that life; not to be only saved from the cross. Notice his humility in this prayer. He brought forth all the fruits

for repentance his circumstances would admit. This case of conversion in the last hours is a single instance in Scripture ; it should teach us to despair of none, and that none should despair of themselves ; but we may be sure that, in general, men die as they live.

44—56. *The death and burial of Christ.*—We have here the death of Christ magnified by the wonders that attended it, and his death explained by the words with which he breathed out his soul. He was willing to offer himself.—Many will be more ready to do real service, when there is occasion, than others who make a greater noise. Though they were in tears for the death of their Lord, yet they must prepare to keep holy the sabbath. In whatever business we engage, or however our hearts may be affected, let us never fail to get ready for, and to keep holy, the day of sacred rest, which is the Lord's day.

2. A false charge, see Matt. 22. 21, but the only one for which Pilate would care.—5. Jewry ; all Judæa.—11. Herod treated Christ only with contempt and mockery, Isa. 53. 3.—15. Done unto him ; rather done by him.—16. Chastise ; punish, but not severely.—31. The righteous are often compared to green or flourishing trees, Ezek. 20. 47 ; the wicked to dry trees.—33. Calvary, in Latin, the same as Golgotha.—34. An example for all Christians, 1 Pet. 2. 21-23 ; Matt. 5. 44.—36. Vinegar, or the customary drink of the Roman soldiers.—39. At first both railed on Jesus, Matt. 27-44.—43. Paradise, or heaven, the place of blessedness.—46. Psa. 31. 5.—48. Psa. 88. 11 ; 88. 18.—54. Preparation, that is, the afternoon before the sabbath. Drew on ; it began at sunset.

CHAPTER XXIV

Ver. 1—12. *The resurrection of Christ.*—Christians often perplex themselves about that with which they should encourage themselves. These angels from heaven bring not any new gospel, but remind the women of Christ's words, and teach them how to apply them. All our mistakes in religion spring from forgetfulness of the words he has spoken. There are many things puzzling and perplexing to us, which would be plain and profitable, if we rightly understood the words of Christ.

13—27. *He appears to two disciples.*—It well becomes the disciples of Christ to talk together of his death and resurrection ; thus they stir up each other's devout affections. And where but two together are well employed in work of that kind, he will come to them, and make a third. Christ's disciples are often sorrowful, even when they have reason to rejoice. Did we know more of the Divine counsels made known in the Scriptures, we should not be subject to the perplexities in which we often entangle ourselves. He shows them that the sufferings of Christ

were really the appointed way to his glory. There are many passages throughout all the Scriptures concerning Jesus, which it is of great advantage to put together. We cannot go far in any part, but we meet with some prophecy, some promise, some prayer, some type that has reference to him. Christ is the best expositor of Scripture; he led them to know the mystery concerning himself, by showing how the Scripture was fulfilled, and turning them to the study of it.

28—35. *And makes himself known to them.*—If we would have Christ dwell with us, we must be earnest with him. Those that have experienced the pleasure and profit of communion with him, cannot but desire more of his company. He took bread, and blessed it, and brake and gave to them. This he did with his usual manner, perhaps with the same words. The work is completed by the opening of the eyes of their mind; yet it is but short views we have of Christ in this world. They had found the preaching powerful, even when they knew not the preacher. Those Scriptures which speak of Christ and his sufferings, will warm our hearts and profit our souls.

36—49. *Christ appears to the other disciples.*—Many troublesome thoughts which disquiet our minds, rise from mistakes concerning Christ, and are displeasing to him. Nothing had passed but what was foretold by the prophets, and necessary for the salvation of sinners. Even good men need to have their understandings opened. That we may have right thoughts of Christ, we must understand the Scriptures.

50—53. *His ascension.*—The disciples did not see Christ rise out of the grave; his resurrection could be proved by their seeing him alive afterwards: but they saw him ascend into heaven; they could not otherwise have a proof of his ascension. As he arose, so he ascended, by his own power. This fresh display of Christ's glory drew from them fresh acknowledgments, and they worshipped him. The glory of Christ is the joy of all true believers, even while in this world. While waiting for God's promises, we must go forth to meet them with our praises; for nothing better prepares the mind for receiving the Holy Ghost. Let us rely on his promises, and plead them. Let us attend his ordinances, praise and bless God for his mercies, and set our affections on things above.

1—10. This describes the second party of women who visited the sepulchre. Matthew and Mark refer to the first.—12. Some suppose that the Lord then appeared to Peter, 1 Cor. 15. 5.—13. Threescore furlongs would be seven miles and a half.—25. O fools, or men devoid of understanding.—27. All the prophets testified of Christ

see Gen. 3. 15; Deut. 18. 15; Isa. 9. 6, 7; 58. 1-12; Jerem. 23. 5; Dan. 9. 24-26; Mal. 4. 2.—28. This was not deception; it was designed to stimulate them to ask his remaining with them, Gen. 32. 26.—34. The Lord is risen; some still disbelieved.—36. See John 20. 19.—44. Law, Prophets, Psalms, were the three divisions made by the Jews of the Old Testament.—49. The Holy Spirit is here meant, Isa. 44. 3; Joel 2. 28.—51-53. See Acts 1. 1-12.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S T. J O H N.

THE apostle and evangelist John, was spoken of as the disciple whom Jesus loved. He was very sincerely attached to his Master. He exercised his ministry at Jerusalem with much success, and outlived the destruction of that city. History relates that, after the death of Christ's mother, John resided chiefly at Ephesus. Towards the close of Domitian's reign he was banished to the isle of Patmos, where he wrote his Revelation. On the accession of Nerva he was set at liberty, and returned to Ephesus, where it is thought he wrote his Gospel and Epistles, about A. D. 97, and died soon after.—The design of this Gospel appears to be to convey just notions of the real nature, office, and character of Him, who came to redeem mankind. John was directed to select those passages of our Saviour's life which most clearly displayed his Divine power and authority; and those of his discourses, in which he spake most plainly of his own nature. John wrote his Gospel in Greek, in a city of Asia Minor, and was therefore careful to translate the Hebrew or Syriac names, and explain some Jewish customs; see ch. 1. ver. 2; 4. 9; 9. 7; 19. 13, etc.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—5. *The Divinity of Christ.*—The Son of God is called the Word: as our words explain our minds to others, so was the Son of God sent to reveal his Father's mind to the world. What the evangelist says of Christ proves that he is God. He asserts, His existence in the beginning, with the Father. All things being made by him, show how well qualified he was for the work of our redemption and salvation. Let us pray that our eyes may be opened to behold this Light, that we may walk in it.

6—14. *His Divine and human nature.*—Nothing more fully shows the darkness of men's minds, than that when the Light had appeared, there needed a witness to call attention to it. Christ by his Spirit and grace enlightens; and those that are not enlightened by him, perish in darkness.

Christ was in the world when he took our nature upon him. He was *in* the world, but not *of* it. When he comes as a Judge, the world shall know him. Many say that they are Christ's own, yet will not part with their sins, nor have him to reign over them. All the children of God are born again. This new birth is through the word of God as the means, 1 Pet. 1. 23, and by the Spirit of God as the Author. By his Divine presence Christ always was in the world; but now he was God manifested in the flesh. His Divine glory appeared in the holiness of his life and doctrine, and in his miracles.

15—18. *John the Baptist's testimony to Christ.*—As to entrance on his work, Christ came after John, but in every other way he was before him. The expression clearly shows that Jesus had existence before he appeared on earth as man. Our receivings by Christ are all summed up in this one word, “grace;” the good will of God towards us, and the good work of God in us. As no mercy comes from God to sinners but through Jesus Christ, no man can come to the Father but by him.

19—36. *Other testimonies of John.*—John was not that Prophet whom Moses said the Lord would raise up. He was not such a prophet as they expected, who would rescue them from the Romans. He baptized the people with water as a profession of repentance, and as an outward sign of the spiritual blessings to be conferred on them by the Messiah. The paschal lamb, in all the circumstances of the ordinance, represented the salvation of sinners by faith in Christ. And the lambs sacrificed daily referred to Christ slain as a sacrifice to redeem us to God by his blood. It agrees with God's glory to pardon all who depend on his atoning sacrifice. He purchases pardon for all that repent and believe the gospel. If Christ takes away the sin of the world, then why not *my* sin? He bore sin *for* us, and so bears it *from* us; let that cause hatred of sin, and resolutions against it. Let us not hold that fast, which the Lamb of God came to take away.

37—42. *Andrew follows Jesus.*—The strongest and most prevailing argument with an awakened soul to follow Christ, is, that it is he only who takes away sin. Whatever communion there is between our souls and Christ, it is he who begins the discourse. The question Jesus put to them, we should all put to ourselves. In following Christ, do we seek the favour of God and eternal life?

43—51. *Philip and Nathanael called.*—All who desire to profit by the word of God, must beware of prejudices against places, or denominations of men. The best way to remove false notions of religion, is to make trial of it.

Nathansel was a sound character, a really upright, godly man. Christ knows what men are indeed. Does He know us? Then let us desire to know him. Let us seek and pray to be truly Christians, approved of Christ himself.

1. This is not spoken of the written word, but of the essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.—2. Prov. 8. 22-30; Col. 1. 17; John 17. 5.—4. John 5. 26; 1 John 5. 11, 12.—5. John 3. 19; Isa. 60. 1, 2; Isa. 9. 1, 2.—7. Acts 19. 4; see also Matt. 3. and Luke 3.—11. His own, or the Jewish nation.—12. Isa. 56. 5; Gal. 3. 26; 1 John 3. 1.—16. Grace for grace, means multiplied favours; entirely free gifts.—18. God is known to man only as revealed in his Son.—21. Elias, or Elijah. That prophet, means he whom Moses foretold, Deut. 18. 15.—29. Christ is compared to a lamb, Isa. 53. 7; 1 Pet. 1. 19; Rev. 5. 6. Of the world; that is, for Jews and Gentiles; while the sacrifices of the levitical dispensation were only for the former.—33. John knew not Jesus till he was revealed to him; therefore it is plain that there was no falsehood or self-interest in his preaching of him.—39. The tenth hour, among the Jews, was two hours before sunset.—40. The other disciple is thought to be the writer John, the evangelist.—45. Nathanael is supposed to be the same as Bartholomew, Matt. 10. 3; Acts 1. 13.—46. Nazareth was much dissipated for the wickedness of its inhabitants.—47. Guile means deceit, dissimulation.—51. This was, probably, spoken with reference to Jacob's ladder, Gen. 38. 12.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—11. *The miracle at Cana.*—Those that would have Christ with them at their marriage, must invite him by prayer, and he will come. There was want, even at a marriage feast! Delays of mercy are not denials of prayer. Those that expect Christ's favours, must observe his orders with ready obedience, and refer themselves to him to do as he pleases. Christ's works commend themselves even to those who know not their Author. What was produced by miracles, always was the best in its kind. Though Christ hereby allows a right use of wine, he does not in the least do away his own caution, Luke 21. 34. Every social interview should be so conducted, that we might invite the Redeemer to join with us, if he were now on earth.

12—22. *Christ casts the buyers and sellers out of the temple.*—Those now make God's house a house of merchandise, whose minds are filled with cares about worldly business when attending religious exercises, or who perform Divine offices for love of gain. Christ foretells his death through the Jews' malice: Destroy ye this temple; or, I will permit you to destroy it. He foretells his resurrection by his own power: In three days I will raise it up. Men mistake by understanding that according to the letter, which the Scripture speaks by way of figure.

23—25. *Many believe in Christ.*—Our Lord knows his

crafty enemies, and all their secret projects; his false friends, and their true characters. We know what is done *by* men; Christ knows what is *in* them, for he tries the heart. Beware of a dead faith, or a formal profession.

2. This Cana was near Nazareth; it is called Kanah, Josh. 19. 28.—6. These waterpots were common; some were lately seen near this place.—4. The term "woman" conveys no idea of disrespect; it was often given to females of high rank.—6. It is doubtful how much a firkin contained, probably about seven and a half gallons.—7. Purifying before meals is spoken of, Mark 7. 3.—8. Governor, or superintendent of the feast.—10. This does not imply that there was at this time any excess.—14. Christ did the same three years after. See Matt. 21. 12.—17. Psa. 69. 9.—21. In Christ, God was manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3. 16; Col. 2. 9; Heb. 8. 2.—22. John 14. 26.—25. None but God can see into the heart, 1 Sam. 16. 7; Heb. 4. 13.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—8. *Christ's discourse with Nicodemus.*—When religion is out of fashion, there are many like Nicodemus. But Jesus bid him welcome, and hereby taught us to encourage good beginnings, although weak. He did not talk with Christ about state affairs, but about the concerns of his soul. Our Saviour spoke of the necessity and nature of regeneration, or the new birth, and at once directed him to the source of holiness of heart. To be born again, is to begin to live anew, as those who have lived much amiss. We must have a new nature, new principles, new affections, new aims. This new birth is *from* heaven, ch. 1, 13, and its tendency is *to* heaven. Jesus shows the Author of this blessed change. It is not wrought by any wisdom or power of our own, but by the power of the blessed Spirit. The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is compared to water; without that new birth which is wrought by the Spirit, and signified by baptism, none shall be subjects of the kingdom of heaven. Though the causes are hidden, the effects are plain, when the soul is brought to mourn for sin, and to breathe after Christ.

9—13. The things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man. Many think that cannot be proved, which they cannot believe. Here is a notice of Christ's two distinct natures in one person, so that while he is the Son of man, yet he is *in* heaven.

14—18. Ask awakened consciences, or damned sinners, they will tell you, that how charming soever the allurements of sin may be, at the last it bites like a serpent. See the powerful remedy against this fatal malady. Christ is plainly set forth to us in the gospel, and the way of applying for a cure is by believing. Here is gospel, good news indeed. Behold and wonder, that the great God should love such

a worthless world! Here is the great gospel duty, to believe in Jesus Christ. And here is the great gospel benefit, that whoever believes in Christ, shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. From all this is shown the happiness of true believers.

18—21. Unbelief is a sin against the remedy. It springs from the enmity of the heart of man to God, and from love of sin in some form. The wicked world keep as far from this light as they can. If they had not hated saving knowledge, they would not sit down contentedly in condemning ignorance. On the other hand, renewed hearts bid this light welcome. Our works are good when the will of God is the rule of them, and the glory of God the end of them; when they are done in his strength, and for his sake; to him, and not to men. The new birth is a subject to which the world is averse; it is, however, the grand concern. What does it signify though we have food to eat in plenty, and variety of raiment to put on, if we are not born again? if after a few mornings and evenings spent in unthinking mirth and carnal pleasure, we die in our sins, and lie down in sorrow?

22—36. *The baptism of John and of Christ. John's testimony.*—The words of Jesus were the words of God; he had the Spirit, not by measure, as the prophets, but in all fulness. Everlasting life could only be had by faith in Him, and might be thus obtained.

1. Nicodemus is mentioned again, ch. 7. 50, and 19. 39.—2. He seems to have been afraid of openly confessing Jesus, ch. 12. 42.—3. Born again, is to become entirely changed, renewed in mind, Gal. 6. 15.—5. The Spirit is compared to the cleansing of water, Ezek. 36. 25—27.—13. See 1 Cor. 2. 11.—14. Numb. 21. 9; Isa. 45. 22.—20. Job 24. 13—15.—22. This journey through Judæa probably took up more than six months.—27. John, by his plain preaching, left his hearers without excuse, ch. 5. 33.—29. Christ is the Bridegroom of his church, Eph. 5. 25. By the friend of the Bridegroom, John himself is meant.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—26. *Christ's discourse with the Samaritan woman.*—We see here our Lord Jesus suffering the common fatigue of travellers. Thus we find that he was truly a man. He sat *thus*, as people wearied with travelling sit. Christ asked a Samaritan for water. Moderate men of all sides are men wondered at.—By this living water is meant the Spirit. The graces of the Spirit, and his comforts, satisfy the thirsting soul, that knows its own nature and necessity. Whoever partakes of the Spirit of grace, and the comforts of the gospel, shall never want that which will abundantly satisfy his soul; while carnal hearts look no higher than carnal ends. How closely our Lord Jesus brings home the

conviction to her conscience! The power of his word in searching the heart, and convincing the conscience of secret things, is a proof of Divine authority. Religion gives no preference to one place above another, in respect of holiness and approval with God. Those who by the Scriptures have obtained some knowledge of God, know *whom* they worship.—The word of salvation was of the Jews: it came to other nations through them. Spiritual affections, as shown in fervent prayers, supplications, and thanksgivings, form the worship of an upright heart, in which God delights and is glorified. No past sins can bar our acceptance with him, if we humble ourselves before him, believing in Christ, the Saviour of the world.

27—42. *The effect of Christ's conversation.*—When particular difficulties occur in the word and providence of God, it is good to satisfy ourselves that all is well that Jesus Christ says and does. Christ knows all the thoughts, words, and actions, of all the children of men. The knowledge of Christ, into which we are led by conviction of sin, is most likely to be sound and saving. We should learn to do the will of God as he did; with diligence, as those that make a business of it, and with delight in it. Harvest-time is busy time; all must be then at work. It is a short time, and harvest-work must be done then, or not at all.

43—54. *He heals a nobleman's son.*—It is hard to persuade ourselves that distance of time and place are no hindrance to the knowledge, mercy, and power of our Lord Jesus. His saying that the soul lives, makes it alive. The father went his way, which showed his faith. Good news will meet those that trust God's word. Diligent comparing the works of Jesus with his word, will confirm our faith.

4. Samaria was situated between Judæa and Galilee.—5. Gen. 33. 19; 48. 22. Sychar is the same as Shechem, Josh. 24. 32.—6. The sixth hour; about noon, when the heat was great.—9. The contentions between the Jews and Samaritans are shown, Ezra 4.—10. The gospel is compared to living, or springing water, Jer. 2. 13; Zech. 13. 1.—12. Those who had wells dug in warm countries, were held in much respect, Gen. 26. 18-22.—20. The Jews were right in worshipping at one set place, 1 Kings 9. 3; Deut. 12. 11.—21. The case is different in these gospel times, Mal. 1. 11; 1 Tim. 2. 8.—27. The Jewish doctors considered it unbecoming to hold public conversation with a female.—35. The harvest in Judæa began in the spring, four months after seed time.—37. This comparison is often used, Isa. 65. 21, 22; Psa. 126. 5, 6.—47. From Capernaum to Cana of Galilee is about fifteen miles.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—9. *The cure at the pool of Bethesda.*—Shall we, who perhaps for many years have scarcely known what it has been to be a day sick, complain of one wearisome

night, when many others, better than we, have scarcely known what it has been to be a day well? As we should be thankful, so we should be patient. Our Lord Jesus cures him, though he neither asked nor thought of it. God's command, Turn and live; Make ye a new heart; no more supposes power in us without the grace of God, his distinguishing grace, than this command supposed such power in the impotent man. it was by the power of Christ, and he must have all the glory. Has Christ healed our spiritual diseases? then let us go where he sends us, and take up what he lays upon us.

10—23. *Christ reproves the Jews.*—This is the voice of every providence, Go, and sin no more. It is common for people, when sick, to promise *much*; when newly recovered, to perform only *something*; but after awhile to forget *all*.—All things now, and at the final judgment, are committed to the Son, that all men might honour the Son, as they honour the Father. Every one who does not *thus* honour the Son, whatever he may think or pretend, does not honour the Father who sent him.

24—47. *Christ's discourse.*—Our Lord first refers to his raising those who were dead in sin, to newness of life, by the power of the Spirit, and then to his raising the dead in their graves. May His voice reach the hearts of those dead in sin; that they may do works meet for repentance, and prepare for the solemn day.—The voice of God, accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost, still proclaims Christ as the beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. But when the hearts of men are full of pride, ambition, and the love of the world, there is no room for the word of God.—Jesus urged the Jews to search the Scriptures with more diligence and attention. “Ye do search the Scriptures,” and ye do well to do so. They searched the Scriptures, but it was with a view to their own glory. It is possible for men to study the letter of the Scripture, yet to be strangers to its power. Or, “Search the Scriptures,” and so it was spoken to *them* in the nature of an *appeal*; as, Ye profess to receive and believe the Scripture, let that be the judge. It is spoken to *us*, as advising or commanding all Christians to search the Scriptures. Not only read them, and hear them, but search them. They slighted and undervalued Christ, *because* they admired and overvalued themselves. How can those believe, who make the praise and applause of men their idol!—Many trust in some form of doctrines or some parties, who no more enter into the real meaning of those doctrines, or the views of the persons whose names they bear, than the Jews did into those of Moses.

1. A feast, probably the *passover*, the second during our Lord's ministry.—2. *Sheep gate*, Neh. 3. 1; 12. 39. *Bethesda*, means house of mercy. *Porches*, or, covered walks.—3. *Impotent*, means helpless, weak.—11. It was considered lawful to depart from common rules, if ordered by a prophet.—17. This was the reply of Jesus to the assembled Sanhedrim, or council.—35. The means of instruction are like lamps, Psa. 119. 105; Rom. 2. 19. Lamps, or lights, were terms the Jews used to describe persons of learning or piety.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1—14. *Five thousand miraculously fed*.—John relates the miracle of feeding the multitude, for its reference to the following discourse. Observe the effect this miracle had upon the people. Men may acknowledge Christ as that Prophet, and still turn a deaf ear to him.

15—21. *Jesus walks on the sea*.—There may be perils and afflictions, where there is an interest in Christ. Even the approaches of comfort and deliverance often are so mistaken, as to become occasions of fear.

22—51. *His discourse with the multitude*.—The utmost earnestness should be employed in seeking salvation, in the use of means; yet it is to be sought only as the gift of the Son of man.—Coming to Jesus, and believing on him, signify the same. Christ is to the soul what bread is to the body; he nourishes and supports the spiritual life. He is the Bread which came down from heaven. It denotes the Divinity of Christ and his authority. The doctrine of Christ crucified is now as strengthening and comforting to a believer as ever it was.—No one will come, till Divine grace has subdued, and changed his heart; therefore no one who comes will ever be cast out.—The advantage of the manna was small, it only referred to this life; but the living Bread is so excellent, that the man who feedeth on it shall never die.

52—65. Christ and him crucified, all the precious benefits of redemption, pardon of sin, the way to the throne of grace, the promises of the covenant, and eternal life: these are called the flesh and blood of Christ, because they are purchased by the breaking his body, and the shedding of his blood. Meditating upon the cross of Christ gives life to our repentance, love, and gratitude. We live by him, as our bodies live by our food.—As without the soul of man the flesh is of no value, so without the quickening Spirit of God all forms of religion are dead and worthless. Let us then apply to Christ, thankful that every one who is willing to come unto him shall be made welcome.

66—71. *Many disciples go back*.—When we admit hard thoughts of the words and works of Jesus, we enter into

temptation, which, if the Lord in mercy prevent not, will end in drawing back. The corrupt and wicked heart of man often makes that an occasion for offence, which is matter of the greatest comfort. Let us ever remember our Lord's searching question, Will ye also go away? To whom can we go? If we forsake him, we forsake our own mercies. He alone can give salvation by the forgiveness of sins.

1—14. See Matt. 14. 13—21; Mark 6. 32—44; Luke 9. 10—17.—5, 8. Philip and Andrew were natives of these parts, ch. 1. 44; 12. 21.—19. About three or four miles. The sea of Tiberias was about fifteen miles long by five broad.—23. Tiberias was a city built by Herod Antipas, in honour of Tiberius Cæsar. A town still stands near the same place, called Tabaria.—27. Labour not; that is, not only or chiefly, as in Eph. 6. 12. See Rom. 12. 11.—31. Psa. 78. 24, 25. See also Exod. 16. 15, and Numb. 11. 7; 1 Cor. 10. 3. The manna used in medicine is a very different substance.—37. There are two negatives here: "I will not; no, I will not."—45. Isa. 54. 13; Jer. 31. 34; Micah 4. 2.—53. This verse was spoken long before the Lord's supper was appointed.—66. The professed followers of Jesus were then numerous, v. 2.—69. The same assurance was expressed, ch. 1. 49; 11. 27; Luke 9. 20.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1—13. *Christ goes to the feast of tabernacles.*—Un-godly men sometimes counsel those employed in the work of God; but only advise what may promote present advantages. Those who count the preachers of the gospel to be deceivers, speak out; while many who favour them, fear to get reproach by avowing regard for them.

14—39. *His discourse.*—Every faithful minister may humbly adopt Christ's words. His doctrine is not his own finding out, but is from God's word, through the teaching of his Spirit. Only those who hate the truth shall be given up to errors which will be fatal. Surely it was as agreeable to the design of the sabbath to restore health to the afflicted, as to administer an outward rite.—Christ was sent of God, who showed himself true to his promises. God can tie men's hands, when he does not turn their hearts.—It is a comfort to those who are *in* the world, but not *of* it, and therefore are hated by it and weary of it, that they shall not be in it always, that they shall not be in it long.—The Spirit dwelling and working in believers, is as a fountain of living, running water, out of which plentiful streams flow, cooling and cleansing as water. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit we do not expect, but for his more common and more valuable influences we may apply.

40—53. *The people dispute concerning Christ.*—Alas, that many, who are for a time restrained, and who speak highly

of the word of Jesus, speedily lose their convictions, and go on in their sins! How many are foolishly swayed by wrong motives in matters of eternal moment!

2. The Jewish feast of tabernacles is described, Lev. 23. 34-44; Neh. 8. 13-15. The Jews were seldom absent from it, Deut. 16. 13-16.—15. The Jewish "letters," or learning, consisted chiefly of human traditions.—22. Circumcision was required of the descendants of Abraham, Lev. 12. 3; Gen. 17. 10.—35. The dispersed, means the scattered tribes of Israel, Isa. 11. 12.—37. On this day, water (taken from the pool of Siloam), was solemnly drawn and poured out in the temple. The Jews used to speak of this as a time of uncommon rejoicing: see Isa. 12. 3.—38. Living water is referred to, ch. 4. 14; Rev. 22. 17; Isa. 44. 3. Belly, or the heart.—48. The rulers were the Sanhedrim, or chief court among the Jews, whose business it was to decide on the claims of a prophet.—52. There were prophets in Galilee, as Jonah was, 2 Kings 14. 25. See also an express prophecy of Christ, Isa. 9. 1, 2.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1--11. *The Pharisees and the adulteress.*—Christ neither found fault with the law, nor excused the prisoner's guilt; nor did he countenance the pretended zeal of the Pharisees. Christ aimed to bring the accused to repentance, by showing her his mercy, and the prosecutors, by showing them their sins. Many crimes merit more severe punishment than they meet with; but we should not leave our own work for that to which we are not called. Christ's favour in the forgiveness of past sins should prevail with us, to go and sin no more.

12--29. *Christ's discourse with the Pharisees.*—One sun enlightens the whole world; so does one Christ, and there needs no more. What a dark dungeon would the world be without the sun! So would it be without Jesus, by whom light came into the world.—If we knew Christ better, we should know the Father better. The time of our departure out of the world depends upon God. Every true believer can look up and say with pleasure, My times are in thy hand, and better there than in my own. To all God's purposes there is a time.—Those that live in unbelief, are for ever undone, if they die in unbelief. But the curse of the law is done away to all that submit to the grace of the gospel. Nothing but the doctrine of Christ's grace will be an argument powerful enough, and none but the Spirit of Christ's grace will be an agent powerful enough, to turn us from sin to God.

30--47. Christ in the gospel offers freedom, and those whom Christ makes free are really so. But often we see persons disputing about liberty of every kind, while they are slaves to some sinful lust. The truth of God heals and

nourishes the hearts of those who receive it ; but the truth taught by philosophers has not this power and effect. Satan prompts men to excesses by which they murder themselves and others. He is a liar ; all his temptations are carried on by his calling evil good, and good evil, and promising freedom in sin. He is the author of all lies.

48--59. Those who are dead to the praises of men can bear their contempt. God will seek the honour of all those who do not seek their own. Here is described the *character* of a believer ; he is one that keeps the sayings of the Lord Jesus. And the *privilege* of a believer ; he shall by no means see death for ever.—Men may be able to dispute about God, yet may not know him. All who rightly know anything of Christ, earnestly desire to know more of him. I AM, is the name of God ; it speaks his self-existence. Thus Christ was not only before Abraham, but before all worlds, Prov. 8. 23 ; ch. 1. 1. As Mediator, he was the appointed Messiah, long before Abraham ; the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. 13, 8.

1. Jesus had not where to lay his head. He often passed the night in prayer.—5. Lev. 20. 10 ; Deut. 22. 22. This sin was very prevalent in Judæa.—7. The same lesson is taught, Rom. 2. 1, 22. The first stone was thrown by the principal accuser, see Deut. 13. 9 ; 17. 7.—12. The sun had probably just risen when Jesus spake these words, and might recall to mind, Mal. 4. 2.—33. The freedom from slavery was thought much of by the Jews, Lev. 25. 42. They were, however, even then, subject to the Romans.—34. The same emblem is used in Romans 6. and Gal. 5.—58. Christ is Jehovah the great I AM, Exod. 3. 14 ; Isa. 43. 13 ; Heb. 13. 8.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1—7. *Christ gives sight to one born blind.*—This poor man could not see Christ, but Christ saw him. And if we know or apprehend anything of Christ, it is because we were first known of him. We must be busy, and not waste day-time ; it will be time to rest when our day is done, for it is but a day. And he that will never do a good work till there is nothing to be objected against, will leave many a good work undone, Eccl. 11. 4. Human reason cannot judge of the Lord's methods ; he uses means and instruments that men despise. Jesus sent the man to the pool : this represents the benefits of attending on ordinances of Christ's appointment ; souls go weak, and come away strengthened ; go doubting, and come away satisfied ; go blind, and come away seeing.

8—17. *The account given by the man.*—Those whose eyes are opened, and whose hearts are cleansed by grace, being known to be the same in person, but widely different in

character, live as monuments to the Redeemer's glory, and recommend his grace. Works of necessity and mercy are allowed, and the sabbath rest is to be kept, in order to the sabbath work. How many blind eyes have been opened by the preaching of the gospel on the Lord's day! how many impotent souls cured on that day! Much unrighteous and uncharitable judging comes from men's adding their own fancies to God's appointments.

18—34. *The Pharisees question him, and cast him out.*—The unlearned and poor, who are simple-hearted, understand the evidences of the light of the gospel; but those whose desires are another way, though ever learning, never come to the knowledge of the truth. In the work of grace in the soul, though we cannot tell when, and how, and by what steps the blessed change was wrought, yet we may take the comfort, if we can say, through grace, Whereas I was blind, now I see. I did live a worldly, sensual life, but, thanks be to God, it is now otherwise with me, Eph. 5. 8. All who have felt the power and grace of the Lord Jesus, wonder at the wilfulness of others who reject him.

35—41. *Christ's words to the man, and reproof to the Pharisees.*—Christ owns those who own him and his truth and ways. All who believe in him, will worship him. The preaching of the cross was thought to be folly by such as by carnal wisdom knew not God. Nothing fortifies men's corrupt hearts against the convictions of the word, more than the high opinion which others have of them. The self-conceited and self-confident reject the gospel of grace, the power of their sin remains unbroken.

2. The Jews wrongly looked upon outward calamity as always a proof of sin. See Luke 13. 1—4; Eccl. 9. 1, 2.—3. That is, his blindness was not a punishment for any special sin.—6. These actions were contrary to the superstitions of the Pharisees.—7. Siloam, or Shiloh, means one sent of God, as Christ was, Gen. 49. 10.—22. Put out of the synagogue, that is, excommunicated, publicly disgraced.—25. This miracle was too plain and striking to be mistaken.—31. This man could not read, but he had, doubtless, heard the word of God, Psa. 66. 18; Isa. 1. 14, 15; Psa. 34. 15.

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1—9. *The parable of the good shepherd.*—The great Shepherd of the sheep knows all that are his, guards them by his providence, guides them by his Spirit and word, and goes before them, to set them in the way of his steps. The sheep of Christ will be cautious of those who would draw them from faith in him to fancies about him. Here are plain directions how to come into the fold; we must come in by Jesus Christ as the Door. By faith in him as

the great Mediator between God and man ; and he expects every believer, to wait on him, and to keep in his pasture.

10—18. *Christ the good Shepherd.*—Many who are not thieves, yet are careless in their duty. Christ was both the offerer and the offering, so that his laying down his life was his offering up himself. Our Lord laid not down his life for his doctrine, but for his sheep.

19—21. *The Jews' opinion concerning Jesus.*—Men would not be laughed out of their food, yet suffer themselves thus to be laughed out of what is far more necessary. Let us not heed such contempt, but remember our Master was thus reproached before us.

22—38. *His discourse at the feast of dedication.*—Christ invites us to believe ; we make ourselves doubt. He was able to defend his sheep against all their enemies, which proves that he claimed Divine power and perfection equally with the Father. The holy God will reward, and therefore will employ, none but such as he makes holy. The Father was in the Son, so that by Divine power he wrought his miracles ; the Son was so in the Father, that he knew His mind.

39—42. *He departs from Jerusalem.*—No weapon formed against our Lord Jesus shall prosper. And He who knew how to deliver himself, knows how to deliver the godly out of their temptations. Persecutors may drive Christ and his gospel out of their own city or country, but they cannot drive him or it out of the world.

2. Jesus was foretold as a Shepherd, Isa. 40. 11 ; Ezek. 34. 23 ; Psa. 23.—3. Shepherds gave particular names to sheep, to which they would answer when called.—4. Eastern sheep do not go before, but follow their shepherds.—12. False teachers are here referred to, Zech. 11. 16, 17.—16. Not of this fold, that is, Gentiles, Isa. 56. 8 ; Rom. 10. 12, 13.—22. The feast of dedication was instituted by Judas Maccabeus, to commemorate the cleansing of the temple after it had been polluted by Antiochus, 170 years before Christ.—34. Human rulers and angels are sometimes styled gods, Psa. 97. 7 ; 82. 6. But the name Jehovan, or, *the self-existent*, is never given to them.—40. This district was called Perea : see ch. 1. 28 ; Matt. 19. 1.

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1—6. *The sickness of Lazarus.*—It is no new thing for those whom Christ loves, to be sick ; bodily distempers correct the corruption, and try the graces of God's people. He came not to preserve his people from these afflictions, but to save them from their sins, and from the wrath to come ; however, it behoves us to apply to Him in behalf of our friends and relatives when sick and afflicted.

7—10. *Christ returns to Judæa.*—Christ never brings his

people into any danger but he goes with them in it. Christ, wherever he went, walked in the day; and so shall we, if we follow his steps. If a man walks in the way of his heart, and according to the course of this world, he falls into temptations and snares. Light *in us* is to our moral actions, that which light *about us* is to our natural actions.

11—32. *The death of Lazarus.*—A true Christian, when he dies, does but sleep; he rests from the labours of the past day. Nay, death is better than sleep, as it is the end of earthly cares and toils. Let us go *to him*; death cannot separate from the love of Christ, nor put us out of the reach of his call.—Grace will keep sorrow from the heart, but not from the house. The crosses and comforts of this present time would not make a deep impression upon us, if we believed the things of eternity as we ought. When we know not what in particular to ask or expect, let us refer ourselves to God; let him do as seemeth him good. In every sense our Lord is the resurrection; the source, the substance, the first-fruits, the cause of it. Christ comes in his word and ordinances, and calls us to them, calls us by them, calls us to himself.

33—46. *He raises Lazarus.*—In all the afflictions of believers Jesus is afflicted. Tears of compassion resemble those of Christ. But many weep at mere tales of distress, who are hardened to real woe. Our Lord Jesus has taught us to call God Father, in prayer, and to draw nigh to him as children to a father, with humble reverence, yet with holy boldness. The grave of sin and this world, is no place for those whom Christ has quickened; they must come forth. The sinner cannot quicken his own soul, but he is to use the means of grace; the believer cannot sanctify himself, but he is to lay aside every hindrance.

47—57. *The Pharisees consult against Jesus.*—Words of prophecy in the mouth, are not clear evidence of a principle of grace in the heart. No devices of man can alter the purposes of God: and while hypocrites amuse themselves with forms and disputes, and worldly men pursue their own plans, Jesus still orders all things for his own glory and the salvation of his people.

1. Martha and Mary are mentioned, Luke 10. 38, 39.—4. The dealings of God are often past our finding out, ch. 9. 3; Isa. 45. 15.—11. Death is often compared to sleep, Deut. 31. 16; 1 Cor. 15. 51; Dan. 12. 2.—18. Fifteen furlongs, would be about two miles.—20. Mary sat in the house, probably weeping, as was the custom among the Jews, sitting on the floor, and going to the grave at stated times.—35. Jesus is also said to have wept, Luke 19. 41; Heb. 5. 7; Isa. 53. 4.—38. The Jewish sepulchres were usually of this kind.—39. Four days; this shows that Lazarus was truly dead.—49. Caiaphas, though careless about religion, spoke truly of Jesus, and more than he designed,

ch. 18. 14.—54. Ephraim was the name of a town, about five miles from Jericho.—55. To purify themselves: this was often necessary, 2 Chron. 30. 17, 18.

CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1—11. *Christ anointed by Mary.*—Some, when found fault with for going too far in one way, peevishly run too far another way; Martha still served, but within hearing of Christ's gracious words. Mary gave a token of love to Christ, who had given real tokens of his love to her and her family. In Judas a foul sin is gilded over with a plausible pretence; and the reigning love of money is heart-theft. The grace of Christ puts kind comments on pious words and actions, makes the best of what is amiss, and the most of what is good. The success of the gospel often makes wicked men so angry, that they act as if they hoped to obtain a victory over the Almighty himself.

12—26. *Christ enters Jerusalem. Greeks apply to him.*—The right understanding of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, prevents our misapplying the Scriptures which speak of it.—In attendance upon holy ordinances, the great desire of our souls should be to see Jesus and derive grace from him. Christ might have possessed his heavenly glory alone; or, after he had taken human nature, he might have entered heaven alone, without suffering or death, but then no sinner of the human race could have been saved. The salvation of souls is owing to the dying of this corn of wheat.

27—36. *A voice from heaven bears testimony to Christ.*—Prayer against trouble may well agree with patience under it, and submission to the will of God in it. We have heard from the gospel that which exalts free grace, and we have heard also that which enjoins duty; we must from the heart embrace both, and not separate them.

37—50. *Unbelief of the Jews.*—Those who have not faith, cannot behold what is set forth in Jesus, lifted up on the cross, and must be strangers to its influence as made known by the Holy Spirit; they find a thousand objections to excuse their unbelief. See the power of the world in smothering convictions, from regard to the applause or censure of men. But beholding in Jesus the glory of the Father, we learn to obey, love, and trust in him. By daily looking to Him we are more and more freed from the darkness of ignorance, error, sin, and misery. The same word which saves will also seal the condemnation of all who despise it.

2, 3. This seems to have been in the house of Simon, the leper, Matt. 26. 6.—5. Three hundred pence, equal to 9*s.* 6*d.*—12, 15.

Psa. 118. 25, 26; **Zech.** 9. 9; **Luke** 19. 35, etc. Also **Judg.** 6. 10, and 10. 4.—16. See **ch.** 14. 26—20. These Greeks were Gentile worshippers, or proselytes, **1 Kings** 8. 41, 42.—34. **Psa.** 89. 36, 37, and 110. 4; **Dan.** 2. 44.—38. **Isa.** 53. 1.—40. **Isa.** 6. 9, 10.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1—17. *Christ washes the disciples' feet.*—Christ washed his disciples' feet, that he might signify to them the value of spiritual washing, and the cleansing of the soul from the pollutions of sin. He does many things of which even his own disciples do not for the present know the meaning, but they shall know afterward. It is not humility, but unbelief, to put away the offers of the gospel, as if too good news to be true. All whom Christ owns and saves, he justifies and sanctifies; and nothing can separate a true believer from his love. Those who truly desire to be sanctified, desire to be made pure throughout. See then what ought to be the daily care of those who through grace are in a justified state, to cleanse themselves from daily guilt, and to watch against everything defiling.

18—30. *The treachery of Judas foretold.*—The sins of professing Christians are the grief of Christ. This prophecy of treachery may apply to all who partake of God's mercies, and meet them with ingratitude. Thus mankind, supported by God's providence, lift up the heel against him.

31—38. *Christ commands the disciples to love one another.*—Christ speaks of his being glorified in his sufferings, as if that were more than all his other glories in his humbled state. They were to seek what might benefit others, and promote the cause of the gospel, as one body. But this commandment still appears *new* to many. It is common to be more desirous to have our curiosity gratified, than our consciences directed; to know what is done in heaven, than what we may do to get thither. How soon discourse as to what is plain and edifying is dropped, while a doubtful dispute runs on into endless strife of words! We take it amiss to be told we cannot do this and the other, whereas, without Christ we can do nothing.

1—3. For proofs of the Saviour's foreknowledge, see **ch.** 2. 24; 6. 70; 12. 23.—5. Washing feet is usual in hot climates, and is done as an act of hospitality, **Gen.** 18. 4; **1 Tim.** 5. 10.—8. Spiritual washing is spoken of, **1 Cor.** 6. 11; **Eph.** 5. 26.—17. Knowledge is vain without love, **1 Cor.** 13. and **Jas.** 1. 25.—18. **Psa.** 41. 9.—23. Whom Jesus loved John modestly keeps back his own name. At an eastern meal the head of each guest was against the bosom of the one next above him.—27. Sop; a slice of the paschal food, dipped in the sauce prepared.—34. See **1 John** 2. 7; 3. 11, 23; 4. 21.—36—38. See **Matt.** 26. 33—35; **Mark** 14. 29—31; **Luke** 22. 33, 34.—38. It is not

uncommon in the east to regulate the time of the night by the crowing of the cock.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1—11. *Christ comforts his disciples.*—Here is the remedy against all trouble of mind, “Believe.” The happiness of heaven is spoken of as in a father’s house. Mansions are lasting dwellings, and if Christ have prepared the place for us, he will prepare us for it. Nor can any man draw nigh God as a Father, who is not quickened by Christ as the Life, and taught by him as the Truth, to come by him as the Way. By Christ, as the Way, our prayers go to God, and his blessings come to us; this is the way, that leads to rest, the good old way. The holiness of God shone in the spotless purity of Christ’s life. His works show forth his own glory and God in him.

12—31. *He further comforts his disciples.*—The gift of the Spirit is a fruit of Christ’s mediation, bought by his merit and sufferings, and received by his intercession. The expressions used here and elsewhere, plainly denote a person, and the office itself includes all the Divine perfections. The gift of the Holy Ghost is bestowed upon the disciples of Christ, and not on the world. Christ promises to continue his care of his disciples. I will not leave you comfortless, that is, fatherless, for I will come speedily to you at my resurrection. I will come daily to you in my Spirit; in the tokens of his love, and visits of his grace. I will come certainly at the end of time. But his disciples have communion with him in his absence. Having Christ’s commands in our heads, we must keep them in our hearts and lives.

25—31. Would we know these things for our good, we must pray for, and depend on, the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Peace is put for all good, and Christ has left us all that is really and truly good, all the promised good; peace of mind arising from our justification before God.—Observe the prospect Christ had of an approaching conflict, not only with men, but with the powers of darkness. Satan has something in us to perplex us with, for we have all sinned; but when he would disturb Christ, he found nothing sinful to help him. Let us rejoice in the Saviour’s victories.

2. Many mansions; alluding to the residences for the Levites in the temple.—3. Christ prepares a place in heaven for his people, Heb. 4.; 7. 27; 10. 20.—5. Thomas and others knew more than they were aware of, which is a far better state than the reverse, 1 Cor. 8. 2; 2 Cor. 10. 18. See Hosea 6. 3.—4. Philip wished for some outward manifestation of God. See Heb. 1. 1—3.—12. Greater works were done when the Spirit was poured out, Acts 2. 41; Rom. 15. 19.—

16. The word used, signifies an advocate, counsellor, monitor, and comforter.—19. Ye see me. Believers live by looking unto Jesus, Heb. 12. 2.—27. Peace is promised, Isa. 26. 3; Psa. 119. 165; Isa. 57. 19; Phil. 4. 7, and elsewhere.—30. The powers of darkness did their utmost against Christ, Luke 22. 53; Gen. 3. 15.—31. It seems that Jesus then left the table, and conversed while walking.

CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1—8. *Christ the true Vine.*—The union of the human and Divine natures, and the fulness of the Spirit that is in Christ, resemble the root of the vine made fruitful by the moisture from a rich soil. Believers are branches of this Vine; all true Christians, though in place and opinion distant from each other, meet in Christ. Like branches of the vine, they are able to stand only as they are borne up. Even fruitful branches need pruning; for the best have notions, passions, and humours, that require to be taken away, which Christ has promised to do by his word, and Spirit, and providence. It is the great concern of all Christ's disciples, constantly to maintain their dependence upon Christ, and communion with him. Those who abide not in Christ, though they may flourish for awhile in outward profession, yet come to nothing.

9—17. *His love to his disciples.*—Those whom God loves as a Father, may disregard the hatred of all the world. The joy of those who abide in Christ's love is a continual feast. They are to show their love to him by keeping his commandments. Christ's love to us should direct us to love each other.

18—27. *Persecution foretold, and the Comforter promised.*—The world's ignorance is the true cause of its hatred to the disciples of Jesus; but the blessed Spirit will maintain the cause of Christ in the world, notwithstanding the opposition it meets with.

1—8. There were many vines in Judæa, 2 Kings 18. 32; Gen. 49. 11. There was also the golden vine, with which Herod adorned the temple.—3. Clean, or pruned. The word of God is the means of cleansing, ch. 17. 17; 1 Pet. 1. 22.—4. Abiding in Christ is mentioned, 1 John 2. 28; Col. 1. 23.—8. Fruitfulness is spoken of, Matt. 7. 20; Phil. 1. 11; Gal. 5. 22.—20. Matt. 10. 24; 13. 16.—22. Privileges misused are dangerous things, Rom. 1. 20; Jas. 4. 17.—25. Psa. 35. 19; 69. 4. Proverbs, or figures.—27. This was fulfilled, Luke 1. 2; Acts 1. 21, 22, and elsewhere.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1—15. *Persecution foretold. The office of the Holy Spirit.*—It is possible for those who are real enemies to God's service, to pretend zeal for it; but villanies will never

be changed by putting the name of God to them. It is the common fault and folly of melancholy Christians to look only on the dark side of the cloud. Nothing more hinders our joy in God, than the love of the world, and the sorrow of the world which comes from it.—Sending the Spirit was to be the fruit of Christ's death, which was his going away. His Spirit is every where, in all places, at all times. It is the method the Holy Spirit takes, first to convince, and then to comfort. The Spirit convinces of the fact of sin; of the fault of sin; of the folly of sin; of the filth of sin; of the fountain of sin, the corrupt nature; and lastly, of the fruit of sin, that the end thereof is death. The Holy Spirit convinces the world of Christ's righteousness, imparted to us for justification and salvation. The Holy Spirit is our guide, not only to show us the way, but to go with us by continued aids and influences. It behoves every one to ask, whether the Holy Spirit has begun a good work in his heart? Without a clear discovery of our guilt and danger, we never shall understand the value of Christ's salvation. We should have fuller views of the Redeemer if we prayed more for the Holy Spirit.

16—27. *Christ's departure. Encouragement to prayer.*—Believers have joy or sorrow, according to their sight of Christ, and the tokens of his presence. Sorrow is coming on the ungodly, which nothing can lessen; the believer is an heir to joy which no one can take away.—Asking of the Father shows a sense of spiritual wants, and a desire of spiritual blessings. Asking in Christ's name shows full dependence upon Christ as the Lord our righteousness. And let us ever remember, that to address the Father in the name of Christ, or to address the Son as God, reconciling the world to himself, are the same, as the Father and Son are one.

28—33. *Christ's discoveries of himself.*—The Redeemer, in his entrance, was God manifest in the flesh, and in his departure was received up into glory. Let us then be encouraged, since Christ has overcome the world before us. But while we think we stand, let us take heed lest we fall; for we know not how we should act if brought into temptation. We should watch and pray without ceasing that we may not be left to ourselves.

2. All this came to pass, Acts 8. 1-4; 26. 9-11; 12. 2, 3.—7. Being ascended on high, Christ gave gifts to men, Eph. 4. 8.—8. To prove, here means to convince. See Acts 2. 22, 37.—9, 10. These motives were urged by the apostles, Acts 17. 31; 2 Cor. 5. 10, 11.—23. Ask me nothing, that is, questioning or doubting, ch. 21. 12. Asking in prayer is not forbidden, Acts 1. 14; 3. 1.—25. Proverbs, that is, parables, or words with hidden meanings.

CHAPTER XVII.

Ver. 1—5. *Christ's prayer for himself.*—Our Lord prayed as a man, and as the Mediator of his people; yet he spoke as one with and equal to the Father. The holiness and happiness of the redeemed, are especially that glory of Christ, and of his Father, which was the joy for which he endured the cross.

6—16. *His prayer for his disciples.*—Christ prays for those that are his. Thou gavest them me, as sheep to the shepherd, to be kept; as a patient to the physician, to be cured; as children to a tutor, to be taught. Observe the foundation on which this plea is grounded, All mine are thine, and thine are mine. This speaks the Father and Son to be one. The Son owns none for his, that are not devoted to the service of the Father.—He prayed that the Father would keep them from the evil, from being corrupted by the world, the remains of sin in their hearts, and from the power and craft of Satan. They are not left here to pursue the same objects as the men around them, but to glorify God, and to serve their generation.

17—26. *Christ's prayer.*—Sanctify them, set them apart for thyself and thy service. The real holiness of all true Christians is the fruit of Christ's death, by which the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased; he gave himself for his church, to sanctify it.—Our Lord especially prayed, that all believers might be as one body under one Head. The more they dispute about lesser things, the more they throw doubts upon Christianity. Let us endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, praying that all believers may be more and more united in one mind and one judgment.—Christ, as one with the Father, claimed on behalf of all that had been given to him, that they should be brought to heaven; and that the whole company of the redeemed might therein find happiness. Thus being joined to Him by one Spirit, they might be filled with all the fulness of God.

2. This Divine power is referred to, Matt. 11. 27; Dan. 7. 14, etc.—12. Perdition means destruction, Matt. 26. 24; 1 John 2. 19. Son of perdition; one who deservedly perishes.—24. See 1 Thess. 4. 17; 1 John 3. 1-3. This is perfect happiness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ver. 1—12. *Christ taken in the garden.*—When the people would have forced our Lord Jesus to a crown, he withdrew, ch. 6. 15; but when they came to force him to a cross, he offered himself; for he came into this world to suffer, and went to the unseen world to reign. He showed

plainly what he could have done; but he set an example of submission to God's will. It is but a *cup*, a small matter. It is a cup that is *given us*; sufferings are gifts. It is given us by a *Father*, who has a father's authority, and does us no wrong; a father's affection, and means us no hurt.

13—27. *Christ before Annas and Caiaphas.*—The sin of lying is a fruitful sin; one lie needs another to support it, and that another. If a call to expose ourselves to danger be clear, we may hope God will enable us to honour him; if it be not, we may fear that God will leave us to shame ourselves. The enemies of Christ, whilst they quarrel with his truth, wilfully shut their eyes against it.

28—40. *Christ before Pilate.*—Many fear the scandal of an ill thing, more than the sin of it. Christ had said he should be delivered to the Gentiles, and be crucified. If the Jews had judged him by their law, he had been stoned.—He gave an account of the nature of his kingdom. Its nature is not worldly; it is a kingdom set up in the heart and conscience; its riches spiritual, its power spiritual, and its glory within. When Christ said, I am the Truth, he said in effect, I am a King. When we search the Scriptures, and attend the ministry of the word, it must be with this inquiry, What is truth? and with this prayer, Lead me in thy truth; into all truth. This solemn declaration of Christ's innocence, unfolds the design of his death; that he died as a Sacrifice for our sins.

1. See Matt. 26. Mark 14. and Luke 22. (the latter part of each.) The little differences are what would naturally be found in the accounts of the same scene by different witnesses.—15. Another disciple; most likely John himself, ch. 19. 35.—16. Female doorkeepers were often employed by the Jews.—18. Frost and snow have been known in Judæa at the time of the passover.—31. The conduct of Pilate was that of a careless, but not a bitter despiser. He made five attempts, if not more, to release Jesus.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 1—18. *Christ condemned and crucified.*—It is good for every one with faith, to behold Christ Jesus in his sufferings. Behold him, and love him; be still looking unto Jesus. Had not Christ been thus rejected of men, we had been for ever rejected of God. He was led forth for us, that we might escape. Was ever sorrow like unto his sorrow? Let us love him, and live to him.

19—30. *Christ on the cross.*—Many things done by the Roman soldiers were fulfilments of the prophecies of the Old Testament. All things therein written shall be fulfilled. Christ's example teaches all men to honour their parents in life and death, and to promote their comfort.

"It is finished;" that is, the counsels of the Father concerning his sufferings were now fulfilled. "It is finished;" the types and prophecies of the Old Testament were accomplished. "It is finished;" the ceremonial law is abolished; the substance is now come, all the shadows are done away. "It is finished;" the work of man's redemption and salvation is now completed. No human power could have taken away his life without his consent: he freely gave it up to save sinners.

31—37. *His side pierced.*—The blood and water that flowed out, signified those two great benefits which all believers partake of through Christ, justification and sanctification; blood for atonement, water for purification. They both flow from the pierced side of our Redeemer. May we ever look to Him, whom, by our sins, we have ignorantly and heedlessly pierced, nay, sometimes against convictions and mercies.

38—42. *The burial of Jesus.*—When God has work to do, he can find out such as are proper to do it. We must do our duty as the present day and opportunity are, and leave it to God to fulfil his promises in his own way and his own time. Christ was buried in a new sepulchre; therefore it could not be said that it was some other that rose. We are not to be particular as to the place of our burial; Christ was buried in the sepulchre next at hand.

1, etc. See the other evangelists, Matt. 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22—14. The preparation, or the day before the passover.—17. Jesus suffered without the city, as a farther insult, Heb. 13. 12; Numb. 15. 36.—24. This casting of lots was a species of gambling, Psa. 22. 18.—25. Cleophas, probably the same as Alpheus. See also Luke 24. 18.—29. Hlyssop. Psa. 69. 21.—31. Deut. 21. 23.—34. The flowing of blood and water showed the reality of Christ's death.—36. Exod. 12. 46; Numb. 9. 12; Psa. 34. 20.—37. Psa. 22. 16, 17; Zech. 12. 10; Rev. 1. 7.—38. See ch. 9. 22, and 12. 42; Isa. 53. 9.—39. Not the same aloes as ours, but a sweet-smelling shrub. How changed was Nicodemus from his former timidity, ch. 3. 2; 7. 50.

CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 1—10. *The sepulchre found to be empty.*—Weak believers often make that the matter of complaint, which is really just ground of hope, and matter of joy. We must do our best, and neither envy those who can do better, nor despise those who do as well as they can, though they come behind. The love of Christ will make us to abound in every duty more than anything else; while a sense of guilt hinders us in the service of God.

11—18. *Christ appears to Mary.*—A sight of angels and their smiles, will not suffice, without a sight of Jesus. None know, but those who have tasted it, the sorrows of

a deserted soul, which has had comfortable evidences of the love of God in Christ, but has now lost them, and walks in darkness. Christ's way of making himself known to his people is by his word applied to their souls. He was no more in the world; she must look higher, and look further, than the present state of things. Let not disciples think this earth is to be their home and rest; their eye and aim must be upon another world, and this word of Christ be ever upon their hearts, "I ascend," therefore I must seek the things which are above.

19—25. *He appears to the disciples.*—It is a comfort to Christ's disciples that no doors can shut out Christ's presence. A sight of Christ will gladden the heart of a disciple at any time; and the more we see of him, the more we shall rejoice. Every word of Christ received in the heart by faith, comes accompanied by this Divine breathing. Nothing is seen, known, discerned, or felt of God, but through this. Power did not exist in the apostles as a power to give judgment, but only as a power to declare the character of those whom God would accept or reject in the day of judgment.

26—31. *The unbelief of Thomas.*—Thomas spoke with affection, as one that took hold of Christ with all his might. That one day in seven should be religiously observed, was an appointment from the beginning. In the kingdom of the Messiah, the first day of the week was pointed out, for Christ on that day once and again met his disciples in a religious assembly. The religious observance of that day has come down to us through every age. If we are faithless, we are Christless and graceless, hopeless and joyless.—These things were committed to writing, that all might believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Saviour of sinners, and the Son of God; that, by this faith, they might obtain eternal life.

1—10. Here are a few facts not so fully stated in the other Gospels.—7. The napkin, etc.; the removal was not done hastily, as by robbers.—9. The resurrection of Christ was implied, rather than expressed, Psa. 16. 10; Isa. 53. 10. Yet he himself had foretold it, Matt. 16. 21, etc.—14. She did not expect to see Jesus, and it was hardly yet light.—15. *Rabboni*, a title of honour, meaning "my master."—17. The disciples of Jesus are his brethren, Matt. 12. 50; Heb. 2. 11.—19. See Mark 16. 14; Luke 24. 36; 1 Cor. 15. 5; 16. 22.—22. Gen. 2. 7.—22, 23. Among other gifts was the discerning of spirits, 1 Cor. 12. 10.—24. *Didymus*, or *Thomas*, means a twin.—31. When John wrote, men had already begun to deny that Christ was God.

CHAPTER XXI.

Ver. 1—14. *Christ appears to his disciples.*—Christ's time of making himself known to his people, is when they are

most at a loss. He knows the wants of his people, and has promised them not only grace sufficient, but food convenient. Divine Providence extends itself to things most minute, and those are happy who acknowledge God in all their ways. There is nothing lost by observing Christ's orders; it is casting the net on the right side of the ship. The net of the gospel has inclosed multitudes, yet it is as strong as ever to bring souls to God. John had cleaved most closely to his Master in his sufferings, and knew him soonest. How variously God dispenses his gifts, and what difference there may be between believers in their way of honouring Christ, yet all may be accepted of him.

15—19. *His discourse with Peter.*—We must not be surprised to have our sincerity called in question, when we ourselves have done that which makes it doubtful. It is well when our falls and mistakes make us more humble and watchful. No one can be qualified to feed the sheep and lambs of Christ, who does not love the good Shepherd more than any earthly object. What is our chief end but this, to die to the Lord, at the word of the Lord?

20—24. *His declaration concerning John.*—It is the will of Christ that his disciples should not be curious about future events, either as to themselves or others. And if we attend to the duty of following Christ, we shall find neither heart nor time to meddle with that which does not belong to us. How little are any unwritten traditions to be relied upon! Let the Scripture explain itself, and the word of Christ keep us from error. Scripture language is the safest channel for Scripture truth; the words the Holy Ghost teaches, 1 Cor. 2. 13.

25. *The conclusion.*—Let us bless God for all that is in the Scriptures, and be thankful that there is so much in so small a space. Enough is recorded to direct our faith, and regulate our practice. Much of what is written is overlooked, much forgotten, and much made the matter of doubtful disputes. We may look forward to heaven, from more complete information as to all Jesus did and said, as well as to his dealings with each of us.

1. According to his promise, Matt. 28. 10.—2. The disciples were, perhaps, not decided as to their future course.—6. They would be reminded of the miracle described, Luke 5. 1-11.—14. For the two former interviews, see John 20. 19, 26.—15. The flock of Christ is his church, Luke 12. 32; Acts 20. 28.—17. Peter would appeal to the judgment of Christ rather than to the eye of man.—19. Church history relates that Peter was crucified with his head downwards, thirty years after this time, in the reign of Nero.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

St. Luke was the writer of this book; probably when he attended Paul to Rome, Col. 4. 14. It contains many particulars of the Christian church from the ascension of our Saviour to the arrival of Paul at Rome, a space of about thirty years. But the narrative does not afford a complete history of the church, nor even of Paul's life. The book relates in what manner the gifts of the Holy Spirit were communicated, and the miracles performed by the apostles; and proves the claim of the Gentiles to be admitted into the church of Christ.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—11. *Christ's ascension.*—Christ ordered the disciples to wait at Jerusalem for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. This would be a baptism by the Holy Ghost, giving them power to work miracles, and enlightening and sanctifying their souls.—Our Lord had given his disciples instructions for the discharge of their duty, and this knowledge is enough for a Christian. When we stand gazing and trifling, the thoughts of our Master's second coming should quicken and awaken us: when we stand gazing and trembling, they should comfort and encourage us.

12—14. *The apostles unite in prayer.*—It was now a time of trouble with the disciples; but if any is afflicted, let him pray; that will silence cares and fears. Those are in the best frame to receive spiritual blessings, who are in a praying frame. Though Christ had promised shortly to send the Holy Ghost, that promise was not to do away prayer, but to quicken and encourage it.

15—26. *Matthias chosen in the place of Judas.*—Christ's resurrection was the great proof of his being the Messiah, and the foundation of our hope in him. The apostles were ordained, not to worldly dignity and dominion, but to preach Christ, and the power of his resurrection. It is fit that God should choose his servants; let us own his hand in the determining everything which befalls us.

1. Treatise, a written discourse, namely, the Gospel of Luke. See Luke 1. 3.—3. Passion here means suffering. Infallible, not to be denied.—4. The Holy Spirit is promised, Joel 2. 28; Isa. 44. 3; Luke 11. 13; John 14. 26.—6. The apostles still expected that Jesus would set up a temporal kingdom.—7. Secret things belong to God, Deut. 29. 29; 1 Cor. 15. 24, 25; Matt. 24. 36.—10. Angels in human form, Luke 24. 4.—12. A sabbath day's journey was rather more than one mile, and less than two.—13. Some think this upper room belonged to the temple. In private dwellings, upper rooms were large, and suited for social meetings.—14. This is the last place in Scripture in

which Mary is named.—15. There were more disciples in other places, 1 Cor. 15. 6.—18. The awful end of Judas is described, Matt. 27. 5, 7, 8.—20. Psa. 69. 25; 109. 8. Bishopric, or the office committed to his charge.—26. This casting lots was a solemn appeal to the Lord that this apostle, like the rest, might be Divinely called to his office.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—13. *The descent of the Holy Spirit.*—While their Master was with them, there were strifes among the disciples; but now all these strifes were at an end. They had prayed more together of late. Notwithstanding differences of sentiments and interests, let us agree to love one another; for where brethren dwell together in unity, there the Lord commands his blessing. The convictions of the Spirit make way for his comforts; and the rough blasts prepare the soul for the gentle gales. The Spirit, like fire, melts the heart, burns up the dross, and kindles devout affections in the soul. They were more than ever under the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, and had miraculous powers for the furtherance of the gospel.—The difference in languages which arose at Babel, has much hindered the spread of knowledge and religion. The apostles' gift of speaking in divers languages proved that their authority was from God.

14—36. *Peter's address to the Jews.*—Though Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost, yet he did not think to set aside the Scriptures. Christ's scholars never learn above their Bible; and the Spirit is given, not to do away the Scriptures, but to enable us to understand, approve, and obey them. Assuredly none will escape condemnation, except those who call upon the name of the Lord, in and through his Son Jesus Christ, as the Saviour of sinners, and the Judge of all mankind.—Christ's resurrection did away the reproach of his death. His death and sufferings should be, not to him only, but to all his, the entrance to a blessed life for evermore. Of this event the apostles were witnesses. Nor did the resurrection rest upon this alone; Christ had poured upon his disciples miraculous gifts and Divine influences.

37—41. *Three thousand souls converted.*—Neither Peter's words, nor the miracle, could have produced such effects, had not the Holy Spirit been given. The apostle exhorted the Jews to repent of their sins, and to avow their belief in Jesus by being baptized in his name. Repentance and remission of sins are still preached to sinners, in the Redeemer's name; still the Holy Spirit seals the blessing on the believer's heart; still the blessings are offered to all that are afar off. Those who repent of their sins, and give

ap themselves to Jesus Christ, must prove their sincerity by breaking off from the wicked.

42—47. *The piety and affection of the disciples.*—We have the history of the truly primitive church; its state of infancy, and, like that, the state of its greatest purity. They kept close to holy ordinances, and abounded in piety and devotion. The greatness of the event raised them above the world, not by destroying property, but doing away selfishness, and causing charity. Those whom God has designed for eternal salvation, shall be brought to Christ, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of his glory.

1. The word Pentecost means fifty. It was fifty days after the pass-over, answering to what is called Whitsuntide. It was a festival: see Lev. 23. 15; Deut. 16. 9; in remembrance of the giving of the Jewish law, Exod. 19.—2. The wind was an emblem of the influences of the Spirit, John 3. 8. Cloven tongues, or small divided flames of fire. Fire was often the emblem of the presence of the Most High, Exod. 3. 2; Lev. 9. 24; 2 Chron. 7. 3.—4. The gift of tongues is referred to, 1 Cor. 12. 10, 28; 13. 1. and 14. 2.—5. Many Jews then dwelt in other lands.—7. The Galilæans had a peculiar accent in speaking, Mark 14. 70.—9. Samaritans, or Persians.—9. By Judæa, some have supposed India.—10. Proselytes, or Gentile converts who worshipped the true God.—17. Joel 2. 28, 29. See also Isa. 44. 3; Ezek. 36. 27; Zech. 12. 10. The last days; the time after the birth of Christ. Dreams here mean inspired visions, as Heb. 1. 2; 3. 7.—25—28. Psa. 16. 8—11.—34. Psa. 110. 1—3. See also John 7. 38, 39.—36. Lord, as ruler. Christ, the promised Messiah.—39. That are afar off, meaning the Gentiles. Promise of the Holy Spirit, Isa. 44. 3; John 16. 7.—44. All things common. This was only for a time: see 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18; Luke 12. 33.—46. Breaking bread; this, perhaps, refers to the Lord's supper; but it is also understood to mean the common meals.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—11. *A lame man healed by Peter and John.*—If we would attempt the healing of men's souls, we must go forth in the name and power of Jesus Christ, calling on helpless sinners to arise and walk in the way of holiness, by faith in Him. How sweet the thought, that the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth can make us whole!

12—26. *Peter's address to the Jews.*—Our Lord always spoke as having Almighty power, and received the honour given to him on account of his Divine miracles. But the apostles referred all to their Lord, and refused to receive any honour, except as his instruments. Jesus was one with the Father; the apostles were weak, sinful men, and dependent for everything on Jesus, whose power effected a cure. Useful men must be very humble. The necessity of repentance is to be solemnly charged upon all who desire that their sins may be blotted out. In a state of trial and probation, the glorified Redeemer will be out of sight, because we must live by faith in him.

Here is a powerful address to warn the Jews, in the very words of Moses, their favourite prophet. Christ came into the world to bring a blessing with him, and he sent his Spirit to be the great blessing. We, by nature, cleave to sin; the design of Divine grace is to turn us from it, that we may not only forsake, but hate it. Let none then think they can be happy by continuing in sin.

1. Three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour of the evening daily sacrifice, which would draw other worshippers, Exod. 29. 39.—2. Many have described the beauty and ornaments of this gate.—6. The apostles wrought miracles in the name of Christ. He did them by his own power and word, "I say unto thee;" "I charge thee."—8. Using his newly acquired powers in outward acts of thankfulness.—16. The Jews were ignorant of Christ in his real office, Luke 23. 34. It was wilful ignorance, 1 Cor. 2. 8.—17. I wot; I consider.—18 Isa. 50. 6; 53. 3-12; Gen. 3. 15; Dan. 9. 26.—19. Refreshing; rest, breathing time.—20. Isa. 43. 25; 44. 22, and 28. 12.—21. Restitution, or restoration, Isa. 1. 26; Joel 3. 1; Rom. 8. 21, 23.—22. Deut. 18. 15, 18, 19.—25. Gen. 12. 3; 18. 18; 26. 4, and 28. 14. See Gal. 3. 8. Thy seed, or Christ.—26. Matt. 1. 21.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—4. *Peter and John imprisoned.*—Miserable is their case, to whom the glory of Christ's kingdom is a grief; for since the glory of that kingdom is everlasting, their grief will be everlasting also. To this day reading the Scriptures, social prayer, and religious conversation, often meet with frowns and checks.

5—14. *The apostles testify to Christ.*—The name of Jesus is that whereby alone believers are saved from the wrath to come. But when covetousness, pride, or any corrupt passion, rules within, men consider those as ignorant and unlearned, who desire to know nothing in comparison with Christ crucified. Christians should act so that all may take knowledge that they have been with their Lord.

15—22. *Peter and John refuse to be silenced.*—Those who know how to put a just value upon Christ's promises, know how to put just contempt upon the world's threatenings. Especially beware of a vain attempt to serve two masters, God and the world; the end will be, you can serve neither.

23—31. *The believers unite in prayer and praise.*—Christ's followers do best in company, provided it is their own company. Those who desire Divine aid and encouragement, may depend upon having them. God gave the disciples greater degrees of his Spirit; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, more than ever.

32—37. *The holy charity of the Christians.*—The doctrine preached was the resurrection of Christ; which being duly explained, was a summary of all the duties, privileges, and

comforts of Christians. There were evident fruits of Christ's grace in all they said and did. They did not take away others' property, but they were indifferent to it. In effect, they had all things common; for there was not any among them who lacked, means were used for their supply. Great care ought to be taken in the distribution of public charity, that it be given to such as are not able to procure a maintenance for themselves; especially those who are reduced to want for well-doing, and for the testimony of a good conscience, ought to be provided for.

1. The captain of the temple was a priest, note Luke 22. 4. 3. In hold; in prison, under guard.—4. Five thousand, including the three thousand converts before mentioned. On comparing ver. 3 and 4, we have proof that the Holy Spirit is God.—10. Name, or power; not the mere use of the name.—11. Matt. 21. 42; Psa. 118. 22.—25. Psa. 2. 1, 2.—32. See ch. 2. 44. This state of things was quickly abused, ch. 5. 2.—36. Cyprus is an island in the Mediterranean Sea, famous for wine.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—11. *The death of Ananias and Sapphira.*—The Spirit of God in Peter discerned unbelief reigning in the heart of Ananias. Satan could not have filled the heart of Ananias with this wickedness had he not been consenting. His falsehood was an attempt to deceive the Spirit of truth, who manifestly spoke and acted by the apostles. The crime consisted not in his retaining part of the price of the land; but in his endeavour to impose upon the apostles with an awful lie, from a desire to make a vain show. If we think to put a cheat upon God, we shall put a fatal cheat upon our own souls. And this punishment was in reality mercy to vast numbers. It prevented the increase of false professors.

12—25. *The apostles' labours and imprisonment.*—That power alone which wrought such miracles by the apostles, can rescue sinners from the power of sin and Satan, and add believers to His worshippers.

The words of the gospel are the words of life; words whereby we may be saved. How wretched are those who are vexed at the success of the gospel! They cannot but see that the word and power of the Lord are against them; yet they will go on. There is no prison so dark, so strong, but God can visit his people in it, and, if he pleases, fetch them out.

26—33. *The apostles testify before the council.*—Faith takes the Saviour in all his offices, who came, not to save us in our sins, but to save us from our sins. None are freed from the guilt and punishment of sin, but those who are freed from the power and dominion of sin; who are turned

from it, and turned against it. Had Christ been exalted to give earthly dominion to Israel, the chief priests would have welcomed him.

34—42. *The advice of Gamaliel.*—The Lord still has all hearts in his hands, and sometimes directs the prudence of the worldly wise, so as to restrain the persecutors. The apostles did not preach themselves, but Christ. It ought to be the constant business of gospel ministers to preach Christ, and him crucified; Christ, and him glorified: nothing beside this, but what has reference to it.

1. A possession; probably a house, or some land, v. 34.—5. Gave up the ghost; died, his spirit fled, Eccl. 12. 7; 3. 21.—6. Bodies in warm countries are quickly buried, John 19. 40.—7. The land was sold for so much, and more. This was equivocation, therefore a lie.—9. Tempt the Spirit, or act as though the apostles were not inspired to discern.—10. Young men, those generally employed in such services.—11. The church, that is, the whole body professing to be disciples of Christ.—12. Jesus had promised that these miracles should follow, John 14. 12; Mark 16. 17, 18.—18. See Luke 21. 12.—21. Council, senate. Both words here signify the Jewish sanhedrim.—28. Straitly, that is, strictly, severely.—34. Gamaliel was tutor to St. Paul; he was a doctor of the law, that is, a Jewish teacher.—36, 37. Theudas and Judas were two of the many leaders who about this time deceived the Jews with false promises, Isa. 8. 10; 28. 18. This taxing followed the enrolment, so called, Luke 2. 2.—41. This spirit is shown in their writings, James 1. 2-4; 1 Pet. 4. 13, 16.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1—7. *The appointment of deacons.*—Hitherto the disciples had been of one accord; but now they were multiplied, they began to murmur. The word of God was enough to take up all the thoughts, cares, and time of the apostles. All who are employed in the service of the church, ought to be commended to the Divine grace by the prayers of the church.

8—15. *Stephen falsely accused of blasphemy.*—Wisdom and holiness make a man's face to shine, yet will not secure men from being treated badly. What shall we say of rational beings attempting to uphold a religious system by false witness and murder! And this has been done in numberless instances. But the blame rests not so much upon the understanding, as upon the heart, which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

1. The Hebrews were the Jewish, the Grecians were the Gentile converts.—2. Serve tables or superintend the distribution of food.—3. This business, or the care of providing for the brethren, and similar duties, 1 Tim. 3. 7, 10.—5. These names are all of them Grecian, a proof of kindness in this appointment.—9. Libertines, were Jews freed from slavery. Cyrenians and Alexandrians came from Africa. Cilicia was the province where Saul of Tarsus was born, ch. 22. 3; and he was,

probaly, among these.—11. Suborned, means bribed. 1 Kings 2. 10, 13; Matt. 26. 59, 60.—15. The face of an angel, a Jewish phrase expressive of majesty and sweetness.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1—29. *Stephen's defence.*—Would we know the nature and effects of justifying faith, we should study the character of the father of the faithful. His calling shows the power and freeness of Divine grace, and the nature of conversion. Here also we see that outward forms and distinctions are as nothing compared with separation from the world, and devotedness to God. God will take special care of those of whom he designs to make special use. And did he thus protect the child Moses? Much more will he secure his holy child Jesus. They may understand, if they do not wilfully shut their eyes, that God will, by this Jesus, deliver them out of a worse slavery than that of Egypt.

30—50. Men deceive themselves, if they think God cannot do what he sees to be good anywhere; he can bring his people into a wilderness, and there speak comfortably to them. Abraham is dead, yet God is still *his* God, therefore Abraham is still alive. This is that life and immortality which are brought to light by the gospel. God who gave them those customs by his servant Moses, might, no doubt, change the custom by his Son Jesus. But Israel thrust Moses from them, and would have returned to their bondage; so men will not obey Jesus, because they love this evil world, and rejoice in their own works and devices. The whole world is God's temple, which he fills with his glory; what occasion has he then for a temple to manifest himself in? Next to the human nature of Christ, the broken and spiritual heart is his most valued temple.

51—53. *Stephen reproves the Jews for the death of Christ.*—Stephen was going on to show that the temple and the temple service must give way to the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth; but he perceived they would not bear it. Therefore he broke off, and by the Spirit of wisdom, courage, and power, rebuked his persecutors. Their guilt stung them to the heart, and they sought relief in murdering their reprover, instead of sorrow and supplication for mercy. There is that in our sinful hearts which still resists the Holy Ghost.

54—60. *The martyrdom of Stephen.*—Stephen died as much in a hurry as ever any man did, yet, when he died, the words used are, He fell asleep; he applied himself to his dying work with as much composure as if he had been going to sleep. Our Lord Jesus is God, to whom we are

to seek, and in whom we are to trust and comfort ourselves, living and dying.

2. Stephen showed that he was well read in the Old Testament Scriptures. Charran means Haran. See Gen. 11. 31; 12. 1; Isa. 51. 2.—6. Gen. 15. 13, 16; Exod. 12. 40; Heb. 11. 9. 400 years, a round or general number for the 430 years from Abraham leaving Charran to the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan.—8. Gen. 17. 9-11; 21. 2-4; 25. 26.—9. Gen. 37. 28.—10, 11. Gen. 41. 37, 54.—13. Gen. 45.—14. Including the wives of Joseph's brethren.—15. Gen. 49. 33.—16. It is thought that the word Abraham has been inserted by a copyist, instead of Jacob; or, after the concise manner of speaking among the Jews, Stephen contracts the two purchases (Gen. 23. 16, and Gen. 33. 19,) into one.—19. Exod. 1. 22.—20. Exod. 2. 2. Exceeding fair, or fair to God, Heb. 11. 23.—22. The Egyptians in the time of Moses were more learned and civilized than any other people.—23. Exod. 2. 11, etc.—30-37. See Exod. 3. Deut. 18. 15. See Acts 3. 22.—38. Lively oracles, the words of life from God, Deut. 32. 46, 47.—40. Exod. 32. 1.—42. Amos 5. 25, 26. Moloch and Remphan were two idols, 2 Kings 23. 10.—44. Exod. 25. 40; Heb. 8. 5. Of witness, or, of the testimony, Numb. 17. 7.—45. Jesus is the Greek for the Hebrew name Joshua; both mean the same, a Saviour.—46. 1 Kings 8. 17; Psa. 132. 4, 5.—47. 1 Kings 6. 1, and 8. 20.—49. Isa. 66. 1, 2.—53. Probably referring to the awful glory of Sinai, Psa. 68. 17; Deut. 33. 2. Disposition, or ministration.—58. Out of the city, 1 Kings 21. 13. This was usual. There was at this time no Roman governor, so the Jews had power to inflict death. It was by stoning, as he was accused of blasphemy, Lev. 24. 16. Clothes, or their upper garments, that they might act more freely.—59. The letter of the law was kept, but its spirit was broken, Deut. 13. 9, 10.—60. Stephen died in prayer, to Jesus as the Lord. See 1 John 5. 20.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1—4. *Saul persecutes the church.*—Though persecution must not drive us from our work, it may send us to work elsewhere. Where a simple desire of doing good influences the heart, it is impossible to shut a man out from usefulness.

5—13. *Philip's success at Samaria. Simon the sorcerer baptized.*—Even bad men, and those who still go after covetousness, may come before God as his people come. The gospel preached may have a common operation upon a soul, where it never produced inward holiness; for all are not savingly converted who profess to believe the gospel. Men may wonder at the proofs of Divine truth, who never experienced their power.

14—25. *The hypocrisy of Simon detected.*—We may take encouragement in praying to God to give the renewing graces of the Holy Ghost to all for whose spiritual welfare we are concerned; for that includes all blessings. No man can give the Holy Spirit by the laying on of his hands; but we should endeavour to instruct those for whom we pray

It is possible for a man to continue under the power of sin, yet to put on a form of godliness. When tempted with money to do evil, see what a perishing thing money is, and scorn it. Think not that Christianity is a trade to live by in this world. There is much wickedness in the thought of the heart, which must be repented of, or we are undone. The doubt here is of the sincerity of Simon's repentance, not of his pardon if his repentance were sincere.

26—40. *Philip and the Ethiopian.*—We should study to do good to those we come into company with by travelling. As to those of whom we know nothing else, we know this, that they have souls. In reading the word of God, we should often inquire of whom and of what the sacred writers speak; but especially our thoughts should be employed about the Redeemer. Let us not be satisfied till we get faith, as the Ethiopian did, by diligent study of the Holy Scriptures, and the teaching of the Spirit of God. When the inquirer after salvation becomes acquainted with Jesus and his gospel, he will go on his way rejoicing, and will fill up his station in society, and discharge his duties, from other motives, and in another manner, than before. Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with water, is not enough without the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

1. This state of things was foretold, Matt. 10. 23.—3. Haling, fetching them by force. Made havoc; the term refers to the ravages made by a wild beast. See ch. 22. 4, and 26. 10, 11.—5. Philip, one of the seven deacons, ch. 6. 5, and 21. 8.—9. It is supposed that Simon had communication with evil spirits, by which he bewitched, that is, deceived or amazed others.—22. Even the most openly wicked should be warned, Ezek. 33. 8, 9.—25. The Samaritan villages had not been visited before: see Matt 10. 5, 6—26. Gaza was a city near the sea coast, formerly belonging to the Philistines, Judg. 16. 1.—27. Ethiopia was a country south of Egypt. See Zeph. 3. 10; Psa. 68. 31.—32. Isa. 53. 7, 8. The meaning is the same, though the words in the Greek and English differ somewhat from those in the Hebrew.—40. Azotus is called Ashdod, 1 Sam. 5. 1.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1—9. *The conversion of Saul.*—It is a signal token of Divine favour, if God stops us from prosecuting or executing sinful purposes. How near to us is the unseen world! It is but for God to draw aside the veil, and objects are presented, compared with which, whatever is most admired on earth is mean and contemptible. Christ's discoveries of himself are humbling; they lay souls very low, in mean thoughts of themselves. When a sinner is brought to a sense of his state, he will cast himself wholly on the mercy of the Saviour, asking what he would have him to do.

10—22. *Saul converted, preaches Christ.*—Lord, what wilt

thou have me to do? And never did Christ leave any who were brought to this inquiry. Now Saul began to pray in another manner than he had done; before, he said his prayers, now, he prayed them. Regenerating grace sets people on praying. The teaching of the Holy Spirit takes away the scales of ignorance and pride from the mind.

23—31. *Saul is persecuted at Damascus, and goes to Jerusalem.*—The Lord knows how to deliver the godly. Though Saul's conversion was, and is a proof of the truth of Christianity, yet it could not, of itself, convert one soul; for nothing can produce true faith, but that power which new-creates the heart. The world is full of deceit, and it is necessary to be cautious, but we must exercise charity. 1 Cor. xiii. 5. The professors of the gospel walked uprightly, and lived upon the comfort of the Holy Ghost, not only in the days of trouble but of prosperity. Those are most likely to walk cheerfully, who walk circumspectly.

32—43. *Cure of Æneas, and Dorcas raised to life.*—When we were wholly without strength, as this poor man, Christ sent his word to heal us. Though Jesus Christ makes thee whole, yet thou must arise, and use the power he gives thee.—Christians who have not property to give in charity, may yet be able to do acts of charity, working with their hands, or walking with their feet, for the good of others. While we live upon the fulness of Christ, for our whole salvation, we should desire to be full of good works, for the honour of his name. How mean the cares of the numerous females who seek no distinction but outward decoration, and who waste their lives in the trifling pursuits of dress and vanity. In the raising of dead souls to spiritual life, the first sign of life is the opening of the eyes of the mind.

1. Saul speaks thus of himself, Gal. 1. 13; 1 Cor. 15. 9; 1 Tim. 1. 13—15. Breathing expresses his deep and incessant excitement on this subject.—2. Of this way (of thinking), namely, Christians, ch. 19. 9, 23.—3. Damascus, a pleasantly situated city, the capital of Syria, 2 Kings 5. 12.—5. Matt. 25. 40, 45. The prickles were the large goads, with which the oxen were urged on. The expression is proverbial, and means useless resistance, Jer. 31. 18.—7. See, for some particulars, ch. 22. 9, and 26. 13.—15. Saul became the apostle of the Gentiles, Gal. 2. 7, 8; Rom. 11. 13.—18. Scales, a layer or crust, like the scales of a fish. The cure was immediate, which marks that it was miraculous.—22. Proving that Jesus was the true Messiah.—26. This was three years after the conversion of Saul; he was part of the time in Arabia, Gal. 1. 18—22.—31. At this time the Jews suffered from the oppression of the Romans.—35. Lydda and Saron were on the sea coast, south of Mount Carmel.—36. Tabitha or Dorcas, means antelope, or doe, Prov. 5. 19.—38. Joppa is a sea port, now called Jaffa, 2 Chron. 2. 16; Jonah 1. 3.—43. Tanner; the art of tanning was then probably unknown; the word means a dealer in hides.

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1—18. *Cornelius and Peter.*—Now the Gentiles were to be called to partake all the privileges of God's people, without first becoming Jews. Pure and undefiled religion is sometimes found where we least expect it.—To tell a Jew that God had directed those animals to be reckoned clean which were hitherto deemed unclean, was saying, that the law of Moses was done away. God knows what services are before us, and how to prepare us; and we know the meaning of what he has taught us, when we find what occasion we have to make use of it.

19—43. *Peter goes to Cornelius.*—When we see our call clear to any service, we should not be perplexed with doubts and scruples arising from prejudices or former ideas. We are right in our aims in attending a gospel ministry, when we do it with regard to the Divine appointment requiring us to make use of that ordinance.—The fear of God and works of righteousness are the substance of true religion, the effects of special grace. The purport of this word was, that God by it published the good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ. Let them know that this Jesus Christ, by whom peace is made between God and man, is Lord of all, and all judgment is committed to him. Peter declares Christ's resurrection from the dead, and the proofs of it. And if we believe in him, we shall all be justified by him as our Righteousness. The remission of sins lays a foundation for all other favours and blessings, by taking that out of the way which hinders the bestowing of them.

44—48. *The gifts of the Holy Spirit poured out.*—The Holy Ghost fell upon others after they were baptized, to confirm them in the faith; but upon these Gentiles before they were baptized, to show that God does not confine himself to outward signs. By mistaken notions of things, we make difficulties for ourselves as to the methods of Divine providence and grace. As they were undeniably baptized with the Holy Ghost, Peter concluded they were not to be refused the baptism of water, and the ordinance was administered. Can we deny the sign to those who have received the things signified? But even those who have received the Holy Ghost, must see their need of daily learning more of the truth.

1. Italian band, consisting of soldiers natives of Italy.—2. The fear of God is always joined with kindness to men, Jas. 1. 27.—3. The ninth hour was the time of evening prayer, Dan. 9. 21.—9. A small room, or the flat top of an eastern house was often used for prayer. Sixth hour, noon.—10. A trance is a state of abstraction from all outward things.—15. Unclean meats are forbidden, Lev. 11. 4. That law was now done away by which the Jews had been kept separate from

other nations.—20. So strong was the prejudice of the Jews against the Gentiles, that it required an express Divine command.—25. To worship, was done by falling prostrate; it might be an act of respect, or of Divine worship. The apostles and even angels, Rev. 22. 8, refused such homage, but our Lord did not.—34. No respecter, that is, not influenced by outward matters, Deut. 10. 17.—38. Anointed, means set apart for a public work, Isa. 61. 1.—42. John 5. 22, 23, 27; Matt. 28. 18, 19. The quick, those who shall be alive at Christ's coming.—43. Zech. 13. 1; Isa. 53. 11.—45. Of the circumcision, or the Jewish Christians then present.

CHAPTER XI.

Vcr. 1—18. *Peter's defence.*—We are too apt to despair of doing good to those who yet, when tried, prove very teachable. It is the bane and damage of the church, to shut out those from it, and from the benefit of the means of grace, who are not in everything as we are. While men are zealous for their own regulations, they should take care that they do not withstand God; and those who love the Lord will glorify him, when he has given repentance to life to any.

19—24. *The success of the gospel at Antioch.*—The hand of the Lord was with them, to bring that home to the heart and conscience, which they could but speak to the outward ear. Their hearers were convinced of the truth of the gospel, and turned to live a holy, spiritual life. They turned from worshipping God in show and ceremony, to worship him in the Spirit and in truth. They turned to the Lord Jesus, and he became All in all with them. This work of conversion must be wrought upon every one of us.

25—30. *The disciples named Christians. Relief sent to Judæa.*—The proper meaning of the name Christian is, a follower of Christ; it denotes one who embraces the religion of Christ, believes his promises, and makes it his chief care to shape his life by Christ's precepts and example. Multitudes take the name of Christian to whom it does not rightly belong. But the name without the reality will only add to our guilt. Grant, Lord, that Christians may forget other names and distinctions, and love one another as the followers of Christ ought to do!

16. Matt. 3. 11; Acts 1. 5, and 19. 4.—18. Rom. 10. 12—15, and 15. 9—12.—19. Phenice, a country near to Galilee.—20. Antioch is a considerable town in the northern part of Syria, more than 300 miles from Jerusalem.—26. First called Christians: they were before called Nazarenes and Galilæans, by the Jews; and were termed among themselves, brethren, believers, etc.—28. Jesus had foretold fanines, Matt. 24. 7; Rom. 15. 25—27. The word here translated world, may mean no more than the land of Palestine, or the Roman empire.

CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1—11. *The martyrdom of James, and the imprisonment of Peter.*—If we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with him, see Matt. 20. 23. The way of persecution, as of other sins, is downhill; when men are in it, they cannot easily stop. If the Lord should bring on the church an awful persecution like this of Herod, the faithful in Christ would learn what soul-felt prayer is.—Peter was assured that the Lord would cause this trial to end in the way that should be most for his glory. When God will work salvation for his people, all difficulties in their way will be overcome. Souls delivered out of spiritual bondage are not at first aware what God has wrought in them.

12—25. *Peter departs. Herod's rage and death.*—As long as we are kept waiting for a mercy, we must continue praying for it. But sometimes that which we most earnestly wish for, we are most backward to believe. The instruments of persecution are themselves exposed to danger; the wrath of God hangs over all that engage in this hateful work.—Such men as Herod, when puffed up with pride and vanity, are ripening fast for signal vengeance. God is very jealous for his own honour, and will be glorified upon those whom he is not glorified by.

1. Herod was the grandson of the first Herod, Matt. 2. 1, and nephew to the other, mentioned Luke 3. 19; 23. 7.—3. The days of unleavened bread were at the time of the passover, Exod. 12. 14, 15. Easter is a word from the name of a heathen festival, observed at the same season; it is not in the original, which is *pasche*.—4. Four quaternions would be sixteen soldiers, who could watch by turns.—5. Instant and earnest prayer is here meant, 1 Thess. 5. 17; Luke 18. 1, 7.—11. Psa. 34. 7; Dan. 3. 28; 6. 22.—12. Probably the evangelist Mark. See v. 25, and Col. 4. 10.—13. Rhoda, means a rose. Such names are and were common.—15. The Jews thought every man had a guardian angel, who sometimes appeared in his form at his death.—20. There was a considerable trade between Judæa and Tyre, in wheat, honey, etc.—21. Herod was dressed in silver tissue, as Josephus describes this event, so that his garments shone splendidly when the sun was on them.—25. The writer of the gospel.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1—3. *The mission of Paul and Barnabas.*—In these persons we see how the Lord raises up instruments for his work, from various places and stations in life. It is by the Spirit of Christ that his ministers are made both able and willing for his service, and taken from other cares that would hinder in it. Whatever means are used, or rules observed, the Holy Ghost alone can fit ministers for their important work, and call them to it.

4—13. *Elymas the sorcerer.*—Satan is in a special manner

busy with great men, to keep them from being religious, for their example will influence many. And those who are enemies to the doctrine of Jesus, are enemies to all righteousness; for in it all righteousness is fulfilled. The ways of the Lord Jesus are the only right ways to heaven and happiness. The doctrine of Christ astonishes: and the more we know of it, the more reason we shall see to wonder at it. Those who are not prepared to endure hardship, are not fitted for the work of the ministry.

14—31. *Paul's discourse at Antioch.*—The reading of the Scriptures in public assemblies is not enough; they should be expounded, and the people exhorted out of them. Everything is touched upon in this sermon, which might best prevail with the Jews to receive and embrace Christ as the promised Messiah. And every view, however short or faint, of the Lord's dealings with his church, reminds us of his long-suffering, and of man's ingratitude and perverseness. When the apostles preached Christ as the Saviour, they were so far from concealing his death, that they always preached Christ crucified. Our complete separation from sin, is represented by our being buried with Christ.

32—41. The resurrection of Christ was the great proof of his being the Son of God. The sure mercies of David are that everlasting life, of which the resurrection was a sure pledge. We were not born for ourselves, but there are those living around us, to whom we must study to be serviceable. Yet here is the difference; Christ was to serve all generations.—The great concern of convinced sinners is, to be justified, to be acquitted from all their guilt, and accepted as righteous in God's sight. By Jesus Christ we obtain a complete justification; for by him a complete atonement was made for sin. Many are ruined because they despise religion. Those that will not wonder and be saved, shall wonder and perish.

42—52. *He preaches to the Gentiles, and is persecuted by the Jews.*—Commonly those who begin with contradicting, end with blaspheming. While many, however, judge themselves unworthy of eternal life, others, who appear less likely, desire to hear more of the glad tidings of salvation. As many as were disposed to eternal life, as many as had concern about their eternal state, and aimed to make sure of eternal life, believed in Christ, in whom God has treasured up that life, and who is the only Way to it; and it was the grace of God that wrought it in them. It is sad, when any, under colour of devotion to God, try to show hatred to Christ.

1. Manaen is thought to have been the foster brother of this Herod. Some have thought Niger, which means black, was a negro.—4 Seleucia was a considerable town in Syria, near the river Orontes.—5

Salamis was a sea port in the south east of the Isle of Cyprus.—6. Paphos was another town in Cyprus, where was a heathen temple.—7 Deputy, or proconsul of a province.—8. Elymas resembled the magicians or deceivers of Egypt, Exod. 7. 11.—9. Saul was a Hebrew name; Paul belonged to him as a Roman citizen, or was now taken as he was going among the Gentiles.—13. It seems from ch. 15. 38, that John Mark was to blame herein.—14. Antioch in Pisidia was not the same as Antioch in Syria.—15. It was usual to call upon strangers attending a synagogue to speak.—18, 19. Deut. 8. 2, and 7. 1.—20. Judg. 2. 16; 1 Sam. 3. 20.—21. Forty years, inclusive of Samuel's government as well as Saul's. 1 Sam. 8. 5, and 10. 1.—22, 23. Psa. 89. 20; Isa. 11. 1; Luke 1. 32, 69.—25. Luke 3. 16; John 1. 20, 27.—31. Acts 1. 3, and 10. 41.—34. The solemn promises of mercy through Christ, declared unto David.—35. Isa. 55. 3, and Psa. 16. 10. See also Psa. 2. 7; Heb. 1. 5.—36. On sleep, asleep. The death of a believer is often so described.—38. "Through this" (person), who appeared as man.—39. Jer. 31. 34; Dan. 9. 24; Isa. 53. 11; Luke 24. 47.—41. Isa. 29. 14; Hab. 1. 5.—42. Or in the week between, before the next sabbath. There was a week-day service in the synagogues.—47. Isa. 49. 5, 6.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1—7. *Paul and Barnabas at Iconium.*—The apostles' success was not to be ascribed to the manner of their preaching, but to the Spirit of God who used the means. Perseverance in doing good, amidst dangers and hardships, is an evidence of grace. If the church's enemies join to destroy it, shall not its friends unite for its preservation?

8—18. *A cripple healed at Lystra.*—When we have faith, that most precious gift of God, we shall be delivered from the spiritual helplessness in which we were born, and from the dominion of sinful habits since formed. The servants of God might easily obtain undue honours if they would wink at men's errors and vices; but they dread and detest such respect more than any reproach. God's truth needs not the services of man's falsehood. Compare the apostles' declaration with the false opinions of those who think that the worship of a God, under any name, or in any manner, is equally acceptable to the Lord Almighty.

19—28. *Paul stoned at Lystra. The churches visited again.*—If Paul would have been Mercury, he might have been worshipped; but if he will be a faithful minister of Christ, he shall be stoned. Thus men who easily submit to strong delusions, hate to receive the truth in the love of it. The grace of God, and nothing less, effectually establishes the souls of the disciples. All who love the Lord Jesus, will rejoice to hear that he has opened the door of faith wide, to those who were strangers to him and to his salvation.

2. The gospel was preached first to the Jews, Luke 24. 47; Acts 3. 26.—11. The heathens believed that their gods often visited earth, more especially Jupiter and Mercury.—13. Barnabas was, perhaps,

the most stately; Paul spoke most.—13. Garlands were placed on oxen sacrificed to Jupiter.—17. Psa. 147. 8; Jer. 14. 22; Rom. 1. 20. Such works of God may be seen by all.—19. Paul mentions his being stoned, 2 Cor. 11. 25; 2 Tim. 3. 11. He was miraculously healed.—22. Confirming, is encouraging, strengthening, 1 Pet. 5. 10.

CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1—6. *The dispute raised by Judaizing teachers.*—There is a strange proneness in us to think that all do wrong who do not just as we do. Wise and good men desire to avoid disputes; yet when false teachers oppose the main truths of the gospel, or bring in hurtful doctrines, we must oppose them.

7—21. *The council at Jerusalem.*—Justification by faith, and sanctification by the Holy Ghost, cannot be separated; both are the gift of God. May we have that faith which the great Searcher of hearts approves, and attests by the seal of the Holy Spirit. Let converts be warned to avoid all appearances of the evils which they formerly practised, or are likely to be tempted to; and caution them to use Christian liberty with moderation and prudence.

22—35. *The letter from the council.*—The apostles and disciples were assured that it seemed good unto God the Holy Spirit, as well as to them, to lay upon the converts no other burden than the things which were necessary, either on their own account, or from present circumstances. It was a comfort to hear that carnal ordinances were no longer imposed on them, which perplexed the conscience, but could not purify or pacify it; and that which threatened division was removed.

36—41. *Paul and Barnabas separate.*—We should suspect ourselves of being partial, and guard against this in putting our relations forward. We see that the best of men are but men, subject to like passions as we are. Perhaps there were faults on both sides, as usual in such contentions. Christ's example alone, is a copy without a blot. What mischief the remainders of pride and passion in good men, do in the world, and do in the church! Many at Antioch, who had heard but little of the devotedness and piety of Paul and Barnabas, heard of their dispute and separation; and thus it will be with ourselves, if we give way to contention. Believers must be constant in prayer, that they may never allow unholy tempers to prevail.

1. These discussions are alluded to, Gal. 2. 12; Titus 1. 10, 11; Gal. 5. 2—3. Phenice was that part of Syria to the north of Galilee.—7. See ch. 10. 20, and 11. 12.—16. Amos 9. 11, 12.—20. These rules and a few more seem to have been given to Noah, Gen. 9. 4. Strangling animals intended for food, and eating blood, were peculiarly offensive to the Jews, and were forbidden at that time to the Gentiles, who were

much with them.—21. See ch 13. 15, 27; also 2 Cor. 3. 15.—29. It was customary for heathen priests to sell as food the animals given them for offerings, after they had been killed at the shrine of the god, 1 Cor. 10. 25, 28.—39. Paul seems to have been reconciled to them afterwards, Col. 4. 10.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1—5. *Paul takes Timothy to be his assistant.*—When men will submit in nothing, and oblige in nothing, Christian temper is wanting; and there is great reason to believe that the doctrines and precepts of the gospel will not be successfully taught. Believers were confirmed in the Christian faith, because it set up a spiritual way of serving God, as suited to the nature both of God and man.

6—15. *Paul proceeds to Macedonia. The conversion of Lydia.*—People greatly need help for their souls; it is their duty to look out for it, and to invite the aid of those who can help them. If we have not synagogues, we must be thankful for more private places, and resort to them; not forsaking the assembling together, as our opportunities are. Lydia had an honest calling, which the historian notices to her praise. Yet though she had a calling to mind, she found time to improve advantages for her soul. Religion does not call us *from* our business in the world, but directs us *in* it. The Lord alone can open the heart to receive and believe his word.

16—24. *An evil spirit cast out. Paul and Silas scourged and imprisoned.*—Satan, though the father of lies, will declare the most important truths, when he can thereby serve his purposes. Those who do good by drawing men from sin, may expect to be reviled as troublers of the city.

25—34. *The conversion of the jailer at Philippi.*—How much more happy are true Christians than their prosperous enemies! No place, or time is amiss for prayer, if the heart be lifted up to God. And no trouble, however grievous, should hinder us from praise. All the cautions of the word of God against sin have this tendency, "Man, woman, hurt not thyself, and then none else can hurt thee; do not sin, for nothing but that can hurt thee." In the answer of Paul is the sum of the whole gospel, the covenant of grace in a few words. The Lord so blessed the word, that the jailer was at once softened and humbled. When sinners are converted, they will love and honour those whom they before despised and hated, and will seek to lessen the sufferings they before desired to increase.

35—40. *Paul and Silas released.*—It was not a mere point of honour that the apostle stood upon, but justice, and not to himself so much as to his cause. Christians should never express personal anger, nor insist too strictly upon

personal amends. The Lord will make them more than conquerors in every conflict.

1. The early training of Timothy is spoken of, 2 Tim. 1. 5; 3. 15. See Rom. 1. 21. His mother and grandmother had, probably, heard Paul on his former visit to these parts, ch. 14. 6.—6. Phrygia and Galatia were countries adjoining. Asia means Asia Minor, near which were Mysia and Bithynia. Troas was a seaport.—9. Macedonia is a country in Europe, about the middle of Turkey.—11. Samothracia, Neapolis, and Philippi, near the sea coast.—13. Places for prayer were commonly by the side of rivers.—14. Either clothes dyed purple, or the purple fringes the Jews wore, Numb. 15. 38.—16. A spirit of divination, or of Python (the serpent) pretending to foretell events.—18 See Mark 1. 25, 34; Acts 3. 6. Paul did not speak in his own name.—21. The Roman colonies, v. 12, were proud of their privileges.—24. The stocks then in use did not merely confine the legs, but caused much pain.—27. The heathens taught that suicide was laudable in times of danger; the principles of Christianity forbid it.—33. The apostles had no warrant to heal themselves by miracle.—35. The serjeants were the lictors, who attended the Roman judges. they carried axes, in bundles of rods, as badges of their office.—37. Scourging was a great disgrace, ch. 22. 25; but Jesus endured it, John 19. 1. Paul vindicated his privileges as a Roman citizen, which had been violated.

CHAPTER XVII.

Ver. 1—9. *Paul at Thessalonica.*—Christ must needs suffer for us, because he could not otherwise purchase redemption for us; and he must needs have risen again, because he could not otherwise apply the redemption to us. How strange it is, that men should grudge others the privileges they will not themselves accept! Neither rulers nor people need be troubled at the increase of real Christians, even though turbulent spirits make religion the pretext for evil designs.

10—21. *The Bereans. Paul at Athens.*—The doctrine of Christ does not fear inquiry. Those are truly noble, and likely to be more and more so, who make the Scriptures their rule, and consult them accordingly. Athens was then famed for polite learning, philosophy, and the fine arts, but yet it was wholly given to idolatry. The apostle ever dwelt upon two points, Christ and a future state; Christ our way, and heaven our end. They asked about Paul's doctrine, not because it was good, but because it was new. Time is precious, and we are concerned to employ it well, because eternity depends upon it.

22—34. *He preaches at Athens.*—Are there not many now called Christians who are zealous in their devotions, yet the great object of their worship is to them an unknown God? Observe what glorious things Paul here says of that God whom he served, and would have them to serve. The Lord now commanded all men everywhere to repent

of their idolatry. Each sect of the learned men would feel affected by the apostle's discourse, which tended to show the emptiness or falsity of their doctrines. Of all subjects, that which deserves the most attention often gains the least. But those who scorn will have to bear the consequences, and the word will never be useless.

1. Amphipolis, Appollonia, and Thessalonica, are in Macedonia. A number of Jews are still settled there, Dent. 28. 64.—4. Consorted, means kept company. See 1 Thess. 2. 1, 2.—7. Jason is named in Rom. 16. 21, which was written not long after.—14, 15. Berea is near Thessalonica; Athens is to the south.—16. Athens was full of idol temples.—18. Epicureans and Stoics were heathen philosophers; the former thought only of pleasure; the latter were cold and unfeeling. So confused were their ideas of Christianity, and so careless as to what they heard, that they took "the resurrection" to be a goddess.—22. Mars' Hill was the court of the Areopagus, the highest tribunal in Athens.—23. The Athenians had a festival for all gods who might be unknown to them. Heathen writers have mentioned this altar and the inscription.—26. Made of one blood: this was opposed to the opinions of the Athenian philosophers.—28. Col. 1. 17; Heb. 1. 3. The Greek poets were then much read. The author here quoted was named Aratus.—30. Winked at, or allowed to pass as though unnoticed.—31. Acts 10. 42; Rom. 2. 16, and 14. 10.—34. The Areopagites were the chief magistrates of Athens.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ver. 1—11. *Paul at Corinth, with Aquila and Priscilla.*—An honest trade, by which a man may get his bread, is not to be looked upon with contempt by any. The Jews would not believe themselves, and did all they could to keep others from believing. When some oppose the gospel, we must turn to others. Grief that many persist in unbelief should not prevent gratitude for the conversion of some to Christ. Let us not despair concerning any place, when even in wicked Corinth Christ had much people. He will gather in his chosen flock from the places where they are scattered.

12—17. *Paul before Gallio.*—It was right in Gallio that he left the Jews to themselves in matters relating to their religion, but yet would not let them, under pretence of that, persecute another. But whether Jesus be the Messiah, and whether the gospel be a Divine revelation, are not questions of words and names, they are questions of vast importance. If Gallio cared not for the affronts of bad men, it was commendable; but if he cared not for the abuses done to good men, his indifference was wrong.

18—23. *He visits Jerusalem.*—Our times are in God's hand; therefore we must make all promises with submission to the will of God. Disciples are compassed about with infirmity; ministers must do what they can to direct

them to Christ, who is their Strength. Let us earnestly seek, in our several places, to promote the cause of Christ, relying on the Lord to bring that to pass he sees good.

24—28. *Apollos teaches at Ephesus and in Achaia.*—Though Apollos had not the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, he made use of the gifts he had. He was full of zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of precious souls. Aquila and Priscilla encouraged his ministry, and they told what they knew to him. Young scholars may gain a great deal by converse with old Christians. As long as we are in this world there are remainders of unbelief, and something lacking in faith to be perfected, and the work of faith to be fulfilled.

1. Corinth is a city in Greece, and was then a place of much trade, and noted for licentiousness.—2. This command of the emperor Claudius is mentioned in history.—3. Tent-makers, or upholsterers. See 2 Thess. 3. 8; 2 Cor. 11. 9.—6. Matt. 10. 14; Acts 13. 51; Ezek. 33. 4. The Jews shook their upper garment, to express displeasure.—8. Crispus is mentioned, 1 Cor. 1. 14.—12. Achaia, the south of Greece, which contained Corinth and Athens.—17. Sosthenes was a Christian, 1 Cor. 1. The Greeks here were Jewish converts.—18. Cenchrea was a port, which joined Corinth. Rom. 16. 1. The journeys mentioned in this and the next four verses extended to 2000 miles.—24. Alexandria was a city of Egypt, where many Jews lived.—27. The labours of Apollos are referred to, 1 Cor. 3. 6.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 1—12. *Paul instructs the disciples of John at Ephesus.*—Paul found some religious persons at Ephesus, who looked to Jesus as the Messiah, but they had not been led to expect the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost; yet they spake as ready to welcome the notice of it. The Holy Ghost came upon them; they spake with tongues, and prophesied. Though we do not now expect miraculous powers, yet all who profess to be disciples of Christ should be called on to examine whether they have received the Holy Ghost in his sanctifying influences. Many seem not to have heard that there is a Holy Ghost, and many deem all that is spoken concerning his graces and comforts to be delusion. They evidently know not the meaning of that outward sign on which they place great dependence. When arguments and persuasions only harden men in unbelief and blasphemy, we must separate from such unholy company.

13—20. *The Jewish exorcists disgraced, and some Ephesians burn their evil books.*—If we resist the devil by faith in Christ, he will flee from us; but if we think to resist him by the using of Christ's name, or his works, as a spell or charm, Satan will prevail against us. Surety if the word

of God prevailed among us, many lewd, infidel, and wicked books would be burned by their possessors. If we desire to be in earnest in the great work of salvation, every pursuit must be given up which hinders the effect of the gospel upon the mind, or loosens its hold upon the heart.

21—31. *The tumult at Ephesus.*—Men are jealous for that by which they get their wealth; and many set themselves against the gospel of Christ, because it calls men from all unlawful crafts, however much wealth is to be gained by them. The city was full of confusion, the effect of zeal for false religion. Friends will often be raised up among those who are strangers to true religion, but observe the honest and consistent behaviour of Christians.

32—41. *The tumult appeased.*—It is a very good rule at all times, both in private and public affairs, not to be hasty and rash in our actions, but always to keep our passions under check. How well it were if we would quiet our appetites and passions, by considering the account we must shortly give to the Judge of heaven and earth! See how the overruling providence of God keeps the public peace, by power over the spirits of men. Thus the world is kept in some order, and men are held back from destroying each other. It is as safe to contend with wild beasts as with men enraged by party zeal and disappointed covetousness. Whatever side in religious disputes, or whatever name this spirit assumes, it is worldly, and should be discountenanced by all.

1. These upper coasts were the parts near the Black Sea. Ephesus, a town in Asia, long famous for a Christian church, Eph. 1. 1; Rev. 2. 1—13. Exorcists were Jews, who pretended to cast out devils, Matt. 12.

of heathen magic or conjuring, much practised at Ephesus. Fifty thousand pieces of silver would be worth about two thousand pounds.—21. Designed, under the influence of the Holy Spirit.—24. These silver shrines were small models of the temple of Diana, v. 35.—31. Chief of Asia; the Asiarcha, superintendents of religious worship.—32. The uproar at Ephesus is noticed, 2 Cor. 1. 8, 9.—34. A Jew, therefore a despiser of idols.—35. This officer was higher in authority than the town clerks among us. This object of idolatrous worship is supposed to have been an aërolite, one of those masses of stone which have fallen from the skies.—38. The law is open; he can have recourse to the courts of law.

CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 1—12. *Eutychus restored to life.*—A Christian's work and his pleasure will be the same wherever he goes. The disciples came together on the first day of the week, the Lord's day. It is to be religiously observed by all the followers of Christ. In the early times, it was the custom to receive the Lord's supper every Lord's day, thus celebrating the memorial of Christ's death. The preaching

of the gospel ought to go with the sacraments. They were willing to hear; Paul saw they were so, and continued his speech. We must do what we can to prevent being sleepy; get our hearts affected with the word we hear, so as to drive sleep far away. Infirmity requires tenderness, but contempt requires severity. How seldom are hours of repose broken for the purposes of devotion! but how often for amusement or sinful revelry!

13—27. *Paul travels, and his discourse to the elders of Ephesus.*—Paul tried to do good when going from place to place, as every good man should do. He was a plain preacher, one that spoke his message so as to be understood. He was a truly Christian, evangelical preacher; he did not preach notions or doubtful matters; nor affairs of state or the civil government; but he preached faith and repentance. It is enough for the child of God to know that his strength shall be equal to his day. He knows not, he would not know, what the day before him shall bring forth. The powerful influences of the Holy Spirit bind the true Christian to his duty; while it is the business of our life to provide for a joyful death. He had preached to them the whole counsel of God.

28—38. *Their farewell.*—Christ has purchased the flock with his own blood. The blood was his as Man; yet so close is the union between the Divine and human nature, that it is here called the blood of God. This put such dignity and worth into it, as to ransom believers from all evil, and purchase all good.—They were full of care what would become of them. Paul directs them to look up to God with faith, and commends them to the word of God's grace, not only as the foundation of their hope and the fountain of their joy, but as the rule of their lives. It is good for friends, when they part, to part with prayer. It was a comfort to all, that the presence of Christ both went with him and stayed with them.

3. Paul alludes to these dangers, 2 Cor. 11. 26.—4. These Christians are often named in the epistles, Rom. 16. 23; Col. 4. 7, 10.—7. To break bread, perhaps the Lord's supper; or it may have been an agapæ, or love-feast.—8. The upper chamber was often the largest and best room, Luke 22. 12.—9. The third loft, or story, means the upper room in which they were; the windows were mostly even with the floor.—14, 15. All these places may be traced on the coast of Asia.—16. One of the chief Jewish and Christian festivals, ch. 2. 1. Voyages for even short distances were then very tedious.—22. Bound, or constrained.—29. Grievous wolves, mean false teachers, Matt. 7. 15; 2 Pet. 2. 1.—35. See John 21. 25.

CHAPTER XXI.

Ver. 1—18. *Paul's journey to Jerusalem.*—Foreseeing Paul's troubles, from love to him, and concern for the

church, they wrongly thought it would be most for the glory of God that he should continue at liberty. When we see trouble coming, it becomes us to say, not only, The will of the Lord *must* be done, and there is no remedy; but, *Let* the will of the Lord be done. When a trouble is come, let this allay our griefs, that the will of the Lord is done: when we see it coming, let this silence our fears, that the will of the Lord *shall* be done; and we ought to say, Amen, *let* it be done. It is honourable to have been enabled, by the grace of God, to continue long in a course of duty, stedfast in the faith, growing more and more experienced, to a good old age. And with these old disciples one would choose to lodge; for the multitude of their years shall teach wisdom. Many brethren at Jerusalem received Paul gladly. We think, perhaps, that if we had him among us, we should gladly receive him; but we should not, if, having his doctrine, we do not gladly receive it.

19—26. *He is persuaded to join in ceremonial observances.*—Paul ascribed all his success to God, and to God he gave the praise. They asked Paul to gratify the believing Jews, by some compliance with the ceremonial law. It was great weakness to be so fond of the shadows, when the substance was come. The weakness and evil of the human heart strongly appear, when we consider that the excellence of his character, and the success with which God blessed his labours, could not gain esteem and affection, seeing that he did not render the same respect to mere ceremonial observances. How watchful should we be against prejudices! This compliance of Paul did not answer, for the very thing which was expected to pacify the Jews brought him into trouble. Integrity and uprightness will be more likely to preserve us than outward compliances.

27—40. *Paul in danger from the Jews, is rescued by the Romans.*—It is no new thing for those who mean honestly and act regularly, to have things laid to their charge which they never thought of. It is common for the wise and good to have that charged against them by malicious people, with which they thought to have obliged them. God often makes those protect his people who have no affection to them, but only have compassion for sufferers, and regard to the public peace.

1. Coos and Rhodes are islands between Greece and Asia.—4. That is, his sufferings there, ch. 20, 23, had been made known to them by the Spirit, and their affection for Paul caused them to warn him of the danger.—7. Ptolemais, now Acre, a town on the sea coast.—10. This gifted person is mentioned Acts 11, 28. See 1 Cor. 12, 10.—15. Took up our carriages; packed up their baggage.—16. Mnason, who had a house at Jerusalem.—21. This was not so. Paul did not interfere with the Jews, except to teach them not to depend on rites and ceremonies

for their justification.—24. The Jewish laws as to vows are found in Numbers 6. 2, 13, 18.—26. This seems to have been a weak compliance, Gal. 2. 18.—34. The castle was the tower Antonia, which overlooked the temple.—38. This Egyptian leader appeared in A.D. 55, or five years before.

CHAPTER XXII.

Ver. 1—11. *Paul's account of his conversion.*—Condemned sinners are struck blind by the power of darkness, and it is a lasting blindness, like that of the unbelieving Jews. Convinced sinners are struck blind as Paul was, not by darkness, but by light. A simple relation of the Lord's dealings with us, when delivered in a right spirit and manner, will make more impression than laboured speeches.

12—21. *Paul directed to preach to the Gentiles.*—The Lord having chosen the sinner, that he should know his will, he is humbled, enlightened, and brought to the knowledge of Christ and his blessed gospel. Christ is here called that Just One; for he is Jesus Christ the righteous. Be baptized, and rest not in the sign, but make sure of the thing signified, the putting away of the filth of sin. The great gospel duty, to which by our baptism we are bound, is, to seek for the pardon of our sins in Christ's name, and in dependence on him and his righteousness. Providence contrives better for us than we do for ourselves; we must refer ourselves to God's guidance. But nothing can reconcile man's heart to the gospel, except the grace of God.

22—30. *The rage of the Jews—Paul pleads that he is a Roman citizen.*—The mention of Paul's being sent to the Gentiles was so contrary to all their prejudices as Jews, that they would hear no more. Paul pleaded his privilege as a Roman citizen. Let us value that freedom to which all the children of God are born. The apostle knew that the God whom he served would support him under all sufferings for his name's sake. He never shrunk from a cross which his Divine Master laid upon his onward road; and he never stepped aside out of that road to take one up.

3. See Phil. 3. 5—8. Scholars sat at their teachers' feet.—4. See ch. 9. 1, etc., and the notes on it.—9. That is, they had no distinct idea of what passed, ch. 9. 7.—16. Baptism was the sign of Christian profession, ch. 8. 36, 37.—17. A trance is a vision or state of abstraction from earthly things. Perhaps on Paul's visit to Jerusalem, ch. 9. 26—30.—22. The Jews were unwilling to hear of the Gentiles being called, Luke 4. 28. It is the practice of Arabs to throw dust into the air to show their contempt of any person.—24. Examined by scourging, or tortured to make him confess.—25. See ch. 16. 37.—28. Paul probably was free born, in consequence of one of his ancestors having done service to the state.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Ver. 1—5. *Paul's defence before the council of the Jews.*—An honest man sets God before him, and lives as in his sight, according to the best of his knowledge; he keeps from whatever is evil, and cleaves to what is good. Great men may be told of their faults, and public complaints may be made in a proper manner; but the law of God requires respect for those in authority.

6—11. *Paul's defence*—*He receives a Divine assurance that he shall go to Rome.*—The Pharisees were correct in the faith of the Jewish church. The Sadducees denied a future state; they had neither hope of eternal happiness, nor dread of eternal misery. It was justifiable by this profession of opinion on that disputed point, to draw off the Pharisees from persecuting him. There is no true friendship among the wicked, and in a moment, and with the utmost ease, God can turn their union into open enmity. Whoever is against us, we need not fear, if the Lord stand by us. It is the will of Christ, that his servants who are faithful, should be always cheerful.

12—35. *The Jews conspire to kill Paul*—*Lysias sends him to Casarea.*—The Lord readily disappoints the best concerted schemes of iniquity. He who will not help himself according to his means and power, has neither reason nor revelation to assure him that he shall receive help from God. The men of the world can discern between the conscientious conduct of upright believers, and the zeal of false professors. All hearts are in God's hand, and those are blessed who commit their ways unto him.

1. Have endeavoured to act conscientiously.—2. Ananias is not thought to be the same as Annas, John 18. 13.—3. Lev. 19. 35; Deut. 25. 1, 2; John 7. 51. Paul gave way to a momentary expression of anger. The reference may be to the whitened tombs of the Jews.—5. Exod. 22. 28; Jude 8; 2 Pet. 2. 10. Wist not; knew not. There seems to have been some irregularity as to the high priesthood at this time.—6. Phil. 3. 5; Matt. 22. 23, etc.—12. Such rash vows were often made and broken in those times.—23. Casarea was the seat of the Roman government in Judæa.—26. This letter shows the style of intercourse among the Romans. "Most excellent," a customary Roman title for a person of rank.—35. In Herod's judgment hall; or in some part of that building.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Ver. 1—9. *The speech of Tertullus against Paul.*—The selfish and evil passions of men urge them forward, and the graces and power of speech too often have been used to mislead and prejudice men against the truth. How different will the characters of Paul and Felix appear at

the day of judgment, from what they are represented in the speech of Tertullus!

10—21. *Paul's defence before Felix.*—Let us never be driven from any good way by contempt and reproach. It is very comfortable, in worshipping God, to look to him as the God of our fathers, and to set up no other rule of faith or practice but the Scriptures. If blamed for being more earnest in the things of God than our neighbours, what is our reply? How many would rather be accused of weakness, nay, even of wickedness, than of fervent love to Christ, and devotedness to his service! Can such think that He will confess them when he comes in his glory?

22—27. *Felix trembles at the reasoning of Paul.*—Justice respects our conduct in life, particularly in reference to others; temperance, the state and government of our souls, in reference to God. Felix trembled, but that was all. Many are startled by the word of God, who are not changed by it. Many fear the consequences of sin, yet continue in the love and practice of it. In the affairs of our souls, delays are dangerous. Felix put off this matter to a convenient season, but we do not find that it ever came. Sinners often start up like a man roused from his sleep by a loud noise, but soon sink again into their usual drowsiness. Let us not be deceived by occasional appearances of religion in ourselves or in others. Remember, now is the day of salvation; to-morrow may be too late.

1. An orator is a public speaker. Tertullus showed great disregard to truth, by his flattery of Felix and false accusation of Paul.—10. Felix was made governor of Judæa seven years before, in A.D. 53.—14. Heresy is a departure from true doctrine, Titus 3. 10.—15. Of the just and unjust: this was opposed to the belief of the Pharisees, who only taught the resurrection of the just. See Dan. 12. 2; John 5. 28, 29, etc.—17. The object of this journey is mentioned, Rom. 15. 25; 2 Cor. 8. 4.—24. Drusilla left her own husband, to live in open sin with the heathen governor Felix.—27. Felix was removed for his crimes, and succeeded by Festus.

CHAPTER XXV.

Ver. 1—12. *Paul before Festus. He appeals to Caesar.*—Preaching Christ, the end of the law, was no offence against the law. It becomes the innocent, to insist calmly upon their innocence. If none of the things whereof they accused him were true, no man could deliver him unto them, with justice. Paul is neither released nor condemned.

13—27. *Festus confers with Agrippa respecting Paul.*—See how slightly this Roman speaks of Christ. But the day is at hand when Festus and the whole world will see, that all the concerns of the Roman empire were but trifles,

compared with this question of Christ's resurrection. Here was a noble assembly brought together to hear the truths of the gospel, though they only meant to gratify their curiosity by attending to the defence of a prisoner. It is no small mercy to have God clear up our righteousness as the light, and our just dealing as the noon-day. And God makes even the enemies of his people to do them right.

2. Felix had succeeded in bringing the country into a quiet state; but he was an oppressive and cruel governor.—8. Cesar was the title of the emperor, or supreme ruler, Luke 2. 1; 1 Pet. 2. 13, to which was afterwards added the name Augustus, see ver. 21.—11. A Roman citizen might appeal from an inferior court to the emperor.—13. Agrippa was the son of Herod (Acts 12); Bernice was his favourite sister, with whom he lived in sin.—27. There was more justice in the Roman courts than in those of the Jews.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Ver. 1—11. *Paul's defence before Agrippa.*—See here what Paul's religion is; he has not such zeal for the ceremonial law as he had in his youth; the sacrifices and offerings are done away by the great Sacrifice which they typified. Of the ceremonial cleansings he makes no conscience, and thinks the Levitical priesthood is done away in the priesthood of Christ; but, as to the main principles of his religion, he is as zealous as ever. Paul acknowledged, that while a Pharisee, he was a bitter enemy to Christianity. Those who have been most strict in their conduct before conversion, will afterwards see abundant reason for humbling themselves, even on account of things which they then thought

12—23. *His conversion* a
was made a minister by
who appeared to him in t

from sin to God, are not only pardoned, but have a grant of a rich inheritance. The forgiveness of sins makes way for these blessings. Thus the true convert can give a reason of his hope, and a good account of the change manifest in him. Yet for going about and calling on men thus to repent and to be converted, vast numbers have been persecuted.

24—32. *Festus and Agrippa convinced of Paul's innocence.*
—It becomes us to speak the words of truth and soberness, and then we need not be troubled at the unjust censures of men. Agrippa saw a great deal of reason for Christianity. His understanding and judgment were for the time convinced, but his heart was not changed. Many are almost persuaded to be religious, who are not quite persuaded;

they are under strong convictions of their duty, and of the excellence of the ways of God, yet do not carry out their convictions. It is with much difficulty that any person can be persuaded he needs a work of grace on his heart, like that which was needful for the conversion of the Gentiles. Let us beware of fatal hesitation in our own conduct.

5. The hope of the promise; that is, of the Messiah.—7. Jer. 23. 5, and 33. 14; Ezek. 34. 23, and 37. 24.—11. See ch. 9. and ch. 22. 25. Paul did not hesitate to use the customary form of respect.—29. A most excellent wish, well expressed, though the speaker was a prisoner.—32. Paul having appealed to Cæsar, the inferior court could not interfere respecting him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Ver. 1—11. *Paul's voyage towards Rome.*—God here encourages those who suffer for him to trust in him; for he can put it into the hearts of those to befriend them, from whom they least expect it. When the winds are contrary, yet we must be getting forward as well as we can. Many who are not driven backward by cross providences, do not get forward by favourable providences. And many real Christians complain their souls make little progress. Every fair haven is not a safe haven.

12—20. *Paul and his companions endangered by a tempest.*—Those who launch forth on the ocean of this world, with a fair gale, know not what storms they may meet with. Let us never expect to be quite safe till we enter heaven. See what the wealth of this world is: though coveted as a blessing, the time may come when it will be a burden. Any man will rather make shipwreck of his goods than of his life; but many rather make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, than of their possessions.

21—29. *He receives a Divine assurance of safety.*—People bring themselves into trouble, because they do not know when they are well off; they come to harm and loss by aiming to amend their condition, often against advice. It is a comfort to the faithful servants of God when in difficulties, that as long as the Lord has any work for them to do, their lives shall be prolonged. God is ever faithful, therefore let all who have an interest in his promises be cheerful. As, with God, saying and doing are not two things, believing and enjoying should not be so with us.

30—38. *Paul encourages those with him.*—Duty is ours, events are God's; and we do not trust God, but tempt him, if we do not use proper means for our safety. But how selfish are men in general, often ready to seek their own advantage or safety by the hurt or destruction of others! It is an encouragement to people to commit themselves to

Christ as their Saviour, when those who invite them, clearly show that they themselves do so trust in him.

39—44. *They are shipwrecked.*—They had the shore in view, yet suffered shipwreck; thus we are taught never to be secure. But whatever the trials and dangers may be, in due time all believers will get safely to heaven. Lord Jesus, thou hast assured us that none of thine shall perish; thou wilt bring them all safely to the heavenly shore.

1. Sail into Italy, for Paul to be heard on his appeal.—2. Aristarchus was a friend and companion of Paul, ch. 19. 29.—3. Sailing in those days was tedious, and always near the coast.—6. There was a great trade for corn, v. 38, from Egypt to Italy.—7. Crete, or Candy, an island between the continents of Europe and Asia.—9. The fast, the Jewish great day of atonement, was in autumn, on the tenth day of the seventh month from the passover, Lev. 23. 27, 29.—10. Paul perceived this by Divine revelation.—14. Euroclydon, or eastern tempest; this violent and dangerous wind is well known in those seas, and now called a Levanter.—17. Undergirding, passing large ropes round the ship. Quicksands, dangerous places near the shore.—20. Before the compass was invented, sailors directed their course by the stars, observing the points of the heavens where they appeared.—25. The nature of true faith is here seen, as in Luke 1. 45; Rom. 4. 20, 21.—27. Adria is the sea near Italy, the south part of the Adriatic Gulf, with the Mediterranean near it.—29. It was then customary to anchor by the stern.—31. The promises of God require us to be attentive to use means.—33. Nothing, or no regular meal.—34. Not a hair fall, is an expression of safety, Matt. 10. 30; Luke 12. 7.—39. Creek, a narrow bay or cove.—40. Rudder bands; the rudders then used were large oars, fastened to the side by ropes, and drawn up when not in use.—41. Two seas met, that is, there was a small point of land between them.—44. God often bleases others, for the sake of his people, Gen. 8. 1; Matt. 24. 22.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ver. 1—10. *Paul kindly received at Melita.*—The conduct of heathens, or persons called barbarians, condemns many in civilized nations, professing to be Christians. Murder is a dreadful crime, one which shall not long go unpunished. But though some are made examples in this world, to prove that there is a God and a Providence, yet many are left unpunished, to prove that there is a judgment to come. Many have thought that all who were remarkably afflicted in this life were wicked; but Divine revelation sets this matter in a true light. Good men often are greatly afflicted in this life, for the trial and increase of their faith and patience. Observe Paul's deliverance from the danger. And thus in the strength of the grace of Christ, believers shake off the temptations of Satan, with holy resolution. The Lord raises up friends for his people

in every place whither he leads them, and makes them blessings to those in affliction.

11—16. *He arrives at Rome.*—The common events of travelling are seldom worthy of being told; but the comfort of communion with the saints, and kindness shown by friends, deserve particular mention. God puts it into their hearts, and we must give him the glory. How many great men made their entry into Rome, crowned and in triumph, who really were plagues to the world! But here a good man makes his entry into Rome, chained as a poor captive, who was a greater blessing to the world than any other merely a man. Is not this enough to put us out of conceit with worldly favour?

17—22. *His conference with the Jews.*—It is, and always has been, the lot of Christ's holy religion, to be spoken against. Look through every town and village where Christ is exalted as the only Saviour of mankind, and where the people are called to follow him in newness of life, and we see those who give themselves up to Christ, still called a sect, a party, and reproached.

23—31. *Paul preaches to the Jews, and abides at Rome a prisoner.*—Some were wrought upon by the word, and others hardened; some received the light, and others shut their eyes against it; and the same has always been the effect of the gospel. Nor will men's reasoning among themselves convince them, without the grace of God to open their understandings. While we mourn on account of such despisers, we should rejoice that the salvation of God is sent to others, who will receive it; and if we are of that number, we should be thankful to Him who hath made us to differ. Though Paul was placed in a very narrow opportunity for being useful, he was not disturbed in it. God overruled Paul's imprisonment for the furtherance of the gospel. And not the residents at Rome only, but all the church of Christ, to the present day, and in the most remote corner of the globe, have to bless God, that during the most mature period of his Christian life and experience, he was detained a prisoner. It was from his prison that the apostle wrote epistles, showing the Christian love with which his heart overflowed, and the Christian experience with which his soul was filled. The believer of the present time may have less of heavenly joy than the apostle, but every follower of the same Saviour, is equally sure of safety and peace at the last.

1. Melita, now Malta, an island south from Italy.—2. The Greeks and Romans called all other people barbarians, Rom. 1. 14.—5. Such miracles are foretold, Mark 16. 18; Luke 10. 19.—9. See ch. 19. 11, .2.—11 Castor and Pollux were idola. It was common to use such

names for ships.—12. Syracuse is a town in the island of Sicily.—13, 15. These places marked their coming near to Rome. Three Tavernæ, is now called Tres Tabernæ, it is about thirty miles from Rome.—16. Paul was, probably, useful to some of these soldiers.—20. The Messiah was called the Hope of Israel. See ch. 26. 6, 7. This chain; it was usual for a prisoner to be fastened by a chain to his guard.—23. By the Law and the Prophets sometimes is meant the whole Old Testament, Luke 16. 31.—26, 27. Isa. 6. 9, Matt. 13. 14, and elsewhere.—28. Matt. 21. 43; Rom. 11. 11; Isa. 49. 6; Luke 2. 32.—30. Thus the gospel was made known even at the emperor's court, Phil. 1. 13.—31. The latter part of Paul's history may be traced in 2 Tim. 4.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THIS epistle was written by St. Paul probably at Corinta, about A.D. 60. His design in writing to the Romans appears to have been, to answer the unbelieving, and to teach the believing Jew; to confirm the Christian, and to convert the idolatrous Gentile; and to prove Gentile converts to be equal to Jewish, in respect of their religious condition, and rank in the Divine favour. The way of a sinner's acceptance with God, or justification in his sight, merely by grace, through faith in the righteousness of Christ, without distinction of nations, is plainly stated.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—15. *The apostle's commission and prayer for the saints at Rome.*—The Son of God, even Jesus the Saviour, who came from David as to his human nature, was also declared to be the Son of God, by the Divine power which raised him from the dead. Here are set forth the privileges of Christians; they are beloved of God, and are members of that body which is beloved; also the duty of Christians, to be holy,—called to be saints. We must show love for our friends, not only by praying for them, but by praising God for them. We should readily impart to others what God has entrusted to us, rejoicing to make others joyful, and in communing with other believers. If redeemed by the blood, and converted by the grace of the Lord Jesus, we are altogether his; and for his sake we are debtors to all men, to do all the good we can.

16, 17. *The gospel way of justification by faith, for Jews and Gentiles.*—God is a just and holy God, and we are guilty sinners. It is necessary that we have a righteousness to appear in before him: there is such a righteousness brought in by the Messiah, and made known in the gospel; a gracious method of acceptance, notwithstanding the guilt of our sins. It is the righteousness of Christ, who is

God, coming from a satisfaction of infinite value. Faith is all in all, both in the beginning and progress of Christian life. It is not from faith to works, as if faith put us into a justified state, and then works kept us in it; but it is all along from faith to faith; faith ever conquering unbelief.

18—32. *The sins of the Gentiles set forth.*—All mankind need the salvation of the gospel, because none could obtain the favour of God, or escape his wrath by their own works. The sinfulness of man is described as ungodliness against the laws of the first table, and unrighteousness against those of the second. All, more or less, do what they know to be wrong, and omit what they know to be right, so that the plea of ignorance cannot be allowed to any. Our Creator's invisible power and Godhead are so clearly shown in the works he has made, that even idolaters and wicked Gentiles are left without excuse. Facts plainly show that men have dishonoured God by the most absurd idolatries and superstitions; and have degraded themselves by the vilest affections and most abominable deeds. A man cannot be brought to greater slavery than to be given up to his own lusts. As the Gentiles did not like to keep God in their knowledge, they committed crimes wholly against reason and their own welfare. The nature of man whether pagan or Christian, is still the same; and the charges of the apostle apply more or less to the state and character of men at all times, till they are brought to full submission to the faith of Christ, and renewed by Divine power.

1. Paul is called by his Hebrew name Saul in Acts 9. and elsewhere. According to the ancient mode of writing epistles, Paul prefixes his name, instead of placing it at the end of his letter. An apostle is one that is sent, a missionary, Mark 3. 13; Luke 6. 13.—2. See Gen. 3. 15; Deut. 18. 18; Isa. 42. 1; 49. 6.—3. The seed of David. See Matt. 1. 1; Isa. 11. 1; Luke 2. 4.—7. Grace means the free love and favour of God. Saints, persons sanctified to the service of God.—8. The whole world, or the whole Roman empire: see Luke 2. 1.—13. Let, or hindered, 1 Thess. 2. 18.—14. The Romans and Greeks called other nations barbarians, Col. 3. 11.—17. Hab. 2. 4; Heb. 10. 38.—22. The folly of idolatry is seen in the most cultivated nations of antiquity worshipping reptiles, beasts, imaginary beings, and other objects.—23. Creeping things, as serpents, crocodiles, and beetles.—24. Gross acts of vice were prevalent in all heathen lands, 1 Cor. 6. 9-11; 1 Thess. 4. 4; and modern missionaries assert that the state of many heathen nations now agrees with this account of the degraded and impure condition of ancient pagans.—26-31. Ancient authors confirm this account of the moral and social condition of the heathen in former ages.—28. A reprobate mind is one void of judgment, which cannot bear trial, Jer. 6. 30.—30. Inventors of evil things; those connected with the wicked rites of idolatry, as the orgies of Bacchus, the worship of Venus, etc.—31. Covenant breakers, not to be trusted in their promises; implacable or unforgiving

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—16. *The Jews could not be justified by the law of Moses, any more than the Gentiles by the law of nature.*—In every wilful sin, there is contempt of the goodness of God ; and though the branches of man's disobedience are very various, all spring from the same root. The ruin of sinners is their walking after a hardened heart. Their will is in a state of enmity against God. Even Gentiles, who had not the written law, had that within, which directed them by the light of nature. As they kept or broke these natural laws, their consciences acquitted or condemned them. Nothing speaks more terror to sinners, and more comfort to saints, than that Christ shall be the Judge.

17—29. *The sins of the Jews confuted all their vain confidences in their outward privileges* — Proud, vain-glorious boasting in God, and in the outward profession of his name, is the root and sum of all hypocrisy. Many despise their more ignorant neighbours who rest in a dead form of godliness ; yet themselves trust in a form of knowledge, equally void of life and power. And some glory in the gospel, whose unholy lives dishonour God, and cause his name to be blasphemed. No forms, ordinances, or notions can profit, without regenerating grace, which will always lead to seeking an interest in the righteousness of God by faith. And the true baptism is that of the heart, by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Ghost ; bringing a spiritual frame of mind, and a willing following of truth in its holy ways. Let us pray that we may be made Christians inwardly, in the heart and spirit ; and let our praise be, not of men, but of God.

1. From this passage, and Matt. 12. 39, 45 ; 3. 7 ; 12. 34, with other passages, it may be concluded that the Jews were guilty of many of the sins enumerated in the previous chapter.—5. Treasuring up wrath, as in a storehouse, through a whole life of sin, until the day of judgment.—12. Without law, or without a revelation from God.—13. The Jewish doctors asserted that all Jews, whatever their personal conduct, would be admitted into happiness in the future world : this the apostle opposes.—14. Do by nature, or the light of conscience and nature.—16. Eccles. 12. 14 ; Matt. 25. 31 ; John 5. 22 ; Acts 10. 42 ; Rev. 20. 12.—22. Sacrilege, the profaning sacred things, Mal. 2. 8 ; 1. 12, 13. The Jews, after their return from their captivity in Babylon, were zealous against all idolatry.—24. Ezek. 36. 20, 23.—26. Circumcision was the outward sign of the covenant of God, Gen. 17. The uncircumcision means the Gentiles.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—8. *Objections answered.*—The law could not save in or from sins, yet it gave the Jews advantages for obtaining salvation. Their stated ordinances, education in the

knowledge of the true God and his service, and many favours shown to the children of Abraham, all were means of grace, and doubtless were made useful to the conversion of many. And especially the Scriptures were committed to them. Enjoyment of God's word and ordinances, is the chief happiness of a people. The wickedness and obstinate unbelief of the Jews, proved man's need of the righteousness of God by faith, and also his justice in punishing sin. Let us do evil, that good may come, is oftener in the heart than in the mouth of sinners; for few thus justify themselves in their wicked ways.

9—20. *All mankind are sinners.*—All are under the guilt of sin, as a burden; and under the dominion of sin, as enslaved by it, to work wickedness. The principles and conduct of multitudes prove that there is no fear of God before their eyes. All must plead guilty. Guilty before God, is a dreadful word. No man can be justified by a law which condemns him for breaking it. The corruption in our nature, will for ever stop any justification by our own works.

21—31. *Justification is by faith.*—Justifying faith respects Christ as a Saviour, in all his three anointed offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King; trusting in him, accepting him, and cleaving to him; in all these, Jews and Gentiles are alike welcome to God through Christ. There is no difference, his righteousness is upon all that believe; not only offered to them, but put upon them as a crown, as a robe. It is free grace, mere mercy; there is nothing in us to deserve such favours. And faith has special regard to the blood of Christ, as that which made the atonement. God, in all this, declares his righteousness. It is plain that he hates sin, when nothing less than the blood of Christ would satisfy for it. If we were saved by our own works, boasting would not be excluded; but the way of justification by faith for ever shuts it out. Yet believers are not left to be lawless. Faith is a law, it is a working grace, wherever it is in truth. The law is still of use to convince us of what is passed, and to direct us for the future. Though we cannot be saved by it as a covenant, yet we own and submit to it, as a rule in the hand of the Mediator.

1. The apostle introduces a Jew as raising an objection to the doctrine he had been asserting.—2. Oracles. The word or message of God, Deut. 4. 7, 8; Psa. 147. 19, 20.—3. Faith of God, or, the faithfulness of God.—4. Psa. 51. 4.—5. Slandorously reported, wrongfully accused, falsely charged, 1 Pet. 2. 12; 4. 14. Damnation, or condemnation.—10—18. Psa. 14. and 53; Isa. 59. 1—8.—19. Mouth stopped; that is, left without excuse, Job 40. 4; Matt. 22. 12.—21. John 5. 16; Acts 3. 24—26.—22. Upon all; like a pure, complete, and glorious robe put upon all them that believe.—24. Being just

fled; being treated as if righteous; this state stands opposed to a state of condemnation. The word redemption refers to the deliverance of a captive, effected by the payment of a price for his liberty.—25. A propitiation is a peace offering, 1 John 2. 1, 2; Isa. 53. 5-7. To propitiate is to appease, to turn away the wrath of an offended person.—27. Excluded, shut out, so that there is no room for it, 1 Cor. 4. 7.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—12. *Abraham justified by faith.*—Abraham, however exalted in various respects, had nothing to boast of in the presence of God, being saved by grace, through faith, even as others. When believers are justified by faith, "their faith being counted for righteousness," it does not justify them as a part, small or great, of their righteousness; but as the appointed means of uniting them to Him who has chosen as the name whereby he shall be called, "the Lord our Righteousness."—It clearly appears from the Scripture, that Abraham was justified long before his circumcision. It is, therefore, plain that this rite was not necessary in order to justification. It was a sign of the original corruption of human nature. The seal of the Holy Spirit in our sanctification, making us new creatures, is the inward evidence of the righteousness of faith.

13—22. *He received the promise through the righteousness of faith.*—The law worketh wrath, by showing that every transgressor is exposed to the Divine displeasure.—As God intended to give men a title to the promised blessings, so he appointed it to be by faith, that it might be wholly of grace, to make it sure to all who had like precious faith with Abraham, whether Jews or Gentiles. It is weakness of faith, that makes a man pore over the difficulties in the way of a promise. The strength of faith appeared in its victory over fears. God honours great faith; and great faith honours God. Faith clearly is the instrument by which we receive the righteousness of God, the redemption which is by Christ; and that which is the instrument whereby we take or receive it, cannot be the thing itself, nor can it be the gift thereby taken and received.

23—25. *And we are justified in the same way.*—Christ meritoriously worked our justification and salvation by his suffering and death; but the power and perfection thereof, with respect to us, depend on his resurrection. By his death he paid our debt; by his resurrection he obtained our acquittance, Isa. 53. 8. When he was discharged, we, in Him and together with Him, received a discharge from the guilt and punishment of all our sins.

3. The faith of Abraham is shown, Gen. 15. 6; Gal. 3. 6; Jas. 2. 23.—6. Psa. 39. 1, 2.—7. Covered; supposed to be an allusion to the

mercy seat which covered the tables of the law.—10. God made his promise about fourteen years before Abraham was circumcised, Gen. 12. 4; 15. 6; 17. 10.—11. Father; the head or pattern of those who should believe.—12. Heir, not an inheritor, but the head of believers in all ages.—19. Heb. 11. 11, 12.—21. Similar faith is described, Psa. 115. 3; Luke 1. 37, 45; Heb. 11. 19.—24. Imputed; reckoned, or counted, 2 Cor. 5. 20, 21.—25. Justification, that is, a man's being accounted righteous before God. The last verse of this chapter is a summary of the whole gospel.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—5. *The happy effects of justification through faith.*—A blessed change takes place in the sinner's state, when he becomes a true believer, whatever he has been. The holy, righteous God, cannot be at peace with a sinner, while under the guilt of sin; but justification takes away the guilt, and so makes way for peace. This is, through Christ as the great Peace-maker, the Mediator between God and man. We could not have got into a state of grace of ourselves, but we are led into it, as pardoned offenders. Therein we stand, a posture that denotes perseverance; we stand firm and safe, upheld by the power of God; stand, as men that keep their ground, not borne down by the power of the enemy. Tribulation worketh patience, not in and of itself, but the powerful grace of God working in and with the tribulation. Patient sufferers have most Divine consolations, which abound as afflictions abound. A right sense of God's love to us, makes us not ashamed of our hope, or our sufferings for him.

6—11. *That we are reconciled by Christ's blood.*—Christ died to save us, not *in* our sins, but *from* our sins. That Christ should die for his enemies, is a mystery; no other such an instance of love is known, so that it may well be the employment of eternity to adore and wonder at it. And if, by Divine grace, they were brought to repent, and to believe in Christ, and thus were justified by his blood-shedding, much more would they be kept from falling under the power of sin and Satan, or departing finally from him. Having such a pledge of salvation in the love of God through Christ, the apostle declared that believers not only rejoiced in the hope of heaven, and even in their tribulations for Christ's sake, but they gloried in God also, as their unchangeable Friend and all-sufficient Portion, through Christ only.

12—14. *Effects of the fall of Adam.*—Adam sinning, his nature became guilty and corrupted, and his children's also. Thus in him all have sinned. And death is by sin; for death is the wages of sin. Then entered all that misery which is the due desert of sin; temporal, spiritual,

yielded to the slavery of sin.—17. That ye were; or, that, though ye were. Form of doctrine: it may allude to melted lead being formed into shape by the mould into which it is poured.—18. Made free, or emancipated; the word used when a Roman gave liberty to a slave.—19. Infirmity, or weakness: see John 16. 12.—23 The wages refers to the pay of soldiers, and signifies the consequence or desert of sin, Gen. 2. 17; James 1. 15.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1—6. *Believers are united to Christ, that they may bring forth fruit unto God.*—So long as a man continues under the law as a covenant, and seeks justification by his own obedience, he continues the slave of sin in some form; but believers are delivered from the power of the law. Understand this not of the law as a rule, but as a covenant of works. In profession and privilege, we are under a covenant of grace, and not under a covenant of works; under the gospel of Christ, not under the law of Moses. In our believing effectually, we are dead to the law, and have no more to do with it than the dead servant, who is freed from his master, has to do with his master's yoke. The day of our believing, is the day of being united to the Lord Jesus. Good works are from union with Christ; as the fruitfulness of the branch is caused by its being united to the vine: there is no fruit to God, till we are united to Christ. Nothing more than a formal obedience to the outward letter of any precept, can be performed by us, without the new-creating grace of the new covenant.

7—13. *The use and excellence of the law.*—There is no way of coming to that knowledge of sin, which is necessary to repentance, and therefore to peace and pardon, but by trying our hearts and lives by the law. That perfect standard showed to the apostle how wrong his heart and life were, proving his sins to be more numerous than he had before thought; but it did not contain any provision of mercy or grace for his relief. The more humble and spiritual any Christian is, the more clearly will he perceive that here there is described the true believer, from his first convictions of sin to his greatest progress in grace, during this present imperfect state. St. Paul was once a Pharisee, ignorant of the spirituality of the law, having some correctness of character, without knowing his inward depravity. When the commandment came to his conscience by the convictions of the Holy Spirit, and he saw what it demanded, he found his sinful mind rise against it. He felt at the same time the evil of sin, his own sinful state, that he was unable to fulfil the law, and was like a criminal when condemned. Yet the law is holy; it is not favourable to sin, which it pursues into the heart, and dis-

covers and reprovcs in the inward motions thereof. Nothing is so good but a corrupt and vicious nature will pervert it. Food or medicine when taken wrong, may cause death, though its nature is to nourish or to heal. The law may cause death through man's depravity, but sin is the poison that brings death. Not the law, but sin discovered by the law, was made death to the apostle.

14—22. *The spiritual conflicts between corruption and grace in a believer.*—Compared with the holy rule of conduct in the law of God, the apostle found himself so very far short of perfection, that he seemed to be carnal; like a man who is sold against his will to a hated master, from whom he cannot set himself at liberty. A real Christian unwillingly serves this hated master, yet cannot shake off the galling chain, till his powerful and gracious Friend above, rescues him. The apostle enlarges on the conflict he daily maintained with the remainder of his original depravity. He was frequently led into tempers, words, or actions, which he did not approve or allow in his renewed judgment and affections. By distinguishing his real self, his spiritual part, from the self, or flesh, in which sin dwelt, and by observing that the evil actions were done, not by him, but by sin dwelling in him, he did not mean that men are not accountable for their sins, but he teaches the evil of their sins, by showing that they are all done against reason and conscience. The more pure and holy the heart is, it will have the more quick feeling as to the sin that remains in it. At the same time, he sees more of the beauty of holiness and the excellence of the law, and his earnest desires to obey increase as he grows in grace. If, by the striving of the flesh against the Spirit, were meant that he could not do or perform as the Spirit suggested, so also, by the effectual opposition of the Spirit, he could resist what the flesh prompted him to do. How different this case from that of those who make themselves easy with regard to the inward motions of the flesh prompting them to evil; who, against the light and warning of conscience, go on, even in outward practice, to do evil, and thus, with forethought, press onwards in the road to perdition!

23—25. *Spiritual conflicts.*—This passage does not represent the apostle as one that walked after the flesh, but as one that had it greatly at heart, not to walk so. He could not deliver himself; and this made him the more fervently thank God for the way of salvation revealed through Jesus Christ, which promised him, in the end, deliverance from this enemy. So then, says he, I myself, with my mind, my prevailing judgment, affections, and purposes, as a regenerate man, by Divine grace, serve and obey the law of God;

but with the flesh, the carnal nature, the remains of depravity, I serve the law of sin, which wars against the law of my mind. Not serving it so as to live in it, or to allow it, but as unable to free himself from it, even in his very best state, and needing to look for help and deliverance out of himself. The power of the Holy Spirit, could root out sin from our hearts even in this life; but it is suffered, that Christians may constantly feel, and understand thoroughly, the wretched state from which Divine grace saves them; may be kept from trusting in themselves; and may ever hold all their consolation and hope, from the rich and free grace of God in Christ.

1. There were Jewish proselytes among the Roman Christians, Acts 2. 10; 18. 2.—5. Most commonly "the flesh," used in a moral sense, signifies the evil principle of sin in man, or human nature as corrupted by sin.—6. The letter, that is, the mere outward keeping of the law, 2 Cor. 3. 6; an allusion may be here to the minute observances of the self-righteous Pharisees.—7. To know, in this sense, is to be convinced of it, ch. 3. 20. Lust; any sort of evil desire.—8. Concupiscence; evil desires.—9. Died: this stands opposed to life before expressed, and denotes the terror which laid hold on his spirit when he saw his state as a sinner.—10. Lev. 18. 5; Ezek. 20. 11, 13, 21. Paul was once a Pharisee, Phil. 3. 5, 6.—14. Carnal, or possessed of an unholy nature, John 3. 6; 1 Cor. 2. 14.—15. Gal. 5. 17. Sold under sin; sold over to.—22. The inward man is the renewed will, given by God, 2 Cor. 4. 16.—23. Captivity, bondage, the state from which Christ redeems men, John 8. 36.—24. Oh wretched man: the phrase denotes one wearied with continual combats. The body of this death; as though, after the manner of eastern prisoners, he were fastened to a dead, corrupting body.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1—9. *The freedom of believers from condemnation.*—Believers may be chastened of the Lord, but will not be condemned with the world. By their union with Christ through faith, they are thus secured. God showed abhorrence of sin by the sufferings of his Son in the flesh, that the believer's person might be pardoned and justified. By the Spirit the law of love is written upon the heart, and though the righteousness of the law is not fulfilled by us, yet, blessed be God, it is fulfilled in us; there is that in all true believers, which answers the intention of the law. The favour of God, the welfare of the soul, the concerns of eternity, are the things of the Spirit, which those that are after the Spirit do mind. A sanctified soul is a living soul and that life is peace. The carnal *man* may, by the power of Divine grace, be made subject to the law of God, but the carnal *mind* never can; that must be subdued and driven out.—We may know our real state and character by inquiring whether we have the Spirit of God and Christ,

or not. Having the Spirit of Christ, means having a mind in some degree like the mind that was in Christ Jesus, and is to be shown by a life and conversation suitable to his precepts and example.

10—17. *Their privileges as being the children of God.*—Grace in the soul is its new nature; the soul is alive to God, and has begun its holy happiness which shall endure for ever. The righteousness of Christ imputed, secures the soul, the better part. We see how much it is our duty to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. If any habitually live according to corrupt lustings, they will certainly perish in their sins, whatever they profess. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit brings a new and Divine life to the soul, though it may be in a feeble state. And the sons of God have the Spirit to work in them the disposition of children. He witnesses with their spirits, in and by his speaking peace to the soul. Though we may now seem to be losers for Christ, we shall not, we cannot, be losers by him in the end.

18—27. *Their hopeful prospects, and their assistance from the Spirit in prayer.*—The sufferings of the saints strike no deeper than the things of time, last no longer than the present time, are light afflictions, and but for a moment. How vastly different are the sentence of God's word and the opinions of the world, concerning the sufferings of this present time! Indeed the whole creation seems to wait with earnest expectation for the period when the children of God shall be manifested in the glory prepared for them. There is an impunity, deformity, and infirmity, which has come upon the creature by the fall of man. There is an enmity of one creature to another; and they are abused by men as instruments of sin. Yet God will deliver creation from thus being held in bondage to man's depravity. Sin has been, and is, the guilty cause of all the suffering that exists in the creation of God. It has brought on the woes of earth; it has kindled the flames of hell. As to man, not a tear has been shed, not a groan has been uttered, not a pang has been felt, in body or mind, that has not come from sin. Believers have been brought into a state of safety; but their comfort consists rather in hope than in enjoyment. They need patience, their way is rough and long; but He that shall come, will come, though he seem to tarry.—The Spirit, as an enlightening Spirit, teaches them what to pray for; as a sanctifying Spirit, works and stirs up praying graces; as a comforting Spirit, silences their fears, and helps them over all discouragements.

28—31. *Their interest in the love of God.*—Every providence tends to the spiritual good of those that love God

in breaking them off from sin, bringing them nearer to God, weaning them from the world, and fitting them for heaven. Here is the order of the causes of a believer's salvation, a golden chain, one which cannot be broken. They are predestinated. All that God designed for glory and happiness as the end, he decreed to grace and holiness as the way. He predestinated, or before decreed, that they should be conformed to the image of his Son. In this life they are in part renewed, and walk in his steps. They are called by an effectual call, from self and earth to God, and Christ, and heaven, as their end; from sin and vanity to grace and holiness, as their way. They are justified; none are thus justified but those that are effectually called. The power of corruption being broken in effectual calling, and the guilt of sin removed in justification, nothing can come between that soul and glory. The apostle speaks as one swallowed up in admiration, wondering at the height and depth, and length and breadth, of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. The more we know of human things, the less we wonder! but the further we are led into gospel mysteries, the more we are affected by them.

32—39. *Their final triumph, through Christ.*—All things whatever, in heaven and earth, are not so great a display of God's free love, as the gift of his coequal Son to be the atonement on the cross for the sin of man; and all the rest follows upon union with him, and interest in him. He that has prepared a crown and a kingdom for us, will give us what we need in the way to it.—By Christ are we thus secured. By the merit of his death he paid our debt. Yea, rather He is risen again. This is convincing evidence that Divine justice was satisfied. Believer! does your soul say within you, Oh that he were mine! and oh that I were his; that I could please him and live to him! Then do not toss your spirit and perplex your thoughts in fruitless doubtings; but believe on Him who justifies the ungodly. You are condemned, yet Christ is dead and risen. Flee to Him as such.—God having manifested his love in giving his own Son for us, can we think that anything should turn aside or do away that love? Troubles neither cause nor show any abatement of his love. None can take Christ from the believer: none can take the believer from Him; and that is enough. Alas, poor sinners! though you abound with the possessions of this world, what vain things are they! Can you say of any of them, Who shall separate us? You may be removed from pleasant dwellings, and friends, and estates. At last you must part, for you must die. Then, farewell, all this world accounts most valuable. And what hast thou left, poor soul, who

hast not Christ, but that which thou wouldest gladly part with, and canst not; the condemning guilt of all thy sins? But he that is in Christ, when other things are pulled away, cleaves to Christ, and these separations pain him not. Yea, when death comes, that breaks all other unions, it carries the believer's soul into the nearest union with its beloved Lord Jesus, and the full enjoyment of him for ever.

1. *In Christ*: a strong expression, denoting close and intimate union, Phil. 1. 1; 2 Cor. 5. 17: as the branch is united to the vine, John 15. 1-6.—3. For sin; or, as in the margin, by a sacrifice for sin.—6. Is death; or, the way that leadeth to death.—9. The Holy Spirit is often represented as dwelling in the heart of the believer: see 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17; 6. 19; Eph. 2. 21, 22; Gal. 4. 6.—10. The body is dead; is under the sentence of death, through sin.—11. Quicken; make alive.—12. Are debtors; or, are under solemn obligation.—13. Mortify, or to put to death, Gal. 5. 24; Col. 3. 5.—15. *Abba*, in the Jewish language, means father. The apostle is supposed to allude to a law among the Jews, which forbade slaves to call a freeman, *Abba*.—16. The Spirit bears witness by the fruit it produces, 2 Cor. 1. 22; Eph. 4. 30.—18. I reckon; or, I find upon the most deliberate calculation. Reference is here to an arithmetician balancing his account.—19. Creature; or, as some think, mankind in general. Other writers consider it alludes to the animate and inanimate creation; while some refer it to the renewed nature of the believer, 1 John 3. 2.—23. The Spirit is the first fruits, or earnest, of future blessedness, Eph. 1. 14; 2 Cor. 5. 5. An allusion to the first fruits of the harvest. Adoption, as practised by the Romans, was a solemn ceremony by which the adopted person was publicly recognised as the son of the adopter.—26. *Helpeth*; the word expresses the action of one who helps another to bear a burden, by lifting or bearing it with him.—Groanings; strong breathings of soul, ardent desires, beyond the power of language to express.—28. See 2 Cor. 3. 18; Eph. 1. 3-7. Work together, or co-operate; mutually contribute to the good of believers.—29. Predestinated; or, before appointed, Eph. 1. 5, 11; 1 Pet. 1. 20.—35. Persecution; to this the early Christians were constantly exposed: so also to "famine," being driven from their homes into strange and desolate places; and to "the sword," or to a violent death, to martyrdom.—38. Principalities and powers; angels, exalted beings; and here supposed to mean the evil angels, Eph. 6. 12; Col. 2. 15.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1-5. *The apostle's concern for his countrymen.*—The apostle would submit to be treated as "accursed," to be disgraced, crucified, and even for a time be in the deepest horror and distress, if he could rescue his nation from the destruction about to come upon them for their obstinate unbelief. To be insensible to the eternal condition of our fellow-creatures, is contrary both to the love required by the law, and the mercy of the gospel. The Jews had long been professed worshippers of Jehovah. The law, and the national covenant which was grounded thereon, belonged

to them. All the promises concerning Christ and his salvation were given to them.

6—13. *The promises are made good to the spiritual seed of Abraham.*—Grace does not run in the blood; nor are saving benefits always found with outward church privileges. Not only some of Abraham's seed were chosen, and others not, but God therein wrought according to the counsel of his own will. God foresaw both Esau and Jacob as born in sin, by nature children of wrath even as others. If left to themselves they would have continued in sin through life; but for wise and holy reasons, not made known to us, he purposed to change Jacob's heart, and to leave Esau to his perverseness. This instance of Esau and Jacob throws light upon the Divine conduct to the fallen race of man. There is, however, full encouragement to use the means of grace which God has appointed.

14—24. *God's sovereign conduct.*—In this effectual, distinguishing grace, God acts as a benefactor, whose grace is his own. None have deserved it; so that those who are saved, must thank God only; and those who perish, must blame themselves only, Hos. 13. 9. God is bound no further than he has been pleased to bind himself by his own covenant and promise, which is his revealed will. And that is, that he will receive, and not cast out, those who come to Christ; but the drawing of souls in order to that coming, is an anticipating, distinguishing favour to whom he will. And who art thou that art so foolish, so feeble, so unable to judge the Divine counsels? Would not men allow the infinite God the same sovereign right to manage the affairs of the creation, as the potter exercises in disposing of his clay, when of the same lump he makes one vessel to a more honourable, and one to a meaner use? God could do no wrong, however it might appear to men. Would we know who these vessels of mercy are? Those whom God has called; and these not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles. Surely there can be no unrighteousness in any of these Divine dispensations. Nor in God's exercising long-suffering, patience, and forbearance towards sinners under increasing guilt, before he brings utter destruction upon them. It is the Lord alone who made us to differ; we should adore his pardoning mercy and new-creating grace, and give diligence to make our calling and election sure.

25—33. *The Divine sovereignty, and the falling short of the Jews in seeking justification.*—It is a wonder of Divine power and mercy that there are any saved: for even those left to be a seed, if God had dealt with them according to their sins, had perished with the rest. And even among the

vast number of professing Christians it is to be feared that only a remnant will be saved. The Gentiles attained to righteousness by faith, not by becoming proselytes to the Jewish religion, and submitting to the ceremonial law; but by believing in Christ, and submitting to the gospel. The Jews talked much of justification and holiness, and seemed very ambitious to be the favourites of God. They sought, but not in the right way, not by faith, not by depending on Christ, and submitting to the gospel. The unbelieving Jews had a fair offer of righteousness and salvation upon gospel terms, which they did not like, and would not accept. Have we sought to know how we may be justified before God, by faith in Christ, as the Lord our Righteousness? Then we shall not be ashamed in that awful day, when the Divine wrath shall overflow every hiding-place but that which God hath prepared in his own Son.

3. A strong expression like that of Moses, Exod. 32. 32. Separated or anathematized.—4. The adoption; God distinguished the Jews as his sons, Exod. 4. 22; Deut. 14. 1; Hos. 11. 1. The glory; the shekinah, the symbol of the Divine presence that attended them from Egypt, and rested on the ark in the first temple, Exod. 13. 21, 22; 25. 22.—8. The children of the promise are all true believers, Gal. 4. 28. Children of the flesh; the descendants of Abraham in general.—9. Gen. 18. 10, 14; 21. 12.—11. In thus adducing this case, says the Rev. T. Scott, the apostle does not decide on the eternal state of either of these individuals.—12. Gen. 25. 21, 23.—13. Mal. 1. 2, 3.—15. Exod. 33. 19.—17. Exod. 9. 16.—21. The same comparison is found, Jer. 16. 6; Isa. 45. 9; and 64. 8.—25. Osce is the Hebrew form of writing the Hebrew word Hosea, Hos. 2. 23; 1 Pet. 2. 10; Hos. 1. 10.—27. Esaias, or Isaiah, 10. 22, 23; Rom. 11. 5.—29. Isa. 1. 9. Sabaoth, a Hebrew word, meaning hosts, Luke 2. 13.—31. The law of righteousness; the law of Moses, the rule of righteousness.—33. Isa. 28. 16; Psa. 118. 22; 1 Pet. 2. 6-8.

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1—11. *Difference between the righteousness of the law and of faith.*—The strictness of the law showed men their need of salvation by grace, through faith. And the ceremonies shadowed forth Christ as fulfilling the righteousness, and bearing the curse of the law. So that even under the law, all who were justified before God, obtained that blessing by faith, whereby they were made partakers of the perfect righteousness of the promised Redeemer. Christ has fulfilled the whole law, therefore whoever believeth in him, is counted just before God, as much as though he had fulfilled the whole law himself. The self-condemned sinner need not perplex himself how this righteousness may be found. When we speak of looking upon Christ, and receiving, and feeding upon him, it is not Christ in heaven, nor Christ in the deep, that we mean;

but Christ in the promise, Christ offered in the word. If a man confessed faith in Jesus, as the Lord and Saviour of lost sinners, and really believed in his heart that God had raised him from the dead, thus showing that he had accepted the atonement, he should be saved by the righteousness of Christ, imputed to him through faith. But no faith is justifying which is not powerful in sanctifying the heart, regulating all its affections by the love of Christ.

12—17. *The Gentiles stand on a level with the Jews.*—There is not one God to the Jews, more kind, and another to the Gentiles, who is less kind; the Lord is a Father to all men. The promise is the same to all, who call on the name of the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, as God manifest in the flesh. And what is the life of a Christian but a life of prayer? We should feel our dependence on him, and be ready to give up ourselves to him, and expect all from him. How welcome the gospel ought to be to those to whom it is preached! The gospel is given, not only to be known and believed, but to be obeyed. It is not a system of notions, but a rule of practice.

18—21. *The Jews might know this from prophecy.*—Did not the Jews know that the Gentiles were to be called in? They might have known it from Moses and Isaiah. Isaiah speaks plainly of the grace and favour of God, as going before in the receiving of the Gentiles. The time of God's patience is called a day, light as day, and fit for work and business; but limited as a day, and there is a night at the end of it. We may well wonder at the mercy of God, that his goodness is not overcome by man's badness; we may well wonder at the wickedness of man, that his badness is not overcome by God's goodness.

2. A zeal of God; or a great zeal for whatever they thought related to God and his law.—4. End of the law: the scope, design, and fulfilment of the law.—5. Lev. 18. 5; Gal. 3. 12.—6, 7. Ascend, descend: proverbial expressions, signifying doing, or attempting to do, some hard and impossible thing.—8. Deut. 30. 12-14.—9. Matt. 10. 32; Luke 12. 8; Acts 8. 37.—10. Unto righteousness, or so as to obtain justification.—15. This may be an allusion to the joy which the approach of a messenger bringing expected or wished-for news excited in the bosoms of the watchmen of the east, Isa. 52. 7.—16. Isa. 53. 1. Our report, message, or preaching.—18. Psa. 19. 4.—19. Deut. 32. 21. The Jews had full opportunity to be acquainted with this truth. The gospel was first preached to them; but they, having refused the message of God by Moses and the prophets, it was offered to the Gentiles whom they despised, and reckoned as "no people."—20, 21. Stretched forth my hands, as a public orator, denoting the earnestness with which he pressed his message, Isa. 65. 1, 2.

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1—10. *The rejection of the Jews is not universal.*—There was a chosen remnant of believing Jews, who had righteousness and life by faith in Jesus Christ. These were kept according to the election of grace. If then this election were of grace, it could not be of works, either performed or foreseen. Salvation from the first to the last must be either of grace or of debt. These things are so directly contrary to each other that they cannot be blended together.—David, having by the Spirit foretold the sufferings of Christ from his own people, the Jews, also foretells the dreadful judgments of God upon them for it, Psalm 69. This teaches us how to understand other prayers of David against his enemies; they are prophecies of the judgments of God, not expressions of his own anger.

11—21. *God overruled their unbelief for making the Gentiles partakers of gospel privileges.*—Abraham was at the root of the church. The Jews continued branches of this tree till, as a nation, they rejected the Messiah; after that, their relation to Abraham and to God was, as it were, cut off. The Gentiles were grafted into this tree in their room; being admitted into the church of God. Multitudes were made heirs of Abraham's faith, holiness, and blessedness. It is the state of every one of us, to be wild by nature. Conversion is as the grafting in of wild branches into the good olive. If we stand at all, it is by faith; we are guilty and helpless in ourselves, and are to be humble, afraid of self-deception, and of being overcome by temptation.

22—32. *The Gentiles cautioned against pride and unbelief.*—The restoration of the Jews is, in the course of things, far less improbable than the call of the Gentiles to be the children of Abraham; and though others now possess these privileges, it will not hinder their being admitted again. Though at present they are enemies to the gospel, for their hatred to the Gentiles; yet, when God's time is come, that will no longer exist, and God's love to their fathers will be remembered.—They are to be brought to believe in Christ, the true Messiah, whom they crucified; to be brought into the Christian church, and become one sheep-fold with the Gentiles, under Christ the Great Shepherd.

33—36. *A solemn adoring of the wisdom, goodness, and justice of God.*—The apostle knew the mysteries of the kingdom of God as well as any man; yet he confesses himself at a loss; and despairing to find the bottom, he humbly sits down at the brink, and adores the depth. Those who know most in this imperfect state, feel their own weakness most. There is not only depth in the

Divine counsels, but riches; abundance of that which is precious and valuable. All things in heaven and earth, especially those which relate to our salvation, and belong to our peace, are all of God by way of creation, *through* him by way of providence, that they may be *to* him in their end. *Of* God, as the Spring and Fountain of all; *through* Christ, *to* God, as the end. Whatever begins, let God's glory be the end: especially let us adore him when we consider the Divine counsels and actings.

1. His people, the whole Jewish race.—2. Of Elias; in Elias, or the Scripture which gives an account of Elijah. Maketh intercession against; to charge with crime, or accuse.—5. Baal, lord or master. This idol was much worshipped in the time of Elijah.—9, 10. Psa. 69. 22, 23. Their table, or food. Even this would prove a means of righteous retribution, a recompense of their evil deeds. Bow down their back alway, that they might bear heavy burdens, and be oppressed for their rejection of the Saviour.—16. In allusion to offering the first-fruits, whereby the lump was sanctified for after use throughout the year. First-fruits here may refer to the pious men of old who were first-fruits unto God of the Jewish nation, Lev. 33. 14, 7. —17. Wild olive tree, or rather branch; being grafted in, refers to the Gentiles being brought into the visible church of God. The wild olive was often ingrafted into the fruitful one when it began to decay, and this not only brought forth fruit, but caused the decaying olive to revive and flourish.—26. See Isa. 59. 20; Psa. 14. 7; Jer. 31. 31, etc.—29. Without repentance, or unchangeable, Numb. 23. 19.

CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1—8. *Believers are to dedicate themselves to God.*—We receive from the Lord daily the fruits of his mercy. Let us surrender ourselves; all we are, all we have, all we can do to him: and after all, what return is it for such very rich receivings? The work of the Holy Ghost first begins in the understanding, and is carried on to the will, affections, and conversation, till there is a change of the whole man into the likeness of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. And the progress of sanctification, dying to sin more and more, and living to righteousness more and more, is the carrying on this renewing work, till it is perfected in glory. All the saints make up one body in Christ, who is the Head of the body, and the common Centre of their unity. In the spiritual body, some are fitted for and called to one sort of work; others for another sort of work. We are therefore to do all the good we can, one to another, and for the common benefit. But as we must not be proud of our talents, so we must take heed lest, under a pretence of humility and self-denial, we are slothful in laying out ourselves for the good of others. Whatever our gifts or situations may be, let us try to employ ourselves diligently, cheerfully, and in sim-

plicity; not seeking our own credit or profit, but the good of many, for this world and that which is to come.

9—16. *Exhortations to various duties.*—We must not only do that which is good, but we must cleave to it. God must be served with the spirit, under the influences of the Holy Spirit. He is served, not only by working for him, but by entire submission, when he calls us to suffer. Patience for God's sake, is true piety. Those who rejoice in hope, are likely to be patient in tribulation. We should not be cold in the duty of prayer, nor soon weary of it. True Christian love will make us take part in the sorrows and joys of each other. Labour as much as you can to agree in the same spiritual truths; and when you come short of that, yet agree in affection. We shall never heartily condescend to others, while we indulge conceit of ourselves; therefore that must be mortified.

17—21. *And to peaceable conduct towards all men, with forbearance and benevolence.*—Those who embrace Christ must expect to meet with enemies in a world whose smiles seldom agree with Christ's. Notwithstanding study and take care to do that which is amiable and creditable, and recommend religion to all with whom you converse. Study the things that make for peace; if it be possible, without offending God and wounding conscience. The line of our duty is clearly marked out; if our enemies are not melted by persevering kindness, we are not to seek vengeance; they will be consumed by the fiery wrath of that God to whom vengeance belongeth. The last verse suggests what is not easily understood by the world; that in all strife and contention, those who exercise revenge are conquered, and those who forgive are conquerors.

1. The figure is taken from the sacrifices under the Jewish dispensation. The body, or the entire animal, was offered, Lev. 1. 1—9; Deut. 15. 21. Present your bodies, that is, bodies and souls, 1 Cor. 6. 20. Holy, without blemish or spot, as were the animals offered in sacrifice, Lev. 22. 20—24.—2. Put not on the forms, habits, and fashion of the world, but appear as new persons, and with new habits, Eph. 4. 22—24.—3. This may refer to him to whom was intrusted the distribution of the alms of the church to the poor. With simplicity, liberally, 2 Cor. 9. 11, 12; 8. 1; Rom. 15. 26, 27.—4. Make no empty professions, 1 Tim. 1. 5, 10; 1 Pet. 1. 22.—5. Hospitality was necessary in those early times, Heb. 13. 2.—6. Deut. 32. 35.—7. By such means thine enemy's hatred shall be melted down, as the fire melts the lead, Prov. 25. 21; Matt. 5. 44.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1—7. *The duty of subjection to governors.*—The grace of the gospel teaches us submission and quiet, where pride and the carnal mind only see causes for murmuring and

discontent. Whatever the persons in authority over us themselves may be, yet the just power they have, must be submitted to and obeyed. In the general course of human affairs, rulers are not a terror to honest, quiet, and good subjects, but to evil-doers. All smuggling, dealing in contraband goods, withholding or evading duties, is against the express command of God. Thus honest neighbours are robbed, who will have to pay the more; and the crimes of smugglers, and others who join with them, are abetted.

8--10. *Exhortations to mutual love.*—Christians must avoid useless expense, and be careful not to contract any debts they have not the power to discharge. They are also to stand aloof from all venturesome speculations and rash engagements, and whatever may expose them to the danger of not rendering to all their due.—The last five of the ten commandments are all summed up in this royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; with the same sincerity, though not in the same measure and degree. Love is a living, active principle of obedience to the whole law.

11--14. *To temperance and sobriety.*—Here is a Christian's directory for his day's work. When to awake; now; and to awake out of the sleep of carnal security, sloth, and negligence; out of the sleep of spiritual death, and out of the sleep of spiritual deadness. Considering the time; a busy time; a perilous time. Also the salvation nigh at hand. Let us mind our way, and mend our pace, we are nearer our journey's end.—A Christian must reckon himself undressed, if unarmed. The graces of the Spirit are this armour, to secure the soul from Satan's temptations, and the assaults of this present evil world. Put on the righteousness of Christ, for justification. Put on the Spirit and grace of Christ, for sanctification. When we are up and ready, we are not to sit still, but to appear abroad let us walk. Christianity teaches us how to walk so as to please God, who ever sees us. Also two things are forbidden: perplexing ourselves with anxious, encumbering care; and indulging ourselves in irregular desires.

1. Titus 3. 1; 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14. This word "ordained" refers to the disposition or arrangement of a military company.—4. "The sword" is a figurative expression, signifying the power of punishing.—6. Tribute refers to taxes imposed by law, on estates, men, etc.; poll-money, land-tax, etc.; custom, to the taxes for the importation or exportation of goods, Matt. 22. 21.—10. Love does not supersede, but stirs up men to fulfil the requirements of the law, Matt. 22. 39, 40.—11. Conversion is compared to awakening, Eph. 5. 14; 1 Cor. 15. 34; 1 Thess. 5. 6.—12. Our time in this world of ignorance and sin is the night—complete salvation in heaven will be the day. The gospel of light affords means for defence against sinful assaults.—14. Imitate the Lord Jesus Christ. See Luke 12. 22, 33; Gal. 5. 16-24.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1—13. *Creations to Jewish and Gentile converts.*—Differences of opinion prevailed even among the immediate followers of Christ and their disciples; nor did St. Paul attempt to end them. Compelled assent to any doctrine, or conformity to outward observances without being convinced, would be hypocritical, and of no avail. We usurp the place of God, when we take upon us to judge the thoughts and intentions of others, which are out of our view. We are all apt to make our own views the standard of truth, to deem things certain which to others appear doubtful. Thus Christians often despise or condemn each other, about doubtful matters of no moment. No one who has given up his name to Christ, is allowedly a self-seeker. The business of our lives is not to please ourselves, but to please God. That is true Christianity, which makes Christ all in all. Though Christians are of different strength, capacities, and practices in lesser things, yet they are all the Lord's; all seek to approve themselves to Christ. A believing regard to the judgment of the great day, would silence rash judgments. Let every man search his own heart and life; he that is strict in judging and humbling himself, will not be apt to judge and despise his brother.

14—23. *Gentiles exhorted to take heed of giving offence.*—We cannot hinder ungoverned tongues from speaking evil; but we must not give them any occasion. We must deny ourselves in many cases what we may lawfully do, when our doing it may hurt our good name. Our good often comes to be evil spoken of, because we use lawful things in an uncharitable and selfish manner. As to God, our great concern is to appear before him justified by Christ's death, sanctified by the Spirit of his grace. As to our brethren, it is to live in peace, and love, and charity with them; following peace with all men. As to ourselves, it is joy in the Holy Ghost; that spiritual joy wrought by the blessed Spirit in the hearts of believers, which respects God as their reconciled Father, and heaven as their expected home. Regard to Christ in doing our duties, alone can make them acceptable.—Meekness, humility, self-denial, and love, promote peace. We cannot edify one another, while quarrelling and contending. Lawful things may be done unlawfully, by giving offence to brethren. How excellent are the blessings of Christ's kingdom, which consists not in outward rites and ceremonies, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost! How preferable is the service of God to all other services! and in serving him we are not called to live and die to our

selves, but unto Christ, whose we are, and whom we ought to serve.

5. The Jews who had been converted might have been disposed to bind down the converted Gentiles to their observances of the law of Moses, as regarded circumcision, meats, and fastings; while the Gentile considered himself free: and the exhortation here is designed to promote mutual forbearance, Gal. 4. 10; Col. 2. 16.—11. Isa. 45. 23; Phil. 2. 10.—17. The kingdom of God, consists not in external things, as eating or refusing different sorts of meats, 1 Cor. 8. 8.—21. 1 Cor. 8. 13. This refers chiefly to food offered to idols, 1 Cor. 10. 28.

CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1—7. *Directions how to behave towards the weak.*—Christ's whole life was a self-denying life; and he is the most advanced Christian, who is the most conformed to Christ. He bore the guilt of sin, and the curse for it; we are only called to bear a little of the trouble of it. He bore the presumptuous sins of the wicked; and should not we be humble, self-denying, and ready to consider one another, who are members one of another, and especially the strong towards the weak?—The great end in all our actions must be, that God may be glorified; nothing more forwards this than the mutual love and kindness of those who profess religion. Those who agree in Christ may well agree among themselves.

8—21. *All to receive one another as brethren.*—The Gentiles, being brought into the church, are companions in patience and tribulation.—Calling upon all the nations to praise the Lord, shows that they shall have knowledge of him. The whole plan of redemption is suited to reconcile us to one another, as well as to our gracious God.—The apostle had written to remind the Roman Christians of their duties and their dangers, because God had appointed him the minister of Christ to the Gentiles. Paul preached to them; but what made them sacrifices to God, was, their sanctification; not his work, but the work of the Holy Ghost. Though a great preacher, he could not make one soul obedient, further than the Spirit of God accompanied his labours.

22—33. *His purposed journeys.*—It is justly expected from all Christians, that they should promote every good work, especially that blessed work, the conversion of souls.—Everything that passes between Christians should be a proof and instance of the union they have in Jesus Christ. The Gentiles received the gospel of salvation from the Jews; therefore were bound to minister to them in what was needed for the body. How delightful and advantageous it is to have the gospel with the fulness of its blessings! What wonderful and happy effects does it pro-

duce, when attended with the power of the Spirit!—Let us learn to value the effectual fervent prayers of the righteous. How careful should we be, lest we forfeit our interest in the love and prayers of God's praying people! If we have experienced the Spirit's love, let us not be wanting in such kindness for others.—But those who beg the prayers of others, must not neglect to pray for themselves.

3. Psa. 69. 9.—9-12. Psa. 18. 49; Deut. 32. 43; Psa. 117. 1; Isa. 11. 1, 10. The words Gentiles, heathens, and nations, all mean the same.—16. The offering up or dedication which the Gentiles who professed Christianity made of themselves to God, Heb. 10. 6, 8, 14, 18. The allusion is to Isa. 66. 20.—19. Illyricum, a province to the north-west of Macedonia, bounded on the south by the Adriatic Sea.—21. Isa. 52. 15; 55. 5.—24. It was probably the custom of the churches, when the messengers of the gospel departed from them, to send with them several Christian brethren to accompany them part of the way on their journey, Acts 15. 3.—26. Macedonia was the upper, Achaia the lower part of Greece.—28. Made sure; as by affixing a seal to a deed. Fruit, of their liberality, Phil. 4. 17. Ancient Spain included the whole of the Spanish peninsula, and was then under Romish sovereignty.—31. This journey to Jerusalem is mentioned, Acts 20. 22.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1—20. *The apostle greets several friends at Rome, and cautions against divisions.*—Though the care of all the churches came upon the apostle daily, yet he could remember many persons, and send salutations to each, with particular notices of them, and express his concern for them. Lest any should feel themselves hurt, as if Paul had forgotten them, he sends his remembrances to the rest, as brethren and saints, though not named.—If truth be forsaken, unity and peace will not last long. Many corrupt the head by deceiving the heart; perverting the judgments by winding themselves into the affections. It has been the common policy of seducers to set upon those who are softened by convictions.—The blessing the apostle expects from God, is victory over Satan. This includes all designs and devices of Satan against souls, to defile, disturb, and destroy them; all his attempts to keep us from the peace of heaven here, and the possession of heaven hereafter. When Satan seems to prevail, and we are ready to give up all as lost, then will the God of peace interpose in our behalf. Hold out, therefore, faith and patience, yet a little while. If the grace of Christ be with us, who can prevail against us?

. 21—27. *Christian salutations, and conclusion.*—Not many mighty, not many noble are called, but some are. It is lawful for believers to bear civil offices; and it were to be wished that all offices in Christian states, and in the church, were bestowed upon prudent and steady Christians.—Our

redemption and salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, are, without controversy, a great mystery of godliness. And yet, blessed be God, there is as much of this mystery made plain as will bring us to heaven, if we do not wilfully neglect so great salvation. Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel, and the Sun of righteousness is risen on the world.—All the glory that passes from fallen man to God, so as to be accepted of him, must go through the Lord Jesus, in whom alone our persons and doings are, or can be, pleasing to God. Of his righteousness we must make mention, even of his only; who, as he is the Mediator of all our prayers, so he is, and will be, to eternity, the Mediator of all our praises.

1. Phebe was a servant or deaconess of the church at Corinth. Cenchrea was a port or suburb to the city of Corinth.—2. A succourer, or supporter. The original means patrou or help, hostess, at whose house those who were received as guests of the church were lodged and entertained.—4. There is allusion here to some period when Priscilla and Aquila had hazarded their lives to save the life of Paul, by sheltering him in their house from his persecutors, Acts 18. 2, 3, 6, 12.—5. One of the first Christian converts of Achaia.—13. Not the parent of Paul, but a woman whom he respected, John 19. 27; 1 Tim. 5. 2.—16. The kiss was the usual mode of salutation in the east, Luke 7. 45; 2 Sam. 20. 9.—21. Lucius is thought to be Luke. See Acts 13. 1; 17. 5; and 20. 4.—22. Tertius is probably the same as Silas, Acts 18. 5. Paul often employed a secretary, who wrote from his dictation.—25. Mystery, the purpose of God with regard to the Gentiles, long hid from the Jews, but now revealed, Eph. 3. 5, 6, 9.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

THE Corinthian church contained some Jews, but more Gentiles; and the apostle had to contend with the superstition of the one, and the sinful conduct of the other. The scope of this epistle was twofold. 1. To apply suitable remedies to the disorders and abuses which prevailed among them. 2. To give satisfactory answers on all the points upon which his advice had been desired. The address, and Christian mildness, yet holy firmness, with which the apostle writes, and goes on from general truths directly to oppose the errors and evil conduct of the Corinthians is very remarkable.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—9. *A salutation and thanksgiving.*—In the true church of God are all who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, and who call upon him as God manifest in the flesh, for all the blessings of salvation; who acknowledge and obey him as their Lord, and as Lord of all; it

includes no other persons.—Observe how often in these verses the apostle repeats the words, Our Lord Jesus Christ: he feared not to make too frequent or too honourable mention of him. To all who called upon Christ, the apostle gave his usual salutation, desiring, in their behalf, the pardoning mercy, sanctifying grace, and comforting peace of God, through Jesus Christ. He speaks of utterance and knowledge; and where God has given these gifts, he has given great power for usefulness. By these gifts of the Holy Ghost God bore witness to the apostles.—How great the privilege, to be kept by the power of Christ, from the power of our corruption, and Satan's temptations!

10—16. *Exhortation to brotherly love, and reproof for divisions.*—In the great things of religion be of one mind; and where there is not unity of sentiment, still let there be union of affection. Agreement in the greater things should extinguish divisions about the lesser. There will be perfect union in heaven, and the nearer we approach it on earth, the nearer we come to perfection.—Satan has always endeavoured to stir up strife among Christians, as one of his chief devices against the gospel.

17—25. *The doctrine of a crucified Saviour, as advancing the glory of God.*—Paul had been bred up in Jewish learning; but the plain preaching of a crucified Jesus, was more powerful than all oratory and philosophy. Christ crucified is the foundation of all our hopes, the fountain of all our joys.—God left a great part of the world to follow the dictates of man's boasted reason, and the event has shown that human wisdom is folly, and is unable to find or retain the knowledge of God as the Creator. The gospel ever was, and ever will be, foolishness to all in the road to destruction; while the message of Christ, plainly delivered, ever has been a sure test by which men may learn what road they are travelling. But the despised doctrine of salvation by faith in a crucified Saviour, God in human nature, purchasing the church with his own blood, to save all that believe, from ignorance, delusion, and sin, has been blessed in every age.

26—31. *And humbling the creature before him.*—God did not choose philosophers, nor orators, nor statesmen, nor men of wealth, and power, and interest in the world, to publish the gospel of grace and peace. He best judges what men and what measures serve the purposes of his glory.—Though not many noble are usually called by Divine grace, there have been some such in every age, who have not been ashamed of the gospel of Christ; and persons of every rank stand in need of pardoning grace. It is by the sovereign choice and regenerating grace of God, that any are in Jesus Christ by faith. He is made wisdom to us,

that by his word and Spirit, and from his fulness and treasures of wisdom and knowledge, we may receive all that will make us wise unto salvation, and fit for every service to which we are called. We are guilty, liable to just punishment; and he is made righteousness, our great atonement and sacrifice. We are depraved and corrupt, and he is made sanctification, the spring of our spiritual life: from him, as the Head, it is given to his body by his Holy Spirit. We are in bonds, and he is made redemption to us, our Saviour and Deliverer. He never discharges from the guilt of sin, without delivering from its power. And this is, that all flesh, according to the prophecy by Jeremiah, ch. ix. 23, may glory in the special favour, all-sufficient grace, and precious salvation of Jehovah.

1. Sosthenes is probably the person spoken of, Acts 18. 17, as ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, and a convert by Paul.—2. Sanctified, or separated from others as Christians, and from the corruptions of their place and age.—12. Cephas, or Peter, literally signifies a stone.—19. Isa. 29. 14.—21–23. The preaching of the cross accorded not with the philosophy of the Greeks. And the Jews expected a mighty earthly king; and to trust in one who had been crucified they considered foolishness.—31. Jer. 9. 23, 24; 2 Cor. 10. 17.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1–9. *The manner in which the apostle preached Christ crucified.*—Christ, in his person, offices, and sufferings, is the sum and substance of the gospel, and ought to be the great subject of a gospel minister's preaching; but not so as to leave out other parts of God's revealed truth and will. Paul preached the whole counsel of God. Jesus Christ is the Lord of glory; a title much too great for any creature. Those who receive the doctrine of Christ as Divine, and, having been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, see not only the plain history of Christ, and him crucified, but the deep and admirable designs of Divine wisdom therein. It is the mystery made manifest to the saints, Col. 1. 26, though formerly hid from the heathen world; it was only shown in dark types and distant prophecies, but now is made known by the Spirit of God.

10–16. *This doctrine cannot be duly known but by the Holy Spirit.*—No one can know the things of God, but his Holy Spirit, who is one with the Father and the Son, and who makes known Divine mysteries to his church. This is most clear testimony, both to the real Godhead and the distinct person of the Holy Spirit.—The pride of carnal reasoning is really as much opposed to spirituality, as the basest sensuality; but though the sanctified mind discerns the real beauties of holiness, the power of discerning and

judging about common and natural things is not lost How little have any known of the mind of God by natural power! In the Holy Scriptures, the mind of Christ, and the mind of God in Christ, are fully made known to us. Christians experience the sanctifying power of the Spirit in their hearts, and bring forth good fruits in their lives.

1. 2 Cor. 10. 10. Paul assures the Greeks that he came not with such artificial arrangement of words and human wisdom, but was determined to make known the simple doctrine of salvation through the cross of Christ.—3. Acts 18. 6-12.—4. Here is doubtless an allusion to the custom of learned Greeks to make public harangues in the most studied and persuasive language, in order to gain over the people to their particular views.—6. To matured Christians the apostle spoke of the mysteries of the gospel, but to the general assembly he spoke the more common truths, Psa. 37. 37; Phil. 3. 15; Eph. 4. 13.—9. Isa. 64. 4.—14. The "natural man" is one not only unrenewed, but under the influence of sensual passions and carnal desires, Rom. 8. 6; John 3. 6: such was especially the case with the heathen in Paul's day.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1-9. *The Corinthians reproved.*—Men may have much doctrinal knowledge, yet be mere beginners in the life of faith and experience. Contentions and quarrels about religion are sad evidences of carnality: and true religion makes men peaceable. But many professors show themselves to be yet carnal, by vain-glorious strife, eagerness for dispute, and readiness to despise and speak evil of others.—We should not put ministers into the place of God. He that planteth and he that watereth are one; employed by one Master, trusted with the same revelation, busied in one work, and engaged in one design. They have their different gifts from one and the same Spirit, for the same purposes; and should carry on the same design heartily. They work together with God, in promoting his glory and the salvation of precious souls; and He who knows their work, will take care they do not labour in vain.

10-15. *Christ is the only foundation.*—Spiritual pride is abominable; it is using the greatest favours of God, to feed our own vanity, and make idols of ourselves. But let every man take heed; there may be bad building on a good foundation. Let us not dare to join a merely human or a carnal life with a Divine faith, the corruption of sin with the profession of Christianity. Christ is a firm, abiding, and immovable Rock of ages, every way able to bear all the weight that God himself or the sinner can lay upon him; neither is there salvation in any other. Leave out the doctrine of his atonement, and there is no foundation for our hopes. Those who spread true and pure religion in all its branches, and whose work will abide in the

great day, shall receive a reward. There are others, whose corrupt opinions and doctrines, or vain inventions and usages in the worship of God, shall be made known, disowned, and rejected, in that day. Let us consider the tendency of our efforts, compare them with God's word, and judge ourselves, that we be not judged of the Lord.

16—17. *The churches of Christ ought to be kept pure.*—False teachers among the Corinthians taught unholy doctrines: such teaching tended to pollute, and destroy the building, which should be kept pure and holy for God. But Christians are holy by profession, and should be so in heart and conversation. He is deceived who deems himself the temple of the Holy Ghost, yet is unconcerned about personal holiness, or the peace and purity of the church.

18—23. *The church should not glory in men.*—To have a high opinion of our own wisdom, is but to flatter ourselves: and self-flattery is the next step to self-deceit. The thoughts of the wisest men in the world, have vanity, weakness, and folly in them. This should teach us to be humble, and make us willing to be taught of God, so as not to be led away, by pretences to human wisdom and skill, from the simple truths revealed by Christ. Observe the spiritual riches of a true believer; "All are yours," even ministers and ordinances. Also, the world itself is yours. Saints have as much of it as Infinite Wisdom sees fit for them, and they have it with the Divine blessing. Life is yours, that you may have a season and opportunity to prepare for the life of heaven; and death is yours, that you may go to the possession of it. It is the kind messenger to take you from sin and sorrow, and guide you to your Father's house. Things present are yours, for support on the road; things to come are yours, to delight you for ever at your journey's end. God in Christ, reconciling sinners to himself, and then pouring on them the riches of his grace is the sum and substance of the gospel.

1, 2. A metaphor to represent such as are of weak understanding, or unable to comprehend the mysteries of science or religion, as babes or children. "Milk" is a continuation of the metaphor, it being usual to feed infants with light food. It is here to signify, that he had taught them the rudiments of Christianity, and not the hard doctrines.—3. God's church is a field or vineyard under his culture, Isa. 5. 1-7. This figure is used in John 15. 1. God is the Builder of his church, Heb. 3. 3; Eph. 2. 20-22; 1 Pet. 2. 5.—10. "Wise master-builder," or skilful architect; a metaphor frequently used by Jewish writers, calling their learned men "builders," or builders of the law.—13. A figurative fire is clearly meant; for what real fire can consume religious rites or doctrines? "Fire" is a metaphor for the Divine judgments, Heb. 12. 29; Mal. 3. 2; Isa. 24. 15.—16. The apostle alludes to the Jews, who are described as the temple and habitation of God. God dwelt by a visible sign in the temple, and so he dwells among Christians, 1 Cor. 6. 19; 2 Cor. 6. 16; Eph. 2. 20-22.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. —6. The true character of gospel ministers.—Apostles were no more than servants of Christ, but they were not to be undervalued. They had a great trust, and for that reason, had an honourable office. Paul had a just concern for his own reputation, but he knew that he who chiefly aimed to please men, would not prove himself a faithful servant of Christ. It is a comfort that men are not to be our final judges. There is a day coming, that will bring men's secret sins to light, and discover the secrets of their hearts. Then every slandered believer will be justified, and every faithful servant approved and rewarded.

7—13. *Cautions against despising the apostle.*—We have no reason to be proud; all we have, or are, or do, that is good, is owing to the free and rich grace of God. A sinner snatched from destruction by sovereign grace alone, must be very absurd and inconsistent, if proud of the free gifts of God. The thought that many eyes are upon believers, when struggling with difficulties or temptations, should encourage constancy and patience. Whatever the disciples of Christ suffer from men, they must follow the example, and fulfil the will and precepts of their Lord. They must be content, with him and for him, to be despised and abused. It is much better to be rejected, despised, and ill used, as St. Paul was, than to have the good opinion and favour of the world. Though cast off by the world as vile, yet we may be precious to God, gathered up with his own hand, and placed upon his throne.

14—21. *The apostle claims their regard as their spiritual father in Christ.*—Ministers are to set an example, and others must follow them, as far as they follow Christ in faith and practice. Christians may mistake and differ in their views, but Christ and Christian truth are ever the same.—Whenever the gospel is effectual, it comes not in word only, but also in power, by the Holy Spirit, quickening dead sinners, delivering persons from the slavery of sin and Satan, renewing them both inwardly and outwardly; and comforting, and strengthening, and establishing the saints, which cannot be done by the persuasive language of men, but by the power of God.

1, 2. A steward, or economist, was one who presided over the affairs of a family, and made provision for it, Luke 12. 42; 1 Pet. 4. 10. "Praise" may be rendered reward.—6. Transferred; Paul used his own name and that of Apollos by way of illustration, but his rebuke was directed against those who were forming parties in the church.—9. Allusion is made to the cruel spectacles in the Roman games; where men were forced to cut one another to pieces, to divert the people; and where the victor did not escape with his life, though he

should destroy his adversary, but was only kept for another combat, and must be killed at last.—10. The apostle speaks ironically by way of reproof.—13. "Filtb—offscouring," may be an allusion to the heathen practice of offering, in public calamities, a human being, as an expiatory sacrifice, such a one being of the worst character. So did the Corinthians esteem the apostles.—17. Timotheus, or Timothy. See Acts 16. 1, and 19. 22; Rom. 16. 21; 1 Tim. 1. 2.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—8. *The apostle blames the Corinthians.*—The apostle notices a flagrant abuse, winked at by the Corinthians. Party spirit, and a false notion of Christian liberty, seem to have saved the offender from censure. Grievous indeed is it that crimes should sometimes be committed by professors of the gospel, of which even heathens would be ashamed.—How dreadful the effects of sin! The devil reigns where Christ does not. The bad example of a man of influence is very mischievous; it spreads far and wide. Corrupt principles and examples, if not corrected, would hurt the whole church. Believers must have new hearts, and lead new lives; their lives must be holy. So far is the sacrifice of Christ our Passover for us from rendering personal and public holiness unnecessary, that it furnishes powerful reasons and motives for it. Without holiness we can neither live by faith in him, nor join in his ordinances with comfort and profit.

9—13. *He directs their behaviour towards those guilty of scandalous crimes.*—Christians are to avoid familiar converse with all who disgrace the Christian name. Such are only fit companions for their brethren in sin, and to such company they should be left, whenever it is possible to do so. Alas, that there are many called Christians, whose conversation is more dangerous than that of heathens!

4, 5. The church was called on to excommunicate the offender. By miraculous power, which only the apostles possessed, he was delivered to Satan, and subjected to bodily afflictions for his sin, Job 2. 6; 1 Tim. 1. 20.—7. Exod. 12. 15, and 13. 6. As, before the Passover, the Jews put all leavened bread from their houses, and were so careful in this matter that they searched every corner with candles lest a particle should remain, so the apostle exhorted the church to free itself from all evil. "Passover," or paschal Lamb.—11. A brother, or a Christian professor.—12. "Without" the pale of the church.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1—8. *Cautions against going to law in heathen courts.*—Christians should not contend with one another, for they are brethren. This, if duly attended to, would prevent many law-suits, and end many quarrels and disputes. In matters of great damage to ourselves or families, we may use lawful means to right ourselves, but Christians should

be of a forgiving temper. Refer the matters in dispute, rather than go to law about them. It is a shame that little quarrels should grow to such a head among Christians that they cannot be determined by the brethren.

9—11. *Sin shuts out from the kingdom of God.*—All reigning sin, nay, every actual sin, committed with design, and not repented of, shuts out of the kingdom of heaven. Be not deceived; men are very much inclined to flatter themselves that they may live in sin, yet die in Christ, and go to heaven. But we cannot hope to sow to the flesh, and reap everlasting life.—The blood of Christ, and the washing of regeneration, can take away all guilt. Our justification is owing to the suffering and merit of Christ; our sanctification to the working of the Holy Spirit; and both go together. All who are made righteous in the sight of God, are made holy by the grace of God.

12—20. *Our bodies must not be defiled.*—There is a liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, in which we must stand fast. But surely a Christian would never put himself into the power of any bodily appetite. The body is for the Lord; is to be an instrument of righteousness to holiness, therefore is never to be made an instrument of sin. It is an honour to the body, that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead; and it will be an honour to our bodies, that they will be raised. The hope of a resurrection to glory, should keep Christians from dishonouring their bodies by fleshly lusts.—And if the soul be united to Christ by faith, the whole man is become a member of his spiritual body. Other vices may be conquered in *fight*; that here cautioned against, only by *flight*. We are to be clean, as vessels fitted for our Master's use. Being united to Christ as one spirit, and bought with a price of unspeakable value, the believer should be wholly the Lord's.

1. Dare; or, is it Christian-like? Unjust, or heathen judges, who were commonly bribed or biassed to an unjust sentence.—4. Least esteemed, the meanest or humblest Christian.—9. Effeminate, self-indulgent, lovers of pleasure.—9, 10. Most heathen, and especially the Corinthians, were noted for all these sins.—12. "All things are lawful," was probably a proverb among the Corinthians, used in palliation of their excesses.—13. Supposed to be an adage, used by the Corinthians in favour of luxurious living.—19. 2 Cor. 6. 16-18.—20. Glorify, that is, live so, that others may give God the praise, 1 Pet. 2. 12.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1—16. *Questions about marriage.*—The apostle tells the Corinthians that it was good, in that juncture of time, for Christians to keep themselves single. Yet he says that marriage, and the comforts of that state, are settled by

Divine wisdom. Man and wife must not separate for any other cause than what Christ allows. Marriage is a Divine institution; and is an engagement for life, by God's appointment. It should be the labour and study of those who are married, to make each other as easy and happy as possible. In every state and relation the Lord has called us to peace; and everything should be done to promote harmony, as far as truth and holiness will permit.

17—24. *Persons, in any fixed station, should usually abide in that.*—It is the duty of every Christian to be content with his lot, and to conduct himself in his rank and place as becomes a Christian. Our comfort and happiness depend on what we are to Christ, not what we are in the world. No man should think to make his faith or religion, a reason for breaking through any natural or civil obligations. He should quietly and contentedly abide in the condition in which he is placed by Divine Providence.

25—35. *We are to sit loose to this world.*—Considering the distress of those times, the unmarried state was best. Notwithstanding, the apostle does not condemn marriage. How opposite are those to the apostle Paul who forbid many to marry, and entangle them with vows to remain single, whether they ought to do so or not!—He exhorts all Christians to holy indifference toward the world. As to relations; they must not set their hearts on the comforts of the state. As to afflictions; they must not indulge the sorrow of the world: even in sorrow the heart may be joyful. As to worldly enjoyments; here is not their rest. As to worldly employment; those that prosper in trade, and increase in wealth, should hold their possessions as though they held them not. As to all worldly concerns; they must keep the world out of their hearts, that they may not abuse it when they have it in their hands. All worldly things are show; nothing solid. All will be quickly gone. Let us reflect on the advantages and snares of our own condition in life; that we may improve the one, and escape as far as possible all injury from the other.

36—40. *Marriage should be only in the Lord.*—The apostle is thought to give advice here about the disposal of children in marriage. In this view, the general meaning is plain. Children should seek and follow the directions of their parents as to marriage. And parents should consult their children; and not reckon that they have power to do with them just as they please, without reason.—In our choice of relations, and change of conditions, we should always be guided by the fear of God, and the laws of God, and act in dependence on the providence of God.

b. Defraud, or withdraw not from the company of. In the syn-

gogue the women sat apart from the men in a gallery inclosed with lattice, where they could see and hear and not be seen, Zech. 7. 3; .2. 12.—10. Divorce was very common among both Jews and Gentiles, on very slight pretexts.—21. Servants in those times were commonly slaves, Phil. 15, 16.—26, 27. These were times of trial and persecution, and hence he judged the advice he gave as proper.—28. I spare you; he would not deter them from acting as they deemed right on this subject, by describing the trials and difficulties which might befall them, Luke 21. 23.—31. Psa. 39. 6; Jas. 1. 10; 4. 14.—32. Carefulness, anxiety, and solicitude, which would attend a married life, especially in times of trial for Christ's sake, Matt. 6. 25; Phil. 4. 6.—36. Females in the east are kept completely in retirement, and are commonly disposed of in marriage without their consent.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1—6. *The danger of a high conceit of knowledge.*—There is no proof of ignorance more common than conceit of knowledge. Much may be known, when nothing is known to good purpose. Satan hurts some as much by tempting them to be proud of mental powers, as others, by alluring to sensuality. Knowledge which puffs up the possessor, and renders him arrogant, is as dangerous as self-righteous pride, though what he knows may be right.—The heathens had gods of higher and lower degrees; gods many, and lords many; so called, but not such in truth. The one God, even the Father, signifies the Godhead as the sole object of all religious worship; and the Lord Jesus Christ denotes the person of Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh, One with the Father, and with us; the appointed Mediator, and Lord of all; through whom we come to the Father, and through whom the Father sends all blessings to us, by the influence and working of the Holy Spirit.

7—13. *The mischief of offending weak brethren.*—Eating one kind of food, and abstaining from another, have nothing in them to recommend a person to God. But the apostle cautions against putting a stumbling-block in the way of the weak; lest they should be made bold to eat what was offered to the idol, not as common food, but as a sacrifice, and thus be guilty of idolatry. He who has the Spirit of Christ in him, will love those whom Christ loved so as to die for them. Let Christians beware of approaching the brink of evil, or the appearance of it, though many do this in public matters, for which perhaps they plead plausibly. Men cannot thus sin against their brethren, without offending Christ, and endangering their own souls.

1. The heathen held feasts to their idols in the temples, to which they invited their friends, and it seems Christians too. The meat eaten was part of that offered to the idol in sacrifice. Part was sold in the market.—4. An idol is nothing. This was a common saying of the Jews; the name they gave to an idol signified that it was

“nothing;” it had no existence.—5. The idols of the Egyptians, Grecians, Romans, etc. were almost innumerable. The Jews who fell into idolatry had as many gods as cities, Numb. 25. 2, 3.—7. For some with conscience of the idol, etc.; that is, they supposed that, though the idol itself was an insensible statue, it might be inhabited by some demon, and thus they became guilty of idolatry.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1—14. *The apostle asserts his authority.*—It is not new for a minister to meet with unkind returns for good-will to a people, and diligent and successful services among them. To the cavils of some, the apostle answers, by showing his self-denial, for the good of others. He renounced his right, rather than hinder his success. Those who seek to do our souls good, should have food provided for them. They may waive their right, as Paul did; but those transgress a precept of Christ, who deny or withhold due support.

15—23. *He waives this part of his Christian liberty.*—It is the glory of a minister to deny himself, that he may serve Christ and save souls. By preaching the gospel freely, the apostle showed that he acted from principles of zeal and love, and thus obtained much comfort and hope in his soul.—Though the apostle would transgress no laws of Christ, to please any man, yet he would accommodate himself to all men, where he might do it lawfully, to gain some. Doing good was the business of his life; and, that he might reach this end, he did not stand on privileges.

24—27. *He did this with care and diligence.*—In the Christian race all may run so as to obtain. There is the greatest encouragement, therefore, to persevere with all our strength, in this course. But those who pursue the interests of their souls, must combat hard with fleshly lusts; the body must not be suffered to rule. The apostle sets before himself and others the danger of yielding to fleshly desires, pampering the body, and its lusts and appetites. Holy fear of himself was needed to keep an apostle faithful: how much more is it needful for our preservation! Let us learn humility and caution, and to watch against the dangers which surround us while in the body.

2. As the seal affixed to a warrant testifies its official validity, so the converts from among the Corinthians proved that he was an apostle.—4. Power, or right.—5. Cephas (or Peter) was married, Matt. 8. 14. This fact stands in opposition to the Romish doctrine of celibacy.—7. A soldier, or warrior, expects to be paid, and not to be at his own expense. The keeper and dresser of a vineyard expects fruit in return for his labour. Shepherds in the east, in modern Greece, and Ethiopia were paid in part or whole in kind, milk or butter, Prov. 27. 18, 23.—9. Deut. 25. 4. 13, 14. Dent. 18. 1; Matt. 10. 10;

Luke 10. 7.—21. Those without law were the Gentiles, Gal. 3. 2; Acts 15. 28.—24. The Isthmian games were held every third year, near the city of Corinth. "So run," there were certain rules and lines, from which, if the racers deviated, though they might reach the goal, they lost the prize.—25. The racers abstained for twelve months previously from all luxurious indulgence. The crown for which they strove was a garland of pine-leaves.—26. Fight, an allusion to the boxing which formed part of the Isthmian games. It was customary for the boxers to exercise themselves, by throwing their arms about in the air, as though engaged in actual combat. If a man in the fight missed his aim, he was said to be "beating the air."

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1—5. *The privileges, and overthrow of the Israelites.*—The Jews were, by a miracle, led under the cloud, and all passed the Red Sea. This was to them a typical baptism. The manna on which they fed was a type of Christ crucified, the Bread which came down from heaven, which whoso eateth shall live for ever. Christ is the Rock on which the Christian church is built; and of the streams that issue therefrom, all believers drink, and are refreshed. The water typified the sacred influences of the Holy Spirit, as given to believers through Christ.

6—14. *Cautions against idolatrous, and sinful practices.*—Carnal desires gain strength by indulgence, therefore should be checked in their first rise. Others have fallen, and so may we. The Christian's security against sin is distrust of himself; for God has not promised to keep us from falling, if we become self-dependent. To this word of caution, a word of comfort is added. Others have the like burdens, and the like temptations: what they bear up under, and break through, we may also. God knows what we can bear. He will make a way to escape; he will deliver either from the trial itself, or at least the evil of it. Whether the world smiles or frowns, it is an enemy; but believers shall be strengthened to overcome it.

15—22. *The partaking in idolatry cannot exist with communion with Christ.*—Did not the joining in the Lord's Supper show a profession of faith in Christ crucified, and of adoring gratitude to him for his salvation? Christians, by this ordinance, and the faith therein professed, were united as the grains of wheat in one loaf of bread, or as the members in the human body, seeing they were all united to Christ, and had fellowship with him and one another. The apostle applies this to feasting with idolaters. Eating food as part of a heathen sacrifice, was worshipping the idol to whom it was made, and having fellowship or communion with it; just as he who eats the Lord's Supper, is accounted to commune with Christ, or as they who ate the

Jewish sacrifices partook of what was offered. It was denying Christianity; for communion with Christ, and communion with devils, could never be had at once.

23—33. *All we do must be to the glory of God.*—A Christian must not merely consider what is lawful, but what is expedient, and to edify others. Christianity by no means forbids the common offices of kindness, or allows uncourteous behaviour to any, however they may differ from us in religious sentiments or practices. But idolatrous worship is altogether forbidden; and Christians should take care not to use their liberty to the hurt of others, or to their own reproach. In eating and drinking, and in all we do, we should aim at the glory of God, pleasing and honouring him.

1. Under the cloud, Exod. 13. 21; 40. 34.—3. The manna from heaven, and the rock smitten by Moses, from which water streamed out after the Israelites, were types of Christ, the Bread of Life, and the Rock of Ages, Exod. 16. 15, 35; 17. 6; John 6. 32; Psa. 78. 24.—7-10. Exod. 32. 6; Numb. 25. 1-9; 21. 5, 6; 16. 41-49.—11. Ends of the world; or, last dispensation. The Jews computed the duration of the world by distributing it into three ages, each of 2000 years.—16. The cup is an emblem of the blood of Christ, the bread of his body. Partaking with prayer and faith, is emblematical of fellowship with each other, and with Christ in his death.—20. Many of the idols were supposed by their worshippers to be evil and malign spirits, Lev. 17. 7; Psa. 106. 37.—25. Shambles, butchers' stalls, or open markets.

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1—16. *The apostle corrects some abuses.*—The apostle not only preached such doctrine as men ought to believe, but led such a life as they ought to live. Yet Christ being our perfect example, the actions and conduct of men, as related in the Scriptures, should be followed only so far as they are like to his.—The woman was made subject to man, because made for his help and comfort. And she should do nothing, in Christian assemblies, which looked like a claim of being equal. Nevertheless, the man and the woman were made for one another. They were to be mutual comforts and blessings, not one a slave, and the other a tyrant. God has so appointed, both in the kingdom of providence and of grace, that the power and subjection of each should be for mutual help and benefit.

17—22. *Also contentions and disorderly celebrations of the Lord's Supper.*—The ordinances of Christ, if they do not make us better, will be apt to make us worse. If the use of them does not mend, it will harden. Christians may separate from each other's communion, yet be charitable one towards another; they may continue in the same communion, yet be uncharitable. This last is schism, rather

than the former.—There is a careless and irregular eating of the Lord's Supper, which is very evil. Many rich Corinthians seem to have acted very wrong at the Lord's table, or at the love-feasts, which took place at the same time as the supper. The rich despised the poor, and ate and drank up the provisions they brought, before the poor were allowed to partake; thus some wanted, while others had more than enough. What should have been a bond of mutual affection, was made the means of discord and disunion. The Lord's Supper is not now made an occasion for gluttony or revelling, but is it not often made the support of self-righteous pride, or a cloak for hypocrisy?

23—31. *The nature and design of the Lord's Supper.*—The apostle describes the sacred ordinance, as to which he had been taught by revelation from Christ. What is eaten is called bread, though at the same time it is said to be the body of the Lord, plainly showing that the apostle did not mean that the bread was changed into flesh. St. Matthew tells us, our Lord bid them all drink of the cup, ch. 26. 27, as if he would, by this expression, provide against any believer being deprived of the cup. The things signified by these outward signs, are Christ's body and blood, his body broken, his blood shed, together with all the benefits which flow from his death and sacrifice. Those who partake of this holy ordinance, are to take him as their Lord and Life, yield themselves up to him, and live upon him. This is to be done in remembrance of Christ, to keep fresh in our minds his dying for us, as well as to remember his pleading for us, in virtue of his death, at God's right hand. We declare his death to be our life, the spring of all our comforts and hopes. And we glory in such a declaration; we show forth his death, and plead it as our accepted sacrifice and ransom.

And directs how to attend upon it.—The apostle lays before the Corinthians the danger of receiving it with an unsuitable temper of mind; or keeping up the covenant with sin and death, while professing to renew and confirm the covenant with God. No doubt such incur great guilt, and so render themselves liable to spiritual judgments. But weak believers should not be discouraged from attending at this holy ordinance. The Holy Spirit never caused this scripture to be written to deter serious Christians from their duty, though the devil has often made this use of it.—The apostle points out the duty of those who come to the Lord's table. Self-examination is necessary to right attendance at this holy ordinance. If we would thoroughly search ourselves, to condemn and set right what we find wrong, we should escape many Divine judgments.

1. The first verse of this chapter is properly the close of the last chapter.—2. Ordinances, or rules and appointments to be observed by them.—4. Dishonoureth his head, or Christ, v. 3. May be an allusion to the usual custom for subordinates to remove the hat, turban, or covering of the head, as a matter of respect to their superiors.—5 The veil over the head of the woman was regarded by the Jews as denoting modesty, retirement, and her sense of subordination to man. Besides, it was a traditional law that women should appear in public veiled. The Christian religion sanctions national customs when they are not against the principles of truth and holiness.—10. Power is supposed to mean a veil, or covering, signifying that she is under the power of her husband, Gen. 24. 65.—20. It is probable the Corinthians had mistaken the nature of the Lord's Supper, and treated it as a common feast.—22. Them that have not; or, the poor members. It was publicly exposing the poverty of those who could not provide sumptuously for themselves.—29. Damnation, or judgment. Lay themselves open to the displeasure and judgments of God, Rom. 13. 2.—30. Sleep, may be understood to convey the idea that they had been punished with death for their sin.—34. The rest, or other matters concerning which his opinion had been sought.

CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1—11. *The variety and use of spiritual gifts.*—Spiritual gifts were extraordinary powers bestowed in the first ages, to convince unbelievers, and to spread the gospel. Gifts and graces greatly differ. Where grace is given, it is for the salvation of those who have it. Gifts are for the advantage and salvation of others; and there may be great gifts where there is no grace. The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit were chiefly exercised in the public assemblies, where the Corinthians seem to have made displays of them, wanting in the spirit of piety, and of Christian love.—While heathens, they had not been influenced by the Spirit of Christ. No man can call Christ Lord, with believing dependence upon him, unless that faith is wrought by the Holy Ghost. All gifts proceed from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the origin of all spiritual blessings. No man has them merely for himself. The more he profits others, the more will they turn to his own account. If we have any knowledge of the truth, or any power to make it known, we must give all the glory to God. The greater the gifts are, the more the possessor is exposed to temptations, and the larger is the measure of grace needed to keep him humble and spiritual; and he will meet with more painful experiences and humbling dispensations.

12—30. *In the human body every member has its place and use.*—Christ and his church form one body, as Head and members. Christians become members of this body by baptism. The outward rite is of Divine institution; it is a sign of the new birth, and is called therefore the wash-

ing of regeneration, Tit. 3. 5. But it is only by the Spirit by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, that we are made members of Christ's body. And by communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper, we are strengthened, not by drinking the wine, but by drinking into one Spirit. Christ's members have different powers and places. We should do the duties of our own place, and not murmur, or quarrel with others. All Christians are dependent one upon another; each is to receive help from the rest.

31. *Love more excellent than spiritual gifts.*—Contempt, hatred, envy, and strife, are very unnatural in Christians. The offices and gifts, dispensed by the Holy Spirit, are noticed. That which holds the last and lowest rank in the list, is the power to speak languages; how vain, if a man does so merely to amuse or to exalt himself! The Spirit distributes to every one as he will. We must be content though we be lower and less than others; nor must we despise others, if we have greater gifts. Instead of coveting the highest stations, or the most splendid gifts, let us leave the appointment of his instruments to God, and those in whom he works by his providence. Remember, those will not be approved hereafter who seek the chief places, but those who are most faithful to the trust placed in them, and most diligent in their Master's work.

5. Administrations; ministries, or ways of working, v. 9, 10, 28.—9. The gifts mentioned appear to mean exact understanding, and uttering the doctrines of the Christian religion; the knowledge of mysteries, and skill to give advice and counsel. Also the gift of healing the sick, the working of miracles, and to explain Scripture 'y a peculiar gift of the Spirit, and ability to speak and interpret languages.—12. Christ, or the Christian church, Rom. 12. 4, 5; v. '7.—31. Be zealous for, and earnestly desire those gifts which will be most useful in the church. "A more excellent way," of showing your zeal for God. See ch. 13.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1—3. *The grace of love.*—Without love the most glorious gifts are of no account to us, of no esteem in the sight of God. A clear head and a deep understanding, are of no value without a benevolent and charitable heart. If we give away all we have and endure the most painful sufferings, while we withhold our hearts from God, it will not profit. How then are those deluded who look for acceptance and reward for their good works, which are as scanty and defective as they are corrupt and selfish!

4—7. *Its excellency.*—This love is a clear proof of regeneration, and is a touchstone of our professed faith in Christ.—Charity is an utter enemy to selfishness; it does not desire or seek its own praise, or honour, or profit, or

pleasure. It never seeks its own to the hurt of others, or to the neglect of others. It ever prefers the welfare of others to its private advantage.—How excellent would Christianity appear to the world, if those who profess it were more under this Divine principle, and paid due regard to the command on which its Author laid the chief stress! Let us ask if this Divine love dwells in our hearts.

8—13. *Its superiority.*—Charity is much to be preferred to the gifts on which the Corinthians prided themselves. It is a grace, lasting as eternity. What narrow views, what confused notions of things, have children when compared with grown men! Thus shall we think of our most valued gifts of this world, when we come to heaven. All things are dark and confused now, compared with what they will be hereafter. They can only be seen as by the reflection of a mirror, or in the description of a riddle; but hereafter our knowledge will be free from all obscurity and error.—Charity is preferred not only to gifts, but to other graces, to faith and hope. There is no room to believe and hope, when we see and enjoy; but in heaven love will be made perfect and everlasting. There we shall perfectly love God; and there we shall perfectly love one another. Blessed state! how much surpassing the best below!

1. Charity; not almsgiving, but love in its fullest meaning; love to God and man. Sounding brass may denote a trumpet of brass; cymbals were musical instruments; the one making a great noise, the other a clanging and clattering sound. Both destitute of vitality.—3. Alms were usually given at the gate of the donor; the word "bestow" may therefore be understood, give away in small portions, Luke 16. 20, 21.—5. Unseemly, offensively, unbecomingly, as some heathen philosophers did.—7. "All things," so far as right.—12. The ancients made their mirrors of polished metal, which is doubtless the illustration here. Objects would be but dimly reflected upon them: such is our present knowledge.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1—14. *Prophecy preferred to the gift of tongues.* The unprofitableness of speaking in unknown languages.—Prophecy, that is, explaining Scripture, is compared with speaking with tongues. This drew attention, more than the plain interpretation of Scripture; it gratified pride more, but promoted the purposes of Christian charity less; it would not equally do good to the souls of men. Every ability or possession is valuable in proportion to its usefulness. Even fervent, spiritual affection must be governed by the exercise of the understanding, else men will disgrace the truths they profess to promote. Even an apostle

could not edify, unless he spoke so as to be understood by his hearers. All religious services should be so performed that all may join in, and profit by them. Language plain and easy to be understood, is the most proper for public worship, and other religious exercises. Every true follower of Christ will rather desire to do good to others, than to get a name for learning or fine speaking.

15—25. *Exhortations to worship that can be understood.*—A truly Christian minister will seek much more to do spiritual good to men's souls, than to get the greatest applause to himself. Christians should be like children, void of guile and malice; yet they should not be unskilful as to the word of righteousness, but only as to the arts of mischief.—It is a proof that a people are forsaken of God, when he gives them up to the rule of those who teach them to worship in another language. They can never be benefited by such teaching. But if those who minister, plainly interpret Scripture, and preach the great truths and rules of the gospel, a heathen or unlearned person might become a convert to Christianity. His conscience might be touched, the secrets of his heart might be revealed to him, and so he might be brought to confess his guilt, and to own that God was present in the assembly. Scripture truth, plainly and duly taught, has a wonderful power to awaken the conscience and touch the heart.

26—40. *Disorders in the church.*—Let all religious exercises be done to edifying. As to the speaking in an unknown tongue, if another were present who could interpret, two miraculous gifts might thus be exercised, and thereby the church be edified, and the faith of the hearers confirmed at the same time. As to prophesying, two or three only should speak at one meeting, and this one after the other, not all at once.—When the apostle exhorts Christian women to seek information on religious subjects from their husbands at home, it shows that believing families ought to assemble for promoting spiritual knowledge. The way to keep peace, truth, and order in the church, is to seek that which is good for it, to bear with that which is not hurtful to its welfare, and to keep up good order.

1. The Corinthians were desirous of speaking in foreign languages, because it excited greater wonder. Paul urged them to desire rather that they might be able to speak for the edification of others.—2. Speaking in unknown tongues was a miraculous gift. See Acts 2. 4, 10. 46.—8. In almost all ancient armies, trumpets were used to direct the soldiers. A difference of sounds was necessary, and if the blower did not give the proper sound, the soldiers either could not act, or would be in danger of acting wrongly.—11. The Greeks called all such as did not speak their language Barbarians. Unlearned, or mere hearers, and holding no office.—16. The congregation among the

Jews usually said "Amen," or, so be it, at the close of a prayer or blessing.—21. Isa. 28. 11, 12. The law, or Scripture of the Old Testament.—25. An allusion to the posture of reverence or worship in the east, by falling on hands and knees, and putting the face to the ground, Gen. 44. 14.—34. Gen. 3. 16; 1 Tim. 2. 11, 12. The rules of the synagogue are very strict on this subject.

CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1—11. *The apostle proves the resurrection of Christ.*—The doctrine of Christ's death and resurrection, is the foundation of Christianity. Remove this, and all our hopes for eternity sink at once. This apostle was highly favoured, but he always had a low opinion of himself, and expressed it. When sinners are, by Divine grace, turned into saints, God causes the remembrance of former sins to make them humble, diligent, and faithful. All true Christians believe that Jesus Christ, and him crucified, and then risen from the dead, is the sum and substance of the gospel. All the apostles agreed in this testimony; by this faith they lived, and in this faith they died.

12—19. *Those answered who deny the resurrection.*—Must not faith in Christ be vain, and of no use, if he is still among the dead? Even those who died in the faith, had perished in their sins, if Christ had not risen. All who believe in Christ, hope for redemption and salvation by him; but if there be no resurrection, or future recompense, their hope in him can only be as to this life. Thus they must be in a worse condition than the rest of mankind, especially at the time, and under the circumstances, in which the apostles wrote; for then Christians were hated and persecuted by all men. But it is not so; they, of all men, enjoy solid comforts amidst all their difficulties and trials, even in the times of the sharpest persecution.

20—34. *The resurrection of believers.*—All that are by faith united to Christ, are by his resurrection assured of their own. As through the sin of the first Adam, all men became mortal, because all had from him the same sinful nature, so, through the resurrection of Christ, shall all who are made to partake of the Spirit, and the spiritual nature, revive, and live for ever.—There will be an order in the resurrection. Christ himself has been the first-fruits; at his coming, his redeemed people will be raised before others; at the last the wicked will rise also. Would we triumph in that solemn and important season, we must now submit to his rule, accept his salvation, and live to his glory.—What shall those do, who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? What will become of those who have suffered many and great injuries, and have

even lost their lives, for this doctrine of the resurrection, if the dead rise not at all?—Those who own a God and a providence, and observe how unequal things are in the present life, how frequently the best men fare worst, cannot doubt as to an after-state, where everything will be set to rights. Let us then awake to righteousness, and not sin.

35—50. *Objections against it answered.*—How are the dead raised up? that is, by what means? How can they be raised? The answer is this, it was to be brought about by Divine power; that power which all may see does somewhat like it, year after year, in the death and revival of the corn. The grain undergoes a great change; and so will the dead, when they rise and live again. The seed dies, though a part of it springs into new life, though how it is we cannot fully understand. There is a great variety among other bodies, as there is among plants. There is a variety of glory among heavenly bodies. The bodies of the dead, when they rise, will be fitted for the heavenly state; and there will be a variety of glories among them.—Believers shall at the resurrection have bodies, made fit to be for ever united with spirits made perfect. The dead in Christ shall not only rise, but shall rise gloriously changed. They will be then bodies, fitted to the heavenly world and state, where they are ever afterwards to dwell. The human body in its present form, and with its wants and weaknesses, cannot enter or enjoy the kingdom of God. The body follows the state of the soul. He, therefore, who neglects the life of the soul, casts away his present good.

51—58. *The mystery of the change that will be made on the living. The believer's triumph.*—Sin gives death all its hurtful power. The sting of death is sin; but Christ, by dying, has taken out this sting; he has made atonement for sin, he has obtained remission of it. The strength of sin is the law. None can answer its demands, endure its curse, or do away his own transgressions. Hence terror and anguish; and hence death is terrible to the unbelieving and the impenitent. Death may seize a believer, but it cannot hold him in its power. How many springs of joy to the saints, and of thanksgiving to God, are opened by the death and resurrection, the sufferings and conquests of the Redeemer!—May Christ increase our faith, that we may not only be safe, but joyful and triumphant.

3, 4. Psa. 22; Luke 24. 26, 46; Isa. 53. 10; Psa. 16. 10; Hosea 6. 2.—5. John 20. 19.—6. Probably in Galilee, Matt. 28. 10.—8. Acts 9. 17.—12. Of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body not a trace can be found in all the teaching of the philosophers.—20. The offering of the first-fruits secured a blessing on the rest, Lev. 23. 10—14.—24. Dan. 7. 14, 27.—29. Perhaps baptism is used here in a figure, for

afflictions, sufferings, and martyrdom, as Matt. 50. 22, 23.—30. 2 Cor. 11. 26; Luke 8. 23.—32. Paul might either refer to wild beasts, or to men equally fierce, Acts 19. 23.—37, 38. Not the same ears that you will reap, but of the same form and quality.—40, 41. As there is a difference between the radiance of sun, moon, and stars, so in a greater degree is there between the heavenly and earthly bodies.—54. Isa. 25. 8.—58. Probably an allusion to the toil and self-denial of the wrestler who stood firm to his ground, striving for the prize.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1—12. *A collection for the poor.*—What more proper to stir us up to charity to the people and children of God, than to look at all we have as his gift? Works of mercy are real fruits of true love to God, and are therefore proper services on his own day. Ministers are doing their proper business, when putting forward, or helping works of charity.—Adversaries and opposition do not break the spirits of faithful ministers, but inspire them with fresh zeal and courage. A faithful minister is more discouraged by the hardness of his hearers' hearts, and the backslidings of professors, than by the enemies' attempts.

13—18. *Exhortation to watchfulness.*—A Christian is always in danger, therefore should ever be on the watch. By faith alone he will be able to keep his ground in an hour of temptation. The apostle gave particular directions as to some who served the cause of Christ among them: they are to be thought much of, and loved.

19—24. *Christian salutations.*—Religion should promote a courteous and obliging temper towards all. Christian salutations are not mere empty compliments; but are real expressions of good-will to others, and commend them to the Divine grace and blessing. Here is a solemn warning. Many who have Christ's name much in their mouths, have no true love to him in their hearts. None love him in truth, who do not love his laws, and keep his commandments. Those who love not the Lord Jesus Christ, must perish without remedy.—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ has in it all that is good, for time and for eternity. To wish that our friends may have this grace with them, is wishing them the utmost good. We can wish them nothing greater, and we should wish them nothing less. The apostle had dealt plainly with the Corinthians, and told them of their faults with just severity; but he ends with a solemn profession of his love to them for Christ's sake.

1. Acts 24. 17; Rom. 15. 26.—5. "I do" intend to pass Macedonia. See note, Acts 16. 9.—9. A great door, or an opening for usefulness, Col. 4. 3.—22. *Anathema maranatha, or, Accursed, the Lord cometh.*

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

This was probably written about a year after the first. Its contents are closely connected with those of the former epistle. In it we find the same ardent affection towards the disciples at Corinth as in the former, the same zeal for the honour of the gospel, and the same boldness in giving Christian reproof. The first six chapters are chiefly practical: the rest have more reference to the state of the Corinthian church, but they contain many rules of general application.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—11. *The apostle blesses God for deliverance out of troubles.*—We are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. The Lord is able to give peace to the troubled conscience, and to calm the raging passions of the soul. All comforts come *from* God, and our sweetest comforts are *in* him. He speaks peace to souls by granting the free remission of sins; and he comforts them by the enlivening influences of the Holy Spirit, and by the rich mercies of his grace. He is able to bind up the broken-hearted, to heal the most painful wounds, and also to give hope and joy under the heaviest sorrows. If we should be brought so low as to despair even of life, yet we may then trust God, who can bring back even from death. Let past experiences encourage faith and hope, and lay us under obligation to trust in God for the time to come.

12—14. *He professes his own integrity.*—Though, as a sinner, the apostle could only rejoice and glory in Christ Jesus, yet, as a believer, he might rejoice and glory in being really what he professed. Conscience witnesses concerning the steady course and tenor of the life. Thereby we may judge ourselves, and not by this or by that single act. Our conversation will be well ordered, when we live under such a gracious principle in the heart.

15—24. *Gives reasons for his not coming to them.*—Good men should be careful to keep the reputation of sincerity and constancy; they *should not* resolve, but on careful thought; and they *will not* change unless for weighty reasons.—The Holy Spirit makes Christians firm in the faith of the gospel: the quickening of the Spirit is an earnest of everlasting life; and the comforts of the Spirit are an earnest of everlasting joy.

1. Corinth was the capital of Achaia, which country was sometimes called Greece Proper.—5. Sufferings of Christ, or sufferings on account of our love to Christ.—8. In Asia; see Acts 19, when Demetrius raised a riot against him at Ephesus.—9. Sentence of death; the certainty he felt of dying a violent death.—11. The gift, or miraculous deliverance granted by God in answer to the prayers of man.—12. Conversation; in the Scripture this word mostly means "conduct."—15. Second benefit, or a further confirmation in knowledge and grace.—22. It was an ancient custom to mark the property of an individual by sealing it. The earnest; referring to the custom of giving earnest money to servants when hired for a particular service.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—11. *Directions about restoring the repentant offender.*—The apostle wished to have a cheerful meeting with them; and he had written in confidence of their doing what was for their benefit and his comfort. He desires them to receive again the person who had done wrong, into their communion; for he was aware of his fault, and much afflicted under his punishment. Even sorrow for sin should not unfit for other duties, and drive to despair. Not only was there danger lest Satan should get an advantage, by tempting the penitent to hard thoughts of God and to despair; but by bringing an evil report upon Christians as unforgiving, to make divisions, and hinder the success of the ministry.

12—17. *An account of the apostle's labours and success.*—A believer's triumphs are all in Christ. To him be the praise and glory of all. In ancient triumphs, abundance of perfumes and sweet odours were used; so the name and salvation of Jesus, as ointment poured out, was a sweet savour diffused in every place. Unto some, the gospel is a savour of death unto death; they reject it to their ruin. Unto others, the gospel is a savour of life unto life: as it quickened them at first when they were dead in trespasses and sins, so it makes them more lively, and will end in eternal life.—What we do in religion, unless it is done in sincerity, as in the sight of God, is not of God, does not come from him, and will not reach to him.

5, 6 Many of the Corinthians were grieved at the evil conduct of him mentioned 1 Cor. 5. 1, and had censured it.—10. "In the person of Christ;" by the authority which I have received from him.—12. Troas, near ancient Troy, a city in Lesser Asia. Here Paul went after he was driven from Ephesus; and it was the crossing-place to Macedonia over the Ægean Sea.—14—16. At the end of a war among the Romans, or Grecians, "a triumph" was held. The conqueror was seated in a triumphal car, flowers strewn around, and incense scented the air. Some of the captives followed in chains, and were put to death at the conclusion. Hence the scent was refreshing and vivifying to the conqueror, which to the doomed captive it was the smell of death.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—11. *The preference of the gospel to the law.*— Nothing is more delightful to faithful ministers, or more to their praise, than the success of their ministry, as shown in the spirits and lives of those among whom they labour. The law of Christ was written in their hearts, and the love of Christ shed abroad there. Nor was it written in tables of stone, as the law of God given to Moses, but on the fleshy tables of the heart, Ezek. 36. 26. Their hearts were humbled and softened to receive this impression, by the new-creating power of the Holy Spirit. The law made known sin, and the wrath and curse of God; it showed us a God above us, and a God against us; but the gospel makes known grace, and Emmanuel, God with us. Therein the righteousness of God by faith is revealed; and this shows us that the just shall live by his faith, this makes known the grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ, for obtaining the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. But even the New Testament will be a killing letter, if viewed as a mere system or form, and without dependence on God the Holy Spirit, to give it a quickening power.

12—18. *The excellency and evidence of the gospel.*—The Old Testament believers had only cloudy and passing glimpses of the glorious Saviour, and unbelievers looked no further than to the outward institution. But the great precepts of the gospel, believe, love, obey, are truths stated as clearly as possible. And the whole doctrine of Christ crucified, is made as plain as human language can make it. Those who lived under the law, had a veil upon their hearts. This veil is taken away by the doctrines of the Bible about Christ. When any persons are converted to God, then the veil of ignorance is taken away. They have light, and with open face they behold the glory of the Lord. We should not rest contented without knowing the transforming power of the gospel, by the working of the Spirit, bringing us into union with, and likeness to Christ.

1. It was customary in the primitive church, when a Christian was about to journey, to give him letters testimonial, or of introduction, Acts 18. 27. By this means false teachers had gained a footing in the church at Corinth.—2. Ye are our epistle, or our letters testimonial.—3. Tables, or tablets, were used for writing on with pointed steel, before paper was common. Fleshy tables, was a metaphor in common use among the ancients.—7. Ex. 34. 28—35.—15. Veils are still worn by Jews in their synagogues. Veil here signifies ignorance arising from pride or prejudice.—16. Turn to the Lord; or when the Jews shall be converted.—18. Open, or unveiled face. Glass, or mirror; the ancient mirrors were made not of glass, but metal, highly polished.

CHAPTER IV.

Vcl. 1—7. *The apostles' labours.*—The least of men would faint, if they did not receive mercy from God. And that mercy which has helped us out, and helped us on, hitherto, we may rely upon to help us even to the end. The design of the devil is, to keep men in ignorance; and when he cannot keep the light of the gospel of Christ out of the world, he spares no pains to keep men from the gospel, or to set them against it.—Self was not the matter or the end of the apostles' preaching; they preached Christ as Jesus, the Saviour and Deliverer, who saves to the uttermost all that come to God through him. As light was the beginning of the first creation; so, in the new creation, the light of the Spirit is his first work upon the soul. The treasure of gospel light and grace is put into earthen vessels. God could have sent angels to make known the gospel, or could have sent the most admired sons of men to teach the nations; but he chose humbler, weaker vessels, that his power might be more glorified in upholding them, and in the blessed change wrought by their ministry.

8-12. *Their sufferings and rich supports.*—Believers may be forsaken of their friends, as well as persecuted by enemies; but their God will never leave them nor forsake them. They may have fears within, as well as fightings without; yet they are not destroyed. The apostle speaks of their sufferings as a counterpart of the sufferings of Christ, that people might see the power of Christ's resurrection, and of grace in and from the living Jesus.

13—18. *Prospects of eternal glory.*—The grace of faith is an effectual remedy against fainting in times of trouble. They knew that Christ was raised, and that his resurrection was an earnest and assurance of theirs. The prospect of eternal life and happiness was their support and comfort. What sense was ready to pronounce heavy and long, grievous and tedious, faith perceived to be light and short, and but for a moment. The weight of all temporal afflictions was lightness itself, while the glory to come was a substance, weighty, and lasting beyond description. Let us then look off from the things which are seen; let us not covet worldly advantages, or fear present distresses. Let us give diligence to make our future happiness sure.

2. Hidden things of dishonesty; these probably were the corrupt doctrines and practices of the false teachers.—4. Satan is the god of this world, Luke 4 6, 7; Eph. 6, 12.—6. Light, in the Scripture, is the emblem of knowledge, purity, and truth, as darkness is of ignorance, error, and sin.—7. It was an ancient practice to secrete valuable treasures in earthen vessels or jars.—10. The apostles bore marks of the sufferings they endured for Christ's sake.—13. Psa. 116, 10.—17.

Far more exceeding, or infinitely exceeding ; it means that all language fails in expressing the eternal glory which awaits the believer in Christ.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—15. *The apostle's hope and desire.*—The happiness of the future state is what God has prepared for those that love him : everlasting habitations, not like the earthly tabernacles, the poor cottages of clay, in which our souls now dwell ; that are mouldering and decaying, whose foundations are in the dust. Death will strip us of the clothing of flesh, and all the comforts of life, as well as end all our troubles here. But believing souls shall be clothed with garments of praise, with robes of righteousness and glory.—It is our duty, and it will be our interest, to walk by faith, till we live by sight. This shows clearly the happiness to be enjoyed by the souls of believers when absent from the body, and where Jesus makes known his glorious presence. Well-grounded hopes of heaven will not encourage sloth and sinful security. On the contrary, knowing what terrible vengeance the Lord will execute upon the workers of iniquity, we shall use every argument and persuasion, to lead men to believe in the Lord Jesus, and to act as his disciples. We shall not make ourselves, but Christ, the end of our living and actions. Alas, how many show the worthlessness of their professed faith and love, by living to themselves and to the world !

16—21. *The necessity of regeneration, and of reconciliation with God.*—The renewed man acts upon new principles, by new rules, with new ends, and in new company. Though the same as a man, he is changed in his character and conduct. These words must and do mean more than an outward reformation. The heart of the unregenerate is filled with enmity against God, and God is justly offended with him ; yet there may be reconciliation. Our offended God has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. The Scriptures are the word of reconciliation ; showing that peace has been made by the cross, and how we may be interested therein.—Christ knew no sin ; yet he was made Sin ; not a sinner, but Sin, a Sin-offering, a Sacrifice for sin. The design of all this was, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, might be justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption which is in Christ.

1. Tabernacle, or tent ; the reference may be to a tent used by travellers in the east, which is soon taken down and removed.—2. Clothed upon ; the Jews spoke of the body as the clothing of the soul, which is put off at death.—6. At home ; rather, while we sojourn in this body, or dwelling.—14. Constrains, or bears us away, like a strong and resistless current.—6. The apostle did not value men on account of

their birth, nation, or station.—17. In Christ, or united to him by faith, as the branch is to the vine, John 15. 2.—21. Sin; that is, a sin-offering, Gal. 3. 13; 1 John 3. 5.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1—10. *The apostles proved themselves faithful ministers.*—The gospel day is a day of salvation, and the present time the proper time to accept the offers of salvation. Then let all be careful not to neglect them. Believers, in this world, need the grace of God, to arm them against temptations, so as to bear the good report of men without pride; and so as to bear their reproaches with patience. They have nothing in themselves, but possess all things in Christ.—Of such differences is a Christian's life made up, and through such a variety of conditions and reports, is our way to heaven. The gospel, when faithfully preached, and fully received, betters the condition even of the poorest. They save and gain by religion, and thus are made rich, both for the world to come and for this, when compared with their sinful, profligate state, before they received the gospel.

11—18. *Their earnest concern that they might have no fellowship with unbelievers.*—It is wrong for believers to join with the wicked and profane. The fatal effects of neglecting Scripture precepts as to marriages clearly appear. Instead of a help meet, the union brings a snare. When professed disciples enter into such unions, against the express warnings of God's word, they must expect much distress.—Also, we should not join in friendship and acquaintance with wicked men and unbelievers. Though we cannot wholly avoid seeing and hearing, and being with such, yet we should never choose them for friends. Come out from the workers of iniquity, and separate from their vain and sinful pleasures and pursuits; from all conformity to the corruptions of this present evil world.

2. Isa. 49. 6-8.—7. Armour of righteousness, etc. Probably an allusion to the Roman warriors, who carried in the left hand a shield, and in the right hand a javelin or sword.—11. A figure of speech, perhaps derived from the eastern custom of closing the mouth when angry, Isa. 52. 15, and opening it when joyous and glad.—15. Belial; a general name for the false gods of the heathen, and sometimes applied to Satan: the word means, lawless, rebellious, wicked.—16. See Ex. 29. 45; Lev. 26. 12; Ezek. 37. 27.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1—4. *An exhortation to holiness.*—If we hope in God as our Father, we must seek to be holy as he is holy, and perfect as our Father in heaven. His grace, by the influences of his Spirit, alone can purify, and holiness should

be the object of our constant prayers.—Ministers may look for esteem and favour, when they can safely appeal to the people, that they have corrupted no man by false doctrines or flattering speeches ; that they have defrauded no man ; nor sought their own interests so as to hurt any.

5—11. *On sorrowing to repentance.*—There were fightings without, or continual contentions with, and opposition from Jews and Gentiles ; and there were fears within, and great concern for such as had embraced the Christian faith. Sorrow according to the will of God, tending to the glory of God, and wrought by the Spirit of God, renders the heart humble, contrite, submissive, disposed to mortify every sin, and to walk in newness of life. And this repentance is connected with saving faith in Christ, and an interest in his atonement. True repentance wrought indignation at sin, at themselves, at the tempter and his instruments. It wrought a watchful and cautious fear of sin. It wrought desire to be reconciled with God. It wrought zeal for duty, and against sin. It wrought revenge against their sin and folly, by endeavours to make satisfaction for injuries done. Deep humility before God, hatred of all sin, with faith in Christ, a new heart and a new life, make repentance unto salvation.

12—16. *The comfort the church and Titus had together.*—Here see the duties of a pastor and of his flock ; the latter must lighten the troubles of the pastoral office, by respect and obedience ; the former make a due return by his care of them, and cherish the flock by testimonies of satisfaction, joy, and tenderness.

1. These promises : see ch. 6. 17, 18. Filthiness, etc., or all impurity in heart and life. See Zech. 3. 3 ; 1 John 3. 35.—5. In Macedonia, the apostles had met much opposition, Acts 16 : within the church they had much to fear from false teachers, whom many followed, ch. 11. 3.—10. Worketh death, as in the cases of Cain and Judas.—11. Indignation, against sin, and the offence noticed, 1 Cor. 5.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1—6. *Charitable contributions for the poor saints.*—The grace of God must be owned as the root and fountain of all the good in us, or done by us. It is great grace and favour from God, if we are made useful to others, and forward to any good work.—Whatever we use or lay out for God, we only give him his own. By ascribing all good works to his grace, we not only give the glory to him whose due it is, but also show men where their strength is.

7—9. *Enforced by the love and grace of Christ.*—Faith is the root ; and as without faith it is not possible to please God, Heb. 11. 6, so those who abound in faith, will abound

in other graces and good works also; and this will work and show itself by love.—The best arguments for Christian duties are drawn from the grace and love of Christ. Though he was rich, as being God, equal in power and glory with the Father, yet he not only became man for us, but became poor also. From what riches, blessed Lord, to what poverty didst thou descend for our sakes! and to what riches hast thou advanced us through thy poverty!

10—15. *By the willingness they had shown to this good work.*—Good purposes are like buds and blossoms, pleasant to behold, and give hopes of good fruit; but they are lost, and signify nothing without good deeds. When men purpose that which is good, and endeavour, according to their ability, to perform also, God will not reject them for what it is not in their power to do. Providence gives to some more of the good things of this world, and to some less, that those who have abundance might supply others who are in want. It is the will of God, that by our mutual supplying one another, there should be some sort of equality; not such a levelling as would destroy property, for in such a case there could be no exercise of charity.

16—24. *He recommends Titus to them.*—It is the duty of all Christians to act prudently; to hinder, as far as we can, all unjust suspicions. It is needful, in the first place, to act uprightly in the sight of God, and then to mind things honest in the sight of men. They brought glory to Christ as instruments, and had obtained honour from Christ to be counted faithful, and employed in his service.

1. We do you to wit; or, we make known to you.—6. Grace, or gift: an act of kindness or liberality.—7. Utterance; perhaps the gift of speaking languages, which many Corinthians possessed.—15. Ex. 16. 18: see also Prov. 19. 17; Matt. 10. 42; 1 Tim. 6. 18, 19; Heb. 13. 16.—18. The brother. Who this was is now unknown; some think it was Luke.—19. This agrees with what is said in 1 Cor. 16. 3.—22. Our brother, thought to have been Apollos: see 1 Cor. 16. 12.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1—15. *Titus sent to collect their alms. Liberality and cheerfulness. The unspeakable gift.*—The duty of ministering to the saints is so plain, that there would seem no need to exhort Christians to it; yet self-love contends so powerfully against the love of Christ, that it is often necessary to stir up their minds by way of remembrance. Money bestowed in charity, may to the carnal mind seem thrown away, but when given from proper principles, it is seed sown, from which a valuable increase may be expected. If we had more faith and love, we should waste less on ourselves, and sow more in hope of a plentiful increase.

We must show the reality of our subjection to the gospel by works of charity. This will be for the credit of our profession, and to the praise and glory of God.—Blessed be God for the unspeakable gift of his grace, whereby he enables and inclines some of his people to bestow upon others, and others to be grateful for it; and blessed be his glorious name to all eternity, for Jesus Christ, that inestimable gift of his love, through whom this and every other good thing, pertaining to life and godliness, are freely given unto us, beyond all expression, measure, or bounds.

1. Ministering to the saints, or, helping the poor saints at Jerusalem.—5. Whereof, etc.; marginal reading, "which hath been so much spoken of before."—9. His righteousness; or, his deeds of beneficence.—9, 10. See Prov. 11, 24, 25; Psa. 112. 9; Isa. 55. 10.—11. Bountifulness, or liberality.

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1--11. *The apostle reasons with the Corinthians.*—The work of the ministry is a spiritual warfare with spiritual enemies, and for spiritual purposes. Outward force is not the method of the gospel, but strong persuasions, by the power of truth and the meekness of wisdom. Thus the weapons of our warfare are very powerful; the evidence of truth is convincing. The appointed means, however feeble they appear to some, will be mighty through God. And the preaching of the cross, by men of faith and prayer, is fatal to idolatry, impiety, and wickedness.

12—18. *Seeks the glory of God, and to be approved of him.*—If we would compare ourselves with others who excel us, this would be a good method to keep us humble. There is not a more fruitful source of error, than to judge of persons and opinions by our own prejudices. How common is it for persons to judge of their own religious character by the opinions and maxims of the world around them! And of all flattery, self-flattery is the worst. Therefore, instead of praising ourselves, we should strive to approve ourselves to God. In a word, let us glory in the Lord our salvation, and in all other things only as evidences of his love, or means of promoting his glory.

1. "Who in presence," etc. Paul had no advantage in outward appearance, and was on this account despised by many. Some of the ancient writers say that he was of low stature.—3. Walk in the flesh, inhabit a body of infirmity, or a mortal body.—4. An illustration borrowed from military tactics, probably an allusion to the walls of Jericho (Josh. 6. 20). The walls were brought down when the priests blew the trumpets, so at the preaching of the gospel all obstacles to its progress will be removed.—5. Imaginations, or sophistical reasoning and pride of false teachers.—10. The Greeks were apt to despise others, Acts 17, 18. Paul may have had an impediment in his speech, or been embarrassed, or inelegant.—15. Enlarged, or magnified in you. The

apostle hoped to extend his usefulness as they increased in Divine knowledge.—16. "Another man's line:" the false teachers boasted in the labours of others as though they had done all.

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1.—15. *The apostle speaks in his own commendation.*—It is far better to be plain in speech, yet walking openly and consistently with the gospel, than to be admired by thousands, and be lifted up in pride, so as to disgrace the gospel by evil tempers and unholy lives. The apostle would not give room for any to accuse him of worldly designs in preaching the gospel, that others who opposed him at Corinth, might not, in this respect, gain an advantage against him. Satan will allow ministers to preach either the law or the gospel separately; but the law as established by faith in Christ's righteousness and atonement, and the partaking of his Spirit, is the test of every false system.

16—33. *He gives an account of his labours and sufferings.*—It is the duty and practice of Christians to humble themselves, in obedience to the command and example of the Lord; yet prudence must direct in what way it is needful to do things which we may do lawfully, even the speaking of what God has wrought for us, and in us, and by us. The apostle gives an account of his labours and sufferings; not out of pride or vain-glory, but to the honour of God, who enabled him to do and suffer so much for the cause of Christ; and shows wherein he excelled the false apostles, who tried to lessen his character and usefulness. It astonishes us to reflect on this account of his dangers and sufferings, and to observe his patience, perseverance, diligence, cheerfulness, and usefulness in the midst of all these trials. Here we may study patience, courage, and firm trust in God, and learn to think less of ourselves.

1. Folly, or seeming weakness.—2: There was an officer among the Greeks whose duty it was to educate young females of rank, and then present them to their husbands.—6. Rude in speech, without the pomp of Greek eloquence, or the studied arts of oratory.—7. Abasing myself, by working as a tent-maker.—8. This accords with Phil. 4. 15, 16.—9. This agrees with Acts 18. 3—5. These undesigned agreements are worthy of notice.—18. Glory after the flesh, in external privileges, and as the children of Abraham.—24. The whip consisted of three lashes, so that thirty-nine only could be given without exceeding the limits of the law, Deut. 25. 3.—25. Rods, a bundle of which was carried before the Roman consuls. Once was I stoned, namely, at Lystra, Acts 14. 19. Thrice I suffered shipwreck: this was written before the shipwreck related in Acts 27.—32. Aretas was an Arabian king.

CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1—10. *The apostle's revelations.*—Whether heavenly things were brought down to him, while his body was in a

trance, as in the case of ancient prophets; or whether his soul was dislodged from the body for a time, and taken up into heaven, or whether he was taken up body and soul together, he knew not. We are not capable, nor is it fit we should yet know, the particulars of that glorious place and state. If God loves us, he will keep us from being exalted above measure; and spiritual burdens are ordered to cure spiritual pride. This thorn in the flesh is said to be a messenger of Satan which he sent for evil; but God designed it, and overruled it for good. Prayer is a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady; and when we are afflicted with thorns in the flesh, we should give ourselves to prayer. Troubles are sent to teach us to pray; and are continued, to teach us to continue instant in prayer. When God does not take away our troubles and temptations, yet, if he gives grace enough for us, we have no reason to complain. When we feel that we are weak in ourselves, then we go to Christ, receive help from him, and enjoy most the supplies of Divine strength and grace.

11—21. *The signs of an apostle were in him. His purpose of making them a visit.*—We are under special obligations to those from whom we have received benefit, especially spiritual benefit, to own them as instruments in God's hand of good to us. Here are noticed several sins commonly found among professors of religion. Falls and misdeeds are humbling to a minister; and God sometimes takes this way to humble those who might be tempted to be lifted up. These last verses show to what excesses the false teachers had drawn aside their deluded followers. How grievous it is that such evils should be found among professors of the gospel! Yet thus it is, and it was so even in the days of the apostles.

2. The time alluded to is not certain; possibly it was at Lystra, Acts 14. 6, about A.D. 46, or it might be at Jerusalem, Acts 22. 17. The third heaven was a term used by the Jews, for the immediate presence of God. The clouds were termed the first heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, the second.—4. Paradise, the future state of bliss, Luke 23. 43. Not lawful, or not possible.—7. Gal. 4. 13, 14. The thorn in the flesh was probably some bodily affliction. Satan was probably the agent in afflicting Paul; or, by the affliction, he distressed the mind of the apostle. See Job 2. 7; Luke 13. 16.—11. I am become a fool; or, I have been compelled to speak of myself like foolish, vainglorious people.—16. Being crafty. This was a false charge brought against the apostle; he acted with great simplicity and uprightness.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1—6. *The apostle threatens obstinate offenders.*—Though it is God's gracious method to bear long with sinners, yet he will not bear always; at length he will

come, and will not spare the obstinate and impenitent. Christ at his crucifixion appeared as only a weak and helpless man, but his resurrection and life showed his Divine power. So the apostles, how mean and contemptible soever they appeared to the world, yet, as instruments, they manifested the power of God.—Let them prove their tempers, conduct, and experience, as gold is proved by the touchstone. They ought to know if Christ Jesus was in them, by the influences, graces, and indwelling of his Spirit, by his kingdom set up in their hearts. Unless Christ be in us by his Spirit, and the power of his love, our faith is dead, and we are yet disapproved by our Judge.

7--10. *He prays for their reformation.*—The most desirable thing we can ask of God, for ourselves and our friends, is to be kept from sin, that we and they may not do evil. We have far more need to pray that we may not do evil, than that we may not suffer evil. We are earnestly to pray to God for those we caution, that they may cease to do evil, and learn to do well. Let us also pray that we may be enabled to make a proper use of all our talents.

11-14. *And ends the epistle with a salutation and blessing.*—Here are several good exhortations. Let it be our constant aim so to walk, that separation from our friends may be only for a time, and that we may meet in that happy world where parting will be unknown. He wishes that they may partake all the benefits which Christ of his free grace has purchased, the Father out of his free love has purposed, and the Holy Ghost applies and bestows.

1. Numb. 35. 30 ; Matt. 18. 16.—5. Prove your own selves ; a metaphor taken from the testing of metals, to see whether they were pure or not. Reprobates, not approved, not able to stand the trial, like unto dross.—9. Perfection ; the word alludes to the setting of a dislocated limb, and here refers to restoring and making things whole that have been broken.—12. The holy kiss was used among the early Christians, Rom. 16. 16 ; 1 Cor. 16. 20. Its discontinuance was caused by an ill report which had been spread concerning it, though as the men and women were apart in their assemblies, no ground of offence was given, nor any occasion for the slanders of their enemies.—14. These words are a prayer addressed to the Holy Trinity.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

THE churches in Galatia were formed partly of converted Jews, and partly of Gentile converts. The subject of this epistle is mainly the same as that discussed in the epistle to the Romans, justification by faith alone. Attention is particularly directed to the point, that men are justified by faith without the works of the law of Moses.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—9. *The apostle Paul asserts his apostolic character, and reproves the Galatians.*—Grace includes God's good-will towards us, and his good work upon us; and peace, all that inward comfort, or outward prosperity, which is really needful for us. They come from God the Father, as the fountain, through Jesus Christ. But observe, first grace, and then peace; there can be no true peace without grace.—Christ gave himself for our sins, to make atonement for us: this the justice of God required, and to this he freely submitted. Especially mark well the words, "for our sins." For here our weak nature starts back, and would first be made worthy by its own works. Not only to redeem us from the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, but also to recover us from wicked practices and customs, to which we are naturally enslaved. It is in vain for those who are not delivered from this present evil world by the sanctification of the Spirit, to expect that they are freed from its condemnation by the blood of Jesus. The apostle presses upon the Galatians a due sense of their guilt in forsaking the gospel way of justification; yet he reproves with tenderness, and represents them as drawn into it by the arts of some that troubled them.—Some would set up the works of the law in the place of Christ's righteousness, and thus they corrupted Christianity. All other gospels than that of the grace of Christ, whether more flattering to self-righteous pride, or more favourable to worldly lusts, are devices of Satan. While we are zealous for good works, let us be careful not to put them in the place of Christ's righteousness, and not to advance anything which may betray others into so dreadful a delusion.

10—24. *He proves the Divine authority of his doctrine and mission.*—In preaching the gospel, the apostle sought to bring persons to the obedience, not of men, but of God. In so important a matter we must not fear the frowns of men, nor seek their favour, by using words of men's wisdom. He was wonderfully brought to the knowledge and faith of Christ. He instantly prepared to obey, without hesitating us to his worldly interest, credit, ease, or life itself. It will but little avail us to have Christ revealed to us, if he is not also revealed in us. Let us glorify God for his power and mercy in saving such as Paul, and for all the service to his people and cause that is done by them.

2. Galatia, a country in the north of Asia Minor; Paul's visit to it is mentioned, Acts 16. 6—12.—6. Another gospel, or pretended revelation from God.—13. Acts 8 3; 9. 1.—15. Separated me, or set me apart, designing me for an apostle.—19. The Lord's brother, or

near kinsman, that is, James, the son of Alpheus, Matt. 13. 56.—
21. Cilicia was the native country of Paul. Tarsus was the capital.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—10. *Paul an apostle of the Gentiles.*—While we simply depend upon God for success to our labours, we should use every proper caution to remove mistakes. We are here taught that the gospel is not ours, but God's; and that men are but the keepers of it; for this we are to praise God. The apostle showed his charitable disposition, and how ready he was to own the Jewish converts as brethren, though many would scarcely allow the like favour to the converted Gentiles; but mere difference of opinion was no reason to him why he should not help them. Herein is a pattern of Christian charity, which we should extend to all the disciples of Christ.

11—14. *Paul had publicly opposed Peter.*—When Paul saw that Peter and others did not live up to that principle which the gospel taught, that by the death of Christ the partition wall between Jew and Gentile was taken down, and the observance of the law of Moses was no longer in force; he publicly reprov'd Peter, as his offence was public. There is a great difference between the prudence of Paul, who bore with, and used for a time, the ceremonies of the law as not sinful, and the timid conduct of Peter, who, by withdrawing from the Gentiles, led others to think that these ceremonies were necessary.

15—21. *The doctrine of justification by faith in Christ.*—Paul speaks of the great foundation doctrine of the gospel. By considering the law itself, he saw that justification was not to be expected by the works of it, and that there was now no further need of the sacrifices and cleansings of it, since they were done away in Christ, by his offering up himself a sacrifice for us. He did not hope or fear anything from it; any more than a dead man from enemies. But the effect was not a careless, lawless life. It was necessary, that he might live to God, and be devoted to him through the motives and grace of the gospel. It is no new prejudice, though a most unjust one, that the doctrine of justification by faith alone, tends to encourage people in sin. Believers see themselves living in a state of dependence on Christ. Hence it is, that though they live in the flesh, yet they do not live after the flesh. But many have the form of godliness without the power of it. They think they believe the articles of faith aright, but they are deceived. For to believe in Christ crucified, is not only to believe that he was crucified, but also to believe that I am crucified with him. Here learn what is the nature of grace.

It cannot stand with man's merit. The more simply the believer relies on Christ for everything, the more devotedly does he walk before Him in all his ordinances and commandments. Christ lives and reigns in him, and he lives here on earth by faith in the Son of God, which works by love, causes obedience, and changes into his holy image.

1. This refers to the occasion described in Acts 15. 2.—2. Run in vain; an allusion to those who lose a race.—7. Gospel of the uncircumcision, or the duty of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.—9. Pillars: this title was often given by the Jews to their eminent teachers.—19. Dead to the law, or to all my former hopes of eternal life, by perfect obedience to it.—21. Frustrate; or, make void.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—5. *The Galatians reproved.*—Alas, that men should turn from the all-important doctrine of Christ crucified, to listen to useless distinctions, mere moral preaching, or wild fancies! The God of this world, by various men and means, blinds men's eyes, lest they should learn to trust in a crucified Saviour. We may, however, boldly inquire where the fruits of the Holy Spirit are most evidently brought forth? whether among those who preach justification by the works of the law, or those who preach the doctrine of faith? Assuredly among the latter.

6—18. *The doctrine of justification established.*—The apostle proves the doctrine he had blamed the Galatians for rejecting; namely, that of justification by faith without the works of the law. This he does from the example of Abraham, whose faith fastened upon the word and promise of God; and upon his believing, he was owned and accepted of God as a righteous man. Through faith in the promise of God he was blessed; and it is only in the same way that others obtain this privilege; for justification by faith is no new doctrine, but was taught in the church of God long before the times of the gospel. It is, in truth, the only way wherein any sinners ever were, or can be justified. The heavy sufferings of the Son of God, more loudly warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, than all the curses of the law; for how can God spare any man who remains under sin, seeing that he spared not his own Son, when our sins were charged upon him? The covenant God made with Abraham, was not done away by the giving the law to Moses. The covenant was made with Abraham and his seed. Christ abideth for ever in his person, and his spiritual seed, who are his by faith. By this we learn the difference between the promises of the law and those of the gospel. The promises of the law are made to the per-

son of every man; the promises of the gospel are first made to Christ, then by him to those who are his by faith.

19—29. *The law was a schoolmaster.*—The law was not intended to discover a way of justification, different from that made known by the promise, but to lead men to see their need of the promise, by showing the sinfulness of sin and to point to Christ, through whom alone they could be pardoned and justified. The great design of the law was, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to those that believe; that, being convinced of their guilt, and the insufficiency of the law to effect a righteousness for them, they might be persuaded to believe on Christ, and so obtain the benefit of the promise. The law did not teach a living, saving knowledge; but, by its rites and ceremonies, especially by its sacrifices, it pointed to Christ. Its terrors are often used by the convincing Spirit, to show the sinner his need of Christ, to bring him to rely on his sufferings and merits, that he may be justified by faith. Then the law, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, becomes his loved rule of duty, and his standard for daily self-examination. Those who have accepted Christ Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, and rely on him alone for justification and salvation, become the sons of God. And he who makes believers to be heirs, will provide for them. Therefore our aim must be to do the duties that belong to us, and all other cares we must cast upon God.

1. Bewitched, or deceived, led astray, Acts 8. 11.—8. Gen. 12. 3; 18. 18; 22. 18; Acts 3. 25.—10. Deut. 27. 26.—11. Hab. 2. 4; Heb. 10. 38.—14. The blessing of Abraham; or, the blessing with which Abraham was blessed.—17. Four hundred and thirty years after it was first made with Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, when he was seventy-five years old.—19. In the hand of a mediator, that is, Moses. By angels. See Ps. 68. 17; Acts 7. 53.—22. To be under sin, signifies to be guilty in the eye of justice.—23. Kept under the law, or as under a military guard, and watched with great strictness.—24. A school-master, that is a servant who took children to school and was often severe and threatening. He had not himself to give instruction.—28. Rom. 10. 12; 1 Cor. 12. 13; Col. 3. 11; John 17. 21; Eph. 2. 14.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—7. *The folly of returning to legal observances for justification.*—We here see the wonders of Divine love and mercy; particularly of God the Father, in sending his Son into the world to redeem and save us; of the Son of God, in submitting so low, and suffering so much for us; and of the Holy Spirit, in condescending to dwell in the hearts of believers, for such gracious purposes. Also, the advantages Christians enjoy under the gospel. Although by

nature children of wrath and disobedience, they become by grace children of love, and partake of the nature of the children of God; for all his children resemble him.

8—11. *The happy change made in the Gentile believers.*—What a man loves most, and cares most for, that is his god: some have their riches for their god, some their pleasures, and some their lusts. And many ignorantly worship a god of their own making; a god made all of mercy and no justice. For they persuade themselves that there is mercy for them with God, though they repent not, but go on in their sins.—It is possible for those who have made great professions of religion, to be afterwards drawn aside from purity and simplicity. And the more mercy God has shown, in bringing any to know the gospel, and the liberties and privileges of it, the greater their sin and folly in suffering themselves to be deprived of them.

12—20. *Warning against false teachers.*—In reproving others, we should take care to convince them that our reproofs are from sincere regard to the honour of God and religion, and their welfare. And we must not forbear speaking the truth, for fear of offending others. An excellent rule is given: it is good to be zealous always in a good thing; not for a time only, or now and then, but always. Happy would it be for the church of Christ, if this zeal were better maintained.

21—31. *The difference between the law and the gospel.*—The difference between believers who rested in Christ only, and those who trusted in the law, is explained by the histories of Isaac and Ishmael. These things are an allegory, wherein beside the literal and historical sense of the words, the Spirit of God points out something further. If the privileges of all believers were so great, according to the new covenant, how absurd for the Gentile converts to be under that law, which would not deliver the unbelieving Jews from bondage or condemnation! Works and fruits brought forth in a man's own strength, are legal. But if arising from faith in Christ, they are evangelical. The first covenant spirit is of bondage unto sin and death. The second covenant spirit is of liberty and freedom; not liberty to sin, but in and unto duty. The first is a spirit of persecution; the second is a spirit of love.

3. *Elements, or rudiments, first principles,* Heb. 6. 1.—5. Adoption is the treating as children those who are not so by birth.—6. The apostle introduces two words of the same meaning, one Jewish and the other Greek, to show the equal right of Jew and Gentile to call God, Father.—14. Paul refers, as some suppose, to the same circumstance of humiliation which he calls the thorn in the flesh, 2 Cor. 12. 7.—17. Zealously affect you, or pretend great love for you. —18. Gen. 16. 15; 21. 2.—24. The historical fact is used as an

illustration to an important truth. The two covenants or testaments of works and grace are herein shadowed forth.—25. This Hagar is Mount Sinai, or represents, or is an emblem of the law given on Mount Sinai.—27. Isa. 54. 1.—30. Gen. 21. 10—12.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—12. *An exhortation to stand fast in the liberty of the gospel.*—No outward privileges or profession will avail to acceptance with God, without sincere faith in our Lord Jesus. True faith is a working grace; it works by love to God, and to our brethren. The danger of old was not in things of no consequence in themselves, as many forms and observances now are. But without faith working by love, all else is worthless, and compared with it other things are of small value. It is not enough that we profess Christianity, but we must run well, by living up to that profession. But many who set out fairly in religion, are hindered in their progress, or turn out of the way. It is dangerous for Christian churches to encourage those who follow, and especially those who spread destructive errors. The first beginnings of such leaven should be opposed. And assuredly those who persist in disturbing the church of Christ must bear their judgment.

13—15. *To take heed of indulging a sinful temper.*—The gospel is a doctrine according to godliness, and is so far from giving the least countenance to sin, that it lays us under the strongest obligation to avoid and subdue it. If Christians, who should help one another, and please one another, quarrel, what can be expected but that the God of love should deny his grace, that the Spirit of love should depart, and the evil spirit, who seeks their destruction, should prevail? Happy would it be, if Christians, instead of biting and devouring one another on account of different opinions, would set themselves against sin in themselves, and in the places where they live.

16—26. *To walk in the Spirit.*—If it be our care to act under the guidance and power of the blessed Spirit, though we may not be freed from the stirrings and oppositions of the corrupt nature which remains in us, it shall not have dominion over us. And those who desire thus to give themselves up to be led by the Holy Spirit, are not under the law as a covenant of works, nor exposed to its awful curse. Their hatred of sin, and desires after holiness, show that they have a part in the salvation of the gospel. By describing the works of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit, we are told what to avoid and oppose, and what we are to cherish and cultivate; and this is the sincere care and endeavour of all real Christians. We must set our-

selves in earnest to mortify the deeds of the body, and to walk in newness of life. Not being desirous of vain-glory, nor provoking or envying one another, but seeking to bring forth abundantly those good fruits, which are, through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.

1. A yoke was an emblem of servitude. The metaphor is taken from an ox under the yoke.—7. Who did hinder you; an allusion to a racer who has been thrown out of the course.—9. Leaven is the emblem of doctrine, secret, silent, and spreading, 1 Cor. 5. 6.—1. The offence of the cross, the humbling truths of the gospel, 1 Cor. 1. 23; showing that man has nothing of his own to trust in.—12. Which trouble you, that is, seek to lead astray, Acts 15. 2, 24—'4. See Lev. 19. 18; Matt. 22. 39; Rom. 13. 8, 9.—16. The flesh, or corrupt nature. The spirit, or internal principle of grace in the regenerate.—20. Emulations, or sinful contentions. Witchcraft, or magical arts. Seditions, or divisions from a party spirit.—21. The Greeks were much given to revellings, or a disorderly spending of the night in feasting, dancing, etc.—22. Faith, or fidelity.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—5. *Exhortations to meekness, gentleness, and humility.*—The law of Christ obliges to mutual forbearance and compassion towards each other, agreeably to his example. It becomes us to bear one another's burdens as fellow-travellers. The better we know our own hearts and ways, the less shall we despise others, and the more be disposed to help them under infirmities and afflictions. Sin is a burden to the soul; it is a spiritual burden; and the less a man feels it to be such, the more cause has he to suspect himself. Feeling the burden of our sins, we must seek ease from the Saviour, and be warned against every sin.

6—11. *To kindness.*—Our present time is seed time; in the other world we shall reap as we sow now. As there are two sorts of sowing, one to the flesh, and the other to the Spirit, so will the reckoning be hereafter. Those who live a carnal, sensual life, must expect no other fruit from such a course than misery and ruin. But those who, under the guidance and influences of the Holy Spirit, live a life of faith in Christ, and abound in Christian graces, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. We should take care to do good in our life-time, and make this the business of our lives. Especially when fresh occasions offer, and as far as our power reaches.

12—15. *Caution against the judaizing teachers.*—By Christ, or by the cross of Christ, the world is crucified to the believer, and he to the world. The more we consider the sufferings of the Redeemer from the world, the less likely shall we be to love the world. The apostle was as little affected by its charms, as a beholder would be by any thing

which had been graceful in the face of a crucified person, when he beheld it writhing in the agonies of death. He was no more affected by the objects around him, than one who is expiring would be struck with any of the prospects his dying eyes might view from the cross on which he hung.—There is a new creation; old things are passed away, and new views and dispositions are brought in by the regenerating influences of God the Holy Spirit. It is a change of mind and heart, whereby we are enabled to believe in the Lord Jesus, and to live to God; and where this inward, practical religion is wanting, outward professions, or names, will never stand in its stead.

16—18. *A solemn blessing.*—The apostle takes his leave with a very serious prayer, that they might enjoy the favour of Christ Jesus, both in its effects and in its evidences. We need desire no more to make us happy than the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle does not pray that the law of Moses, or the righteousness of works, but that the grace of Christ might be with them; that it might be in their hearts and with their spirits, quickening, comforting, and strengthening them: to all which he sets his Amen; signifying his desire that so it might be, and his faith that so it would be.

1. Restore such a one: an allusion to the restoring of a dislocated joint, or member to its right place in the body.—2. The law of Christ is his new commandment, to love one another, John 13. 34. and 15. 12.—11. Paul commonly employed others to write what he dictated, Rom. 16. 22; this epistle to the Galatians was written with his own hand.—15. A new creature, or a new creation.—17. The marks of the Lord Jesus, or the scars of his sufferings in the cause of Christ, Col. 1. 24. ¶ Written from Rome, this is an error, and these words form no part of the sacred Scriptures.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPIHESIANS.

This epistle was written when St. Paul was a prisoner at Rome. The design appears to be to strengthen the Ephesians in the faith of Christ, and to give exalted views of the love of God, and of the dignity and excellence of Christ, fortifying their minds against the scandal of the cross. He encourages them to persevere in their Christian calling, and urges them to walk in a manner becoming their profession.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—8. *An account of saving blessings, as prepared in God's eternal election, as purchased by Christ's blood.*—All Christians must be saints; if they come not under that cha-

racter on earth, they will never be saints in glory. By grace, understand the free and undeserved love and favour of God and those graces of the Spirit which come from it; by peace, all other blessings, spiritual and temporal, the fruits of the former. Spiritual and heavenly blessings are the best blessings; *with* which we cannot be miserable, and *without* which we cannot but be so. This was from the choice of them in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that they should be made holy by separation from sin, being set apart to God, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, in consequence of their election in Christ. All who are chosen to happiness as the end, are chosen to holiness as the means. In love they were predestinated, or fore-ordained, to be adopted as children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and to be openly admitted to the privileges of that high relation to himself. It was indeed rich grace to provide such a surety as his own Son, and freely to deliver him up. This method of grace gives no encouragement to evil, but shows sin in all its hatefulness, and proves that it deserves punishment.

9—14. *And as conveyed in effectual calling.*—Christ united the two differing parties, God and man, in his own person, and satisfied for that wrong which caused the separation. He wrought, by his Spirit, those graces of faith and love, whereby we are made one with God, and among ourselves. He dispenses all his blessings, according to his good pleasure. His Divine teaching led whom he pleased to see the glory of those truths, which others were left to blaspheme. The sanctifying and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit seal believers as the children of God, and heirs of heaven. These are the first-fruits of holy happiness. Let all be ascribed unto the praise of his glory.

15—23. *The apostle thanks God for their faith and love, and prays for the continuance of their knowledge and hope.*—God has laid up spiritual blessings for us in his Son the Lord Jesus; but requires us to draw them out, and fetch them in, by prayer. If we disputed less, and prayed more with and for each other, we should daily see more and more what is the hope of our calling, and the riches of the Divine glory in this inheritance. Here is signified that it is Christ the Saviour, who supplies all the necessities of those who trust in him, and gives them all blessings in the richest abundance. And by being partakers of Christ himself, we come to be filled with the fulness of grace and glory in him. How then do those forget themselves who seek for righteousness out of him! When feeling our weakness and the power of our enemies, we most perceive the greatness of that mighty power which effects the conversion of the be-

liever, and is engaged to perfect his salvation. Surely this will constrain us by love to live to our Redeemer's glory.

3. Heavenly places; things relating to, and tending to, fit for heaven.—4, 5. Before the foundation, etc.; before creation began as a house is not built *before* the foundation is laid.—9. Mystery, etc. Not hitherto fully revealed, now made known by the gospel dispensation.—10. Gather, etc.; the words are used in the same sense as when an orator sums up at the close of his harangue.—13. Persons initiated into the mysteries of Diana, goddess of the Ephesians, received as a mark of their initiation a seal or ring, with the figure of a he-goat.—14. "Earnest," a deposit given as a token of sincerity.—15. It is supposed the apostle had not seen the Ephesians for four years. Perhaps he had heard nothing since he bade the elders farewell at Miletus, Acts 20.—21. Far above all principality, may refer to men of whatever rank and power, and angels; Christ is highly exalted above them all.—23. The fulness, etc. Paul uses this language as referring to a body complete with its limbs in proper proportion, which may be called the filling up or fulness of the body.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—10. *The riches of God's free grace.*—Sin is the death of the soul. A man dead in trespasses and sins has no desire for spiritual pleasures. When we look upon a corpse, it gives an awful feeling. A never-dying spirit is now fled, and has left nothing but the ruins of a man. But if we viewed things aright, we should be far more affected by the thought of a dead soul, a lost, fallen spirit. God's eternal love or good-will toward his creatures, is the fountain whence all his mercies flow to us; and that love of God is great love, and that mercy is rich mercy. Grace in the soul is a new life in the soul. A regenerated sinner becomes a living soul; he lives a life of holiness, being born of God: he lives, being delivered from the guilt of sin, by pardoning and justifying grace.

11—13. *The Ephesians reminded of their former state.*—A sad and terrible description is here; but who can prove that it does not apply to himself? Would that this were not a true description of many baptized in the name of Christ. Who can, without trembling, reflect upon the misery of a person, separated for ever from the people of God, cut off from the body of Christ, fallen from the covenant of promise, having no hope, no Saviour, and without any God but a God of vengeance, to all eternity? To have no part in Christ! What true Christian can hear this without horror?

14—22. *And the blessings of the gospel.*—Through the person, sacrifice, and mediation of Christ, sinners are allowed to draw near to God as a Father, and are brought with acceptance into his presence, with their worship and services, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, as one with the Father and the Son. Christ purchased leave for us to

come to God; and the Spirit gives a heart to come, and strength to come, and then grace to serve God acceptably. God dwells in all believers now. Let us ask if our hopes are fixed on Christ, according to the doctrine of his word? Have we devoted ourselves as holy temples to God through him? Are we habitations of God by the Spirit? Are we spiritually-minded, and do we bring forth the fruits of the Spirit? Then let us take heed not to grieve the holy Comforter. Let us desire his gracious presence, and his influences upon our hearts.

1. Quickened; made alive.—2. Prince of the power of the air, etc. It was a prevalent notion of the Jews that the air was peopled by noxious and accusing spirits. Satan is doubtless here intended.—5. Together with Christ, etc. Christ is the head of the church—the body. The resurrection of the head therefore involves the resurrection of the body. Such is the connexion between Christ and believers, 1 Cor. 15.—11. Uncircumcision; a term of reproach to those without the pale of the people of God, commonly used by those who had adopted the external rites of the true religion.—12. Aliens, etc. Strangers to; and ignorant of, the privileges of the Jewish worship as established by God himself.—14. Middle wall of partition. In the temple was a wall separating the Jewish from the Gentile courts; beyond this wall it was death for a foreigner to pass.—18. Access, etc. It has been a custom of all royal courts to require that persons seeking an audience with a king or other eminent personage should be introduced by some person appointed for the purpose.—19. In Athens, strangers or foreigners in a state might quietly carry on their business, but had no voice in public affairs, or part in matters of state. Foreigners; merely guests in a private family.—20–22. The church is frequently spoken of as a building, 1 Cor. 3. 9; 1 Pet. 2. 4, 5. The Ephesians were skilled in architecture, and would understand the figure. The doctrines which the apostles preached were the foundation on which the church is built. Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone, because upon him the weight of the whole building rests.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1–7. *The apostle sets forth his office.*—All the gracious offers of the gospel, and the joyful tidings it contains, come from the rich grace of God; it is the great means by which the Spirit works grace in the souls of men. The mystery, is the hidden purpose of salvation. This was the great truth made known to the apostle, that God would call the Gentiles to salvation by faith in Christ. An effectual working of Divine power attends the gifts of Divine grace.

8–12. *The noble purposes answered by it.*—Those whom God advances to honourable employments, he makes low in their own eyes. Though many are not enriched with the unsearchable riches of Christ; yet how great a favour to have them preached among us, and to have an offer of them! His riches are as unsearchable and as sure as ever, yet while angels adore the wisdom of God in the redemp-

tion of his church, the ignorance of self-wise and carnal men deems the whole to be foolishness.

13—21. *He prays for the Ephesians.*—The apostle asks for spiritual blessings, which are the best blessings. Strength from the Spirit of God in the soul; the strength of faith, to serve God, and to do our duty. If the law of Christ is written in our hearts, and the love of Christ is shed abroad there, then Christ dwells there. Where his Spirit dwells, there he dwells. The breadth of the love of Christ shows its extent to all nations and ranks; the length, that it continues from everlasting to everlasting; the depth, its saving those who are sunk into the depths of sin and misery; the height, its raising them up to heavenly happiness and glory. Those who receive grace for grace from Christ's fulness, may be said to be filled with the fulness of God. Should not this satisfy man? Must he needs fill himself with a thousand trifles, fancying thereby to complete his happiness?

1. Paul was imprisoned at Rome through the malice of the Jews, because he had said that the Gentiles had equal rights with them in the Christian church.—2. If, etc.; here might be read, "Since ye have heard." It implies that the fact is taken for granted.—4—6. Mystery of Christ, etc.; the hitherto unrevealed doctrine that through Christ salvation is free to Jews and Gentiles.—8. Unsearchable riches, unexplored. Some suppose this to be an allusion to the immense treasures of the temple of Diana.—10. Principalities, etc.; heavenly intelligences.—15. The Jews designated the angels, the *upper* family of God; his people on earth, his *lower* family. Named as the children of one family bear the name of the head.—16. Inner man, the soul.—17—19. Here may be an allusion to the temple. The church of God had been likened to a building whose foundation was in love, and the apostle had spoken about surveying the length, breadth, and height of it: he now prays that God may dwell therein.—21. World without end, for ever—literally, "Unto all the generations of the eternity of eternities, or the eternity of ages."

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—6. *Exhortations to mutual forbearance and union.*—Nothing is pressed more earnestly in the Scriptures, than to walk as becomes those called to Christ's kingdom and glory. There is one Christ in whom all believers hope, and one heaven they are all hoping for; therefore they should be of one heart. They had all one faith, as to its object, Author, nature, and power. They all believed the same as to the great truths of religion; they had all been admitted into the church by one baptism, with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as the sign of regeneration.

7—16. *To a due use of spiritual gifts and graces.*—There is a fulness in Christ, and a measure of that fulness given in

the counsel of God to every believer; but we never come to the perfect measure till we come to heaven. God's children are growing, as long as they are in this world; and the Christian's growth tends to the glory of Christ. The more a man finds himself drawn out to improve, in his station, and according to his measure, all that he has received, to the spiritual good of others, he may the more certainly believe that he has the grace of sincere love and charity rooted in his heart.

17—24. *To purity and holiness.*—Do not men, on every side, walk in the vanity of their minds? They have a dislike and hatred to a life of holiness, which is not only the way of life God requires and approves, and by which we live to him, but which has some likeness to God himself in his purity, righteousness, truth, and goodness. Sinful desires are deceitful lusts; they promise men happiness, but render them more miserable; and bring them to destruction, if not subdued and mortified. These, therefore, must be put off, as an old garment, a filthy garment; they must be subdued and mortified. But it is not enough to shake off corrupt principles; we must have gracious ones.

25—32. *And to take heed of the sins of the heathen.*—We give place to the devil, when the first motions of sin are not grievous to our souls; when we consent to them; and when we repeat an evil deed. This teaches that as sin, if yielded unto, lets in the devil upon us, we are to resist it, keeping from all appearance of evil. Men ought to be industrious, that they may do some good, and that they may be kept from temptation. They must labour, not only that they may live honestly, but that they may be able to relieve others. What then must we think of those called Christians, who grow rich by fraud, oppression, and deceitful practices! It is the duty of Christians to seek, by the blessing of God, to bring persons to think seriously, and to encourage and warn believers by their conversation. Mark how God's forgiveness causes us to forgive. God forgives us, though we had no cause to sin against him. We must forgive, as he has forgiven us. The body will be redeemed from the power of the grave at the resurrection day. Wherever that blessed Spirit dwells as a Sanctifier, he is the earnest of all the joys and glories of that redemption day; and we should be undone, should God take away his Holy Spirit from us.

1. Vocation; calling or invitation, as to a feast or banquet.—2. Col. 3. 14; Phil. 2. 3; 1 Cor. 13. 4.—8. Psa. 68. 18; Judg. 5. 12; Col. 2. 15. There is an allusion to the triumphs of Roman conquerors who led their captives in chains.—11. Evangelist, "a messenger of good tidings." Pastors, literally, shepherds, who were to

exercise as great watchfulness over the people of God as a shepherd does over his flock.—13. A perfect man; Xenophon represents a nation as thus classified: children up to ten years of age, youths up to twenty, when they become *perfect men*, and remain twenty-five years in this class, when they become elders, and are not suffered to go out to war. 1 Cor. 2. 6; Heb. 5. 14.—14. Tossed, etc.; like the waves of the sea. Carried about, like a ship without a rudder, having no fixed course. Sleight, etc. Deceit, trickery.—16. Alluding to the fact that the head conveys vital influences to every part of the body. The body in all its arrangements is well adapted for growth and vigour. So with the church, it depends upon Christ its head.—22. Conversation, conduct. Rom. 6. 6.—26. Let not the sun, etc. Do not cherish anger. The Pythagoreans had a precept of this kind. If any of the scholars of Pythagoras had any misunderstanding with one another, they were bound to be reconciled before the sun went down.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—14. *Exhortations and cautions.*—We are to resemble God especially in his love and pardoning goodness, as becomes those beloved by their heavenly Father. Here follow not only cautions against gross acts of sin, but against what some may make light of. But dare we make light of that which brings down the wrath of God? These things are so far from being profitable, that they pollute and poison the hearers. Those who allow themselves, either in the lusts of the flesh or the love of the world, belong not to the kingdom of grace, nor shall they come to the kingdom of glory. There are many ways of abetting, or taking part in the sins of others; by commendation, counsel, consent, or concealment. And if we share with others in their sins, we must expect to share in their plagues. A good man will be ashamed even to speak of sins which many wicked men are not ashamed to do.

15—21. *Directions as to duties.*—Time is a talent given us by God, and it is misspent and lost when not employed according to his design. If we have lost our time heretofore, we must double our diligence for the future. Of that time which thousands on a dying bed would gladly redeem at the price of the whole world, how little do men think, and to what trifles they daily sacrifice it! Drunkenness is a sin that never goes alone, but carries men into other evils; it is a sin very provoking to God. The drunkard holds out to his family and to the world the sad spectacle of a sinner hardened beyond what is common, and hastening to perdition. When afflicted or weary, let us not seek to raise our spirits by strong drink, which is hateful and hurtful, and only ends in making sorrows more felt. But by fervent prayer let us seek to be filled with the Spirit, and to avoid whatever may grieve our gracious Comforter.

22—33. *The duties of wives and husbands.*—Christ gave

himself for the church, that he might sanctify it in this world, and glorify it in the next, that he might bestow on all his members a principle of holiness, and deliver them from the guilt, the pollution, and the dominion of sin, by those influences of the Holy Spirit, of which baptismal water was the outward sign. The church and believers will not be without spot or wrinkle till they come to glory. But those only who are sanctified now, shall be glorified hereafter. All the duties of marriage are included in unity and love. And while we adore and rejoice in the condescending love of Christ, let husbands and wives learn hence their duties to each other. Thus the worst evils would be prevented, and many painful effects avoided.

1. Followers, imitators, in a forgiving spirit, Matt. 5. 44-47.—5. Rev. 22. 15.—13. Reproved, discovered. As light shows to us of what shape and colour things are, so that system which discovers to us the true nature of, and exposes sin, must be light.—14. Sleep and death are terms used to denote carnal security and the hardened state of man by nature, Eph. 2. 1; John 1. 4-9; Heb. 1. 3.—18. Allusion to the Bacchanalian revels. Bacchus was the "god of wine, and men and women got intoxicated as the most acceptable worship, and they ran with wild cries and songs through the fields, vineyards, etc. Plato says that during the celebration of these orgies there was not a sober man in Attica.—21. The apostle enjoins due subordination in the various relations in life.—23. See 1 Cor. 11. 3.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1—4. *Duties of children and parents.*—The great duty of children to obey their parents includes inward reverence, as well as outward acts, and in every age prosperity has attended those distinguished for obedience to parents. The duty of parents is to deal prudently and wisely with children; convince their judgments, and work upon their reason. Bring them up well; under proper and compassionate correction; and in the knowledge of the duty God requires. Often is this duty neglected, even among professors of the gospel. God alone can change the heart, yet he gives his blessing to the good lessons and examples of parents, and answers their prayers.

5—9. *Of servants and masters.*—Servants are to reverence those over them. They are to be sincere; not pretending obedience when they mean to disobey, but serving faithfully. And they must fulfil their duty not only when their master's eye is upon them; but must be strict in the discharge of their duty, when he is absent. Steady regard to Christ will make men faithful in every station, not grudgingly or by constraint, but from a principle of love. This makes service easy to them, pleasing to their masters, and acceptable to the Lord Christ. The duty of masters is

to act after the same manner. Be just to servants, as you expect they should be to you. You have a Master to obey, and you and they are but fellow-servants in respect to Christ Jesus. If masters and servants would consider their duties to God, and the account they must shortly give to him, they would be more mindful of their duty to each other, and families would be more orderly and happy.

10—18. *The Christians' spiritual armour.*—Those who would prove themselves to have true grace, must aim at all grace; and put on the whole armour of God, which he prepares and bestows. The combat is not against human enemies, nor against our own corrupt nature only; we have to do with an enemy who has a thousand ways of beguiling unstable souls. Truth, or sincerity, is the girdle. This girds on all the other pieces of our armour, and is first mentioned; for there can be no religion without sincerity. The righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, is a breast-plate against the arrows of Divine wrath. The righteousness of Christ implanted in us, fortifies the heart against the attacks of Satan. Resolution must be as greaves, or armour to our legs; and, to stand their ground or to march forward in rugged paths, the feet must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Faith, as relying on unseen objects, receiving Christ and the benefits of redemption, and so deriving grace from him, is like a shield, a defence every way. Violent temptations, by which the soul is set on fire of hell, are the darts Satan shoots at us. Faith applying the word of God and the grace of Christ, quenches the darts of temptation. Salvation must be our helmet. A good hope of salvation, a scriptural expectation of victory, will purify the soul, and keep it from being defiled by Satan. To the Christian armed for defence in battle, the apostle recommends only one weapon of attack; but it is enough, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. It subdues and mortifies evil desires and blasphemous thoughts as they rise within; and answers unbelief and error as they assault from without. Prayer must fasten all the other parts of our Christian armour. We must pray with all kinds of prayer, public, private, and secret; social and solitary; solemn and sudden: with all the parts of prayer; confession of sin, petition for mercy, and thanksgiving for favours received. And we must do it by the grace of God the Holy Spirit, in dependence on, and according to, his teaching. Let us think upon these things, and continue our prayers with patience.

19—24. *The apostle desires prayers, and apostolic blessing.*
—Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith. By peace, understand all manner of peace; peace with God, peace of

conscience, peace among themselves. And the grace of the Spirit, producing faith and love, and every grace. These he desires for those in whom they were already begun. And all grace and blessings come to the saints from God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1. In the Lord ; as far as agreeable to his commandments —6. The servants of ancient times were mostly slaves. Eye service, only when the master's eye is fixed on them.—11. Whole ; panoply, or complete armour which God had appointed to be worn.—12. Wrestle, referring to the Grecian games in which men wrestled with each other.—13. The different parts of the armour of heavy-armed soldiers, who had to sustain the fiercest assaults of the enemy, are here described.—14. A girdle was a piece of armour worn by the ancients, which kept the other parts together and in their place. It was also worn as part of the dress in peace. Breast-plate, or coat of mail, which defended the vital parts of the body, 1 Sam. 17 5.—15. Ancient Greek and Roman soldiers wore greaves, or boots of brass, as a defence to the legs.—16. Fiery darts were in common use among the ancients, and were either filled or bound round with combustible material, and shot slowly among the enemy ; these striking against the shield would be put out.—20. See Note on 2 Cor. 5. 20.—23. Peace, etc. ; a common form of salutation in the east.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

The scope of the epistle is to confirm the Philippians in the faith, to encourage them to walk as becomes the gospel of Christ, to caution them against judaizing teachers, and to express gratitude for their Christian bounty. This epistle is the only one, among those written by St. Paul, in which no censures are implied or expressed.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—7. *The good work of grace in the Philippians.*—The highest honour of the most eminent ministers is, to be servants of Christ. Out of Christ, the best saints are sinners, and unable to stand before God. And there is no grace and peace but from God our Father, the fountain and origin of all blessings. We must thank our God for the graces and comforts, gifts and usefulness of others, as we receive the benefit, and God receives the glory. The work of grace will never be perfected till the day of Christ's appearance. But we may be confident God will perform his good work, in every soul wherein he has really begun it by regeneration ; though we must not trust in outward appearances, but seek a new creation to holiness.

8—11. *The apostle expresses affection for them.*—Those who abound in any grace, need to abound more. A small me-

sure of Christian love, knowledge, and fruitfulness should not satisfy any. Christians should not be apt to take offence, to offend God or the brethren. The things which most honour God will most benefit us.

12—20. *Fortifies them against being cast down at his sufferings.*—How wretched the temper of those who preached Christ out of envy and contention, and to add affliction to the bonds that oppressed this best of men! But the apostle was easy in the midst of all. Since our troubles may tend to the good of many, we ought to rejoice. Whatever turns to our salvation, is by the Spirit of Christ; and prayer is the appointed means of seeking for it. Let us leave it to Christ to make us serviceable by labour or suffering; by living to his honour in working for him, or dying to his honour in suffering for him.

21—26. *He stood prepared for glorifying Christ by life, or death.*—Death is a great loss to a carnal, worldly man, for he loses all his earthly comforts and all his hopes; but to a true believer it is gain, for it is the end of all his weakness and misery. It delivers him from all the evils of life, and brings him to possess the chief good. The apostle's difficulty was not between living in this world and living in heaven; between these two there is no comparison; but between serving Christ in this world and enjoying him in another: not between two evil things, but between two good things; living to Christ and being with him.

27—30. *Exhortations to zeal and constancy.*—Those who profess the gospel of Christ, should live as becomes those who believe gospel truths, submit to gospel laws, and depend upon gospel promises. A man may sleep and go to hell; but he who would go to heaven, must be diligent. If we suffer reproach and loss for Christ, we are to reckon them a gift, and prize them accordingly. Yet salvation must not be ascribed to bodily afflictions and persecutions, as though they deserved it; but from God only is salvation.

1. See Acts 16. 12; Philippi; a city of Macedonia, originally called Datas. Its name was derived from Philip, father of Alexander the Great.—7. Of my grace, or with me of grace.—13. All the palace—supposed to mean the court of Cæsar, ch. 4. 22.—15. It would seem that at Rome there was a party jealous of Paul's influence—probably Jewish teachers, professors of the Christian faith, but who considered his views as detracting from the honour of Moses.—16. Add affliction, etc. Increase his trials.—22. I wot not; do not know.—23. Like a ship at anchor, with violent winds blowing upon it, threatening to drive it out to sea: he was bound to them in love, but at the same time he felt such a sense of heavenly influence upon him, as would carry him to heaven.—27. Conversation—the original word denotes the conduct of citizens who seek the credit, safety, and prosperity of their city.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—4. *Exhortations to a kind, humble, spirit and behaviour.*—Kindness is the law of Christ's kingdom, the lesson of his school, the livery of his family. If you expect or experience the benefit of God's compassions to yourselves, be compassionate one to another. We must be alive and severe as to our own faults and defects, but ready to make favourable allowances for others. And we must kindly care for others, but not be busy-bodies in other men's matters.

5—11. *The Example of Christ.*—Notice the two natures of Christ. Who being in the form of God, partaking the Divine nature, as the eternal and only-begotten Son of God, John i. 1, had not thought it a robbery to be equal with God, and to receive Divine worship from men. As to his human nature; he became like us in all things except sin. Thus low, of his own will, he stooped from the glory he had with the Father before the world was.—Christ's two states, of humiliation and exaltation, are noticed. Christ not only took upon him the likeness and fashion, or form of a man, but of one in a low state; not appearing in splendour. His whole life was a life of poverty and suffering. But the lowest step was his dying the death of the cross, the death of a malefactor and a slave; exposed to public hatred and scorn. The exaltation was of Christ's human nature, in union with the Divine.

12—18. *Diligence in the affairs of salvation.*—We must be diligent in the use of all the means which lead to our salvation, persevering therein to the end. Work out your salvation, for it is God who worketh in you. This encourages us to do our utmost, because our labour shall not be in vain. The working of God's grace in us, is to quicken and engage our endeavours. God's good-will to us, is the cause of his good work in us. The children of God should differ from the sons of men. The more perverse others are, the more careful we should be to keep ourselves blameless and harmless. The doctrine and example of consistent believers will enlighten others, and lead them to Christ and holiness, even as the lighthouse warns mariners to avoid rocks, and directs their course into the harbour.

19—30. *The apostle's purpose of visiting Philippi.*—It is best with us, when our duty becomes natural to us. Naturally, that is, sincerely, and not in pretence only; with a willing heart and upright views. We are, however, apt to prefer our own credit, ease, and safety, before truth, holiness, and duty. It is doubly pleasant to have our mercies restored by God, after great danger of their removal; and

this should make them more valued.—Answers to prayer, should be received with great thankfulness and joy.

6. *Form*—here used to denote external shape or appearance. Calvin considers the form of God to denote his majesty—the majesty which shines in Him is his figure. But the more general opinion is that it signifies the nature or being of God—in fact, his Divinity.—7. *Form of a servant*; implies his lowly condition, and that he performed such acts as only servants would do.—8. *Fashion, or figure*.—10. *Bowing the knee* denotes respect, homage, adoration, Rom. 11. 4.—11. John 6. 27—29.—15. *Ye shine, or shine ye*. An allusion probably to light-houses on a dangerous coast.—16. *Life is compared to a race*, 1 Cor. 9. 26. *Running* denotes earnestness and progress; *labouring* denotes constancy and application.—17. *Offered, or poured forth*. The verse is expressive of Paul's willingness, if needful, as a confirmation of the faith of the Philippians to seal his testimony with his blood; and thus *pour out* his life, as wine and oil were poured out on the meat and drink offering to render the sacrifice complete. See Exod. 29 40; Lev. 2. 1.—25. *Epaphroditus*, a member of the church at Philippi—the church had sent him with relief to Paul at Rome, where he had been taken ill. On his recovery, he returned to Philippi, and the apostle sent this epistle by him.—30. *Lack, or rather inability* through want of opportunity. Epaphroditus did that which the church would have done, had the apostle been with them.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—11. *The apostle cautions the Philippians*.—Sincere Christians rejoice in Christ Jesus. The work of religion is to no purpose, unless the heart is in it, and we must worship God in the strength and grace of the Divine Spirit. Believers rejoice in Christ Jesus, not in mere outward enjoyments and performances. If the apostle would have gloried and trusted in the flesh, he had as much cause as any man. But the things which he counted gain while a Pharisee, and had reckoned up, those he counted loss for Christ. The apostle did not persuade them to do anything but what he himself did; or to venture on anything but that on which he himself ventured his never-dying soul. True knowledge of Christ alters and changes men, their judgments and manners, and makes them as if made again anew. The believer prefers Christ, knowing that it is better to be without all worldly riches than without Christ and his word. We are undone, without a righteousness wherein to appear before God, for we are guilty. There is a righteousness provided for us in Jesus Christ, and it is a complete and perfect righteousness. None can benefit by it who trust in themselves. Faith in Christ's blood is the appointed means of applying the saving benefit. We are made conformable to Christ's death, when we die to sin, as he died for sin; and the world is crucified to us, and we to the world, by the cross of Christ.

12-21. *Expresses his earnest desire, and recommends his own example.*—He who runs a race, must never stop short of the end, but press forward as fast as he can; so those who have heaven in their view, must still press forward to it, in holy desires and hopes, and constant endeavours. Eternal life is the gift of God, but it is in Christ Jesus; through his hand it must come to us, as it is procured for us by him. There is no getting to heaven as our home, but by Christ as our Way. True believers, in seeking this assurance, as well as to glorify him, will seek more nearly to resemble his sufferings and death, by dying to sin, and by crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts. In these things there is a great difference among real Christians, but all know something of them. Believers make Christ all in all, and set their hearts upon another world. If they differ from one another, and are not of the same judgment in lesser matters, yet they must not judge one another; while they all meet now in Christ, and hope to meet shortly in heaven. Let them join in all the great things in which they are agreed, and wait for further light as to lesser things wherein they differ.—There is glory kept for the bodies of the saints, in which they will appear at the resurrection. Then the body will be made glorious; not only raised again to life, but raised to great advantage. May we be always prepared for the coming of our Judge; looking to have our vile bodies changed by his Almighty power, and applying to him daily to new-create our souls unto holiness; to deliver us from our enemies, and to employ our bodies and souls in his service.

2. An expression of contempt or disapproval, 1 Sam. 17. 43; 2 Kings 8. 13. In eastern countries dogs wander about without a master in the fields and streets, 1 Kings 16. 4, 21. 19. The allusion may be here to the Roman custom of placing a dog chained before the door of the house to guard, over which was written, in sight, "Beware of the dog." The Jews called the heathen, dogs. Circumcision—those Jewish teachers who practised circumcision.—5. According to the law circumcision took place on the eighth day, Lev 12 3; Luke 1 59. Stock—descended from Israel. The tribes of Israel revolted under Jeroboam, except Judah and Benjamin; hence Paul conveys the idea that he was not one who had revolted; and he was, in every sense, a Hebrew, entitled to all the advantages of such a descent, and had observed the law with great zeal.—12—14. In reference to the Grecian foot-races. Attained—had not secured the prize—the glorious resurrection he was looking forward to. Perfect—had not secured the completion of his hopes. He had not apprehended, or obtained that for which he strove. Probably in allusion to the laying hold of the pole by the winner of the race. See also Note on 1 Cor. 9. 24.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—9. *Exhortation to stand fast in the Lord.*—The believing hope and prospect of eternal life, should make us

steady and constant in our Christian course. To stand fast in the Lord, is to stand fast in his strength, and by his grace.—Joy in God is of great consequence in the Christian life; and Christians need to be again and again called to it. It more than outweighs all causes for sorrow. Let their enemies perceive how moderate they were as to outward things, and how composedly they suffered loss and hardships. There is a care of diligence which is our duty, and agrees with a wise forecast and due concern; but there is a care of fear and distrust, which is sin and folly, and only perplexes and distracts the mind. As a remedy against perplexing care, constant prayer is recommended. Not only stated times for prayer, but in everything by prayer. We must join thanksgivings with prayers and supplications; not only seek supplies of good, but own the mercies we have received. We should walk in all the ways of virtue, and abide therein; then, whether our praise is of men or not, it will be of God. All our privileges and salvation arise from the free mercy of God; yet the enjoyment of them depends on our sincere and holy conduct.

10—19. *Contentment in every condition of life.*—Pride, unbelief, vain hankering after something we have not got, and fickle disrelish of present things, make men discontented even under favourable circumstances. Let us pray for patient submission and hope when we are abased; for humility and a heavenly mind when exalted. It is a special grace in a low state not to lose our comfort in God, nor distrust his providence, nor take any wrong course for our own supply. And, in a prosperous condition, not to be proud, or secure, or worldly. This is a harder lesson than the other; for the temptations of fulness and prosperity are more than those of affliction and want.—Through Christ we have grace to do what is good, and through him we must expect the reward; and as we have all things by him, let us do all things for him, and to his glory.

20—23. *The apostle's prayer and blessing.*—We should look upon God, under all our weakness and fears, not as an enemy, but as a Father, disposed to pity us and help us. God's grace and favour, which reconciled souls enjoy, with the whole of the graces in us, which flow from it, are all purchased for us by Christ's merit, and applied by his pleading for us; and therefore are justly called his grace.

1. Longed for—a term denoting strong affection.—2. Euodias and Syntyche—probably the names of two females who had been at variance.—3. In well-ordered cities a register or catalogue of the names of citizens was kept. The names of apostates, fugitives, or infamous characters, or the deceased were erased from these records; the names of the good citizen continued on the roll, Rev. 3. 5. Life here meant

eternal life.—7. Keep—the mind would be protected and defended as a camp or castle.—10. Flourished, etc.—revived, as a plant or flower; it seemed to the apostle as if they had sprung up afresh, and grown, as it were, green again.—22. Cæsar's household. The emperors of Rome, after Julius Cæsar, were called Cæsar, as all the kings of Egypt were called Pharaoh. Nero reigned at this time.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

This epistle was sent because of some difficulties among the Colossians, probably from false teachers. Its scope is to show, that all hope of man's salvation is founded on Christ, in whom alone are all fulness, perfections, and sufficiency. In the first two chapters the apostle tells them what they must believe, and in the last two what they must do; the doctrine of faith, and the precepts of life for salvation.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—8. *The apostle Paul blesses God for their faith, love, and hope.*—The gospel is the word of truth, and we may safely venture our souls upon it. And all who hear the word of the gospel, ought to bring forth the fruit of the gospel, and have their principles and lives formed according to it. Worldly love arises, either from views of interest or from likeness in manners; carnal love, from the appetite for pleasure. To these, something corrupt, selfish, and base, always cleaves. But Christian love arises from the Holy Spirit, and is full of holiness.

9—14. *Prays for their fruitfulness.*—He who undertakes to give strength to his people, is a God of power, and of glorious power. In praying for spiritual strength, we are not straitened, or confined in the promises, and should not be so in our hopes and desires. The special use of this strength was for sufferings. There is work to be done, even when we are suffering.—All who are designed for heaven hereafter, are prepared for heaven now. Those who have the inheritance of sons, have the education of sons, and the disposition of sons. By faith in Christ they enjoyed this redemption, as the purchase of his atoning blood, whereby forgiveness of sins, and all other spiritual blessings were bestowed. Surely then we shall deem it a favour to be delivered from Satan's kingdom, and brought into that of Christ, knowing that all trials will soon end, and every believer be found among those who came out of great tribulation?

15—28. *Gives a glorious view of Christ.*—Christ in his

human nature, is the visible discovery of the invisible God, and he that hath seen Him hath seen the Father. Let us adore these mysteries with humble faith, and behold the glory of God in Christ Jesus. All things being created by Him, were created for him; being made by his power, they were made according to his pleasure, and for his praise and glory. He not only created them all at first, but it is by the word of his power that they are upheld. — Christ as Mediator is the Head of the body, the church. All fulness dwells in him; a fulness of merit and righteousness, of strength and grace for us — If convinced that we were enemies in our minds by wicked works, and that we are now reconciled to God by the sacrifice and death of Christ in our nature, we shall not attempt to explain away, nor yet think fully to comprehend these mysteries; but we shall see the glory of this plan of redemption, and rejoice in the hope set before us.

24—29. *And sets out his own character.*—Both the sufferings of the Head and of the members are called the sufferings of Christ, and make up, as it were, one body of sufferings. But He suffered for the redemption of the church; we suffer on other accounts; for we do but slightly taste that cup of afflictions of which Christ first drank deeply. A Christian may be said to fill up that which remains of the sufferings of Christ, when he takes up his cross, and after the pattern of Christ, bears patiently the afflictions God allots to him. As Christ is preached among us, let us seriously inquire, whether he dwells and reigns in us; for this alone can warrant our assured hope of his glory.

2. Colosse, a famous city of Phrygia, in Asia Minor, nearly east of Ephesus. The ancient town is now extinct. A village is built on the site called Khonas.—5. Hope—rather denotes the thing hoped for—eternal bliss, laid up, or reserved, as the prize is laid up, or kept in reserve till the competitors shall have run the race.—7. Epaphras was a minister of the church at Colosse, which had sent him on some business to Paul at Rome; he was, at that time, fellow-prisoner with Paul Philemon 23. Probably Paul wrote the Epistle at his request, to confirm the doctrines which Epaphras preached.—12. Light, emblematical of knowledge, purity, etc.; Luke 16. 8, 1 Thess. 5. 5, and darkness, of error, misery, sin, etc., Luke 1. 79, 1 Pet. 2. 9.—15. To be born, or begotten before the creation, is the Scripture way of representing eternity.—23. Grounded, etc., or firm and sure, as a building which has a foundation of rock.—29. Striving; literally agonizing, like the runner or wrestler in the Grecian games.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—7. *The apostle's love to, and joy in believers.*—The soul prospers when we have clear knowledge of the truth

as it is in Jesus. When we not only believe with the heart, but are ready, when called, to make confession with the mouth. The stronger our faith, and the warmer our love, the more will our comfort be. The treasures of wisdom are hid, not *from* us, but *for* us in Christ. These were hid from proud unbelievers, but displayed in the person and redemption of Christ. We cannot be built up in Christ, or grow in him, unless we are first rooted in him, or founded upon him. Being established in the faith, we must abound therein, and improve in it more and more.

8—17. *He cautions against the errors of heathen philosophy and Jewish traditions.*—There is a philosophy which rightly exercises our reasonable faculties; a study of the works of God, which leads us to the knowledge of God, and confirms our faith in him. But there is a philosophy which is vain and deceitful; and while it pleases men's fancies, hinders their faith: such as curious speculations as to things about us, or of no concern to us. Christ is in us, and we are in him, when, by the power of the Spirit, we have faith wrought in our hearts, and we are united to our Head. The circumcision of the heart, the crucifixion of the flesh, the death and burial to sin and to the world, and the resurrection to newness of life, set forth in baptism, and by faith wrought in our hearts, prove that our sins are forgiven, and that we are fully delivered from the curse of the law. Since every mortal man is, through the handwriting of the law guilty of death, how very dreadful is the condition of the ungodly and unholy, who trample under foot that blood of the Son of God, whereby alone this deadly handwriting can be blotted out!

18—23. *Against worshipping angels, and legal ordinances.*—It looked like humility to apply to angels, as if men were conscious of their unworthiness to speak directly to God. But it is not warrantable; it is taking that honour which is due to Christ only, and giving it to a creature. It is an insult to Christ, who is the Head of the church, to use any intercessors but him. True wisdom is to keep close to the appointments of the gospel; in entire subjection to Christ, who is the only Head of his church. Self-imposed sufferings and fastings, might have a show of uncommon spirituality and willingness for suffering, but this was not "in any honour" to God. The whole tended, in a wrong manner, to satisfy the carnal mind, by gratifying self-will, self-wisdom, self-righteousness, and contempt of others.

1. Laodicea, capital of Phrygia, by the river Lycus, and south of Colosse. Conflict; in allusion to the Grecian games, where the combatants had many hard struggles for the victory.—2. Knit, or compacted, and made to come together; imply close and intimate union.

Full assurance, etc. ; a full conviction of the truth.—7. Eph. 3. 17.—8. The Greek philosophy was prevalent around Colosse. Spoil ; as by a long rain, and as mildew spoils the crops. This would be the effect of the Greek philosophy on their friends if they gave heed to its speculations.—14. Handwriting, etc. ; probably in allusion to those written contracts by which we bind ourselves to the performance of any duty, to make any payment—which, only on its fulfillment, would be cancelled, which is done by blotting out the name, or drawing a line through the whole. The easterns frequently did this by driving a nail through it. The effect of Christ's death superseded the ritual requirements of the Mosaic law.—15. Spoiled ; as a victorious army spoils the conquered country. Denoting the complete victory of Christ, by his death, over his enemies. Triumphant over. See Notes 2 Cor. 2. 14.—16. The Hebrew civil year commenced at the new moon in the beginning of Tisri, or October, and was celebrated as a festival, Lev. 23. 24, 25 ; Numb. 10. 10 ; 28. 11-14.—21. The Essenes, a Jewish sect, had many rules of this kind. They ate no pleasant food ; certain drinks were forbidden to be tasted, and other things forbidden to be handled. To such observances it would seem the apostle here refers.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1-4. *Exhortations to heavenly mindedness.*—As Christians are freed from the ceremonial law, they must walk the more closely with God in gospel obedience. Those that are born again are dead to sin, because its dominion is broken, its power gradually subdued by the operation of grace, and it shall at length be extinguished by the perfection of glory. Christ lives *in* the believer by his Spirit, and the believer lives *to* him in all he does. At the second coming of Christ, there will be a general assembling of all the saved ; and those whose life is now hid with Christ, shall then appear with him in his glory. Do we look for such happiness, and should we not set our affections upon that world, and live above this ?

5-11. *To mortify all corrupt affections.*—Continual opposition must be made to all corrupt workings, and no provision made for sinful indulgences. Occasions of sin must be avoided : the lusts of the flesh, and the love of the world ; and covetousness, which is idolatry ; love of present good, and of outward enjoyments. It is necessary to mortify sins, because if we do not kill them they will kill us.—Whatever the country, or conditions and circumstances of life, it is the duty of every one to be holy, because Christ is a Christian's All ; all his hope and happiness.

12-17. *To live in mutual love.*—Those who are the elect of God, holy and beloved, ought to be lowly and compassionate towards all. While in this world, where there is so much corruption in our hearts, quarrels will sometimes arise. But it is our duty to forgive one another, imitating the forgiveness through which we are saved. The soul prospers, when we are full of the Scriptures and of the

grace of Christ. Whatever we are employed about, let us do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in believing dependence on him.

18-25. *To practise all relative duties.*—Submission is the duty of wives; but it is not to a stern tyrant, but to her own husband, who is engaged to affectionate duty. And husbands must love their wives with tender and faithful affection.—Servants must be both just and diligent; without selfish designs, or hypocrisy and disguise. Those who fear God, will be just and faithful when from under their master's eye, because they know they are under the eye of God. And for servants' encouragement, let them know, that in serving their masters according to the command of Christ, they serve Christ, and he will give them a glorious reward at last. Both master and servant will stand upon a level at the tribunal of God. How happy would true religion make the world, if it everywhere prevailed, influencing every state of things, and every relation of life!

3. Hid, as a treasure in a secure place; secure in Christ.—5. Eph. 5. 3-5. Mortify; the word means, kill them, suppress them, as weeds or vermin, which spread, and destroy all about them.—7. 1 Cor. 6. 10. 11. Rom. 1. 24-32.—9. Put off, etc., your former corrupt habits.—11. The Scythians were considered a wild and savage race. They occupied that country now inhabited by the Monguls and Tartars. They lived in the north and north-east of the Black and Caspian Seas.—13. Quarrel; complaint.—14. Eph. 5. 2; 1 Cor. 13. 1.—16. Eph. 5. 19.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1-6. *Perseverance in prayer, and Christian prudence.*

—No duties can be done aright, unless we persevere in fervent prayer, and watch therein with thanksgiving. Believers are exhorted to right conduct towards unbelievers. Be careful in all converse with them, to do them good, and recommend religion by all fit means. Let all discourse be discreet and seasonable, as becomes Christians. Though it be not always of grace, it must always be with grace. Though our discourse be of that which is common, yet it must be in a Christian manner.

7-18. *The apostle sends greetings.*—It is a great comfort under the troubles and difficulties of life, to have fellow Christians caring for us. Circumstances of life make no difference in the spiritual relation among sincere Christians; they partake of the same privileges, and are entitled to the same regards. The apostle had comfort in the communion of saints and ministers. One is his fellow-servant, another his fellow-prisoner, and all his fellow-workers, working out their own salvation, and endeavouring to pro-

mote the salvation of others. The smiles, flatteries, or frowns of the world, the spirit of error, or the working of self-love, lead many to a way of preaching and living which comes far short of fulfilling their ministry. But those who preach the same doctrine as Paul, and follow his example, may expect the Divine favour and blessing.

1. Doubtless in allusion to bondmen, who could not enforce their claims for justice by the law, and were thus entirely dependent on their masters for the exercise of kindness and equity.—6. Speech, etc. Salt was emblematical of wit among the Greeks. The apostle means that the conversation of the Christians should always be imbued with the spirit of piety.—9. Onesimus, it is thought, was from Colosse. He was the servant of Philemon; he had probably bound himself in service for a given period.—10. Aristarchus, of Macedonia, Acts 19. 29; 20. 4.; 27. 2. Marcus, or Mark, Acts 13. 37—39.—11. Jesus, probably so called by the Jews. Persons frequently changed their names among foreign people. Justus was his Roman name, Acts 13. 9. Of the circumcision, all were Jewish Christians.—13. Hierapolis, or the holy city, so called on account of the numerous temples erected there, is celebrated for the hot-springs near it. The people were worshippers of Apollo. It was a city of Phrygia, not far from Laodicea and Colosse. It is now utterly forsaken, and its ruins show it to have been a most splendid city.—14. Luke, it is supposed, was born at Cyrene, and to have died at Achaia. He seems to have been acquainted with the science of medicine. Demas is mentioned in Philemon 24 and 2 Tim. 4. 10, 16.—The former part of the epistle was probably written by an amanuensis.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

This epistle is generally considered to have been the first of those written by St. Paul. The occasion seems to have been the good report of the steadfastness of the church at Thessalonica. It is full of affection and confidence, and more consolatory and practical, and less doctrinal, than some of the other epistles.

CHAPTER 1.

Ver. 1—5. *The faith, love, and patience of the Thessalonians*.—As all good comes from God, so no good can be hoped for by sinners, but from God in Christ. And the best good may be expected from God, as our Father, for the sake of Christ. Wherever there is a true faith, it will work; it will affect both the heart and life. And wherever there is a well-grounded hope of eternal life, this will appear by the exercise of patience. It is a sign of sincerity, when in all we do, we seek to approve ourselves to God. By this we may know our election, if we not only speak of the thing

of God with our lips, but feel their power in our hearts, mortifying our lusts, weaning us from the world, and raising us up to heavenly things.

6-10. *The powerful and exemplary effects of the gospel upon their hearts and lives.*—The believers under the Old Testament waited for the coming of the Messiah, and believers now wait for his second coming. He is yet to come. And God has raised him from the dead, which is a full assurance unto all men that he will come to judgment. He came to purchase salvation, and will, when he comes again, bring salvation with him, full and final deliverance from that wrath which is yet to come. Let them all, without delay, escape from it, and seek refuge in Christ and his salvation.

1. Timothy and Silas were present with Paul when the church of Thessalonica was founded, Acts 17.—3. Strong Hebrew forms of expression, denoting “active faith, laborious love, and patient hope.”—5. Our gospel, which Paul and his companions had preached.—5. It was in a time of great persecution when the church was founded at Thessalonica, Acts 17, 5-8.—8. “In every place,” with which Thessalonica, as a seaport and commercial city, had intercourse.—9. Idols were dead, dumb, deaf, and blind, Psa. 135; Isa. 44

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—12. *The apostle's preaching and behaviour.*—Suffering in a good cause should sharpen holy resolution. The gospel of Christ at first met with much opposition; and it was preached with contention, with striving in preaching, and against opposition. It is designed for mortifying corrupt affections, and that men may be brought under the power of faith. The evidences of the apostle's sincerity were, that he avoided flattery, covetousness, ambition, and vain-glory. Our great gospel privilege is that God has called us to his kingdom and glory. The great gospel duty is, that we walk worthy of God. We should live as becomes those called with such a high and holy calling, making it our great business to serve, and please him.

13—20. *The gospel received as the word of God.*—We should receive the word of God with affections suited to its holiness, wisdom, truth, and goodness. The words of men are frail and perishing, like themselves, and sometimes false, foolish, and fickle; but God's word is holy, wise, just, and faithful. Nothing tends more to any person or people's filling up the measure of their sins, than opposing the gospel, and hindering the salvation of souls. Those who forbid the preaching of the gospel to sinners, to men dead in sin, do not by this please God.—This world is not a place where we are to be always, or long together—In heaven, holy souls shall meet, and never part more. And

though the apostle could not come to his Christian friends yet, and though he might never be able to come, nothing should hinder the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. With much contention; the word implies the great effort made by them on account of the opposition they met with, as the competitors in the Grecian games struggled hard to win their prize.—5 Cloke—any pretence or show of piety, made to hide their real intention, Matt. 23. 14; Luke 20. 47.—9. Paul seems to have supported himself by tent-making, Acts 20. 34, 35; 1 Cor. 4. 12.—11. As a father. He felt the same tenderness and anxiety for their welfare as does a father for his children.—14. The Thessalonian church had suffered similar persecution with other churches. Though the Jews had not directly persecuted them, persecution arose through them. They excited the heathen, persuading them that the apostle would injure their civil institutions. See Acts 14. 2; 17. 5, 6, 13.—18. See 2 Cor. 12. 7.—19. The apostle gloried as much in their conversion, as the victor in the Grecian games exulted in the prize he had won.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—5. *Timothy sent to establish and comfort.*—The apostle's design was to establish and comfort the Thessalonians as to the *object* of their faith, that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the world; and as to the *recompense* of faith, which was more than enough to make up all their losses, and to reward all their labours. The apostles, far from flattering people with the expectation of worldly prosperity in religion, told them plainly they must count upon trouble in the flesh. Herein they followed the example of their great Master, the Author of our faith. Christians were in danger, and should be forewarned; they would thus best be kept from being moved by any devices of the tempter.

6—13. *The apostle rejoiced at their faith, love, and increase in grace.*—Thankfulness to God is very imperfect in the present state; but one great end of the ministry of the word is to help faith forward. That which was the instrument to obtain faith, is also the means of increasing and confirming it, namely, the ordinances of God; and as faith cometh by hearing, so also it is confirmed by hearing. Prayer is to be offered to God as our Father. Prayer is not only to be offered in the name of Christ, but offered up to Christ himself, as our Lord and our Saviour. We need the Spirit's influences in order to our growth in grace; and the way to obtain them, is by prayer. Holiness is required of all who would go to heaven; and we must act so that we do not contradict the profession we make of holiness. The Lord Jesus will certainly come in his glory. Then the excellence as well as the necessity of holiness will appear; for without it no hearts can be established at that day, nor shall any avoid condemnation.

3. 1 Pet. 2. 21 —7. 2 Cor. 7. 6, 7.—8. Their consistent and holy life was a source of great comfort to him and worth living for.—10. implies a constancy and earnestness in his prayer for this special object.—11. Direct guide; it means the leading straight from one place to another; and the apostle prays that the Lord would remove all obstacles, so that he might go directly to them.—13. Phil. 2. 15; Luke 1. 6.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—12. *Exhortations to purity, holiness, brotherly love, and diligence.*—To abide in the faith of the gospel is not enough, we must abound in the work of faith. Sanctification, in the renewal of their souls under the influences of the Holy Spirit, and attention to appointed duties, constituted the will of God respecting them. In aspiring after this renewal of the soul unto holiness, strict restraint must be put upon the appetites and senses of the body, and on the thoughts and inclinations of the will, which lead to wrong uses of them. The Lord calls none into his family to live unholy lives, but that they may be taught and enabled to walk before him in holiness. All who are savingly taught of God, are taught to love one another. It is very desirable to have a calm and quiet temper, and to be of a peaceable and quiet behaviour. Those who are busy-bodies, meddling in other men's matters, have little quiet in their own minds, and cause great disturbances among their neighbours. They seldom mind the other exhortation, to be diligent in their own calling, to work with their own hands. Christianity does not take us from the work and duty of our particular callings, but teaches us to be diligent therein.

13—18. *The death of godly relations and friends.*—Grief for the death of friends is lawful; we may weep for our own loss, though it may be their gain. Christianity does not forbid, and grace does not take away, our natural affections. Yet we must not be excessive in our sorrows; this is too much like those who have no hope of a better life. It will be some happiness that all the saints shall meet, and remain together for ever; but the principal happiness of heaven is to be with the Lord, to see him, live with him, and enjoy him for ever. We should support one another in times of sorrow; and this may be done by the many lessons to be learned from the resurrection of the dead, and the second coming of Christ. What! comfort a man by telling him he is going to appear before the judgment-seat of God! Who can feel comfort from these words? That man alone with whose spirit the Spirit of God bears witness that his sins are blotted out, and the thoughts of whose heart are purified by the Holy Spirit, so that he can love God, and worthily magnify his name.

6. Defraud implies overreaching, oppressing, or taking advantage of another.—9. John 15. 12, 17.—11. Among heathens idleness prevails; and it is the parent of no small portion of their vices, 1 Pet. 4. 15; Phil. 2. 4; Acts 20. 34.—12. Col. 4. 5.—13. Sleep is frequently used to denote the death of God's people, John 11. 11; 1 Cor. 15. 51. The heathen have no hope of a future life; and when their relatives die they bury their hopes; they have no evidence that their souls will still live; or if they have, that they are happy. Hence the heathen indulge in excessive grief. They hire men to play in a mournful manner upon a pipe or trumpet, or women to howl. They utter loud shrieks, beat their breasts, rend their garments, tear off their hair, put dust on their heads, and sit down in ashes.—14. 1 Cor. 15. 20.—15. Prevent, signifies in Scripture not to hinder, but to precede, or anticipate.—16. A shout of the multitude who will accompany him.—17. In the clouds. The Greek renders it in clouds; that is in groups, like the clouds, Rev. 11. 12.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—11. *Exhortation to be ready for the coming of Christ to judgment.*—It is needless or useless to ask about the particular time of Christ's coming. Christ did not reveal this to the apostles. There are times and seasons for us to work in, and these are our duty and interest to know and observe; but as to the time when we must give up our account, we know it not, nor is it needful that we should. But we are assured that the coming of Christ will be a great surprise to men. It will be terrible to the ungodly. Their destruction will overtake them while they dream of happiness, and please themselves with vain amusements. This day will be a happy day to the righteous. But how many are speaking peace and safety to themselves, over whose heads utter destruction is hovering! Most of mankind do not consider the things of another world at all, because they are asleep; or they do not consider them aright, because they sleep and dream. Shall Christians, then, who have the light of the blessed gospel shining in their faces, be careless about their souls, and unmindful of another world? We need the spiritual armour, or the three Christian graces, faith, love, and hope. *Faith*: if we believe that the eye of God is always upon us, that there is another world to prepare for, we shall see reason to watch and be sober. True and fervent *love* to God, and the things of God, will keep us watchful and sober. If we have *hope* of salvation, let us take heed of anything that would shake our trust in the Lord. We have ground on which to build unshaken hope, when we consider, that salvation is by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, to atone for our sins and to ransom our souls. Thus we shall learn to live to him, with whom we hope to live for ever.

12—22. *Directions as to several duties.*—The ministers of

the gospel are described by the work of their office, which is to serve and honour the Lord. It is their duty not only to give good counsel, but also to warn the flock of dangers, and reprove whatever may be amiss. The people should honour and love their ministers, because their business is the welfare of men's souls.—And the people should be at peace among themselves, doing all they can to guard against any differences. We must bear and forbear. We must be long-suffering, and keep down anger, and this to all men.—A truly religious life should be a life of joy. And we should rejoice more, if we prayed more. Prayer will help forward all lawful business, and every good work. If we pray without ceasing, we shall not want matter for thanksgiving in everything. We shall see cause to give thanks for sparing and preventing, for common and uncommon, past and present, temporal and spiritual mercies. Not only for prosperous and pleasing, but also for afflicting providences, for chastisements and corrections; for God designs all for our good, though we at present see not how they tend to it.—Christians are said to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The Spirit worketh as fire, by enlightening, enlivening, and purifying the souls of men. As fire is put out by taking away fuel, and as it is quenched by pouring water, or putting a great deal of earth upon it; so we must be careful not to quench the Holy Spirit, by indulging carnal lusts and affections, minding only earthly things. Believers often hinder their growth in grace, by not giving themselves up to the spiritual affections raised in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.—We should abstain from sin, and whatever looks like sin, leads to it, and borders upon it. He who is not shy of the appearances of sin, who shuns not the occasions of it, and who avoids not the temptations to it, will not long keep from doing sin.

23—28. *The apostle's conclusion with prayer and a blessing.*—The apostle prays that they might be sanctified more perfectly, for the best are sanctified but in part while in this world. As we must fall, if God do not carry on this good work in the soul, we should pray to God to perfect it, till we are presented faultless before the throne of his glory.—Not only are the common people allowed to read the Scriptures, but it is their duty, and what they should be persuaded to do. The word of God should not be kept in an unknown tongue, but translated; that as all men are concerned to know it, so they all may be able to read it. To make us happy, we must know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is an ever-flowing and an over-flowing fountain of grace to supply all our wants.

6. A state of carnal security, Matt. 25. 5; Rom. 13. 11-13.—9. See Eph. 6. 14, etc.—10. An allusion to the ancient custom in heathen nations, before going to battle to propitiate the gods, and to be assured that they would favour them and give them victory, by offering sacrifices, consulting the flight of birds, etc.—11. Wake or sleep—be dead or alive at his coming. Rom. 14. 8, 9; 2 Cor. 5. 15.—12. See Phil. 3. 1; 4. 4.—13. Implies a regularity in prayer as well as stated seasons for prayer.—14. Eph. 5. 20.—15. Probably alluding to the fire on an altar which was emblematical of devotion and constantly kept burning. The influences of the Holy Spirit are here compared to a fire which may be extinguished, or made to burn more brightly, 2 Tim. 1. 6.—16. Prophecys; here preaching is intended.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

The second epistle to the Thessalonians was written soon after the first. The apostle was told that, from some expressions in his first letter, many expected the second coming of Christ was at hand, and that the day of judgment would arrive in their time. Some of these neglected their worldly duties. St. Paul wrote again to correct their error, which hindered the spread of the gospel. The subject led to a remarkable foretelling of some of the future events which were to take place in the after-ages of the Christian church.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—4. *The apostle blesses God for the love and patience of the Thessalonians.*—Where there is the truth of grace, there will be an increase of it. And where there is the increase of grace, God must have all the glory. Where faith grows, love will abound, for faith works by love. It shows faith and patience, such as may be proposed as a pattern for others, when trials from God, and persecutions from men, quicken the exercises of these graces; for the patience and faith of which the apostle gloried, bore them up, and enabled them to endure all their tribulations.

5—12. *And encourages them to persevere under all their sufferings.*—Religion, if worth anything, is worth everything; and those have no religion, or none worth having, or know not how to value it, who cannot find in their hearts to suffer for it. We cannot by all our sufferings, any more than by our services, merit heaven; but by our patience under sufferings, we are prepared for the promised joy. The Lord Jesus will, in the great day, appear from heaven. He will come in the glory and power of the upper world. His light will be piercing, and his power consuming, to all who in that day shall be found as chaff. This appearance will be terrible to those that know not

God, especially to those who rebel against revelation, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though sinners may be long spared, they will be punished at last. They did sin's work, and must receive sin's wages. Here God punishes sinners by creatures as instruments; but then, it will be by destruction from the Almighty. In that bright and blessed day, Christ Jesus will be glorified and admired *by* his saints; and will be glorified and admired *in* them. His grace and power will be shown, when it shall appear what he has purchased *for*, and wrought *in*, and bestowed *upon*, those who believe in him. Lord, if the glory put upon thy saints shall be thus admired, how much more shalt thou be admired, as the Bestower of that glory! Believing thoughts and expectation of the second coming of Christ, should lead us to pray to God more, for ourselves and others. If there is any good in us, it is owing to the good pleasure of his goodness, and therefore it is called grace. The apostle prays that God would complete in them the work of faith with power: this is to promote their doing every good work. The power of God not only begins, but carries on the work of faith. And this is the great end and design of the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, which is made known to us, and wrought in us.

6. Rev. 6. 10.—The future punishment of the wicked is just and proper, and therefore will be inflicted.—7. The rest of the righteous who have been troubled and persecuted here will be equally just and proper, Rev. 14. 13; Jude 14.—8. Amid flashes of vivid lightning, Heb. 10. 27; 2 Pet. 3. 7; Deut. 32. 41, 43; Psa. 79. 8; Zeph. 1. 6; Rom. 2. 8.—9. Phil. 3. 19; Isa. 2. 19.—10. Matt. 25. 31; Psa. 68. 35. 11. Col. 1. 2; Rev. 3. 4.

CHAPTER II.

Vet 1—4. *Cautions against their error as to the time of Christ's coming.*—We have a cunning adversary, who watches to do mischief, and will promote errors, even by the words of Scripture. Whatever uncertainty we are in, or whatever mistakes may arise about the time of Christ's coming, that coming itself is certain. This has been the faith and hope of all Christians, in all ages of the church; it was the faith and hope of the Old Testament saints. All believers shall be gathered together to Christ, to be with him, and to be happy in his presence for ever. We should firmly believe the second coming of Christ; but there was danger lest the Thessalonians, being mistaken as to the time, should question the truth or certainty of the thing itself. A reason why they should not expect the coming of Christ, as at hand, is given. There would be a general falling away first, such as would occasion the rise of anti-

christ, that man of sin. There have been great disputes who or what is intended by this man of sin and son of perdition. The man of sin not only practises wickedness, but also promotes and commands sin and wickedness in others; and is the son of perdition, because he is devoted to certain destruction, and is the instrument to destroy many others, both in soul and body. As God was in the temple of old, and worshipped there, and is in and with his church now; so this antichrist, is a usurper of God's authority in the Christian church, claiming Divine honours.

5—12. *The destruction of the man of sin.*—Corruption of doctrine and worship came in by degrees, and the usurping of power was gradual; thus the mystery of iniquity prevailed. Superstition and idolatry were advanced by pretended devotion, and bigotry and persecution were promoted by pretended zeal for God and his glory. The pure word of God, with the Spirit of God, will discover this mystery of iniquity, and, in due time, it shall be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming.—Signs and wonders, visions and miracles, are pretended; but they are false signs to support false doctrines; and lying wonders, or only pretended miracles, to cheat the people; and the diabolical deceits with which the antichristian state has been supported, are notorious. The persons are described, who are his willing subjects. Their sin is this, they did not love the truth, and therefore did not believe it. God leaves them to themselves, then sin will follow of course, and spiritual judgments here, and eternal punishments hereafter. This passage exactly agrees with the system of popery, as it prevails under the Romish popes. But though the son of perdition has been revealed, and though he has spoken and acted as if he were a god upon earth, and has proclaimed his insolent pride, and supported his delusions by lying miracles and all kinds of frauds; still the Lord has not yet fully destroyed him with the brightness of his coming: and other prophecies remain to be fulfilled before the end shall come.

13—17. *An exhortation to steadfastness, and prayer for them.*—When we hear of the apostasy of many, it is a great comfort and joy, that there is a remnant according to the election of grace, which does and shall persevere; especially we should rejoice, if we have reason to hope that we are of that number. The preservation of the saints, is because God loved them with an everlasting love from the beginning of the world. But the end and the means must not be separated. Faith and holiness must be joined together as well as holiness and happiness. The belief of the truth brings the sinner to rely on Christ, and so to

love and obey him; it is sealed by the Holy Spirit upon his heart. We have no certain proof of anything having been delivered by the apostles, more than what we find contained in the Holy Scriptures. Let us then stand fast in the doctrines taught by the apostles, and reject all additions and vain traditions. The love of God in Christ Jesus, is the spring and fountain of all the good we have or hope for. There is good reason for strong consolations, because the saints have good hope through grace. The free grace and mercy of God are what they hope for, and what their hopes are founded on, and not any worth or merit of their own.

2. Shaken, as a vessel by the tossing billow, or the wave by the boisterous wind.—3. The general opinion of commentators is, that this verse refers to departure from the faith, and the abominations of the Romish church, and the odious usurpation of the pontiffs. The succession to the popedom, with some exceptions, has been of men of very bad character. Son of perdition; implies that the popedom would be devoted to destruction, as was Judas, John 17. 12.—4. The papacy has been ever a system of opposition to gospel truth, as the persecutions of the reformers, the days of Queen Mary, the Inquisition, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, etc. testify. The pope claims the honours which are due only to God, and acts as if he were God. Temple, or Christian church, 2 Cor. 6. 16; Rev. 3. 12.—6, 7. It is supposed that these refer to the Roman civil power which at that time restrained the full development of Antichrist. Be taken out of the way; in the fourth century the emperor Constantine left Rome to reside at Constantinople, from this time the Roman empire declined, and made room for the growth of the papal power.—9. Alluding to the pretended miracles upon which the Romish church has so much depended.—11. Send, etc., God permitted it.—15. Matt. 15. 2.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—5. *The apostle expresses his confidence in and prays for the Thessalonians.*—Those who are far apart, still may meet together at the throne of grace; and those not able to do or receive any other kindness, may in this way do and receive real and very great kindness. The apostle had confidence in them, and that was founded upon his confidence in God; for there is otherwise no confidence in man.—He prays for spiritual blessings for them. There is no true love of God, without faith in Jesus Christ. If, by the special grace of God, we have that faith which multitudes have not, we should earnestly pray that we may be enabled, without reserve, to obey his commands, and that the Lord the Spirit may direct our hearts into the love of God, and the patience of Christ.

6—15. *He charges them to withdraw from disorderly walkers.*—Christianity is not to countenance slothfulness, which would consume what is meant to encourage the industrious,

and to support the sick and afflicted. Industry in our callings as men, is a duty required by our callings as Christians. It is a great error and abuse of religion, to make it a cloak for idleness or any other sin. The servant who waits for the coming of his Lord aright, must be working as his Lord has commanded. The mind of man is a busy thing; if it be not employed in doing good, it will be doing evil.—The Lord is with you while you are with him. Hold on your way, and hold on to the end. It will be time enough to rest when we come to heaven.

16—18. *And concludes with a prayer for them.*—The apostle prays for the Thessalonians. And let us desire these same blessings for ourselves and our friends. Peace with God. This peace is desired for them always, or in every-thing. Peace by all means; in every way; that, as they enjoyed the means of grace, they might use all methods to secure peace. It is through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we hope to have peace with God, and to enjoy the presence of God. This grace is all in all to make us happy; and though we wish ever so much to others, there remains enough for ourselves.

1. Free course, or run; that, as in the race, every impediment would be removed, so every obstacle to the gospel might be removed.—5. Patient waiting, patience of Christ; that in their trials they might evince the same patience as Christ.—11. Disorderly, irregular in their ways and contrary to the rules of Christ, as a soldier who does not keep to his ranks.—13. There were some idlers in the church who asked assistance; but they were not therefore discouraged from giving to the really-deserving.—15. Charity is to be shown even in discipline. Look upon him as a brother, though erring.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

Timothy having been left at Ephesus, the apostle Paul wrote to instruct him in the choice of proper officers in the church, as well as in the exercise of the ministry. Also, to caution him against the influence of false teachers, who by subtle distinctions and endless disputes, corrupted the purity and simplicity of the gospel.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—4. *The apostle salutes Timothy.*—Jesus Christ is a Christian's hope; all our hopes of eternal life are built upon him; and Christ is in us the hope of glory. That which raises debate, is not for edifying; that which gives occasion for doubtful disputes, pulls down the church

rather than builds it up. Godliness of heart and life can only be kept up and increased, by the exercise of faith in the truths and promises of God, through Jesus Christ.

5-11 *The design of the law as given by Moses.*—The design of the gospel is answered, when sinners, through repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ, are brought to exercise Christian love and obedience. And as believers were become righteous persons in God's appointed way, the law was not against them. But unless we are made righteous by faith in Christ, really repenting and forsaking sin, we are yet under the curse of the law, even according to the gospel of the blessed God, and are unfit to share the holy happiness of heaven.

12-17. *Of the apostle's conversion.*—The apostle knew that he would justly have perished, if the Lord had been extreme to mark what was done amiss, and also if his grace and mercy had not been abundant to him when dead in sin, working faith and love to Christ in his heart. This is a faithful saying; these are true and faithful words, which may be depended on, That the Son of God came into the world, willingly and purposely to save sinners. No man, with Paul's example before him, can question the love and power of Christ to save him, if he really desire to trust in him as the Son of God, who once died on the cross, and now reigns upon the throne of glory, to save all that come to God through him. Let us then admire and praise the grace of God our Saviour; and ascribe to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons in the unity of the Godhead, the glory of all done in, by, and for us.

18-20. *The obligation to maintain faith and a good conscience.*—The ministry is a warfare against sin and Satan; carried on under the Lord Jesus, who is the Captain of our salvation. The good hopes others have had of us, should stir us up to duty. The design of the highest censures in the primitive church, was, to prevent further sin, and to reclaim the sinner. May all who are tempted to put away a good conscience, and to abuse the gospel, remember that this is the way to make shipwreck of faith also.

3. Paul and Timothy had laboured together at Ephesus. Paul left before his work was completed, being driven away by the uproar which Demetrius raised, Acts 20.—4. Fables abounded among the Greeks. Here is allusion, doubtless, to the superstitions of the Jewish rabbies. Genealogies: In allusion to the genealogical records kept by the Hebrews, in order to preserve the distinction of tribes. In the course of years these records became both complicated and numerous: hence might be well designated "endless."—6. As an archer might miss the mark, so they had missed or failed of the things referred to v. 5. Jangling here means unprofitable discourse.—7. It was considered by the Jews a great honour to be well versed in the

law, and capable of giving explanations of it to others, Rom. 1. 23.—9. The Jews explained the law so as to produce a spirit of bondage. The apostle taught that the law was not a terror to the righteous, but to restrain the wicked—13. Acts 8. 3; 1 Cor. 15. 9.—18. A good warfare. Like a good soldier, constant to his post, faithful to his captain, watchful of the motions of the enemy, courageous, and who clings to his standard.—19. Faith may be destroyed, as a ship is ruined that strikes on a rock.—20. Hymeneus was a dangerous character holding that “the resurrection was already past,” 2 Tim. 2. 17, 18. Alexander the coppersmith, 2 Tim. 4. 14. Possibly he was afflicted with a bodily malady that he might be reformed.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—7. *Prayer to be made for all persons.*—Our duty as Christians, is summed up in two words; godliness, that is, the right worshipping of God; and honesty, that is, good conduct toward all men. These must go together. There is one Mediator, and that Mediator gave himself a ransom for all. And this appointment has been made for the benefit of the Jews and the Gentiles of every nation; that all who are willing may come in this way to the mercy-seat of a pardoning God, to seek reconciliation with him.—Sin had made a quarrel between us and God; Jesus Christ is a Mediator who makes peace. He is a ransom that was to be made known in due time. Those who are saved must come to the knowledge of the truth, for that is God’s appointed way to save sinners.

8—15. *How men and women ought to behave.*—Under the gospel, prayer is not to be confined to any one particular house of prayer, but men must pray every where. We must pray in our closets, pray in our families, pray at our meals, pray when we are on journeys, and pray in the solemn assemblies, whether more public or private. We must pray in charity; without malice, or anger against any person. We must pray in faith, without doubting, and without disputing.—Women who profess the Christian religion, must be modest in apparel, not affecting gaudiness, gaiety, or costliness. Modesty and neatness are more to be consulted in garments than elegance and fashion. The best ornaments for professors of godliness, are good works.—According to St. Paul, women are not allowed to be public teachers in the church; for teaching is an office of authority. But good women may and ought to teach their children at home the principles of true religion. As woman was last in the creation, which is one reason for her subjection, so she was first in the transgression. But there is a word of comfort; that those who continue in sobriety, shall be saved in child bearing, or by child-bearing, that is, the Messiah, who was born of a woman.

2. In authority, marginal reading, "eminent place," not necessarily in power, but all who are high in rank.—6. Ransom; redemption price.—7. Faith and verity. The apostle had been placed in the office of a teacher of the Gentiles in the faith and knowledge of the truth, Rom. 11. 13; Gal. 2. 7.—9. Eastern females pay great attention to plaiting the hair, and often ornament it with silver wire, or adorn it with spangles, 1 Pet. 3. 3.—11-13 See note, 1 Cor. 14. 34; 1 Cor. 11. 3, 8, 9.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—7. *The qualifications and behaviour of gospel bishops.*—A minister must give as little occasion for blame as can be, lest he bring reproach upon his office. He must be sober, temperate, moderate in all his actions, and in the use of all creature-comforts. Sobriety and watchfulness are put together in Scripture; they assist one the other. The families of ministers ought to be examples of good to all other families. To encourage all faithful ministers, we have Christ's gracious word of promise, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 20. And he will fit them for their work, and carry them through difficulties with comfort, and reward their faithfulness.

8 13. *And of deacons and their wives.*—The deacons were at first appointed to distribute the charity of the church, and to manage its concerns, yet pastors and evangelists were among them. They must be grave, serious, prudent men. It is not fit that public trusts should be lodged in the hands of any, till they are found fit for the business to be done.—All who are related to ministers, must take great care to walk as becomes the gospel of Christ.

14 - 16. *The reason of writing about these, and other church affairs.*—When a church ceases to be the pillar and ground of truth, we may and ought to forsake her; for our regard to truth should be first and greatest.—The mystery of godliness is Christ. He is God who was made flesh. God was pleased to manifest himself to man, by his own Son taking the nature of man. Though reproached as a sinner, and put to death as a malefactor, Christ was raised again by the Spirit, and so was justified from all the false charges with which he was loaded. Angels ministered to him, for he is the Lord of angels. Let us remember that God was manifest in the flesh, to take away our sins, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These doctrines must be shown forth by the fruits of the Spirit in our lives.

2. This verse shows that the celibacy of the Romish clergy is entirely at variance with the word of God.—3. Marginal reading: not ready to quarrel and offer wrong, as one in wine.—5. The church of God is here likened to a family: but while the father of a family rules, the verse implies that the minister should have a tender care for the

church.—6. Novice, or one newly come to the faith. A tree newly planted, which had not yet struck deep into the earth, is unfitted to stand against the storm: so a recent convert, not being rooted and grounded in the faith, would be in danger of falling through pride.—8. See Phil. 1. 1. The Jewish priests were forbidden to take wine when about to engage in the service of God, Lev. 10. 9. Even the heathen priests on entering their temples did not drink wine.—15. Proclamations were often affixed to the pillars of heathen temples in Greece. The church holds forth the doctrines of Christ as a pillar holds forth a proclamation.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—5. *Of departures from the faith.*—The Holy Spirit, both in the Old and the New Testament, spoke of a general turning from the faith of Christ, and the pure worship of God. This should come during the Christian dispensation, for that is called the latter days. False teachers forbid as evil what God has allowed, and command as a duty what he has left indifferent. We find cause for watchfulness and self-denial, in attending to the requirements of God's law, without being tasked to imaginary duties, which reject what he has allowed.

6—16. *Directions, with motives for the discharge of duties.*—Outward acts of self-denial profit little. What will it avail us to mortify the body, if we do not mortify sin? No diligence in merely outward things could be of much use. The gain of godliness lies much in the promise; and the promises to godly people relate partly to the life that now is, but especially to the life which is to come: though we lose for Christ, we shall not lose by him.—Those who teach by their doctrine, must teach by their life. Their discourse must be edifying; their conversation must be holy; they must be examples of love to God and all good men, examples of spiritual-mindedness. The doctrine of a minister of Christ must be scriptural, clear, evangelical, and practical; well stated, explained, defended, and applied. And these duties leave no leisure for worldly pleasures, trifling visits, or idle conversation, and but little for what is mere amusement, and only ornamental. May every believer be enabled to let his profiting appear unto all men; seeking to experience the power of the gospel in his own soul, and to bring forth its fruits in his life.

1. Dan. 11. 35; Matt. 24. 5—12; Rev. 16. 14.—2. Or, "Through the hypocrisy of those speaking lies." A hot iron applied to the skin causes it to become hard and dead to sensibility: such would be the effect of the doctrines and delusions spoken of by the apostle on the conscience.—7. Old wives' fables, signifying that which is silly. The heathen religion abounds in fables, and the Jewish system of teaching also was then remarkable for the number of them.—8. The Essenes made bodily mortification by abstinence and penance, part of their re-

ligion. There may be an allusion to the exercise of body which the athletes underwent to prepare for the combat, 1 Cor. 9. 25-27.—14. 2 Tim. 1. 6; 1 Tim. 1. 18; Acts 13. 3.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1-8. *Directions as to several classes.*—Respect must be paid to the dignity of years and office. The younger, if faulty, must be rebuked, not as desirous to find fault with them, but as willing to make them better. There is need of much meekness and care in reproving those who deserve reproof.—Honour widows that are widows indeed, relieve them, and maintain them. It is the duty of children, if their parents are in need, and they are able, to relieve them, and to do it to the utmost of their power. All who live in pleasure, are dead while they live, spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins. Alas, what numbers there are of this description among nominal Christians, even to the latest period of life!—If they spend upon their lusts and pleasures, what should maintain their families, they have denied the faith, and are worse than infidels. If professors of the gospel give way to any corrupt principles or actions, they are worse than those who do not profess to believe the doctrines of grace.

9-16. *Concerning widows.*—Those who would find mercy when they are in distress, must show mercy when they are in prosperity; and those who show most readiness for every good work, are most likely to be faithful in whatever is trusted to them. Those who are idle, very seldom are only idle, they make mischief among neighbours, and sow discord among brethren. All believers are required to relieve those belonging to their families who are destitute, that the church may not be prevented from relieving such as are entirely destitute and friendless.

17-25. *The respect to be paid to elders.*—Care must be taken that ministers are maintained. It is their just due, as much as the reward of the labourer.—We have great need to watch at all times, that we do not partake of other men's sins. Keep thyself pure, not only from doing the like thyself, but from countenancing it, or any way promoting it in others. God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make known the counsels of all hearts. Looking forward to the judgment-day, let us all attend to our proper offices, whether in higher or lower stations, studying that the name and doctrine of God may never be blasphemed on our account.

1. Elder, or aged man.—4. "Nephews" here signifies children or grandchildren, descendants in a direct line.—10. In allusion to the eastern rite of hospitality to wash the feet of the guest, Gen. 18. 4.

Here signifying a performance of the humblest offices of kindness.—11. Refuse, in reference to the matter under discussion. Wantor rather signifies "pulling away," as a horse having pulled away the reins runs about at his pleasure.—17. Rule, or manage.—18. It was customary among the Jews, Greeks, Egyptians, and Romans to use oxen to tread out their corn. They muzzled the oxen, or spread skins over the corn to prevent its sustaining damage, Deut. 25. 4; 1 Cor. 9 8-10; Luke 10. 7.—19. An elder, or person in office, Deut. 19. 15.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1—5. *The duty of Christians towards their masters.*—Christians were not to suppose that religious knowledge or Christian privileges, gave them any right to despise heathen masters, or to disobey lawful commands, or to expose their faults to others. While such as enjoyed the privilege of living with believing masters, were not to withhold due respect and reverence, because they were equal in respect to religious privileges, but were to serve with double diligence and cheerfulness, because of their faith in Christ, and as partakers of his free salvation. Commonly those are most proud who know least; for they do not know themselves. Hence come envy, strife, railings, evil-surmisings, disputes that are all subtlety, and of no solidity, between men of corrupt and carnal minds, ignorant of the truth and its sanctifying power, and seeking only their own worldly advantage.

6—10. *The advantage of godliness.*—He that is godly, is sure to be happy in another world; and if contented with his condition in this world, he has enough; and all truly godly people are content. When brought into the greatest straits, we cannot be poorer than when we came into this world; a shroud, a coffin, and a grave, are all that the richest man in the world can have from all his wealth. If nature should be content with a little, grace should be content with less. The necessaries of life bound a true Christian's desires, and with these he will endeavour to be content.—We see here the evil of covetousness. It is not said, they that *are* rich, but they that *will* be rich; who place their happiness in wealth, and are eager and determined in its pursuit. People may have money, and yet not love it; but if they love it, this will push them on to all evil. Every sort of sin, in one way or another, grows from the love of money. We cannot look around without perceiving many proofs of this, especially in a day of outward prosperity, great expenses, and loose profession.

11—16. *A solemn charge to be faithful.*—It ill becomes any men, but especially men of God, to set their hearts upon the things of this world; men of God should be taken up with the things of God. There must be a conflict with

corruption, and temptations, and the powers of darkness. Eternal life is the crown proposed for our encouragement.—None can approach God except as he is made known unto sinners in and by Christ. The Godhead is here adored without distinction of Persons, as all these things are properly spoken, whether of the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost. God is revealed to us, only in and through the human nature of Christ, as the only begotten Son of the Father.

17—21. *The apostle warns the rich, and closes with a blessing.*—Nothing is more uncertain than worldly wealth. Those who are rich, must see that God gives them their riches; and he only can make any enjoy them richly; for many have riches, but enjoy them poorly, not having a heart to use them. What is the best estate worth, more than as it gives opportunity of doing the more good? That learning which opposes the truth of the gospel, is not true science, or real knowledge, or it would approve the gospel, and consent to it. Those who advance reason above faith, are in danger of leaving faith. Grace includes all that is good, and grace is an earnest, a beginning of glory: wherever God gives grace, he will give glory.

1. Eph. 6. 5.—3. Wholesome words such doctrine as would conduce to a due observance of all the proprieties of life and produce piety.—4. Doting, etc.; marginal reading, sick. Like an unhealthy man, who has no relish for substantial food, but craves for that only which will satisfy a diseased appetite.—5. Perverse disputings, or a wearing away of time, idle employments. Gain, etc.: supposing that any course tending to worldly prosperity has the sanction of religion.—7. Job 1. 21; Psa. 49. 17.—8. Implies a supply of wants in general.—9. Prov. 28. 20. As a ship wrecked sinks with all her cargo.—12. Eph. 6. 10-17. As in the Grecian games, the competitor lays hold on the prize.—13. John 18. 36, 37.—17. Psa. 62. 10.—20. In those days there existed a great deal of false philosophy and science.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

The first design of this epistle seems to have been, to apprise Timothy of what had occurred during the imprisonment of the apostle, and to request him to come to Rome. But being uncertain whether he should be suffered to live to see him, Paul gives a variety of advices and encouragements, for the faithful discharge of his ministerial duties. As this was a private epistle written to St. Paul's most intimate friend, under the miseries of imprisonment, and in the near prospect of death, it shows the mind of the apostle, and contains convincing proofs that he sincerely believed the doctrines he preached.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1--5. *Paul expresses great affection for Timothy.*—

The promise of eternal life to believers in Christ Jesus, is the leading subject of ministers who are employed according to the will of God. True believers have in every age the same religion as to substance. Their faith is unfeigned; it will stand the trial, and it dwells in them as a living principle.—Pious women may take encouragement from the success of Lois and Eunice with Timothy, who proved so excellent and useful a minister. Some of the most worthy and valuable ministers the church of Christ has been favoured with, have had to bless God for early religious impressions made upon their minds by the teaching of their mothers or other female relatives.

6—14. *Exhorts him to improve his spiritual gifts.*—God has not given us the spirit of fear, but the spirit of power, of courage and resolution, to meet difficulties and dangers; the spirit of love to him, which will carry us through opposition. And the spirit of a sound mind, quietness of mind. As is usual with the apostle, when he mentions Christ and redemption, he enlarges upon them; so full was he of that which is all our salvation, and ought to be all our desire. Salvation is of free grace; and is said to be given us before the world began, that is, in the purpose of God from all eternity; in Christ Jesus, for all the gifts that come from God to sinful man, come in and through Christ Jesus alone. As there is so clear a prospect of eternal happiness by faith in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, let us give more diligence in making his salvation sure to our souls. The apostle had trusted his life, his soul, and eternal interests, to the Lord Jesus. No one else could deliver and secure his soul through the trials of life and death. The hope of the lowest real Christian rests on the same foundation as that of the great apostle. He also has learned the value and the danger of his soul; he also has believed in Christ; and the change wrought in his soul, convinces the believer that the Lord Jesus will keep him to his heavenly kingdom.—The Christian doctrine is a trust committed to us; it is of unspeakable value in itself, and will be of unspeakable advantage to us. It is committed to us, to be preserved pure and entire, yet we must not think to keep it by our own strength, but by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

15—18. *Tells of many who basely deserted him.*—The day of death and judgment is an awful day. And if we would have mercy then, we must seek for it now of the Lord. The best we can ask, for ourselves or our friends, is, that the Lord will grant that we and they may find mercy of the Lord, when called to pass out of time into eternity, and to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

3. From my forefathers, or after their example.—5. 1 Tim. 4. 6; Acts 16. 1.—6. Denotes the kindling up the fire as by a bellows: so Timothy was to keep the flame of true religion alive and burning brightly, 1 Tim. 4. 14.—10. Abolished, etc., implying the certainty that death will be abolished, 1 Cor. 15. 54; John 5. 24-29.—12. That day; the day of judgment.—13. Form, etc.: see note, 1 Tim. 6. 3.—15. Asia, that part of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital. Phygellus and Hermogenes are nowhere else spoken of.—16. Onesiphorus of Ephesus (v. 18) appears to have shown kindness to Paul in his trials, and was not ashamed to be known as the friend of one who was imprisoned on account of religion. He was doubtless yet alive, Acts 28. 20. The house, or family.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1-7. *The apostle exhorts to perseverance with diligence.*—All Christians must be faithful to their Captain, and resolute in his cause. The great care of a Christian must be to please Christ. We are to strive to get the mastery of our lusts and corruptions, but we cannot expect the prize unless we observe the laws. Those who strive lawfully shall be crowned at last. If we would partake the fruits, we must labour; if we would gain the prize, we must run the race. We must do the will of God, before we receive the promises, and hence we have need of patience.

8-13. *Assurances of a happy end of faithfulness.*—Let suffering saints remember, and look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God. If we are dead to the pleasures, profits, and honours of this world, we shall be for ever with Christ in a better world. He is faithful to his threatenings, and faithful to his promises. This truth makes sure the unbeliever's condemnation, and the believer's salvation.

14-21. *Warnings to shun vain babblings and dangerous errors.*—The foundation has two writings on it. One speaks our comfort, for none can overthrow the faith of any whom God hath chosen. The other speaks our duty, for those who would have the comfort of the privilege, must make conscience of the duty. The church of Christ is like a dwelling: some furniture is of great value; some of smaller value, and put to meaner uses. Some professors of religion are like vessels of wood and earth. When the vessels of dishonour are cast out to be destroyed, the others will be filled with all the fulness of God. We must see to it that we are holy vessels. Every one in the church whom God approves, will be devoted to his Master's service, and thus fitted for his use.

22-26. *Charges to flee youthful lusts.*—See how often the

apostle cautions against disputes in religion; which surely shows that religion consists more in believing and practising what God requires, than in subtle disputes. Those are unapt to teach, who are apt to strive, and are fierce and froward. Teaching, not persecution, is the Scripture method of dealing with those in error.—The same God who gives the discovery of the truth, by his grace brings us to acknowledge it, otherwise our hearts would continue to rebel against it. If any long for deliverance, let them remember they never can escape, except by repentance, and we must ask it of God by earnest, persevering prayer.

3. Soldiers often endure great privations, either for reward or their country's sake. The Christian minister should be willing to do all for his Saviour's sake.—4. The Roman soldiers were excluded those engagements which would interfere with the prosecution of that which was their sole object.—5. No one was allowed the prize who broke the rules in the Olympic games.—9. Evil-doer, or violator of the laws. Eph. 6. 20. In spite of all attempts to suppress the gospel, it has triumphed on the earth.—15. Some suppose here is an allusion to a steward distributing the food to the guests at a feast, others to the Jewish priest dividing the sacrifice.—17. As a gangrene will spread over and consume the healthful parts of the body.—19. Eph. 2. 20; Nah. 1. 7. In allusion to the custom of engraving the name of the builder and design of the edifice on the corner-stone. Seal sometimes signifies the instrument, and sometimes the impression.—20. In the furniture of a house there is variety in form and material, as well as in uses.—21. These, or the characters which the vessels of wood and earth represent. See Acts 9. 15.—26. Such as fall into error are like the bird taken alive in the snare of the fowler.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—9. *The rise of dangerous enemies to the gospel.*—Even in gospel times there would be perilous times; on account of persecution from without, still more on account of corruptions within. Men love to gratify their own lusts, more than to please God and do their duty. Men are unholy and without the fear of God, because unthankful for the mercies of God. We abuse God's gifts, if we make them the food and fuel of our lusts. God is to be loved above all; but a carnal mind, full of enmity against him, prefers any thing before him, especially carnal pleasure.—There ever have been artful men, who, by pretences and flatteries, creep into the favour and confidence of those who are too easy of belief, ignorant, and fanciful. All must be ever learning to know the Lord; but these follow every new notion, yet never seek the truth as it is in Jesus. Yet though the spirit of error may be let loose for a time, Satan can deceive the nations and the churches no further, and no longer, than God permits.

10—17. *The apostle exhorts Timothy to continue in the doc-*

things he had learned.—A profession of Christian faith without a godly life, often is allowed to pass, while open profession of the truth as it is in Jesus, and resolute attention to the duties of godliness, stir up the scorn and

and being deceived. Those who would learn the things of God, and be assured of them, must know the Holy Scriptures, for they are the Divine revelation. The age of children is the age to learn; and those who would get true learning, must get it out of the Scriptures. They must not lie by us neglected, seldom or never looked into. The Bible is profitable for all purposes of the Christian life. It is of use to all, for all need to be taught, corrected, and reprov'd. Oh that we may love the Bible more, and keep closer to it! then shall we find benefit, and at last gain the happiness therein promised by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the main subject of both Testaments.

3. Truce-breaker, or rather those bound by no treaty: see Rom. 1. 31. Incontinent; those who allow their passions to be ungodly: heady, rash, without deliberation, Acts 19. 36.—5. Probably referring to that apostasy mentioned, 2 Thess. 2: 1 Tim. 4.—6. Indicative of the insinuating method of the propagators of error, who ingratiate themselves into families.—8. Jannes and Jambres are frequently mentioned by Hebrew writers, and are considered to have been two of the magicians who opposed Moses and Aaron, Exod. 7. 11.—10. Marginal reading. "But thou hast been a diligent follower of my doctrine," or instructions, not opinions.—11. Acts 13. 45, 50; 14. 5, 6, 19.—13. Seducers, such as by deceptive and seductive arts lead into error.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—8. *The apostle solemnly charges Timothy to be diligent.*—People will turn away from the truth, they will grow weary of the plain gospel of Christ, they will be greedy of fables, and take pleasure in them. People do so when they will not endure that preaching which is searching, plain, and to the purpose. Death to a godly man, is his release from the imprisonment of this world, and his departure to the enjoyments of a better world. As a Christian, and a minister, Paul had kept the faith, kept the doctrines of the gospel. What comfort will it afford, to be able to speak in this manner toward the end of our days! The crown of believers is a crown of righteousness, purchased by the righteousness of Christ. Believers have it not at present, yet it is sure, for it is laid up for them.

9—18. *Desires him to come sedily, and notices such as had deserted him.*—The love of this world, is often the cause

of turning back from the truths and ways of Jesus Christ.—There is as much danger from false brethren, as from open enemies. It is dangerous having to do with those who would be enemies to such a man as Paul. The Christians at Rome were forward to meet him, Acts 28, but when there seemed to be a danger of suffering with him, then all forsook him. God might justly be angry with them, but he prays God to forgive them. The apostle was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, that is, of Nero, or some of his judges. If the Lord stands by us, he will strengthen us in difficulties and dangers, and his presence will more than supply every one's absence.

19—22. *Friendly greetings.*—We need no more to make us happy, than to have the Lord Jesus Christ with our spirits; for in him all spiritual blessings are summed up. It is the best prayer we can offer for our friends, that the Lord Jesus Christ may be with their spirits, to sanctify and save them, and at last to receive them to himself. Many who believed as Paul, are now before the throne, giving glory to their Lord: may we be followers of them.

1. Rev. 20. 12, 13.—2. Instant. To be always at his post, and use every opportunity which offered itself. The word, the gospel. Thus 2. 15.—3. Heap, or multiply teachers. The more error abounds, in proportion will the teachers of error abound.—6. Phil. 1. 23. As a ship which is bound to her moorings, he had been bound to the present world, but death would release him.—7. See 1 Tim. 6. 12.; 1 Cor. 9. 24—26.—8. 1 Cor. 9. 25.—10. Demas is mentioned, Col. 4. 14. Dalmatia was a part of Illyricum, on the gulf of Venice, or the Adriatic Sea. It is supposed Titus had gone thither to preach the gospel.—11. Mark: see Acts 15. 37.—13. Carpus seems to have been a friend of the apostle, with whom he had stayed when at Troas. Winter was drawing on, and a cloak would be necessary. Dressed skins were commonly used for writing on before the art was discovered of making paper with rags.—14. Alexander the coppersmith, or rather the brazier. Probably the same person as mentioned, 1 Tim. 1. 20; Acts 19. 33.—16. Refers to some trial of Paul which had taken place before the Roman emperor, when his friends forsook him.—17. Paul having been tried at Rome, had an opportunity of testifying to the truth of Christianity before Gentile rulers. The lion may refer to Nero, or to his escape from the punishment of many Christians, who were thrown to the beasts in the Roman amphitheatre.—19. Prisca, Priscilla, the wife of Aquila, Rom. 16. 3.—20. Corinth was the home of Erastus, where he filled an important office, Rom. 16. 23; Acts 20. 1, 15.

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

This epistle chiefly contains directions to Titus concerning the elders of the church, and the manner in which he should give instruction; and the latter part tells him to urge obedience to magistrates, to enforce good works, avoid foolish questions, and shun heresies.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—4. *The apostle salutes Titus.*—All gospel truth is according to godliness, teaching the fear of God. The intent of the gospel is to raise up hope as well as faith; to take off the mind and heart from the world, and to raise them to heaven, and the things above. How excellent then is the gospel, which was the matter of Divine promise so early, and what thanks are due for our privileges! Grace is the free favour of God, and acceptance with him. Mercy, the fruits of that favour, in the pardon of sin, and freedom from all miseries both here and hereafter. And peace is the effect and fruit of mercy. Peace with God through Christ who is our Peace, and with the creatures and ourselves! Grace is the fountain of all blessings, from whence mercy, and peace, and all good, are derived.

5—16. *The qualifications of a faithful pastor.*—The character and qualification of pastors, here called elders and bishops, agree with what the apostle wrote to Timothy. What they are not to be, is plainly shown, as well as what they are to be, as servants of Christ, and able ministers of the letter and practice of the gospel. False teachers are described. They had a base end in what they did; serving their worldly interests under pretence of religion. Such should be resisted, and put to shame, by sound doctrine from the Scriptures. Christian meekness is as far from cowardly passing over sin and error, as from anger and impatience. But the sharpest reproofs must aim at the good of the reprov'd; and soundness in the faith is most desirable and necessary. See the miserable state of hypocrites, such as have a form of godliness, but are without the power; yet let us not be so ready to fix this charge on others, as careful that it does not apply to ourselves.

5. Crete, an island in the Mediterranean Sea, now called Candia. Acts 27. 21. It is said to have contained one hundred cities.—10. Circumcision: the Jewish teachers over zealous for the law, Gal. 2. 4.—12. A prophet, supposed to have been Epimenides: poets were often called prophets. Slow bellies, or lazy gluttons. Ancient heathen writers confirm this character of the Cretans.—15. Probably an allusion to the distinctions made by the Jews in meats and drinks.—16. Reprobate; disapproved and condemned when brought to the standard of God's word.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—8. *The duties which become sound doctrine.*—Old disciples of Christ must behave in everything agreeably to the Christian doctrine. Aged persons are apt to be peevish and fretful; therefore need to be on their guard. Though there is not express Scripture for every word, or

look, yet there are general rules, according to which all must be ordered. Young women must be sober and discreet; for many expose themselves to fatal temptations by what at first might be only want of discretion. The reason is added, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Failures in duties greatly reproach Christianity.—Young men are apt to be eager and thoughtless, therefore must be earnestly called upon to be sober-minded: there are more young people ruined by pride than by any other sin.—Every godly man's endeavour must be to stop the mouths of adversaries. What a glory is it for a Christian, when that mouth which would fain open itself against him, cannot find any evil in him to speak of!

9—15. *Believing servants must be obedient.*—Servants must know and do their duty to their earthly masters, with a reference to their heavenly one. Not giving disrespectful or provoking language; but taking a check or reproof with silence, not making content or bold replies. When conscious of a fault, to excuse or justify it, doubles it. Never putting to their own use that which is their master's, nor wasting the goods they are trusted with. True religion is an honour to the professors of it; and they should adorn it in all things. The doctrine of grace and salvation by the gospel, is for all ranks and conditions of men. It teaches to forsake sin, and to make conscience of that which is good. A gospel conversation must be a godly conversation. It teaches to look for the glories of another world; for at the glorious appearing of Christ the blessed hope of Christians will be complete.—To bring us to holiness and happiness was the end of Christ's death. He loved us, and gave himself for us; and what can we do less than love and give up ourselves to him! Redemption from sin and sanctification of the nature go together, and make a peculiar people unto God, free from guilt and condemnation, and purified by the Holy Spirit. Let us inquire whether our whole dependence is placed upon that grace which saves the lost, pardons the guilty, and sanctifies the unclean. And the further we are removed from boasting of our own fancied good works, or trusting in them, and the more we glory in Christ alone, the more zealous shall we be to abound in real good works.

2. Sober, or vigilant, like soldiers who are on their guard against surprise.—5. Keepers at home, or careful of their family, a quality in females highly extolled by the ancient Greeks and Romans.—10. Purloining; secretly stealing, petty acts of dishonesty. The Roman servants and slaves were notoriously guilty of theft.—11. The grace of God here means the gospel of God. Hath appeared; like the rising sun breaking forth on a dark world.—12. Live soberly, righteously, and godly: this has been called an epitome of practical reli-

tion, containing our duty to ourselves, our neighbour, and to God.—13
Or, the glorious appearance of him who is our great God and Saviour.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—7. *Obedience to magistrates, and becoming behaviour towards all.*—Spiritual privileges do not make void or weaken, but confirm civil duties. Mere good words and good meanings are not enough without good works. The servants of sin have many masters, their lusts hurry them different ways; pride commands one thing, covetousness another. Thus they are hateful, deserving to be hated. It is the misery of sinners, that they hate one another; and it is the duty and happiness of saints to love one another.—God the Father is God our Saviour. He is the fountain from which the Holy Spirit flows, to teach, regenerate, and save his fallen creatures; and this blessing comes to mankind through Christ. Love and grace have, through the Spirit, great power to change and turn the heart to God. Works must be in the saved, but are not among the causes of their salvation. A new principle of grace and holiness is wrought, which sways, and governs, and makes the man a new creature.—Here is the outward sign thereof in baptism, called therefore the washing of regeneration. The work is inward and spiritual; this is outwardly signified in this ordinance. Slight not this outward sign; yet rest not in the outward washing, but look to the answer of a good conscience, without which the outward washing will avail nothing. The worker therein is the Spirit of God; it is the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Through him we mortify sin, perform duty, walk in God's ways. The Spirit and his saving gifts and graces, come through Christ, as a Saviour, whose undertaking and work are to bring to grace and glory. Justification, in the gospel sense, is the free forgiveness of a sinner; accepting him as righteous through the righteousness of Christ received by faith. God, in justifying a sinner in the way of the gospel, is gracious to him, yet just to himself and his law. As forgiveness is through a perfect righteousness, and satisfaction is made to justice by Christ, it cannot be merited by the sinner himself.

8—11. *Good works to be done.*—When the grace of God towards mankind has been declared, the necessity of good works is pressed. Those who believe in God, must make it their care to maintain good works, to seek opportunities for doing them, being influenced by love and gratitude. Though we may now think some sins light and little, if the Lord awaken the conscience and make it tender, we shall feel even the smallest sin heavy upon our souls.

12-15. *Directions and exhortations.*—Christianity is not a fruitless profession; and its professors must be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. They must be doing good, as well as keeping away from evil. Christianity obliges all to seek some honest work and calling, and therein to abide with God.—The apostle concludes with expressions of kind regard and fervent prayer. Grace be with you all; the love and favour of God, with the fruits and effects thereof, according to need; and the increase and feeling of them more and more in your souls. Grace is the chief thing to be wished and prayed for, with respect to ourselves or others; it is “all good.”

5. Regeneration; the new birth, of which baptism was a type or sign, John 3. 3, 5; 1 Pet. 3. 21.—10. An heretic, or one who holds and promotes erroneous doctrine.—11. Subverted, an allusion to the breaking up of the foundation of a building.—12. Nicopolis, a city in Thrace. Zenas the lawyer might formerly have been a teacher of the laws among the Jews, or a Roman lawyer.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

Philemon was an inhabitant of Colosse, a person of some note and wealth, and a convert under the ministry of St. Paul. Onesimus was the slave of Philemon: having run away from his master, he went to Rome, where he was converted to the Christian faith, by the word as set forth by Paul, who kept him till his conduct proved the truth and sincerity of his conversion. He wished to repair the injury he had done to his master, but fearing the punishment of his offence, he entreated the apostle to write in his favour to Philemon.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1-7. *Philemon's steady faith in the Lord Jesus.*—Faith in Christ and love to him, should unite saints more closely than any outward relation can unite the people of the world. Paul, in his private prayers, was particular in remembering his friends. We must remember Christian friends much and often, as their cases may need, bearing them in our thoughts, and upon our hearts, before our God. The good which Philemon did, was matter of joy and comfort to him and others, who therefore desired that he would continue and abound in good fruits, more and more, to God's honour.

8-22. *The apostle recommends Onesimus as one who would make rich amends for the misconduct of which he had been guilty.*—It does not lower any one to condescend, and

sometimes even to beseech, where, in strictness of right, we might command: the apostle argues from love, rather than authority, in behalf of one converted through his means; and this was Onesimus. In allusion to that name, which signifies "profitable," the apostle allows that in time past he had been *unprofitable* to Philemon, but hastens to mention the change by which he had become *profitable*. Unholy persons are unprofitable; they answer not the great end of their being. But what happy changes conversion makes! of evil, good; of unprofitable, useful. One great evidence of true repentance consists in returning to practise the duties which have been neglected. In his unconverted state, Onesimus had withdrawn, to his master's injury; but now he had seen his sin, and repented, he was willing and desirous to return to his duty. Little do men know for what purposes the Lord leaves some to change their situations, or engage in undertakings, perhaps from evil motives. Had not the Lord overruled some of our ungodly projects, we may reflect upon cases in which our destruction must have been sure. When we speak of the nature of any sin or offence against God, the evil of it is not to be lessened; but in a penitent sinner, as God covers it, so must we. Such changed characters often become a blessing to all among whom they reside.—This passage is an instance of that being imputed to one, which is contracted by another; and of one becoming answerable for another, by a voluntary engagement, that he might be freed from the punishment due to his crimes, according to the doctrine that Christ of his own will bore the punishment of our sins, that we might receive the reward of his righteousness.—Philemon was Paul's son in the faith, yet he intreated him as a brother. Onesimus was a poor slave, yet Paul besought for him, as if seeking some great thing for himself. If Christians do not meet on earth, still the grace of the Lord Jesus will be with their spirits, and they will soon meet before the throne, to join for ever in admiring the riches of redeeming love. The example of Onesimus may encourage the vilest sinners to return to God, but it is shamefully perverted, if any are made bold thereby to persist in evil courses.

23—25.—*Salutations and a blessing.*—Grace is the best wish for ourselves and others; with this the apostle begins and ends. All grace is from Christ; he purchased, and he bestows it. What need we more to make us happy, than to have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with our spirit? Let us do that now, which we should do at the last breath. Then men are ready to renounce the world, and to prefer the least portion of grace and faith before a kingdom.

2. Archippus seems to have been a minister at Colosse, Col. 4. 17. Some have thought he was the son of Philemon and Apphia.—9. Thirty years had now passed since Paul was present at the death of Stephen. He was probably now more than sixty years of age.—10. My son; or, my son in the gospel. Begotten in my bonds, or converted to the faith since I was a prisoner.—11. The name Onesimus signifies "profitable."—19. Put that on mine account; reckon or impute that to me.—22. Paul was released from prison for a short time.—24. See Col. 4. 10, 14.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

The great truth set forth in this Epistle is, that Jesus of Nazareth is the true God. The unconverted Jews used many arguments to draw their converted brethren from the Christian faith. They represented the law of Moses as superior to the Christian dispensation, and spoke against everything connected with the Saviour. The apostle, therefore, shows the superiority of Jesus of Nazareth, as the Son of God, and the benefits from his sufferings and death as the sacrifice for sin, so that the Christian religion is much more excellent and perfect than that of Moses. And the principal design seems to be, to bring the converted Hebrews forward in the knowledge of the gospel, and thus to establish them in the Christian faith, and to prevent their turning from it, against which they are earnestly warned. There are good reasons for believing the epistle to have been written by Paul when he was a prisoner at Rome, about A.D. 64. See ch. 13. 23, 24.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—3. *The surpassing dignity of the Son of God.*—The gospel revelation is excellent above the former; in that it is a revelation which God has made by his Son. In beholding the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ, we behold the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Father, John 14. 7; the fulness of the Godhead dwells, not typically, or in a figure, but really, in him. From the glory of the person and office of Christ, we proceed to the glory of his grace. The glory of His person and nature gave to his sufferings such merit as was a full satisfaction to the honour of God, who suffered an infinite injury and affront by the sins of men. That he should by himself cleanse us from our sins is a wonder of love beyond our utmost powers of admiration, gratitude, and praise.

4—14. *His superiority to the angels.*—Many Jews had a superstitious or idolatrous respect for angels, because they had received the law and other tidings of the Divine will by their ministry. They looked upon them as mediators between God and men, and some went so far as to pay them a kind of religious homage or worship. Thus it was neces-

say that the apostle should insist, not only on Christ's being the Creator of all things, and therefore of angels themselves, but as being the risen and exalted Messiah in human nature, to whom angels, authorities, and powers are made subject. To prove this, several passages are brought from the Old Testament. On comparing what God there says of the angels, with what he says to Christ, the inferiority of the angels to Christ plainly appears. If Christ had not been God, he had never done the Mediator's work, and had never worn the Mediator's crown. Only as Man he has his fellows, and as anointed with the Holy Spirit; but he is above all prophets, priests, and kings, that ever were employed in the service of God on earth. Christ will fold up this world as a garment, not to be abused any longer, not to be used as it has been. As a sovereign, when his garments of state are folded and put away, is a sovereign still, so our Lord, when he has laid aside the earth and heavens like a vesture, shall be still the same. The Saviour has done much to make all men his friends, yet he has enemies. But they shall be made his footstool, by humble submission, or by utter destruction. Christ shall go on conquering and to conquer. The most exalted angels are but ministering spirits, mere servants of Christ, to execute his commands. The saints, at present, are heirs, not yet come into possession. The angels minister to them in opposing the malice and power of evil spirits, in protecting and keeping their bodies, instructing and comforting their souls, under Christ and the Holy Ghost.

2. Last days, or the days of the Messiah.—3. Brightness of his glory: there is here an allusion to the refulgent splendour of the mid-day sun. The seat at the right hand of a sovereign was deemed the most honourable, and implied equality of rank and participation in the government.—5. Psa. 2. 7. The second psalm was considered by the Jews to have particularly reference to the Messiah. Solomon was a type of Christ, and what was said of Solomon, 2 Sam. 7. 14, is more especially applicable to Christ and his spiritual reign.—6, 7. Psa. 97. 7; 1 Pet. 3. 22; Psa. 103. 20, 21, and 104. 4. The word here rendered "worship" is used, in the New Testament, only in the sense of the religious worship due to the Divine Being.—8, 9. Psa. 45. 6, 7. See Isa. 61. 1. Anointing was usual with kings and great men on occasions of public rejoicing, especially on the day of coronation. Fellows, or associates in office; that is, King Messiah is greater than all other kings.—10. Psa. 102. 25, etc.; Isa. 51. 6. See 2 Pet. 3. 7, 10.—12. Vesture, an upper garment.—13, 14. Psa. 110. 1; Matt. 22. 44; Gen. 19. 16, and 32. 1; Psa. 34. 7; Dan. 6. 22. Ancient kings, after a victory, used to tread on the necks of their captured enemies.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—9. *The duty of steadfastly adhering to Christ.*—The Lord's judgments under the gospel dispensation are chiefly

spiritual, but are on that account the more to be dreaded. Here is an appeal to the consciences of sinners. The setting forth the gospel was continued and confirmed by those who heard Christ, by the evangelists and apostles, who were witnesses of what Jesus Christ began both to do and to teach; and were qualified by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, for the work to which they were called. And all this according to God's own will. It was the will of God that we should have sure ground for our faith, and a strong foundation for our hope in receiving the gospel. Let us mind this one thing needful, and attend to the Holy Scriptures, written by those who heard the words of our gracious Lord, and were inspired by his Spirit; then we shall be blessed with the good part that cannot be taken away.—Neither the state in which the church is at present, nor its more completely restored state, when the prince of this world shall be cast out, and the kingdoms of the earth become the kingdom of Christ, is left to the government of the angels: but Christ will take to him his great power, and will reign. As a reward of Christ's humiliation in suffering death, he has unlimited dominion over all things.

10—13. *The reason of his sufferings.*—Whatever the proud, carnal, and unbelieving may imagine or object, the spiritual mind will see peculiar glory in the cross of Christ, and be satisfied that it became Him, who in all things displays his own perfections in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. His way to the crown was by the cross, and so must that of his people be. Christ sanctifies; he has purchased and sent the sanctifying Spirit: the Spirit sanctifies as the Spirit of Christ. True believers are sanctified, endowed with holy principles and powers, set apart to high and holy uses and purposes. The words, Christ not being ashamed to call them brethren, express the high superiority of Christ to the human nature.

14—18. *Christ's priestly office.*—The angels fell, and remained without hope or help. Christ never designed to be the Saviour of the fallen angels, therefore he did not take their nature; and the nature of angels could not be an atoning sacrifice for the sin of man. Here is a price paid, enough for all, and suitable to all, for it was paid in our nature. Here the wonderful love of God appeared, that, when Christ knew what he must suffer in our nature, and how he must die in it, yet he readily took it upon him. Let those who dread death, no longer attempt to outbrave or to stifle their terrors, no longer grow careless or wicked through despair. Let them seek pardon, peace, grace, and a lively hope of heaven, by faith in Him who died and rose

again, that thus they may rise above the fear of death — The remembrance of his own sorrows and temptations, makes Christ mindful of the trials of his people, and ready to help them. He became man, and was tempted, that he might be every way qualified to succour his people, seeing that he had passed through the same temptations himself, but continued perfectly free from sin. No soul ever perished under temptation, that cried unto the Lord from real alarm at its danger, with faith and expectation of relief. This is our duty on being surprised by temptations, and would stop their progress, which is our wisdom.

1. Heed, attention. Slip; run out as water from leaking vessels.—
 2. Spoken by angels: the Jews commonly believed that the law was promulgated by the ministry of angels. The apostle intends to show the superiority of Christ the Redeemer to angels, Numb. 15. 30, 31.—
 3. So great salvation, the means of salvation which the gospel affords, Mark 1. 14.—5. The world to come, Christ's kingdom upon earth, called so familiarly by the Jews, ch. 6. 5; this world would be under the control of Christ, and not of angels.—6-8. Psa. 8. 4-6. Referring doubtless to the dominion exercised by man in his innocence, and which by the fall was in some measure lost: his dominion is not now so universal.—9. Since we do not see man now exercising that extended dominion spoken of by the psalmist, "we see" in Jesus Christ, "crowned with glory and honour," a fulfilment of his words. Taste death; a Jewish phrase for to die, Matt. 16. 28.—10. Captain, author or beginner. As a Captain leading on the army of the redeemed to glory. Perfect, completely fitted for his office, ch. 5. 9.—12. Psa. 22. 22.—13. Psa. 18. 2; Isa. 8. 18; John 17. 6-12.—14. Through Christ's death, destroy Satan's power, by which death came into the world.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1-6. *The superior worth and dignity of Christ above Moses.*—Christ is to be considered as the Apostle of our profession, the Messenger sent by God to men, the great Revealer of that faith which we profess to hold, and of that hope which we profess to have. As Jesus, our Saviour, our Healer, the great Physician of souls. Consider what he is in himself, what he is to us, and what he will be to us hereafter and for ever. Close and serious thoughts of Christ bring us to know more of him. The Jews had a high opinion of the faithfulness of Moses, yet his faithfulness was but a type of Christ's.—Christ was the Master of this house, of his church, his people, as well as their Maker. Moses was a faithful servant; Christ, as the eternal Son of God, is rightful Owner and Sovereign Ruler of the church. Every meditation on his person and his salvation, will suggest more wisdom, new motives to love, confidence, and obedience.

7-13. *Warnings against unbelief.*—Days of temptation

are often days of provocation. But to provoke God, when he is letting us see that we entirely depend and live upon him, is a provocation indeed. All sin, especially sin committed by God's professing people, not only provokes God, but grieves him. And sin, long persisted in, will make God's wrath discover itself in destroying the impenitent; there is no resting under the wrath of God.—“Take heed:” all who would get safe to heaven must look about them. Sin appears fair, but is vile; it appears pleasant, but is destructive; it promises much, but performs nothing. The deceitfulness of sin hardens the soul; one sin allowed makes way for another; and every act of sin confirms the habit. Let every one beware of sin.

14—19. *The necessity of faith in Christ.*—The same spirit with which Christians set out in the ways of God, they should maintain unto the end. Perseverance in faith is the best evidence of the sincerity of our faith. Hearing the word is often a means of salvation, yet, if not hearkened to, it will expose more to the Divine wrath. The happiness of being partakers of Christ and his complete salvation, and the fear of God's wrath and eternal misery, should stir us up to persevere in the life of obedient faith. Let us beware of trusting to outward privileges or professions, and pray to be numbered with the true believers who enter heaven, when all others fail because of unbelief. As our obedience follows according to the power of our faith, so our sins and want of care are according to the prevailing of unbelief in us.

2. House here signifies the Jewish nation, Num. 12. 7.—3. Man: the Lord Jesus. As a designer and builder of a house is worthy of more regard than the house itself. Christ, who is the author of all things (John 1. 2), the originator of all well-constructed systems, and who founded the dispensation over which Moses presided, and the Christian dispensation, is worthy of more honour than Moses.—6. Christ exercises the same authority as a son to whom are entrusted all the arrangements of the family, Psa. 2. 7, 12. The relation of a servant is far different.—7—11. Psa. 95. 7—11. Sware, denoting a fixed determination. Rest, refers to the land of Canaan; but is emblematical of the rest in heaven.—13. To-day; while the day lasts, or daily.—14.—Partakers, etc., we become united to him, and participate in those things which pertain to him.—16. Not all. See Numb. 14. 26—30.—17. Numb. 26. 64, 65.—18. Deut. 1. 34, 35.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—10. *Cautious fear is urged, lest any should come short of the promised rest.*—Unbelief is at the root of all unfruitfulness under the word. Faith in the hearer is the life of the word. It is a painful consequence of partial neglect, and of a loose and wavering profession, that they

often cause men to seem to come short. Let us then give diligence, that we may have a clear entrance into the kingdom of God.—As God finished his work, and then rested from it, so he will cause those who believe, to finish their work, and then to enjoy their rest. It is evident, that there is a more spiritual and excellent sabbath remaining for the people of God, than that of the seventh day, or that into which Joshua led the Jews. This rest is, a rest of grace, and comfort, and holiness, in the gospel state. And a rest in glory, where the people of God shall enjoy the end of their faith, and the object of all their desires. Those who do not believe, shall never enter into the spiritual rest of grace here, or glory hereafter. God declares man's rest to be in him, and his love to be the only real happiness of the soul; and faith in his promises, through his Son, to be the only way of entering that rest.

11—16. *Arguments and motives to faith and hope.*—Observe the end proposed: rest spiritual and eternal; in Christ on earth, with Christ in heaven. After diligent labour, sweet and satisfying rest shall follow; and labour now will make that rest more pleasant when it comes. When God sends his word home by his Spirit, it convinces powerfully, converts powerfully, and comforts powerfully. Sinful habits, that are become as it were natural to the soul, and rooted deeply in it, are separated and cut off by this sword. It will discover to men their thoughts and purposes, the vileness of many, the bad principles they are moved by, the sinful ends they pursue.—Let us hold fast the doctrines of Christian faith in our heads, its enlivening principles in our hearts, the open profession of it in our lips, and be subject to it in our lives. Christ executed one part of his priesthood on earth, in dying for us; the other he executes in heaven, pleading the cause, and presenting the offerings of his people. In the sight of Infinite Wisdom, it was needful that the Saviour of men should be one who has the fellow-feeling which no being but a fellow-creature could possibly have; and therefore it was necessary he should have actual experience of all the effects of sin that could be separated from its actual guilt. But the more holy and pure he was, the more he must have been unwilling in his nature to sin, and must have had deeper impression of its evil; consequently the more must he be concerned to deliver his people from its guilt and power.—We should encourage ourselves by the excellence of our High Priest, to come boldly to the throne of grace. We are to come with reverence and godly fear, yet not as if dragged to the seat of justice, but as kindly invited to the mercy-seat where grace reigns. We have boldness to enter into the holiest

only by the blood of Jesus; he is our Advocate, and has purchased all our souls want or can desire.

1. Fear; implies caution.—2. The good tidings of rest in Canaan was proclaimed to the Israelites, typical of the heavenly rest promised to the people of God. Mixed; as the food we eat, with saliva and gastric juice, by which it is converted in chyle and chyme, and then into blood. If well mixed, it conduces to the life and health of the body, if not, disease and death ensue. So the good tidings of the gospel, if properly received and mixed with faith, conduce to spiritual life and health.—3. Do enter; implies the certainty of believers entering heaven. If, etc., a Hebraism for they shall not.—4. Gen. 2. 2.—7. After so long a time; about 500 years after the making of the first promise.—8. Jesus; the Greek mode of writing Joshua, meaning saviour, or deliverer.—10. Implies the similarity between the rest of God and of the Christian.—12. Dividing asunder, etc.; probably an allusion to the Jewish sacrifices, in which the victim was minutely dissected by the priests, and every inward portion was observed and separated.—13. Naked and opened: the Jewish burnt-offerings consisted of an animal, stripped of its skin, cut open, and divided into quarters, so that every part was exposed to view to be examined, Lev. 1. 5, 6.—16. In the temple service, Jehovah is represented as seated on the mercy-seat, to dispense, through the high-priest, who was the people's intercessor, pardon, Lev. 16. In heaven God is seated on a throne of mercy to dispense, through Jesus the great High-priest, pardon and peace, Heb. 10. 19-22.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—10. *The office and duty of a high priest.*—As we value acceptance with God, and pardon, we must apply by faith to this our great High Priest Christ Jesus, who is willing to intercede for those that are out of the way of truth, duty, and happiness, and who has tenderness to lead them back from the by-paths of error, sin, and misery. Christ set an example, not only to pray, but to be fervent in prayer. How many dry prayers, how few wetted with tears, do we offer up to God! He was strengthened to support the immense weight of suffering laid upon him. He was raised and exalted, and to him was given the power of saving all sinners to the uttermost, who come unto God through him.—Christ has left us an example that we should learn humble obedience to the will of God, by all our afflictions. We need affliction to teach us submission. His obedience in our nature encourages our attempts to obey, and leads us to expect support and comfort in all the temptations and sufferings to which we are exposed. Being made perfect for this great work, he is become the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.

11—14. *A reproof for little progress in the knowledge of the gospel.*—Dull hearers make the preaching of the gospel difficult, and even those who have some faith may be dull

hearers, and slow to believe. To be unskilful, denotes want of experience in the things of the gospel. Christian experience is a spiritual sense, taste, or relish of the goodness, sweetness, and excellence of the truths of the gospel. And no tongue can express the satisfaction which the soul receives, from a sense of the Divine goodness, grace, and love to it in Christ.

1. The high priest was at the head of all religious matters, and of many social matters in the Hebrew commonwealth, Deut. 17. 8-12; 19. 17; 21. 5. For men; for their welfare. Gifts; thank-offerings.—3. Lev. 4. 3; 9. 7.—4. No man dared to transgress this rule in ancient times, and the high priest was to be of Aaron's family, Exod. 29. 9: in the time of the Romans this was disregarded, and persons by interest, and even without qualification, were made high priests, 2 Chron. 26. 18.—6. Psa. 110. 4. After the order; in his designation to his office, and the union of priest and king, or resembling.—7. In that he feared; for his piety.—9. See note, ch. 2. 10.—10. Called of God, in Psa. 110.—12. Oracles, signifying here those Scriptures of the Old Testament referring to the Messiah. Strong meat, or food, implying the higher mysteries of the gospel, such as he was about to refer to.—13. Babes in knowledge: the inexperienced, those who know but little of the gospel.—14. See on Eph. 4. 13.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1-8. *The Hebrews are urged to go forward in the doctrine of Christ.*—Every part of the truth and will of God should be set before all who profess the gospel, and be urged on their hearts and consciences.—The humbled sinner who pleads guilty, and cries for mercy, can have no ground from this passage, (ver. 4-8) to be discouraged, whatever his conscience may accuse him of. Nor does it prove that any one who is made a new creature in Christ, ever becomes a final apostate from him. The apostle is not speaking of the falling away of mere professors, never convinced or influenced by the gospel. Such have nothing to fall away from, but an empty name, or hypocritical profession. Neither is he speaking of partial declinings or backslidings. Nor are such sins meant, as Christians fall into through the strength of temptations, or the power of some worldly or fleshly lust. But the falling away is an open and avowed renouncing of Christ, from enmity of heart against him, his cause, and people, by men approving in their minds the deeds of his murderers, and all this after they have received the knowledge of the truth, and tasted some of its comforts. Of these it is said, that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. Not because the blood of Christ is not sufficient to obtain pardon for this sin; but this sin, in its very nature, is opposite to repentance and everything that leads to it. If those who

through mistaken views of this passage, as well as of their own case, fear that there is no mercy for them, would attend to the account given of the nature of this sin, that it is a total and a willing renouncing of Christ, and his cause, and joining with his enemies, it would relieve them from wrong fears. Believers not only taste of the word of God, but they drink it in. And this fruitful field or garden receives the blessing. But the merely nominal Christian, continuing unfruitful under the means of grace, or producing nothing but deceit and selfishness, was near the awful state above described; and everlasting misery was the end reserved for him.

9, 10. *The apostle expresses satisfaction, as to the most of them.*—There are things that are never separated from salvation; things that show the person to be in a state of salvation, and which will end in eternal salvation. The works of love, done for the glory of Christ, or done to his saints for Christ's sake, from time to time, as God gives occasion, are evident marks of a man's salvation; and more sure tokens of saving grace given, than the enlightenings and tastings spoken of before. No love is to be reckoned as love, but working love; and no works are right works, which flow not from love to Christ.

11—20. *And encourages them to persevere.*—The promise of blessedness God has made to believers, is, from God's eternal purpose, settled between the eternal Father, Son, and Spirit. These promises of God may safely be depended upon; for here we have *two* things which cannot change,—the counsel and the oath of God, in which it is not possible for God to lie; it would be contrary to his nature as well as to his will. And as He cannot lie, the destruction of the unbeliever, and the salvation of the believer, are alike certain. The consolations of God are strong enough to support his people, under their heaviest trials. Here is a refuge for all sinners who flee to the mercy of God, through the redemption of Christ, according to the covenant of grace, laying aside all other confidences.—We are in this world as a ship at sea, tossed up and down, and in danger of being cast away. We need an anchor to keep us sure and steady. Gospel hope is our anchor in the storms of this world. The free grace of God, the merits and mediation of Christ, and the powerful influences of his Spirit, are the sure grounds of this hope.

1. "Leaving" the first elements of Christianity; let us go on to the study of those doctrines which will perfect your Christianity. Dead works; may signify sinful works or want of vitality in religion, Eph. 2. 1.—7. The fruitful Christian is compared to the mellow soil that receives the rain, and brings forth fruit for the cultivator; God con-

times to smile on such fields of beauty by causing his rain to descend, and his sun to shine upon them. And so does Jehovah look down with pleasure upon the Christian who improves the means for growing in grace with which God has favoured him.—8. The apostle refers merely to the fact that the oriental and Roman agriculturists used to burn bad and barren lands, as the simile would not suit his purpose carried further. Burning was done with a view to rid the land of stubble and weeds, and fit it for use. The unfruitful is likened to waste land, which, after useless efforts to make it fruitful, is abandoned by the husbandman, Isa. 5. 6; Psa. 80. 16.—9. Accompany or pertain to salvation. The unfruitful professor is near to abandonment; the fruitful professor is near to salvation.—10. Matt. 25. 40.—11. Full assurance, etc.; sound conviction, without the least doubt, Rom. 4. 21; 14. 5. To the end; during the continuance of life.—13, 14. Gen. 22. 16, 17.—16. Exod. 22. 11.—18. Two immutable things; supposed generally to mean the promise and oath of God as a pledge to the performance of his promise. Refuge; an allusion to the cities of refuge, where one who slew another by error might flee and be safe from the avenger, by laying hold of the altar, Num. 35. 11-15.—19. As an anchor fixed firmly in the ground secures and makes fast the tossed vessel, so a well-grounded hope of heaven is a source of security to the Christians amid the troubles and trials of life. Within the veil; an allusion to the veil which divided the holy place from the most holy sanctuary, Lev. 16. 15. The most holy place typified heaven.—20. Forerunner; one who prepares the way for others: Jesus Christ first entered heaven, John 14. 3.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1—3. *The priesthood of Melchizedec and that of Christ.*—Melchizedec's name "King of righteousness," doubtless suitable to his character, marked him as a type of the Messiah and his kingdom. The name of his city signified "Peace;" and as king of peace he typified Christ, the Prince of peace, the great Reconciler of God and man. Nothing is recorded as to the beginning or end of his life; thus he typically resembled the Son of God, whose existence is from everlasting to everlasting, who had no one that was before him, and will have no one come after him, in his priesthood. Every part of Scripture honours the great King of righteousness and peace, our glorious High Priest and Saviour.

4—25. *The excellence of Christ's priesthood.*—That High Priest who should afterward appear, of whom Melchizedec was a type, must be much superior to the Levitical priests. The priesthood and law by which perfection could not come, are done away; a Priest is risen, and a dispensation now set up, by which true believers may be made perfect. The law which made the Levitical priesthood, showed that the priests were frail, dying creatures, not able to save their own lives, much less could they save the souls of those who came to them. But the High Priest of our pro-

fession holds his office by the power of endless life in himself; not only to keep himself alive, but to give spiritual and eternal life to all who rely upon his sacrifice and intercession.—The better covenant, of which Jesus was the Surety, is distinguished from the Sinai covenant with Israel, and the legal dispensation under which the church so long remained. The better covenant brought the church and every believer into clearer light, more perfect liberty, and more abundant privileges. In the order of Aaron, there was a multitude of priests, of high priests one after another; but in the priesthood of Christ there is only one and the same. This is the believer's safety and happiness, that this everlasting High Priest is able to save to the uttermost, in all times, in all cases. Surely, then, it becomes us to desire a spirituality and holiness, as much beyond those of the Old Testament believers, as our advantages exceed theirs.

26—28. *The faith and hope of the church encouraged from this.*—Observe the description of the personal holiness of Christ. He is free from all habits or principles of sin, not having the least disposition to it in his nature. He is harmless, free from all actual transgression; he did no violence, nor was there any deceit in his mouth. It is hard to keep ourselves pure, so as not to partake the guilt of other men's sins. But none need be dismayed who come to God in the name of his beloved Son. Let them be assured that he will deliver them in the time of trial and suffering, in the time of prosperity, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.

1. Gen. 14. 18-20.—3. His descent and parentage are not recorded; neither the time of his birth nor of his death. Continually; as far as recorded in Genesis 14. He differed from the Jewish priests in the continuance of his office. His priesthood ended doubtless with his death, but when this took place we are not told, hence the expression. He was a type of the Saviour, whose priesthood will only end with the complete redemption of his church.—4. The apostle proves that Melchizedec was more exalted than Abraham, whom the Jews greatly venerated as the father of Aaron, by the fact that Abraham acknowledged him as priest of the Most High in devoting the tenth of the spoils to God through him, Gen. 14. 20. Hence Christ must be greater than Melchizedec, and the priesthood of Aaron be superseded by that of Christ. See verses 6, 7.—8. Here—the Levitical priesthood; there—that of Melchizedec. It is witnessed, etc.; probably intended to signify that while it is recorded of Levitical priests that they died, and had their successors, there is no mention of the death of Melchizedec, nor of any predecessor or successor.—12. According as foretold, Psa. 110. The law; relating to the Levitical priesthood. It would be superseded.—13, 14. In the Mosaic laws concerning the priesthood, the tribe of Judah is not mentioned. Jesus sprang out of Judah, Matt. 2. 6; this was another evidence of the change of the

priesthood.—16. Carnal, because relating chiefly to outward observances. The power, etc.: it was changeless and spiritual; its authority was unending. Christ was qualified for the office, for he possessed eternal and Divine life.—18. Disannulling; the law relating to priesthood was set aside by the Christian dispensation. The law was weak, etc., inasmuch as it was not adapted for the salvation of man. It accomplished, however, many valuable ends, Gal. 3. 19-24.—22. Surety; one who pledges his property, etc., for the accomplishment of some particular thing. Better testament, or covenant, than that of the Jewish dispensation.—24. This man; Jesus Christ.—27. Lev. 9. 7.—28. Christ, being perfect, had no sin of his own to atone for.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1-6. *The excellence of Christ's priesthood above that of Aaron.*—The substance, or summary, of what had been declared was, that Christians had such a High Priest as they needed. He took upon himself human nature, appeared on earth, and there gave himself as a sacrifice to God for the sins of his people. We must not dare to approach God, or to present any thing to him, but in and through Christ, depending upon his merits and mediation; for we are accepted only in the Beloved. The covenant here referred to, was that made with Israel as a nation, securing temporal benefits to them. The promises of all spiritual blessings, and of eternal life, revealed in the gospel, and made sure through Christ, are of infinitely greater value. Let us bless God that we have a High Priest suited to our helpless condition.

7-13. *The excellence of the new covenant above the former.*—The superior excellence of the priesthood of Christ, above that of Aaron, is shown from that covenant of grace, of which Christ was Mediator. The law not only made all subject to it, liable to be condemned for the guilt of sin, but also was unable to remove that guilt, and clear the conscience from the sense and terror of it. Whereas, by the blood of Christ, a full remission of sins was provided, so that God would remember them no more.—God once wrote his laws to his people, now he will write his laws in them; he will give them understanding to know and to believe his laws; he will give them memories to retain them; he will give them hearts to love them, courage to profess them, and power to put them in practice. This is the foundation of the covenant; and when this is laid, duty will be done wisely, sincerely, readily, easily, resolutely, constantly, and with comfort. Pardoning mercy is connected with all other spiritual mercies: unpardoned sin hinders mercy, and pulls down judgments; but the pardon of sin prevents judgment, and opens a wide door to all spiritual blessings.—Let us see that we are taught by the

Holy Spirit to know Christ, so as to love, trust, and obey him.

2. The sanctuary; or of holy things. True tabernacle; heaven, the dwelling-place of Jehovah.—3. See ch. 9. 11-14, 25, 26.—5. Example and shadow; imitation or outline, prefiguring in a small degree the reality of the heavenly service, Col. 2. 17; Exod. 25. 40; 26. 30. "In the Mount" Sinai.—6. More excellent; it was the reality, of which the other service was typical. Better promises; the promises of the former covenant were chiefly of temporal, but the promises in Christ are of spiritual blessings.—7. See on ch. 7. 16.—8-12. Finding fault, etc., is generally interpreted—"Finding fault, or showing wherein it was defective; he saith, to them," Jer. 31. 31-34.—13. Waxeth old; the idea may be taken from the fact that old things generally have indications of decay, and that they must shortly pass away. So it was with the Jewish system, and the introduction of a new covenant showed that it must soon be abolished.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1-10. *The Jewish tabernacle and its utensils.*—The apostle shows to the Hebrews the typical reference of their ceremonies to Christ. The tabernacle was a movable temple, shadowing forth the unsettled state of the church upon earth, and the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. The ordinances and articles of the Mosaic covenant point out Christ as our Light, and as the Bread of Life to our souls; and remind us of his Divine Person, his holy priesthood, perfect righteousness, and all-prevailing intercession. Christ, having undertaken to be our High Priest, could not enter into heaven till he had shed his blood for us; and none of us can enter, either into God's gracious presence here, or his glorious presence hereafter, but by the blood of Jesus. A few believers, under the Divine teaching, saw something of the way of access to God, of communion with him, and of admission into heaven through the promised Redeemer; but the Israelites in general looked no further than the outward forms, which forms could not take away sin. They could neither discharge the debts, nor resolve the doubts, of him who did the service.

11-22. *These were typical of Christ.*—All good things past, present, and to come, were and are founded upon the priestly office of Christ, and come to us from thence. Our High Priest entered into heaven once for all, and has obtained eternal redemption. What gave such power to the blood of Christ? It was Christ's offering himself without any sinful stain in his nature or life. This cleanses the most guilty conscience from dead, or deadly, works, to serve the living God; from sinful works, such as pollute the soul, as dead bodies did the persons of the Jews who

touched them; while the grace that seals pardon, new-creates the polluted soul. The depth of the mystery of the sacrifice of Christ, we cannot dive into, the height we cannot comprehend. We cannot search out the greatness of it, or the wisdom, the love, the grace that is in it. The solemn transactions between God and man, are sometimes called a covenant, here a testament, which is a willing deed of a person, bestowing legacies on such persons as are described, and it only takes effect upon his death. Thus Christ died, not only to obtain the blessings of salvation for us, but to give power to the disposal of them. Or, as some think, it refers to the sacrificial victim's death. For where a covenant is made by sacrifice there is a necessity that the death of the appointed sacrifice be produced. For, according to the practice of God and man, a covenant is made firm over dead sacrifices; seeing it never hath force whilst the goat, calf, or bullock, appointed as the sacrifice of ratification, liveth. Because from the beginning God ratified his covenants by sacrifice, to preserve among men the expectation of the sacrifice of his Son; hence not even the covenant at Sinai was made without a sacrifice. All, by sin, were become guilty before God, had forfeited everything that is good: but God, willing to show the greatness of his mercy, proclaimed a covenant of grace. Nothing could be clean to a sinner, not even his religious duties; except as his guilt was done away by the death of a sacrifice, of value sufficient for that end, and unless he continually depended upon it. May we ascribe all real good works to the same all-procuring cause, and offer our spiritual sacrifices as sprinkled with Christ's blood, and so purified from their defilement.

23—28. *The necessity, dignity, and power of his priesthood.*
 —Sin would still have been upon us, and have had dominion over us; but Jesus Christ, by one sacrifice, has destroyed the works of the devil, that believers may be made righteous, holy, and happy. As no wisdom, learning, virtue, wealth, or power, can keep one of the human race from death, so nothing can deliver a sinner from being condemned at the day of judgment, except the atoning sacrifice of Christ; nor will one be saved from eternal punishment who despises or neglects this great salvation.—The believer knows that his Redeemer liveth, and that he shall see him. Here is the faith and patience of the church, of all sincere believers. Hence is their continual prayer as the fruit and expression of their faith, Even so come, Lord Jesus.

1. Worldly; in contradistinction to the heavenly sanctuary.—
 2, 3. The tabernacle was divided into two parts by a veil: the first,

or holy place; the second, or holy of holies, Exod. 26. 31-37. See also Exod. 40. 3, 4.—4. Lev. 16. 12. Though Moses does not call it a *golden censer*; the apostle informs us that it was, as also Josephus.—5. They were called cherubims of glory on account of the splendour of their appearance: they were placed on the lid of the ark, Exod. 25. 18-20. Comp. 1 Kings 8. 6, 7; 1 Chron. 28. 18.—6. Num. 28. 3. Always, or continually, performing the various services of the tabernacle.—7. Exod. 30. 10; Lev. 16; Heb. 5. 3.—8. So long as these services continued, it was a proof that the way to heaven was not yet known; but now, in the new dispensation, Jesus has opened the way, and entered heaven, and is preparing a place for all true believers.—10. Meats and drinks; what was lawful to be eaten or drunk, and the various ablutions and external ceremonies laid on them under the former dispensation, Exod. 30. 18; Lev. 11. 2; Num. 19. 7; Psa. 51. 16-19. Reformation; the introduction of a better system.—12. See Lev. 16; Acts 20. 28.—13. Num. 19. 2, 17. The ashes of the heifer sprinkled over one who had become defiled by contact with a dead body, or in some other way, rendered his body clean or holy.—16-20. Testament, should be rendered covenant. An allusion to the custom among the Hebrews, under the old dispensation, of sacrificing an animal to ratify the covenant between man and his maker, Gen. 15. 9, 18; Exod. 24. 6; Jer. 34. 18. Scarlet; or rather purple. Hyssop; a small fragrant shrub which grew out of rocks or walls.—21. Exod. 29. 12, 36; 40. 10, 11.—22. Lev. 17. 11; no remission or forgiveness of sin.—23. Patterns; the tabernacle and its various utensils were typical of heaven and Christ's complete atonement.—26. End of the world; see on 1 Cor. 10. 11.—28. Second time; at the day of judgment. Sin; or a sin-offering.

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1-18. *The insufficiency of sacrifices for taking away sin.*—The apostle having shown that the tabernacle, and ordinances of the covenant of Sinai, were only emblems and types of the gospel, concludes that the sacrifices the high priests offered continually, could not make the worshippers perfect, with respect to pardon, and the purifying of their consciences. But when "God manifested in the flesh," became the sacrifice, and his death upon the accursed tree the ransom, then the Sufferer being of infinite worth, his free-will sufferings were of infinite value. The atoning sacrifice must be one capable of consenting, and must of his own will place himself in the sinner's stead: Christ did so. The righteousness brought in, and the sacrifice once offered by Christ, are of eternal power, and his salvation shall never be done away. They are of power to make all the comers thereunto perfect; they derive from the atoning blood, strength and motives for obedience, and inward comfort. Under the new covenant, or gospel dispensation, full and final pardon is to be had. This makes a vast difference between the new covenant and the old one. Under the *old*, sacrifices must be often repeated, and

after all, only pardon as to this world was to be obtained by them. Under the *new*, one sacrifice is enough to procure for all nations and ages, spiritual pardon, or being freed from punishment in the world to come. Well might this be called a *new* covenant. What then remains, but that we seek an interest in this Sacrifice by faith; and the seal of it to our souls, by the sanctification of the Spirit?

19—25. *An argument for holy boldness in access to God, and for steadfastness in the faith.*—The apostle having closed the first part of the Epistle, the doctrine is applied to practical purposes. As believers had an open way to the presence of God, it became them to use this privilege. The way and means by which Christians enjoy such privileges, is by the merit of that blood which Jesus offered up as an atoning sacrifice. The agreement of infinite holiness with pardoning mercy, was not clearly understood till the human nature of Christ, the Son of God, was wounded and bruised for our sins.—Their bodies were to be washed with pure water, alluding to the cleansings directed under the law: thus the use of water in baptism, was to remind Christians that their conduct should be pure and holy. While they derived comfort and grace from their reconciled Father to their own souls, they would adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things.—Believers are to consider how they can be of service to each other, especially stirring up each other to the more vigorous and abundant exercise of love, and the practice of good works. The communion of saints is a great help and privilege, and a means of steadfastness and perseverance.

26—31. *The danger of apostasy.*—The sin here mentioned is a total and final falling away, when men, with a full and fixed will and resolution, despise and reject Christ, the only Saviour; despise and resist the Spirit, the only Sanctifier: and despise and renounce the gospel, the only way of salvation, and the words of eternal life. What punishment can be sorer than to die *without* mercy? We answer, to die *by* mercy, *by* the mercy and grace which they have despised. How dreadful is the case, when not only the justice of God, but his abused grace and mercy call for vengeance! All this does not in the least mean that any souls who sorrow for sin will be shut out from mercy, or that any will be refused the benefit of Christ's sacrifice, who are willing to accept these blessings.

32—39. *Encouragement to believers to maintain their profession.*—The happiness of the saints in heaven will last for ever; enemies can never take it away as earthly goods. This will make rich amends for all we may lose and suffer here. The greatest part of the saints' happiness, as yet, is

in promise. It is a trial of the patience of Christians, to be content to live after their work is done, and to stay for their reward till God's time to give it is come. The Christian's present conflict may be sharp, but will be soon over. And those who have been kept faithful in great trials for the time past, have reason to hope for the same grace to help them still to live by faith, till they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

1. See on ch. 8. 5. Perfect; free from sin.—3. Lev. 16. 34.—5. Psa. 40. 6-8; Psa. 51. 16, 17. Paul quotes from the Septuagint, which differs from the Hebrew.—6-9. The quotations are not literal; they, however, retain the sense.—12. Man is not in the original. It reads "but this," meaning this Priest, the Lord Jesus.—13. Expecting; waiting. See Psa. 110. 1.—18. There "is no more" necessity for sacrifice.—20. Consecrated, new made. The veil; Christ's corporeal nature is likened to the veil of the tabernacle. Through the death of Christ the way to heaven is opened, as by the withdrawal of the veil the high priest entered into the holy of holies. Exod. 26. 31-33. At the death of Christ, the veil of the temple was rent in two.—21. House of God; his church, his people, 1 Tim. 3. 15.—24. Provoke; excite, call forward, Rom. 11. 14.—25. It is probable that some of the signs, Matt. 24. 33, of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem were now evident.—28, 29. Deut. 22. 2-13. Despite; treated with contempt, Acts 7. 51; Matt. 12. 31, 32.—30. Deut. 32. 35, 36; Psa. 50. 4, and 135. 14.—32. Illuminated; become Christians, were enabled to see the truth. Fight; signifying the struggle they had to keep their faith without wavering amid much persecution.—33. A gazing stock; the Greeks and Romans before putting their prisoners to death led them through the theatre, exposing them to all sorts of reproach and insults from the lookers-on.—34. Spoiling; the early Christian were frequently plundered of their goods by their persecutors.—36. The Greeks considered it a deep disgrace to cast away their shield in battle, Eph. 6. 16.—37, 38. Hab. 2. 3, 4; John 16. 16.

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1-7. *The nature and power of faith as seen by instances from Abel to Noah.*—Faith always has been the mark of God's servants, from the beginning of the world. It is a firm persuasion and expectation, that God will perform all he has promised to us in Christ. This persuasion gives the soul to enjoy those things now; it gives them a subsistence or reality in the soul, by the first-fruits and foretastes of them. Faith proves to the mind the reality of things that cannot be seen by the bodily eye. It is a full approval of all God has revealed, as holy, just, and good. This view of faith is explained by many examples of persons in former times, who obtained a good report, or an honourable character in the word of God. Faith was the principle of their holy obedience, remarkable services, and patient sufferings. Abel brought a sacrifice of atonement from the firstlings of the flock, acknowledging himself a sinner who

deserved to die, and only hoping for mercy through the great Sacrifice. Cain's proud rage and enmity against the accepted worshipper of God, led to the awful effects the same principles have produced in every age; the cruel persecution, and even murder, of believers.—Enoch was translated, or removed, that he should not see death; God took him into heaven, as Christ will do the saints who shall be alive at his coming.—Noah's faith influenced his practice; it moved him to prepare an ark. His faith condemned the unbelief of others; and his obedience condemned their contempt and rebellion. This shows how believers, being warned of God to flee from the wrath to come, are moved with fear, take refuge in Christ, and become heirs of the righteousness of faith.

8—19. *By Abraham and his descendants.*—If heirs of Abraham's faith, we shall obey and go forth, though not knowing what may befall us; and we shall be found in the way of duty, looking for the performance of God's promises. The trial of Abraham's faith was, that he simply and fully obeyed the call of God. Sarah received the promise as the promise of God; being convinced of that, she truly judged that he both could and would perform it.—Believers can lay hold of blessings at a great distance; can make them present; can love them and rejoice in them, though strangers; whose home is heaven, and pilgrims, travelling toward their home. By faith, they overcome the terrors of death, and bid a cheerful farewell to this world, and to all the comforts and crosses of it. All true believers desire the heavenly inheritance; and the stronger faith is, the more fervent those desires will be. The greatest trial and act of faith upon record is, Abraham's offering up Isaac, Gen. 22. 2. It is our duty to reason down our doubts and fears, by looking, as Abraham did, to the Almighty power of God. The best way to enjoy our comforts is, to give them up to God; he will then again give them as shall be the best for us. Have we given up what was called for, fully believing that the Lord would make up all our losses, and even bless us by the most afflicting dispensations?

20—38. *By faith Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and others.*—Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, concerning things to come. Things present are not the best things; no man knoweth love or hatred by having them or wanting them: Jacob lived by faith, and he died by faith, and in faith. Faith has a great work to do at last, to help the believer to die to the Lord, so as to honour him, by patience, hope, and joy.—Joseph was tried by temptations to sin, by persecution for keeping his integrity; and he was tried by honours and

power in the court of Pharaoh, yet his faith carried him through.—In the faith of Moses' parents there was a mixture of unbelief, but God was pleased to overlook it. Faith gives strength against the sinful, slavish fear of men; it sets God before the soul, shows the vanity of the creature, and that all must give way to the will and power of God. The pleasures of this world are for the most part the pleasures of sin; they are always so when we cannot enjoy them without deserting God and his people. Suffering is to be chosen rather than sin; there being more evil in the least sin, than there can be in the greatest suffering. Moses made his choice when ripe for judgment and enjoyment, able to know what he did, and why he did it.—By faith we may be fully sure of God's providence, and of his gracious and powerful presence with us. It makes sin bitter to the soul, even while it receives the pardon and atonement. By her works Rahab declared herself to be just. That she was not justified by her works appears plainly; because the work she did was faulty in the manner, and not perfectly good, therefore it could not be answerable to the perfect justice or righteousness of God. We should be pleased to think, how great the number of believers was under the Old Testament, and how strong their faith, though the objects of it were not then so fully made known as now. And we should lament that now, in gospel times, when the rule of faith is more clear and perfect, the number of believers should be so small, and their faith so weak.—Few ever met with greater trials, few ever showed more lively faith, than David; and he has left a testimony as to the trials and acts of faith, in the book of Psalms, which has been, and ever will be, of great value to the people of God. By faith we have comfort of the promises; and by it we are prepared to wait for the promises, and in due time to receive them. What a difference between God's judgment of a saint, and man's judgment! The world is not worthy of those scorned, persecuted saints, whom their persecutors reckon unworthy to live. They are not worthy of their company, example, counsel, or other benefits. For they know not what a saint is, nor the worth of a saint, nor how to use him; they hate, and drive such away, as they do the offer of Christ and his grace.

39, 40. *The better state of believers under the gospel.*—The apostle tells the Hebrews, that God had provided some better things for them, therefore they might be sure that he expected as good things from them. As our advantages, with the better things God has provided for us, are so much beyond theirs, so should our obedience of faith, patience of hope, and labour of love, be greater. And

unless we get true faith as these believers had, they will rise up to condemn us at the last day. Let us then pray continually for the increase of our faith, that we may follow these bright examples, and be, with them, at length made perfect in holiness and happiness, and shine like the sun in the kingdom of our Father for evermore.

1. Substance; reality. "Faith gives all the force of reality to what is believed." 2. Elders; the patriarchs and holy men of old.—4, Gen. 4. 4. Yet speaketh; or is yet spoken of.—5. Gen. 5. 22, 24. Was not found implies that he was taken from the earth, as was Elijah, 2 Kings 3. 37.—9, 10. The life of an eastern has little indication of settlement. Foundations; a settled rest, a heavenly home, in opposition to their wandering life.—14, 16. A country; another country. Even a heavenly; they had no expectation of a settled home in Canaan themselves, they therefore looked for a heavenly home, Exod. 36; 15. 16.—17-19. Offered up; so far as intention is concerned, he did it, Gen. 21. 12. In a figure; speaking figuratively. The taking of Isaac alive from the altar was to Abraham as if he had been once dead.—30, 31. Believed not; or were disobedient.—35. Tortured; the word so rendered signifies the kind of torture. An instrument like a drum was used, on which the body was placed in a bending attitude and scourged. The wounds were thus laid open to the air, and the torture rendered more severe.—36. Scourging usually preceded the death of martyrs, Jer. 20. 2; Matt. 27. 26.—37. Stoning was a customary form of punishment with the Jews, Matt. 21. 35, 44; 2 Chron. 24. 21; Acts 7. 59. Sawn asunder; this mode of punishment was practised in ancient times, but not very generally. Bodies were cut in two, and the parts hung upon walls and towers, 1 Sam. 31. 9, 10.

CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1—11. *An exhortation to constancy and perseverance.*—The persevering obedience of faith in Christ was the race set before the Hebrews, wherein they must either win the crown of glory, or have everlasting misery for their portion; and it is set before us. By the sin that does so easily beset us, understand that sin to which we are most prone, or to which we are most exposed, from habit, age, or circumstances. This is a most important exhortation; for while a man's darling sin, be it what it may, remains unsubdued, it will hinder him from running the Christian race, as it takes from him every motive for running, and gives power to every discouragement.—By stedfastly looking to Jesus, our thoughts will strengthen holy affections, and keep under carnal desires. Let us then frequently consider him. What are our little trials to his agonies, or even to our deserts? Though our enemies and persecutors may be instruments to inflict sufferings, yet they are Divine chastisements; our heavenly Father has his hand in all, and his wise end to answer by all. God may let others alone in their sins, but he will correct sin in his own children. Our earthly parents sometimes may chasten us,

to gratify their passion, rather than to reform our manners; but the Father of our souls never willingly grieves nor afflicts his children. It is always for our profit. When we come to a perfect state, we shall be fully reconciled to all God's chastisement of us now. God's correction is not condemnation; the chastening should be borne with patience, and greatly promote holiness.

12—17. *Peace and holiness are recommended.*—Faith and patience enable believers to follow peace and holiness, as a man follows his calling constantly, diligently, and with pleasure. Where persons fail of having the true grace of God, corruption will prevail and break forth; beware lest any unmortified lust in the heart, which seems to be dead, should spring up, to trouble and disturb the whole body.—Falling away from Christ is the fruit of preferring the delights of the flesh, to the blessing of God, and the heavenly inheritance, as Esau did. It agrees with the profane man's disposition, to desire the blessing, yet to despise the means whereby the blessing is to be gained. But God will neither sever the means from the blessing, nor join the blessing with the satisfying of man's lusts.

18—29. *The New Testament dispensation much more excellent than the Old.*—Mount Sinai, on which the Jewish church state was formed, was a mount such as might be touched, though forbidden to be so, a place that could be felt; so the Mosaic dispensation was much in outward and earthly things. The gospel church is called Mount Zion; there believers have clearer views of heaven, and more heavenly tempers of soul. Let a soul be supposed to join that glorious assembly and church above, that is yet unacquainted with God, still carnally-minded, loving this present world and state of things, looking back to it with a lingering eye, full of pride and guile, filled with lusts; such a soul would seem to have mistaken its way, place, state, and company.—Christ is the Mediator of this new covenant, between God and man, to bring them together in this covenant; to keep them together; to plead with God for us, and to plead with us for God; and at length to bring God and his people together in heaven. This covenant is made firm by the blood of Christ sprinkled upon our consciences, as the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon the altar and the victim. See then that you refuse not his gracious call and offered salvation; for how can those escape, who turn from God in unbelief or apostasy, while he so graciously beseeches them to be reconciled, and to receive his everlasting favour! God is the same just and righteous God under the gospel as under the law. The inheritance of believers is secured to them; and all things

pertaining to salvation are freely given in answer to prayer. Let us seek for grace, that we may serve God with reverence and godly fear.

1. An allusion to the eastern games. In the amphitheatre, the witnesses of the combat were seated in circular seats, and the combatants occupied the centre. Cloud was frequently used by classic writers to denote a vast multitude. Every weight: see note on 1 Cor. 9. 25.—4. An allusion probably to the ancient boxers, who fought with the *cæstus*, consisting of leathern thongs bound round the hands up to the shoulders, into which, latterly, pieces of lead or iron were sewed to give greater force to the blow: hence these boxers were often covered with blood.—5. Prov. 3. 11, 12.—10. After their own pleasure; marginal reading, as seemed good, or meet, to them.—12. A figure for renewing their courage, and bearing up under their trials. The metaphor signifying weakness and enervation from continued exertion, Isa. 35. 3.—13. Remove hindrances to your progress, and that of those in the church who may be in danger of falling. In the case of a lame man, every care would be taken to heal rather than expose to fresh injury.—15. Fail; be wanting. Bitterness; probably in allusion to herbs or trees of a poisonous and bitter character growing in the midst of the good and pleasant, Deut. 29. 18.—16, 17. Place, etc., or way to change his mind.—18-21. Touched, denotes the materiality of Mount Sinai as contrasted with Mount Sion, which cannot be touched. Mount Sinai no one dare touch literally, Exod. 20. 19. Voice of words; the ten commandments.—22. Ye are come, etc.; the Christian dispensation conducts to heaven. An innumerable company; the Greek renders it, "to myriads of angels in an assembly or joyful convocation."—23. Written; enrolled, alluding probably to the register or roll of the people kept in ancient cities.—25. Refuse; reject not. God speaks as surely in the gospel as he did on Mount Sinai.—26. Hag. 2. 6.—27. Are shaken; or may be. Contrasting the stability of the truth with those things which have no sure foundation.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1—6. *Exhortations to various duties.*—The design of Christ in giving himself for us, is, that he may purchase to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. The sin opposed to the grace and duty of contentment is covetousness, an over-eager desire for the wealth of this world, with envy of those who have more than ourselves. Having treasures in heaven, we may be content with plain things here. Those who cannot be so, would not be content though God raised their condition. This promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," contains the sum and substance of all the promises; the true believer shall have the gracious presence of God with him, in life, at death, and for ever. Men can do nothing against God, and God can make all that men do against his people, turn to their good.

7—15. *Cautions against being carried away by strange doctrines.*—Christ is the same in the Old Testament day, as in

the gospel day, and will be so to his people for ever, equally merciful, powerful, and all-sufficient. Still he fills the hungry, encourages the trembling, and welcomes repenting sinners; still he rejects the proud and self-righteous, abhors mere profession, and teaches all whom he saves, to love righteousness, and to hate iniquity.—Believers should seek to have their hearts established in simple dependence on free grace, by the Holy Spirit, which would comfort their hearts, and render them proof against delusion.—Having showed that keeping to the Levitical law would, according to its own rules, keep men from the Christian altar, the apostle adds, Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp; go forth from the ceremonial law, from sin, from the world, and from ourselves. Living by faith in Christ, set apart to God through his blood, let us willingly separate from this evil world. Sin, sinners, or death, will not suffer us to continue long here; therefore let us go forth now by faith, and seek in Christ the rest and peace which this world cannot afford us. Let us bring our sacrifices to this altar, and to this our High Priest, and offer them up by him.

16—21. *Further exhortations to duties.*—The apostle states what is our duty to ministers; to obey and submit to them, so far as is agreeable to the mind and will of God, made known in his word. The people must search the Scriptures, and so far as the ministers teach according to that rule, they ought to receive their instructions as the word of God, which works in those that believe. It is the interest of hearers, that the account their ministers give of them may be with joy, and not with grief. The more earnestly the people pray for their ministers, the more benefit they may expect from their ministry.—God is the God of peace, fully reconciled to believers; who has made a way for peace and reconciliation between himself and sinners, and who loves peace on earth, especially in his churches. He is the Author of spiritual peace in the hearts and consciences of his people. There is no good thing wrought in us, but it is the work of God. And no good thing is wrought in us by God, but through Christ, for his sake and by his Spirit.

22—25. *This Epistle to be seriously considered.*—So bad are men, and even believers, through the remainders of their corruption, that when the most important, comfortable doctrine is delivered to them for their own good, and that with the most convincing evidence, there is need of earnest entreaty and exhortation that they would bear it, and not fall out with it, neglect it, or reject it.—Let the favour of God be toward you, and his grace continually working in

you, and with you, bringing forth the fruits of holiness, as the first-fruits of glory.

5. Conversation; conduct, Gen. 28. 15.—7. Rule over you; are the guides.—9. With meats; referring to the Jews, who prided themselves in retaining in their memory a knowledge of all the rules concerning clean and unclean meats, etc.—10. A portion of the animal sacrificed was the property of those who served in the tabernacle among the Jews.—11. Without the camp; during the sojourn of the children of Israel in the wilderness, Exod. 29. 14; Lev. 16. 27; but after the building of the temple it was carried without the walls of Jerusalem to be burned there.—12. Without the gate, of Jerusalem. Thus was there a similarity between the anti-type and the type.—15. Fruit, or produce of the lips, an Hebraism for words.—20. Peace; is used in the New Testament for every kind of blessing and happiness, John 10. 1, 14.—23. Set at liberty; Timothy was the constant companion of the apostle, and this probably denotes that he had sent him on a message to one of the churches, probably Philippi, Phil. 2. 19, 23, rather than that he had been imprisoned.—24. They; the Christians of Italy. Most probably written in Italy at Rome.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

This Epistle of James is chiefly directed against particular errors at that time brought in among the Jewish Christians; it does not contain the same full doctrinal statements as the other epistles, but it presents an admirable summary of the practical duties of all believers. On attentive consideration, it will be found entirely to agree with St. Paul's statements concerning grace and justification, while it abounds with earnest exhortations to the patience of hope and obedience of faith and love, interspersed with warnings, reproofs, and encouragements, according to the characters addressed. The Epistle seems to have been written about A. D. 60.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—11. *How to behave in prosperous and in adverse circumstances.*—Christianity teaches men to be joyful under troubles: such exercises are sent from God's love; and trials in the way of duty will brighten our graces now, and our crown at last. Let us take care, in times of trial, that patience, and not passion, is set to work in us: for when the work of patience is complete, it will furnish all that is necessary for our Christian race and warfare. We should not pray so much for the removal of affliction, as for wisdom to make a right use of it. A mind that has single and prevailing regard to its spiritual and eternal interest, and that keeps steady in its purposes for God, will grow wise by afflictions, will continue fervent in devotion, and rise

above trials and oppositions. No condition of life is such as to hinder rejoicing in God. Those of low degree may rejoice, if rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom of God. The rich may rejoice in providences, that lead to a lowliness of mind; but worldly wealth is a withering thing.

12—18. *All evil proceeds from ourselves, and all good from God.*—The tried Christian shall be a crowned one; for the crown of life is promised to all who have the love of God reigning in their hearts. Every soul that truly loves God, shall have its trials in this world fully recompensed in that world above, where love is made perfect.—The commands of God, and the dealings of his providence, try men's hearts, and show the dispositions which prevail in them. But God is not the author of the dross, though his fiery trial exposes it. Those who lay the blame of sin, either upon their constitution, or upon their condition in the world, or pretend they cannot keep from sinning, wrong God, as if he were the author of sin. Afflictions, as sent by God, are designed to draw out our graces, but not our corruptions.—As the sun is the same in nature and influences, though the earth and clouds, often coming between, make it seem to us to vary, so God is unchangeable, and our changes and shadows are not from any changes or alterations in him. What the sun is in nature, God is in grace, providence, and glory; and infinitely more. As every good gift is from God, so particularly our being born-again, and all its holy, happy consequences, come from him. Let us then devote all our faculties to God's service, that we may be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

19—25. *Christian duties.*—The worst thing we can bring to any dispute is anger. We have here an exhortation to lay apart, and to cast off as a filthy garment, all sinful practices. This must reach to sins of thought and affection as well as of speech and practice; to everything corrupt and sinful. We must yield ourselves to the word of God, with humble and teachable minds. It is the design of the word of God to make us wise to salvation; and those who propose any mean or low ends in attending upon it, dishonour the gospel, and disappoint their own souls. If we heard a sermon every day of the week, and an angel from heaven were the preacher, yet, if we rested in hearing only, it would never bring us to heaven. Mere hearers are self-deceivers; and self-deceit will be found the worst deceit at last. Our sins are the spots the law discovers: Christ's blood is the laver the gospel shows. But in vain do we hear God's word, and look into the gospel glass, if we go away, and forget our spots, instead of washing them off; and forget our remedy, instead of applying to it,

This is the case with those who do not hear the word as they ought.—Every part of Divine revelation has its use, in bringing the sinner to Christ for salvation, and in directing and encouraging him to walk at liberty, by the Spirit of adoption, according to the holy commands of God. And mark the distinctness, it is not *for* his deeds that any man is blessed, but *in* his deed. Christ becomes more precious to the soul, which by his grace is more fitted for the inheritance of the saints in light.

26, 27. *The difference between vain pretences and real religion.*—When men take more pains to seem religious than really to be so, it is a sign their religion is in vain. The not bridling the tongue, readiness to speak of the faults of others, or to lessen their wisdom and piety, are signs of a vain religion. The man who has a slandering tongue cannot have a truly humble, gracious heart. True religion teaches us to do everything as in the presence of God. An unspotted life must go with unfeigned love and charity; for let us remember, that nothing avails in Christ Jesus, but faith that worketh by love, purifies the heart, subdues carnal lusts, and obeys God's commands.

1. James the Less, son of Alphæus, is supposed to be the author of this Epistle. Twelve tribes, etc.; the Jewish Christians were now much scattered, Acts 8. 1. There were still some remains of the twelve tribes, Acts 26. 7; Luke 2. 36.—2. Temptations; or trials.—4. Perfect and entire; thoroughly prepared for every trial which may happen.—6. The unstable character is compared to a wave rolling on towards the shore, and then receding to the depths; fluctuating.—8. Doubleminded; here signifies indecision rather than duplicity of character.—11. Under the feudal system a heavy fine might sometimes release the prisoner; but for any great crime his money would prove as the grass beneath the burning sun, of no value for his rescue. So if a man live without religion, though he be rich, his money cannot save him from the anger and judgment of God, Prov. 10. 2; 11. 4.—12. Tried, or approved; probably in allusion to trying the quality of metals by passing them through the fire.—13. Tempted; here signifies solicitation to sin; drawn; as a fish, lured by the bait, is drawn from the water.—17. No variability; an astronomical illustration. The heavenly luminaries suffer a variety of changes by declinations, eclipses, etc.; the stars have a diversity of shadows; the sun and moon cast a variety of shadows according to their nearness to, or distance from, us: we thus discover their motions by the changes produced. (The sun is commonly said to turn, though it is the earth which turns.)—18. First-fruits; the Jews were first called to the Christian faith, Acts 3. 25, 26.—21. Lay apart; put it off as an old or rotten garment.—24. The allusion seems to be to the folly of a man who should take a casual glance at himself in the glass, and turn away without noticing that which was wrong in his attire or appearance. Glass, see on 2 Cor. 3. 18.—25. Whoso looketh, etc.; in opposition to a casual glance; bending towards, and looking close into. Law of liberty; the gospel. It implies meditation on, and a clear impression of, the truth.—26. Bridleth; restraineth, Ps 34. 13; 39. 1.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—13. *All professions of faith are vain, if without love and justice.*—Those who profess faith in Christ as the Lord of glory must not respect persons on account of mere outward circumstances and appearances, in a manner not agreeing with their profession of being disciples of the lowly Jesus. Civil respect must be paid; but never such as to influence the proceedings of Christians in disposing of the offices of the church of Christ, or in passing the censures of the church, or in any matter of religion.—As places of worship cannot be built or maintained without expense, it may be proper that those who contribute thereto should be accommodated accordingly; but were all persons more spiritually-minded, the poor would be treated with more attention than usually is the case in worshipping congregations.—God would give to all believers riches and honours of this world, if these would do them good, seeing that he has chosen them to be rich in faith, and made them heirs of his kingdom, which he promised to bestow on all who love him.—The Scripture gives as a law, to love our neighbour as ourselves. This law is a royal law, it comes from the King of kings; and if Christians act unjustly, they are convicted by the law as transgressors. By the covenant of works, one breach of any command brings a man under condemnation, from which no obedience, past, present, or future, can deliver him. This shows us the happiness of those that are in Christ.

14—26. *The necessity of good works.*—Those are wrong who put a mere notional belief of the gospel for the whole of evangelical religion. No doubt, true faith alone, whereby men have part in Christ's righteousness, atonement, and grace, saves their souls; but it produces holy fruits, and is shown to be real by its effect on their works; while mere assent to any form of doctrine, or mere historical belief of any facts, wholly differs from this saving faith. There is no way to show we really believe in Christ, but by being diligent in good works, from gospel motives, and for gospel purposes. There is not only to be *assent* in faith, but *consent*; not only an assent to the truth of the word, but a consent to take Christ. True believing is not an act of the understanding only, but a work of the whole heart.—That a justifying faith cannot be without works is shown from two examples, Abraham and Rahab. Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Faith, producing such works, advanced him to peculiar favours. We see then, ver. 24, how that by works a man is justified, not by a bare opinion or profession, or

believing without obeying, but by having such faith as produces good works.—Let us then take heed, for the best works, without faith, are dead; they want root and principle. Faith is the root, good works are the fruits; and we must see to it that we have both. Every one must either live God's friend or God's enemy. Living to God, as it is the consequence of faith, which justifies and will save, obliges us to do everything for him and to him.

2. Assembly; synagogue, or place of worship. Gold ring; persons of rank usually decked their fingers with costly rings. Vile; or mean attire.—4. Judges, etc.; their judgment was biassed; or, evil principles and thoughts alone could lead to such preference.—8. The Grecian republic designated the laws of the Persians royal, because made by kings; Christ is the King of kings, Matt. 22. 39.—10. Guilty of all; not literally, but in substance: as when a man breaks one link in a chain, he is said to break the whole.—12. See on ch. 1. 25.—18. Without; some copies read, by thy works. The apostle institutes a contrast between a real Christian faith and a mere profession of faith.—20. Vain; empty. A figure taken from an empty vessel. Dead; useless.—21. Gen. 22. 9, 12. Justified; or his faith was manifested to be genuine by its fruits.—22. Perfect; as a tree grown up and laden with good fruit.—23. Gen. 15. 6.—26. Spirit; or breath.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—12. *Cautions against proud behaviour, and an unruly tongue.*—The affairs of mankind are thrown into confusion by the tongues of men. Hell has more to do in promoting the fire of the tongue than men generally think; and whenever men's tongues are employed in sinful ways, they are set on fire of hell. No man can tame the tongue without Divine grace and assistance. Other sins decay with age, this many times gets worse; we grow more froward and fretful as natural strength decays, and the days come on in which we have no pleasure.—That man's tongue confutes itself, which at one time pretends to adore the perfections of God, and to refer all things to him; and at another time condemns even good men, if they do not use the same words and expressions. Pious and edifying language is the genuine produce of a sanctified heart; and none who understand Christianity, expect to hear curses, lies, boastings, and revilings from a true believer's mouth, any more than they look for the fruit of one tree from another. But facts prove that professors need exhortation to bridle and restrain their tongues.

13—18. *The excellence of heavenly wisdom.*—He who thinks well, or he who talks well, is not wise in the sense of the Scripture, if he does not live and act well. True wisdom may be known by the meekness of the spirit and temper. Those who live in malice, envy, and contention,

live in confusion ; and are liable to be provoked and hurried to any evil work. Such wisdom comes not down from above, but springs up from earthly principles, acts on earthly motives, and is intent on serving earthly purposes. Heavenly wisdom, described by the apostle James, is near to the Christian love, described by the apostle Paul ; and both are so described that every man may fully prove the reality of his attainments in them. May the purity, peace, gentleness, teachableness, and mercy shown in all our actions, and the fruits of righteousness abounding in our lives, prove that God has granted us this excellent gift.

1. Masters ; teachers. Probably some persons were disposed to undertake, heedlessly, the office of instructors. Condemnation ; or judgment, for undertaking an office to which God had not called them and for which they were not qualified.—2. Bridle, etc. ; keep in subjection, or rule himself. See on ch. 1. 26.—3-6. By a small bit the horse is guided, and by the rudder of a ship the vessel is turned about ; a little spark in the midst of combustible material will raise a great flame : so with the tongue. A world ; there is no evil it cannot utter. Course of nature ; the whole frame of it.—8. Ps. 140. 3.—10. Such should not be the case with Christians.—11, 12. The apostle argues that in the nature of things, a fountain could not yield two kinds of water at the same hole, nor a fig tree two kinds of fruit. So the Christian would order his conversation aright.—17. Easy to be intreated ; yielding in things of indifferent importance. Without partiality, or wrangling.—18. Righteousness springs from peace ; those who cultivate peace will enjoy its fruit, Matt. 5. 9.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—10. *Important cautions.*—Worldly and fleshly lusts are distempers which will not allow content or satisfaction ; they stop prayer, and the working of our desires toward God. Unbelieving and cold desires beg denials ; and we may be sure that when prayers are rather the language of lusts than of graces, they will return empty.—Worldly-mindedness is enmity to God. An enemy may be reconciled, but “enmity” never can be reconciled. A man may have a large portion in things of this life, and yet be kept in the love of God ; but he who sets his heart upon the world, who will conform to it rather than lose its friendship, is an enemy to God. The spirit of the world teaches us to lay up, or lay out for ourselves, according to our own fancies ; God the Holy Spirit teaches us to be willing to do good to all about us, as we are able.—The proud in their understanding resist the truths of God ; in their will, they resist the laws of God ; in their passions, they resist the providence of God ; therefore, no wonder that God resists the proud. Submit yourselves to God, for he is ready to do you good. Submit your understanding to the truth of God ; submit your wills to the will

of his precept, the will of his providence. All sin must be wept over; *here*, in godly sorrow, or *hereafter* in eternal misery. The Lord will not refuse to comfort one who really mourns for sin, or to exalt one who humbles himself.

11—17. *Constant regard to the will and providence of God enjoined.*—We have the law of God, which is a rule to all; let us not presume to set up our own notions and opinions as a rule to those about us, and let us be careful that we be not condemned of the Lord. How apt worldly and contriving men are to leave God out of their plans! How vain it is to look for anything good without God's blessing and guidance! The frailty, shortness, and uncertainty of life, ought to check the vanity and presumptuous confidence of all projects for futurity. We can fix the hour and minute of the sun's rising and setting to-morrow, but we cannot fix the certain time of a vapour being scattered. So short, unreal, and fading is human life, and all the prosperity or enjoyment that attends it; though bliss or woe for ever must be according to our conduct during this fleeting moment.—All we design, and all we do, should be with submissive dependence on God. It is foolish, and it is hurtful, to boast of worldly things and aspiring projects; it will bring great disappointment, and will prove destruction in the end.—Omissions are sins which will be brought into judgment, as well as commissions. He that does not the good he knows should be done, as well as he who does the evil he knows should not be done, will be condemned.

1. Josephus says that, at this period, the Jews were at war with their neighbours, and in every town, city, and family, and not only in Judæa, but in Syria, Alexandria, etc.—2. Kill; or envy. They strove to attain happiness by a wrong end.—4. Adulterers, etc. imply here, estranged from God by the love of the world.—5. To envy, or enviously.—6. Prov. 3. 34.—8. Cleanse, etc.; denoting that purity of heart and life which the gospel requires of those who serve God. The figure probably is derived from the fact of the priests before performing the tabernacle service, washing their bodies, and of the people washing their hands before offering prayer.—13. Go to now; a call to any one to consider his conduct as being wrong. An allusion to the practice prevalent in the east, of the merchants who take goods to a certain city, and stay there till they have sold them; and then purchase others for sale at another city, and thus continue trading from city to city, till, after a few years, they return prosperously to their homes, Gen. 37. 25.—16. 1 Cor. 6. 5.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—6. *The judgments of God against rich unbelievers.*—Public troubles are most grievous to those who live in pleasure, and are secure and sensual, though all ranks suffer deeply at such times.—God does not forbid us to use lawful pleasures; but to live in pleasure, especially sinful pleasure, is a provoking sin.—The just may be cor-

damned and killed; but when such suffer by oppressors, this is marked by God. Above all their other crimes, the Jews had condemned and crucified that Just One who had come among them, even Jesus Christ the righteous.

7—11. *Exhortation to patience and meekness.*—Consider him that waits for a crop of corn; and will not you wait for a crown of glory? If you should be called to wait longer than the husbandman, is not there something more worth waiting for? To short-lived creatures a few years seem an age; but Scripture, measuring all things by the existence of God, reckons thousands of years but so many days.—God brought about things in Job's case, so as plainly to prove that he is very pitiful and of tender mercy. This did not appear during his troubles, but was seen in the event, and believers now will find a happy end to their trials. Let us serve our God, and bear our trials, as those who believe that the end will crown all.

12—18. *Cautions and duties.*—The sin of swearing is condemned; but how many make light of common profane swearing! This sin brings neither gain, nor pleasure, nor reputation, but shows enmity to God without occasion and without advantage.—In a day of affliction, nothing is more seasonable than prayer. The spirit is then most humble, and the heart is broken and tender. It is necessary to exercise faith and hope under afflictions; and prayer is the appointed means for obtaining and increasing these graces.—Observe, that the saving of the sick is not ascribed to the anointing with oil, but to prayer. The great thing we should beg of God for ourselves and others in the time of sickness is, the pardon of sin. Let nothing be done to encourage any to delay, under the mistaken fancy that a confession, a prayer, a minister's absolution and exhortation, or the sacrament, will set all right at last, where the duties of a godly life have been disregarded. And when a true believer, justified in Christ, and by his grace walking before God in holy obedience, presents an effectual fervent prayer, wrought in his heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, it avails much.—It is not enough to say a prayer, but we must pray in prayer. Thoughts must be fixed, desires must be firm and ardent. God never says to any of the seed of Jacob, Seek my face in vain. Where there may not be much of miracle in God's answering our prayers, yet there may be much of grace.

19, 20. *The happiness of being the means of the conversion of a sinner.*—There is some doctrinal mistake at the bottom of every practical mistake. There is no one habitually bad, but upon some bad principle.—Conversion is the turning a sinner from the error of his ways, not merely from one

party to another, or from one notion and way of thinking to another. Many sins are hindered in the party converted; many also may be so in others whom he may influence. The salvation of one soul is of infinitely greater importance than preserving the lives of multitudes, or promoting the welfare of a whole people. For six thousand years, the Lord has been multiplying pardons, and yet his free grace is not tired nor grown weary. Certainly Divine mercy is an ocean that is ever full and ever flowing. May the Lord give us a part in this abundant mercy, through the blood of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit.

1-3. There is doubtless reference to those who had hoarded up riches and were trusting to them. Corrupted: corn, wine, and oil formed part of the riches they had collected together, probably by unjust measures (see v. 4). Garments also were laid up in store as part of their riches; these were likely to become moth-eaten. Gold and silver, etc.; may be in allusion to various metals, or the dull and polluted appearance they would gain by want of use. The whole refers probably to the foretold destruction of Jerusalem, which the signs of the times showed to be near at hand. Luke 6. 24; Prov. 11. 28. See note on ch. 1. 11.—4. Crieth, for vengeance. See Lev. 19. 13; Deut. 24. 15. Sabaoth; of hosts, see on Rom. 9. 29.—5. A day of slaughter; may refer either to the fattening of animals before slaughter, (Ps. 37. 20,) or to the sacrifices which preceded the Jewish festivals, on many of which the offerers feasted, Isa. 34. 6.—7. Be patient, or suffer with long patience. Early and latter rain; rains were periodical in Judea. The early or former rain fell soon after seed time (November), at nearly the beginning of the civil year; the latter rain fell just before the corn was ripe in April.—9. Grudge; or grieve not.—11. The end; the design of the Lord.—14. Anointing, etc.; oil was used medicinally for almost all disorders, Luke 10. 34. The disciples of Christ were endowed with extraordinary gifts, and healed many that were sick by the use of oil, Mark 6. 7-13. So these elders probably were endowed with these gifts.—17, 18. Elias; or Elijah, 1 Kings 17. 1; 18. 42, 45. The earth; or land of Israel.

THE FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE OF PETER.

This Epistle is remarkable for the sweetness, gentleness, and humble love, with which it is written. It gives a short, and yet a very clear summary, both of the consolations and the instructions needful for the encouragement and direction of a Christian in his journey to heaven, raising his thoughts and desires to that happiness, and strengthening him against all opposition in the way, both from corruptions within, and temptations and afflictions without. The Epistle is supposed to have been written about A. D. 60.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—9. *The apostle blesses God for his special benefits through Christ.*—This Epistle is addressed to believers in

general, who are strangers in every city or country where they live, and are scattered through the nations. These are to ascribe their salvation to the electing love of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the sanctification of the Holy Ghost; and so to give glory to one God in three Persons, into whose name they had been baptized.—The matter of a Christian's joy is the remembrance of the happiness laid up for him. It is *incorruptible*, it cannot come to nothing, it is an estate that cannot be spent. Also *undefiled*; this signifies its purity and perfection. And it *fudeth not*; is not sometimes more or less pleasant, but ever the same, still like itself. All possessions here are stained with defects and failings; still something is wanting: fair houses have sad cares flying about the gilded and ceiled roofs; soft beds and full tables are often with sick bodies and uneasy stomachs. All possessions are stained with sin, either in getting or in using them. But that must be of the greatest worth which is laid up in the highest and best place, in heaven. Happy are those whose hearts the Holy Spirit sets on this inheritance. The Lord, in his wise love, often appoints sharp trials to show his people their hearts, and to do them good at the latter end. Gold does not increase by trial in the fire, it becomes less; but faith is made firm and increases, by troubles and afflictions. Gold must perish at last, and can only purchase perishing things, while the trial of faith will be found to praise, and honour, and glory. Let this reconcile us to present afflictions.

10—12. *Salvation by Christ foretold in ancient prophecy.*—Jesus Christ was the main subject of the prophets' studies. Their inquiry into the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow, would lead to a view of the whole gospel, the sum whereof is, That Christ Jesus was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.—The doctrine of the prophets, and that of the apostles, exactly agree, as coming from the same Spirit of God. Let us then search diligently those Scriptures which contain the doctrines of salvation.

13—16. *All are exhorted to holy conversation.*—As the traveller, the racer, the warrior, and the labourer, gathered up their long and loose garments, that they might be ready in their business, so let Christians do by their minds and affections. Be sober, be watchful against all spiritual dangers and enemies, and be temperate in all behaviour. Be sober-minded in opinion, as well as in practice, and humble in your judgment of yourselves. A strong and perfect trust in the grace of God agrees with endeavours in duty.—The written word of God is the surest rule of a

Christian's life, and by this rule we are commanded to be holy in everything.

17—25. *Such as is suitable to their principles, privileges, and obligations.*—Holy confidence in God as a Father, and awful fear of him as a Judge, agree together; and to regard God always as a Judge makes him dear to us as a Father. Then, let Christians not doubt God's faithfulness to his promises, nor give way to enslaving dread of his wrath, but let them reverence his holiness.—God had purposes of special favour toward his people long before he made manifest such grace unto them. But the clearness of light, the supports of faith, the power of ordinances, are all much greater since Christ came upon earth than they were before. Our comfort is, that being by faith made one with Christ, his present glory is an assurance that where he is we shall be also, John xiv. 3.—In contrast with the excellence of the renewed spiritual man, as born again, observe the vanity of the natural man. In his life, and in his fall, he is like grass, the flower of grass, which soon withers and dies away. Let us then hear, and thus receive and love, the holy, living word, and rather hazard all than lose it, or suffer other things to take the place due to it.

1. Strangers; Jewish converts not in their own country. Pontus, etc.; these provinces were in Asia Minor, along the south shore of the Black Sea, all of which it is probable Peter had visited. 2. Sprinkling; an allusion to the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifices in the temple service.—3. Lively hope; a Hebrew phrase for "hope of life."—4. Fadeth, etc.; always in bloom, like flowers which could retain their hue and fragrance constantly.—5. Kept; as in a besieged town, from the assaults of the enemy. Last time; at the coming of Christ.—7. See on Jas. 1. 12.—12. Not unto themselves; they would not live to see accomplished what they foretold. The angels desire, etc.; "Over which the angels bend with admiration and delight to look into." Denoting earnestness and intense interest. The cherubims bending over the mercy-seat were emblematical of the angels' conduct, Exod. 25. 20.—13. The eastern garments were long, hence when about to take active exercise or to journey, they were fastened up with a girille, Exod. 12. 11. Revelation; or appearing.—16. Lev. 19. 2.—17. Sojourning; as travellers transacting business in any place; not reckoning it our home.—18. Redeemed, etc.; in allusion to the atonement money, and redemption money, which the Israelites paid as an offering to the Lord for their souls, and for the firstborn, Exod. 30. 12, 13; Numb. 3. 46—48.—19. Exod. 12. 5.—23. Corruptible seed; the Jews laid great stress on the descent from Abraham.—24. Grass; doubtless flowers are included, as lilies, etc.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—10. *The temper suitable to the Christian character.*—Christ is called a *Stone*, to teach his servants that he is their protection and security, the foundation on which they are

built. He is precious in the excellence of his nature, the dignity of his office, and the glory of his services.—Christ is the *chief Corner-stone*, that unites the whole number of believers into one everlasting temple, and bears the weight of the whole fabric. *Elected*, or chosen, for a foundation that is everlasting.—*Precious* beyond compare, in all that can give worth. To be built on Christ means, *to believe in him*. Though the frame of the world were falling to pieces, he who is built on this foundation may behold it without fear; *He shall not be confounded*. All true Christians are a chosen generation; they make one family, a people distinct from the world: of another spirit, principle, and practice; which they could never be, if they were not chosen in Christ to be such, and sanctified by his Spirit. Their first state is a state of gross darkness, but they are called out of darkness into a state of joy, pleasure and prosperity; that they should show forth the praises of the Lord by their profession of his truth, and their good conduct. Let us not dare to abuse the free grace of God, if we mean to be saved by it; but let all who would be found among those who obtained mercy, walk as his people.

11—17. *Relative duties*.—Even the best of men need to be exhorted to keep from the worst sins. It is a sore judgment to be given up to them.—There is a day of visitation coming, wherein God may call to repentance by his word and his grace; then many will glorify God, and the holy lives of his people will have promoted the happy change. A Christian conversation must be honest; which it cannot be, if there be not a just and careful discharge of all relative duties: the apostle here treats of these distinctly. Regard to these duties is the will of God, consequently, the Christian's duty, and the way to silence the base slanders of ignorant and foolish men. Christians must endeavour, in all relations, to behave aright, and remember that they are servants of God.

18—25. *Duties of servants to their masters*.—Servants are to be subject to the masters placed over them by Providence, with a fear to dishonour or offend God. And not only to those pleased with reasonable service, but to the severe, and those angry without cause. The sinful misconduct of one relation, does not justify sinful behaviour in the other; the servant is bound to do his duty, though the master may be sinfully froward and perverse. Christ's death was designed not only for an example of patience under sufferings, but he bore our sins; he bore the punishment of them, and thereby satisfied Divine justice. The fruits of Christ's sufferings are the death of sin, and a new holy life of righteousness; for both which we have an

example, and powerful motives, and ability to perform also, from the death and resurrection of Christ. Here is man's sin; he goes astray; it is his own act. His misery; he goes astray from the pasture, from the Shepherd, and from the flock, and so exposes himself to dangers without number. Here is recovery by conversion; sinners are now returned as the effect of Divine grace. This return is, from all their errors and wanderings, to Christ.

2. Newborn babes; an appellation given by the Jewish doctors to new converts. See on 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2. 4, 5. Living stone; Jesus Christ is the foundation or corner stone of the spiritual temple, which is to be built up of living men. House, or temple; is often used to signify the household or family.—6. Isa. 28. 16.—7. Ps. 118. 22. Builders; or the Jews.—9. Peculiar; or purchased praises; or virtues, a term probably signifying achievements.—10. Rom. 9. 25.—12. The heathen had raised slanderous reports concerning these Christians.—13. The Jews held the notion that, because they were God's people, they were not bound to obey a foreign power, and especially the power of heathen idolaters, such as the Romans then were.—16. They also boasted of their freedom and of being governed by their own laws, John 19. 7. Probably some had rebelled against the Roman authority. They were exhorted to maintain spiritual freedom, and not comply with the prevailing idolatry.—24. Isa. 53. 4-6, 11. The tree; or cross.—25. John 10. 11.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—7. *The duties of wives and husbands.*—We daily see how narrowly evil men watch the ways and lives of professors of religion. Putting on of apparel is not forbidden, but vanity and costliness in ornament. Religious people should take care that all their behaviour answers to their profession. Far more are restrained by the lowliness of their state, than the lowliness of their mind; and many will not be so bounded, but lavish their time and money upon trifles.—The apostle directs Christian females to put on something not corruptible, that beautifies the soul, even the graces of God's Holy Spirit. This will do more to fix the affections, and excite the esteem of a husband, than studied ornaments or fashionable apparel, attended by a froward and quarrelsome temper. Wives should be subject to their husbands, not from dread or amazement, but from desire to do well, and please God. The husband's duty to the wife implies giving due respect unto her, and maintaining her authority, protecting her, and placing trust in her. They are heirs together of all the blessings of this life and that which is to come, and should live peaceably one with another. Prayer will sweeten their converse. That you may pray much, live holily; and that you may live holily, be much in prayer.

8—13. *Christians exhorted to agree.*—Though Christians cannot always be exactly of the same mind, yet they should have compassion one of another, and love as brethren. If any man desires to live comfortably on earth, or to possess eternal life in heaven, he must bridle his tongue from wicked words. He must forsake and keep far from evil actions, do all the good he can, and seek peace with all men.

14—22. *And encouraged to patience.*—The example of Christ is an argument for patience under sufferings. In the case of our Lord's suffering, he that knew no sin suffered instead of those who knew no righteousness. He was put to death in respect of his human nature, but was quickened and raised by the power of the Holy Spirit. If Christ were not freed from sufferings, why should Christians think to be so? Christ sent his Spirit to the old world; he gave warning by Noah. But though the patience of God waits long, it will cease at last. And the spirits of disobedient sinners, as soon as they are out of their bodies, are committed to the prison of hell, where those that despised Noah's warning now are, and from whence there is no redemption. Noah's salvation in the ark upon the water, which carried him above the floods, set forth the salvation of all true believers. That temporal salvation by the ark was a type of the eternal salvation of believers by baptism of the Holy Spirit. To prevent mistakes, the apostle declares what he means by saving baptism; not the outward ceremony of washing with water, which, in itself, does no more than put away the filth of the flesh, but that baptism, of which the baptismal water formed the sign. Not the outward ordinance, but when a man, by the regeneration of the Spirit, was enabled to repent and profess faith, and purpose a new life, uprightly, and as in the presence of God. Many who were baptized, and constantly attended the ordinances, have remained without Christ, died in their sins, and are now past recovery. Rest not then till thou art cleansed by the Spirit of Christ and the blood of Christ.

3. The ancient women plaited the hair, and wore ornaments of gold, pearls, and precious stones, Gen. 24. 22. The apostle rather cautions against making ornaments the chief concern, than entirely forbidding their use.—6. Gen. 18. 2.—7. Not hindered, by family disputes and quarrels.—11. Eschew; shun. Ensee; pursue, or follow after, Ps. 34. 14.—15. Sanctify; the word was frequently used by the Hebrews as denoting to glorify, Lev. 10. 3: this is its signification here. Fear, or reverence.—19, 20. The spirits in prison: Noah was the preacher by whom the Spirit warned the old world of approaching destruction. Those who despised his word are now in the prison of hell, Gen. 6. 3; 7. 7; 8. 18.—21. Like figure; or by a similar figure.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—6. *The consideration of Christ's sufferings is urged for purity and holiness.*—The strongest and best arguments against sin, are taken from the sufferings of Christ. Temptations could not prevail, were it not for man's own corruption; but true Christians make the will of God, not their own lust or desires, the rule of their lives and actions. And true conversion makes a marvellous change in the heart and life. It alters the mind, judgment, affections, and conversation. It is a Christian's duty, not only to keep from gross wickedness, but also from things that lead to sin, or appear evil. The gospel had been preached to those since dead, who by the proud and carnal judgment of wicked men were condemned as evil-doers, some even suffering death. But being quickened to Divine life by the Holy Spirit, they lived to God as his devoted servants.

7—11. *The approaching end of the Jewish state, was a reason for sobriety, watchfulness and prayer.*—The destruction of the Jewish church and nation, foretold by our Saviour, was very near. And the speedy approach of death and judgment concerns all, to which these words naturally lead our minds. Our approaching end, is a powerful argument to make us sober in all worldly matters, and earnest in religion. There are so many things amiss in all, that unless by love we cover, excuse, and forgive others, Satan will prevail to stir up divisions and discords. But we are not to suppose that charity will cover or make amends for the sins of those who exercise it, so as to induce God to forgive them. In all the duties and services of life, we should aim at the glory of God as our chief end. He is a miserable, unsettled wretch, who cleaves to himself, and forgets God. But he who has given up himself and his all to God, may say confidently that the Lord is his portion.

12—19. *Believers encouraged to rejoice in sufferings for Christ.*—By patience and fortitude in suffering, by dependence on the promises of God, and keeping to the word the Holy Spirit hath revealed, the Holy Spirit is glorified but by the contempt and reproaches cast upon believers, he is evil spoken of, and is blasphemed. A time of universal calamity was at hand, as foretold by our Saviour, Matt. 24. 9, 10. And if such things occur in this life, how awful will the day of judgment be! It is true that the righteous are scarcely saved; even those who endeavour to walk uprightly in the ways of God. This does not mean that the purpose and performance of God are uncertain, but only the great difficulties and hard encounters in the way; that they go through so many temptations and tribulations, so

many fightings without, and fears within. But if the way of the righteous be so hard, then how hard shall be the end of the ungodly sinner, who walks in sin with delight, and thinks the righteous is a fool for all his pains!

1. Same mind; the same meekness and resolution in the face of suffering.—2. Rest of his time; the remainder of his life.—3. An allusion to idolatry in its excesses and bacchanalian revelries, in which the heathen, often strove one with another who could drink the greatest quantity.—4. Run not; as those heathens who ran about intoxicated, and as mad people, in the streets and fields.—5. Quick; such as shall be living at the coming of Christ.—6. Dead; those who had already died, and probably as martyrs.—7. The end of all things; probably of the Levitical priesthood.—11. As; or in accordance with, the oracles, or word of God.—12. Fiery trial; a metaphor in allusion to the torturing by fire at that time prevalent. Probably the apostle referred to the severe and grievous persecution about to fall upon the Jews.—15. The Jews were much addicted to buying themselves with other people's affairs.—17. House of God; or with those who were believers. This was probably written shortly before the terrible persecution under Nero.—18. Scarcely, etc.; with much difficulty, alluding to the trials through which they were called to pass.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—4. *Elders exhorted and encouraged.*—It was the peculiar honour of Peter and a few more, to be witnesses of Christ's sufferings; but it is the privilege of all true Christians to partake of the glory that shall be revealed. These poor, dispersed, suffering Christians, were the flock of God, redeemed to God by the great Shepherd, living in holy love and communion, according to the will of God. They are also dignified with the title of God's heritage or clergy; his peculiar lot, chosen for his own people, to enjoy his special favour, and to do him special service. Christ is the chief Shepherd of all the flock and heritage of God.

5—9. *Younger Christians are to submit to their elders.*—Where God gives grace to be humble, he will give wisdom, faith, and holiness. To be humble, and subject to our reconciled God, will bring greater comfort to the soul than the gratification of pride and ambition. But it is to be in *due time*; not in thy fancied time, but God's own wisely appointed time. Cast "all your care;" personal cares, family cares, cares for the present, and cares for the future, for yourselves, for others, for the church, on God. Cares are burdensome, and often very sinful, when they arise from unbelief and distrust, when they torture and distract the mind, unfit us for duties, and hinder our delight in the service of God. The remedy is, to cast our care upon God, and leave every event to his wise and gracious disposal. The whole design of Satan is to devour and destroy souls. He always is contriving whom he may ensnare to

eternal ruin. Our duty plainly is, to be sober; to govern both the outward and inward man by the rules of temperance. To be vigilant; suspicious of constant danger from this spiritual enemy, watchful and diligent to prevent his designs. Be stedfast, or firm, by faith. Faith lifts the soul to the solid ground of the promises, and fixes it there. In whatever form Satan assaults us, or by whatever means, our brethren have experienced the same.

10—14. *Prayers for their growth and establishment.*—The apostle prays to God for them, as the God of all grace. *Perfect*, implies their progress towards perfection. *Stablish*, imports the curing of our natural lightness and inconstancy. *Strengthen*, has respect to the growth of graces, especially where weakest and lowest. *Settle*, signifies to fix upon a sure foundation, and may refer to Him who is the Foundation and Strength of believers. These expressions show that perseverance and progress in grace are first to be sought after by every Christian. The cherishing and increase of Christian love, and of affection one to another, is no matter of empty compliment, but the stamp and badge of Jesus Christ on his followers. Others may have a false peace for a time, and wicked men may wish for it to themselves and to one another; but theirs is a vain hope, and will come to nought. All solid peace is founded on Christ, and flows from him.

1. Elder; or fellow elder, guide, leader, or shepherd. The pope makes himself a lord over the ministers of his religion. This verse is an argument against the popedom. A partaker; evidencing in his walk and conversation that he had a good hope of eternal glory.—2. Probably some were not willing to become pastors of the Christian church, in that age when the persecution was principally against the overseers of the flock.—4. Chief Shepherd; in the east the sheep were led out to pasture in very large flocks, as many as ten thousand together, so that it required several shepherds; and, in order to preserve regularity, etc., one was appointed as chief shepherd.—5. Be clothed; in allusion to a white coarse cloak worn by slaves over their other clothes, implying that humility should be visible in all our conduct.—9. Accomplished; your brethren suffer the same fierce persecution, though Satan may tempt you to think your own trials the greatest, Acts 14. 22; 1 Thess 3. 3.—10. Perfect; architectural phrases denoting his desire that all the believers to whom he wrote might grow up to a holy temple in the Lord, firmly established on the surest foundation, Jesus Christ.—12. Silvanus; Silas had probably laboured in those provinces. He conveyed this epistle.—13. Babylon; probably in Assyria. Marcus; Mark; he is supposed to have written his Gospel under the guidance of Peter. My son; meaning most likely a convert of the apostle.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

This Epistle is clearly connected with the former Epistle of Peter. The apostle having stated the blessings to which God has called Christians, exhorts those who had received these precious gifts, to endeavour to improve in graces and virtues. They are guarded against impostors and scoffers, by showing why the great day of Christ's coming was delayed, and suitable exhortations to diligence and holiness are given. This Epistle is thought to have been written A.D. 65.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—11. *Exhortations.*—Faith unites the weak believer to Christ, as really as it does the strong one, and as truly purifies the heart of one as of another. Faith worketh godliness, and produces effects which no other grace in the soul can do. In Christ all fulness dwells, and pardon, grace, peace, knowledge, and new principles, are thus given through the Holy Spirit. Believers must add knowledge to their virtue, increasing acquaintance with the whole truth and will of God. We must add temperance to knowledge; moderation about worldly things; and add to temperance, patience, or cheerful submission to the will of God. Tribulation worketh patience, whereby we bear all calamities and crosses with silence and submission. To patience we must add godliness: this includes the holy affections and dispositions found in the true worshippers of God; with tender affection to all fellow Christians. Those who are diligent in the work of religion, shall have a triumphant entrance into that everlasting kingdom where Christ reigns, and they shall reign with him for ever and ever; and it is in the practice of every good work that we are to expect entrance to heaven.

12—15. *The apostle looks forward to his decease.*—The body is but a tabernacle, or tent, to the soul. It is a mean and movable dwelling. Nothing can so give composure in the prospect, or in the hour, of death, as to know that we have faithfully and simply followed the Lord Jesus, and sought his glory.

16—21. *And confirms the truth of the gospel.*—The gospel is no weak thing, but comes in power, Rom. i. 16. The law sets before us our wretched state by sin, but there it leaves us. It discovers our disease, but does not make known the cure. It is the sight of Jesus crucified, in the gospel, that heals the soul. Try to dissuade the covetous worldling from his greediness, one ounce of gold weighs

down all reasons. Offer to stay a furious man from anger by arguments, he has not patience to hear them. Try to retain the licentious, one smile is stronger with him than all reason. But come with the gospel, and urge them with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, shed to save their souls from hell, and to satisfy for their sins, and this is that powerful pleading which makes good men confess that their hearts burn within them, and bad men, even an Agrippa, say they are almost persuaded to be Christians. As the Scripture is the revelation of the mind and will of God, every man ought to search it, to understand its sense and meaning. The Scriptures are to be accounted the words of the Holy Ghost, and all the plainness and simplicity, all the power and all the propriety of the words and expressions, come from God. Mix faith with what you find in the Scriptures, and esteem the Bible as a book written by holy men, taught by the Holy Ghost.

3. Virtue; valour, or courage: not in the battle-field, but as Christians resisting temptations of evil even unto death.—4. Divine nature; or rather holiness, which is a part of the Divine nature.—5. Add; probably an allusion to the dance among the Greeks, when the performers joined hand-in-hand, dancing to a chorus.—9. Blind, etc.; willfully blind, or destitute of saving knowledge.—11. An allusion probably to the triumph which was granted to Roman generals when they rendered any signal service in military affairs. Their entrance was “free, honourable, and triumphant.”—14. Tabernacle; the body in which the soul dwells as in a tent made of frail materials. Showed me; see John 21. 18, 19.—16. Cunningly devised fables; the heathen said their gods appeared in human form. Eye-witnesses; alluding to the transfiguration, Matt. 17. 1, 2, in opposition to the heathen mysteries.—17. Excellent glory; or bright cloud which then overshadowed them. A bright cloud was the emblem of the Divine presence.—19. Ps. 119. 105; Rev. 2. 28; 22. 16.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—9. *Believers are cautioned against false teachers.*—These seducers used feigned words, they deceived the hearts of their followers. Such are condemned already, and the wrath of God abides upon them. God's usual method of proceeding is shown by examples. Angels were cast down from all their glory and dignity, for their disobedience. If creatures sin, even in heaven, they must suffer in hell. Sin is the work of darkness, and darkness is the wages of sin. See how God dealt with the old world. The number of offenders no more procures favour, than their quality. When God sends destruction on the ungodly, he commands deliverance for the righteous. In bad company they cannot but get either guilt or grief. Yet it is possible for the children of the Lord, living amongst the

most profane, to retain their integrity; there being more power in the grace of Christ, and his dwelling in them, than in the temptations of Satan, or the example of the wicked, with all their terrors or allurements. In our intentions and inclinations to commit sin, we meet with various hindrances if we carefully mark them.

10—22. *An account of these seducers.*—Impure seducers and their abandoned followers, give themselves up to their own fleshy minds. They go on in sinful courses, and increase to greater degrees of impurity and wickedness. They also despise those whom God has set in authority over them, and requires them to honour. But none have more cause to tremble, than those who are bold to gratify their sinful lusts, by presuming on the Divine grace and mercy. The word of truth is the water of life, which refreshes the souls that receive it; but deceivers spread and promote error, and are set forth as empty, because there is no truth in them. As clouds hinder the light of the sun, so do these darken counsel by words wherein there is no truth. In the midst of their talk of liberty, these men are the vilest slaves; their own lusts gain a complete victory over them, and they are actually in bondage. A state of apostasy is worse than a state of ignorance. To bring an evil report upon the good way of God, and a false charge against the way of truth, must expose to the heaviest condemnation. Yet though such a case is deplorable, it is not utterly hopeless. Is thy backsliding a grief to thee? Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.

1. Among the Jews, as well as now among Christians, there were those who taught destructive heresies.—3. Feigned words; probably in allusion to those monkish tales which prevailed in the early ages, and spread so extensively afterwards.—5. Eighth; with seven others. Gen. 7.—6. Gen. 19. 24.—10. Despise, etc.; the principles of the false teachers led to the despising and resisting the Roman magistracy.—12. Brute beasts are moved by the impulse of their passions.—13. Feast, etc.; here may be an allusion to the love feasts which were held previous to the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. 11. 20, 21; at these feasts these teachers behaved with much excess.—14. Eyes full, etc; an adulteress constantly in their presence.—15. Numb. 22. 5, 7, 21, 23, 25. Boser; Beor in the Hebrew.—17. A traveller in the east would be much disappointed if he came to a well and found it empty: or a husbandman, in a dry country, if he saw a cloud rise, and expected rain, and it should turn to a tempest and destroy his fruits, would be sadly disappointed.—19. Of whom, etc.; an allusion to the practice of enslaving such as were conquered in battle.—22. The former part of the proverb is to be found in Prov. 26. 11.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—4. *Christ's coming to judgment.*—There will be scoffers in the last days, under the gospel; men who

make light of sin, and mock at salvation by Jesus Christ. They will not believe that he will come. Because they see no changes, they fear not God, Psa. 55. 19. What he never has done, they fancy he never can or will do.

5—10. *He will appear unexpectedly.*—Had these scoffers considered the dreadful vengeance with which God swept away a whole world of ungodly men at once, surely they would not have scoffed at his threatening an equally terrible judgment. Though, in the account of men, there is a vast difference between one day and a thousand years, yet, in the account of God, there is no difference; the delay of a thousand years cannot be so much to him, as putting off anything for a day or for an hour is to us. How hard is it to form any thoughts of eternity! What men count slackness, is long suffering, and that to us-ward; it is giving more time to his own people, to advance in knowledge and holiness, and in the exercise of faith and patience, to abound in good works, doing and suffering what they are called to, that they may bring glory to God. That day will come, when men are secure, and have no expectation of the day of the Lord. The stately palaces, and all things wherein worldly-minded men seek and place their happiness, shall be burned up. What will become of us, if we set our affections on this earth, and make it our portion, seeing all these things shall be burned up? Therefore make sure of happiness beyond this visible world.

11—18. *From thence is inferred the need for holiness, and steadfastness.*—From the doctrine of Christ's second coming, we are exhorted to purity and godliness. Very exact and universal holiness is enjoined, not resting in any low measure or degree. True Christians look for new heavens and a new earth; freed from the vanity to which things present are subject, and the sin they are polluted with. Those only who are clothed with the righteousness of Christ and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, shall be admitted to dwell in this holy place. Only the diligent Christian will be the happy Christian in the day of the Lord—Proud, carnal, and corrupt men, seek to wrest some things into a seeming agreement with their wicked doctrines. But this is no reason why St. Paul's epistles, or any other part of the Scriptures, should be laid aside; for men left to themselves, pervert every gift of God. Then let us seek to have our minds prepared for receiving things hard to be understood, by putting in practice things which are easy to be understood. That we may avoid being led away from our own steadfastness, we must seek to grow in all grace, in faith, and virtue, and knowledge. Labour to know Christ more clearly, and more fully to know him

so as to be more like him, and to love him better. Those who taste this effect of the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will, upon receiving such grace from him, give thanks and ascribe glory to him now, in the full assurance of doing the same hereafter, for ever.

1. Pure minds ; uninfluenced by the prevailing heresies.—2, 3. Jude 17, 18 ; Dan. 12. 1.—4. Promise ; its fulfilment. Since ; with the exception that the fathers had fallen asleep.—5. Gen. 1. 6, 9. Standing, etc. ; part of the earth is under the sea, part rises above it, forming islands and continents.—6. The heavens poured down water, and the earth sent up its water in fountains over the earth, Gen. 7. 11.—7. See v. 10 ; Matt. 23. 41 ; 2 Thess. 1. 8.—15. Is salvation ; for the salvation of sinners. Paul, etc. ; an allusion probably to his Epistle to the Hebrews.—16. Unlearned ; in the Scriptures and in self-knowledge. Unstable ; not firm in the faith. Wrest ; literally, as the martyr is tortured by being placed on the rack. They misapply and pervert Scripture.—17. Beware ; be on your guard, as a sentinel in a fortified town or castle.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN.

This Epistle is a discourse upon the principles of Christianity, in doctrine and practice. The design appears to be, to refute and guard against erroneous and unholy tenets, principles, and practices, especially such as would lower the Godhead of Christ, and the reality and power of his sufferings and death, as an atoning sacrifice. It opposes the assertion that believers, being saved by grace, are not required to obey the commandments. It also helps forward and excites real Christians to communion with God and Christ, to constancy in the true faith, and to purity of life. Written after the year 69.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—4. *The apostle's testimony to Christ.*—That essential Good, that uncreated Excellence, which had been from the beginning, from eternity, as equal with the Father, and which at length appeared in human nature for the salvation of sinners, was the great subject concerning which the apostle wrote to his brethren. The apostles had seen Christ and witnessed his wisdom and holiness, his miracles, and love and mercy, during some years, till they saw him crucified for sinners, and afterwards risen from the dead. They declared what they had seen and heard, that believers might share their comforts and everlasting advantages. They had a happy experience of the truth in their souls, and showed its excellence in their lives. This communion of believers with the Father and the Son is begun and kept up by the influences of the Holy Spirit. The

benefits Christ bestows do not, like the possessions of the world, cause jealousies in others; but the happiness of communion with God is all-sufficient, so that any number may partake of it. All who are warranted to say, that truly their fellowship is with the Father, will desire to lead others to partake of the same blessedness.

5--10. *The necessity of a life of holiness, in order to communion with God.*—The great God should be represented to this dark world as pure and perfect light. As this is the nature of God, his doctrines and precepts must be such. And as his perfect happiness cannot be separated from his perfect holiness, so our happiness will be in proportion to our being made holy. The eternal Word put on flesh and blood; and Christ died to wash us from our sins in his own blood, and procures for us the sacred influences by which sin is to be subdued more and more, till it is quite done away. While the necessity of a holy walk is insisted upon, the opposite error of self-righteous pride is guarded against with equal care. All who walk near to God, in holiness and righteousness, are sensible that their best days and duties are mixed with sin. God has given testimony to the sinfulness of the world, by providing an effectual Sacrifice for sin; and the sinfulness of believers themselves is shown, by requiring them continually to confess their sins, and to apply by faith to the blood of that Sacrifice. Let us honestly confess all our sins in their full extent, relying wholly on God's mercy and truth through the righteousness of Christ, for a free and full forgiveness, and our deliverance from the power and practice of sin.

1. That; the Word, John 1. 1. Handled; John leaned on the bosom of Jesus, Luke 24. 39. Jesus Christ the Word of life appeared in the flesh.—3. Fellowship; those who partook with the Greeks in their religious rites were said to have fellowship with them.—5. Light; denotes perfect holiness and purity. This the Gnostics acknowledged in the Supreme Being; but would not admit that the Supreme Being was he whom Jews and Christians worshipped as God.—6. Walk in darkness; live in sin.—7. Walk in light; live a life of holiness.—9. Psa. 32. 5; Prov. 28. 13.—10. Make him a liar; deny the truth of his word.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1, 2. *The apostle directs to the atonement of Christ.*—We have an Advocate with the Father; one who has undertaken, and is fully able, to plead in behalf of every one who applies for pardon and salvation in his name, depending on his pleading for them. All men, in every land, and through successive generations, are invited to come to God through this all-sufficient atonement, and by this new and living way. The Gospel, when rightly understood and

received, sets the heart against all sin, and stops the allowed practice of it, while it gives blessed relief to the wounded consciences of those who have sinned.

3—11. *The effects of saving knowledge.*—The love of God is perfected in him who keeps his commandments: for God's grace in him attains its true mark, and produces its sovereign effect as far as may be in this world. The command to love one another had been in force from the beginning of the world, but it might be called a new command as given to Christians. It was new in them, as their situation was new in respect of its motives, rules, and obligations. Christian love teaches us to value our brother's soul, and to dread everything hurtful to his purity and peace.

12—23. *Christians addressed and cautioned against the love of this world, and against errors.*—As Christians have their peculiar states, so they have peculiar duties; but there are precepts and obedience common to all, particularly mutual love, and contempt of the world. The youngest sincere disciple is pardoned; and those of the longest standing in Christ's school need further advice and instruction. Even fathers must be written unto, and preached unto; none are too old to learn. Children in Christ know that God is their Father; it is their wisdom. Those advanced believers, who know Him that was from the beginning before this world was made, may well be led thereby to give up this world.—It will be the glory of young persons to be strong in Christ, and his grace. The things of the world may be desired and possessed for the purposes for which God gave them, and they are to be used by his grace, and to his glory; but believers must not seek or value them for those objects for which sin abuses them. The things of the world are classed according to the three ruling inclinations of depraved nature. 1. The lust of the flesh, of the body; wrong desires of the heart, the appetite of indulging all things that excite and inflame sensual pleasures. 2. The lust of the eyes; the eyes are delighted with riches and rich possessions; this is the lust of covetousness. 3. The pride of life; a vain man craves the grandeur and pomp of a vain-glorious life; this includes thirst after honour and applause. Many efforts have been made to evade the force of this passage by limitations, distinctions, or exceptions; but the plain meaning of these verses cannot easily be mistaken. Unless this victory over the world is begun in the heart, a man has no root in himself, but will fall away, or at most remain an unfruitful professor. Yet these vanities are so alluring to the corruption in our hearts, that without constant watching and prayer we cannot escape the world, or obtain

victory over the god and prince of it. Every man is an antichrist, who denies the Person or any of the offices of Christ; and in denying the Son, he denies the Father also, and has no part in his favour while he rejects his great salvation. True Christians are anointed ones; their name expresses this: they are anointed with grace, with gifts and spiritual privileges, by the Holy Spirit of grace. While we judge favourably of all who trust in Christ as the Divine Saviour, and obey his word, and seek to live in union with them, let us pity and pray for those who deny the Godhead of Christ, or his atonement, and the new-creating work of the Holy Ghost.

24—29. *They are encouraged to stand fast in faith and holiness.*—What value should we put upon gospel truth! for thereby the promise of eternal life is made sure. The promise God makes is suitable to his own greatness, power, and goodness; it is eternal life. Gospel privileges oblige to gospel duties; and those anointed by the Lord Jesus abide with him. The new spiritual nature is from the Lord Christ. He that is constant to the practice of religion in trying times shows that he is born from above. Then, let us beware of holding the truth in unrighteousness, remembering that those only are born of God who bear his holy image, and walk in his most righteous ways.

1. My little children; an affectionate mode of address: probably some were the spiritual children of the apostle. Advocate; literally a pleader in a court of justice, or one who intercedes.—2. Propitiation; atoning sacrifice.—6. Abideth; professes to abide in him. Walk; or live in the world.—7. Beginning; when the gospel was first proclaimed to you, Matt. 5; John 15. 17.—8. True, etc. exemplified in Christ more fully, and in his followers. Darkness, of heathenism; true light, of the gospel.—13. Young men; men in the prime of life, or capable to bear arms; the term youth was applied to the Roman army.—14. Fathers; elders, on account of their Christian experience.—17. The world; its fashion, pleasures, etc., 1 Pet. 1. 24.—18. Last time; this is the last dispensation. Antichrist; an opposer of Christ and his people, or false teachers, according to the prophecy of our Lord, Matt. 24.—20. Unction; or anointing. Persons set apart to sacred offices, were anointed with oil under the law, Exod. 28. 41; 1 Sam. 10. 1; 16. 1, 13.—26. Seduce; or rather attempt to do so.—27. Anointing; the Holy Spirit's influence.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—10. *The purifying influence of the hope of seeing Christ.*—Little does the world know of the happiness of the real followers of Christ. Little does the world think that these poor, humble, despised ones are favourites of God, and will dwell in heaven. The sons of God must walk by faith, and live by hope. They may well wait in faith, hope, and earnest desire, for the revelation of the

Lord Jesus. It is the hope of hypocrites, not of the sons of God, that makes allowance for gratifying impure desires and lusts. May we be followers of Him as his dear children; thus show our sense of his unspeakable mercy, and express that obedient, grateful, humble mind which becomes us. In Christ was no sin. All the sinless weaknesses that were consequences of the fall he took; that is, all those infirmities of mind or body which subject man to suffering, and expose him to temptation. But our moral infirmities, our proneness to sin, he had not. Renouncing sin is the great proof of spiritual union with, continuance in, and saving knowledge of the Lord Christ. But a man cannot act like the devil, and at the same time be a disciple of Christ Jesus. And the regenerate person cannot sin as he did before he was born of God, and as others do who are not born again. There is that light in his mind, which shows him the evil and malignity of sin. There is that bias upon his heart which disposes him to loathe and hate sin. There is the spiritual principle that opposes sinful acts. And there is repentance for sin if committed. He only is righteous before God, as a justified believer, who is taught and disposed to righteousness by the Holy Spirit. In *this* the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. May all professors of the gospel lay these truths to heart, and try themselves by them.

11-21. *Love to the brethren.*--We should love the Lord Jesus, value his love, and therefore love all our brethren in Christ. This love is the special fruit of our faith, and a certain sign of our being born again. We may know that we are passed from death to life by the evidences of our faith in Christ, of which love to our brethren is one. It is not zeal for a party in the common religion, or affection for those who are of the same name and sentiments with ourselves. The life of grace in the heart of a regenerate person is the beginning and first principle of a life of glory, whereof they must be destitute who hate their brother in their hearts. Here is the condescension, the miracle, the mystery of Divine love, that Christ would redeem the church with his own blood. Surely we should love those whom God has loved, and so loved. By what can it be known that a man has a true sense of the love of Christ for perishing sinners, or that the love of God has been planted in his heart by the Holy Spirit, if the love of the world and its good overcomes the feelings of compassion to a perishing brother? Every instance of this selfishness must weaken the evidences of a man's conversion; when habitual and allowed, it must decide against him. If conscience condemn us in known sin, or the neglect of

known duty, God does so too. Let conscience therefore be well-informed, be heard, and diligently attended to.

22—24. *The advantage of faith, love, and obedience.*—When believers had confidence towards God, through the Spirit of adoption, and by faith in the great High Priest, they might ask what they would of their reconciled Father. They would receive it, if good for them. He who follows Christ dwells in Him as his ark, refuge, and rest, and in the Father through him. The Spirit of God works a change; in all true Christians He changes from the power of Satan to the power of God. Consider, believer, how He changes thy heart. Dost not thou long for peace with God? Wouldst thou not forego all the world for it? No profit, pleasure, or preferment shall hinder thee from following Christ. This salvation is built upon Divine testimony, even the Spirit of God.

2. When he shall appear; at the judgment. Like him; in purity and the duration of life.—4. Committeth; or worketh, as one in his trade or occupation; it implies continued action.—8. Destroy, etc.; the idea conveyed is, that sin is a mighty fabric, Satan the builder, and Jesus the destroyer of the profane building.—9. Cannot sin; expressive of the disinclination. He will not take pleasure in sinning. Seed, or the principle of grace implanted by God's Spirit in the soul.—15. A murderer; he cherishes those evil passions which would lead to murder; he is a murderer in his heart.—17. Bowels, etc.; the most tender sympathies.—22. We receive; shall receive.—23. John 13. 34; 17. 3.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1—6. *Believers cautioned.*—Christians who are well acquainted with the Scriptures may, in humble dependence on Divine teaching, discern those who set forth doctrines, according to the apostles, and those who contradict them. The false teachers spoke of the world according to its maxims and tastes, so as not to offend carnal men. The world approved them, they made rapid progress, and had many followers such as themselves; the world will love its own, and its own will love it.—The true doctrine as to the Saviour's person, as leading men from the world to God, is a mark of the spirit of truth and opposed to the spirit of error.

7—21. *Brotherly love enforced.*—He that does not love the image of God in his people has no saving knowledge of God. The law of God is love; and all would have been perfectly happy had all obeyed it. But none of our words or thoughts can do justice to the free, astonishing love of a holy God towards sinners, who could not profit or harm him, whom he might justly crush in a moment, and whose desert of his vengeance was shown in the method by which

they were saved. Search we the whole universe for love in its most glorious displays? It is to be found in the person and the cross of Christ. Does love exist between God and sinners? Here was the origin, not that we loved God, but that he freely loved us. His love could not be designed to be fruitless upon us, and when its proper end and issue are gained and produced it may be said to be perfected. A loving Christian is a perfect Christian; set him to any good duty, and he is perfect to it, he is expert at it. Love oils the wheels of his affections, and sets him on that which is helpful to his brethren. That God dwells in us and we in him, were words too high for mortals to use had not God put them before us. Those who are truly persuaded that they are the sons of God cannot but call him Abba, Father. From love to him, they hate sin, and whatever disagrees with his will, and they have a sound and hearty desire to do his will. And whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. This confession includes faith in the heart as the foundation; makes acknowledgment with the mouth to the glory of God and Christ; and profession in the life and conduct, against the flatteries and frowns of the world.—There must be a day of universal judgment. Happy those who shall have holy boldness before the Judge at that day, knowing he is their Friend and Advocate! Happy those who have holy boldness in the prospect of that day, who look and wait for it, and for the Judge's appearance! We must distinguish between the fear of God and being afraid of him; the fear of God imports high regard and veneration for God. Obedience and good works, done from the principle of love, are not like the servile toil of one who unwillingly labours from dread of a master's anger. They are like that of a dutiful child who does services to a beloved father, which benefit his brethren, and are done willingly. The love of God in Christ, in the hearts of Christians from the Spirit of adoption, is the great proof of conversion. This must be tried by its effects on their temper, and their conduct to their brethren. If a man profess to love God, and yet indulges anger or revenge, or shows a selfish disposition, he gives his profession the lie. But if it be plain that our natural enmity is changed into affection and gratitude, let us bless God for this seal and earnest of eternal happiness.

1. Spirit; every person who pretends to be inspired.—2. 1 Cor. 12. 3.—4. Of God; or influenced by the Holy Spirit. Overcome; as soldiers, the attacks of the enemy. He that is in the world, that is Satan. John 12. 31; 41. 30; 16. 11.—9. It is probable the apostle refers to *Eliou* and *Cerintus*, two false teachers, who declared that Christ was

not the Son of God by nature, but that, like other good men, he was honoured with that title on account of his virtues, with a view to confute their error, John 3. 16.—12. Dwelleth in us, by his Spirit; love to Him and to man are shed abroad in our hearts.—14. John 1. 14; 3. 17.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—5. *Brotherly love is the effect of the new birth.*—As God's commands are holy, just, and good rules of liberty and happiness, so those who are born of God and love him do not count them grievous; but lament that they cannot serve him more perfectly. Self-denial is required, and true Christians have a principle which carries them above all hindrances. Though the conflict often is sharp, and the regenerate may be cast down, yet they will rise up and renew their combat with resolution. But all, except believers in Christ, are enslaved in some respect or other to the customs, opinions, or interests of the world. Faith is the cause of victory, the means, the instrument, the spiritual armour by which we overcome. In and by faith we cleave to Christ, in contempt of and in opposition to the world. Faith sanctifies the heart, and purifies it from those sensual lusts by which the world obtains sway and dominion over souls. We must all, after Christ's example, overcome the world, or it will overcome us to our ruin.

6—8. *Jesus, the Son of God, is the true Messiah.*—We are inwardly and outwardly defiled; inwardly, by the power and pollution of sin in our nature. For our cleansing there is in and by Christ Jesus, the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Some think that the two sacraments are here meant: baptism with water, as the outward sign of regeneration, and purifying from the pollution of sin by the Holy Spirit; and the Lord's supper, as the outward sign of the shedding of Christ's blood, and the receiving him by faith for pardon and justification. Both these ways of cleansing were represented in the old ceremonial sacrifices and cleansings. This water and blood include all that is necessary to our salvation. By the water, our souls are washed and purified for heaven and the habitation of saints in light. By the blood, we are justified, reconciled, and presented righteous to God. Three had borne witness to these doctrines concerning the person and the salvation of Christ. The Father, repeatedly, by a voice from heaven declared that Jesus was his beloved Son. The Word declared that He and the Father were one, and that whoever had seen him had seen the Father. And the Holy Ghost, who descended from heaven, and rested on Christ at his baptism; who had borne witness to

Him by all the prophets; and gave testimony to his resurrection and mediatorial office, by the gift of miraculous powers to the apostles. To the doctrine taught by the apostles, respecting the person and salvation of Christ, there were three testimonies. 1. The Holy Spirit. We come into the world with a corrupt, carnal disposition, which is enmity to God. This being done away by the regeneration and new-creating of souls by the Holy Spirit, is a testimony to the Saviour. 2. The water: this sets forth the Saviour's purity and purifying power. The actual and active purity and holiness of his disciples are represented by baptism. 3. The blood which he shed: and this was our ransom, this testifies for Jesus Christ; it sealed up and finished the sacrifices of the Old Testament. These three witnesses are for one and the same purpose; they agree in one and the same thing.

9—12. *The satisfaction the believer has about Christ, and eternal life.*—The real Christian has seen his guilt and misery, and his need of a Saviour. He has seen the suitability of such a Saviour to all his spiritual wants and circumstances. He has found and felt the power of the word and doctrine of Christ, humbling, healing, quickening, and comforting his soul. Yet he finds still a conflict with himself, with sin, with the flesh, the world, and wicked powers. But he finds such strength from faith in Christ, that he can overcome the world, and travel on towards a better. Such assurance has the gospel believer: he has a witness in himself, he cannot be argued out of his belief in the leading truths of the gospel.—Here is what makes the unbeliever's sin so awful. He gives God the lie; because he believes not the record that God gave of his Son. He that refuses to trust and honour Christ as the Son of God, who disdains to submit to his teaching as Prophet, to rely on his atonement and intercession as High Priest, or to obey him as King, is dead in sin, and under condemnation; nor will any outward morality, learning, forms, notions, or confidences avail him.

13—17. *The assurance of God's hearing and answering prayer.*—The Lord Christ invites us to come to him in all circumstances, with our supplications and requests, notwithstanding the sin that besets us. Our prayers must always be offered in submission to the will of God. In some things, they are speedily answered: in others, they are granted in the best manner, though not as requested. There are sins that war against spiritual life in the soul, and the life above. We cannot pray that the sins of the impenitent and unbelieving should, while they are such, be forgiven them; or that mercy, which supposes the forgive-

ness of sins, should be granted to them, while they wilfully continue such. But we may pray for their repentance, for their being enriched with faith in Christ, and thereupon for all other saving mercies.

18—21. *The happy condition of true believers.*—All mankind are divided into two parties or dominions; one which belongs to God, and another which belongs to Satan. True believers belong to God: they are of God, and from him, and to him, and for him; while the rest, by far the greater number, are in the power of the wicked one; they do his works, and support his cause. Happy are those to whom it is given to know that the Son of God is come, and to have a heart to trust in and rely on him that is true! May this be our privilege; then shall we be kept from all idols and false doctrines, and from the idolatrous love of worldly objects, and be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto eternal salvation. To this living and true God, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

1. Begotten; or all true Christians.—2. By this; that is, by this love to the people of God.—4. Faith is the shield which defends from the assaults of the world.—6. Water and blood: when Christ was crucified, water and blood flowed from his pierced side; emblems of his holiness and atonement.—8. Agree in one; in testifying to the Divinity of Christ.—9. Witness of men; see Deut. 19, 15.—12. Hath the Son; an interest in the death of Christ.—14. In him, or concerning him.—18. Sinneth not, etc.; does not live in wilful commission of sin. Wicked one; Satan does not prevail against him.—20. John 17. 3.—21. The Christians dwelt in the midst of idolaters.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

JOHN.

The Epistle is like an abridgement of the first; it touches, in few words, on the same points. The elect lady, or Lady Electa, is commended for the religious education of her children; is exhorted to abide in the doctrine of Christ, and carefully to avoid the delusions of false teachers. But chiefly the apostle beseeches her to practise the great commandment of Christian love and charity. The Epistle was written probably about A.D. 69.

Ver. 1—3. *The apostle salutes the elect lady and her children.*—Religion turns compliments into real expressions of respect and love. An old disciple is honourable; an old apostle and leader of disciples is more so. Families are to be encouraged and directed in their love and duties at home. Those who love truth and piety in themselves, should love it in others. From the Divine Persons of the Godhead, the apostle craves grace, Divine favour, and

good-will, the spring of all good things. It is grace indeed that any spiritual blessing should be given to sinful mortals. Mercy, free pardon, and forgiveness; for those already rich in grace, need continual forgiveness. Peace, quietness of spirit, and a clear conscience, in assured reconciliation with God, and all outward prosperity that is really for good: these are desired in truth and love.

4-6. *Expresses his joy in their faith and love.*—It is good to be trained to early religion. It gave great joy to the apostle to see children treading in their parents' steps, and likely in their turn to support the gospel. May God bless such families more and more, and raise up many to copy their example. How pleasing the contrast to numbers who spread irreligion, infidelity, and vice, among their children! This commandment of mutual Christian love, may be said to be a new one, in respect of its being declared by the Lord Christ; yet, as to the matter, it is old. The foresight of the decay of this love, as well as of other apostasies, or fallings away, might engage the apostle to urge this duty, and this command, frequently and earnestly.

7-13. *Cautions them against deceivers.*—Let us not think it strange, that there are deceivers and opposers of the Lord Christ's name and dignity now, for there were such, even in the apostles' times. But the more deceivers and deceits abound, the more watchful the disciples must be. Any who did not profess and preach the doctrine of Christ, respecting him as the Son of God, and salvation by him from guilt and sin, were not to be noticed and countenanced. Yet, in obeying this command, we must show kindness and a good spirit to those who differ from us in lesser matters, but hold firmly the all-important doctrines of Christ's person, atonement, and holy salvation.—The apostle refers many things to a personal meeting. Pen and ink were means of strengthening and comforting others; but to see each other is more so. The communion of saints should be maintained by all methods; and should tend to mutual joy. In communion with them we find much present joy, and look forward to happiness for ever.

1. Elder; John was not an elder officially only, but he was old in years at this time. Elect lady; Christian lady, a person of rank. Truth; with sincerity.—2. For the truth's sake; influenced by the gospel of Christ.—4. Walking in truth; living as becometh those who profess a belief in the truth.—6. This is an evidence of love, 1 John 5. 3.—7. 1 John 4. 1-3.—8. Wrought, or gained;—some versions read, "which ye have gained, but that ye receive a full reward"—9. Hath not God; if a man despise the doctrine of Christ's incarnation and atonement, he has no interest in Christ or God as his Father, John 15. 23.—10. God speed; a form of salutation.—11. Partaker; or holds a fellowship with him.—12. Face to face; the

Greek rendering is "mouth to mouth."—13. Elect; or Christian sister; probably she was now dead, hence the salutation of the children alone was sent; or she might have been absent from home.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF

JOHN.

This Epistle is addressed to a converted Gentile. The scope is to commend his steadfastness in the faith, and his hospitality, especially to the ministers of Christ. Written about A.D. 69.

Ver. 1—8. *The apostle commends Gaius for piety and hospitality.*—Soul prosperity is the greatest blessing on this side heaven. Grace and health are rich companions. Grace will employ health. A rich soul may be lodged in a weak body; and grace must then be exercised in submitting to such a dispensation. But we may wish and pray that those who have prosperous souls, may have healthful bodies; that their grace may shine where there is still more room for activity. How many professors there are, about whom the apostle's words must be reversed, and we must earnestly wish and pray that their souls might prosper, as their health and circumstances do!—Good men will rejoice in the soul prosperity of others; and they are glad to hear of the grace and goodness of others.—Gaius overlooked petty differences among serious Christians, and freely helped all who bore the image, and did the work of Christ. Faithful souls can hear their own praises without being puffed up; the commendation of what is good in them, lays them at the foot of the cross of Christ.—Christians should consider not only what they must do, but what they may do; and should do even the common actions of life after a godly sort, serving God therein, and designing his glory.

9—12. *Cautions him against siding with Diotrephes, and recommends Demetrius.*—The temper and spirit of Diotrephes was full of pride and ambition. It is bad not to do good ourselves; but it is worse to hinder those who would do good. Those cautions and counsels are most likely to be accepted, which are seasoned with love. Evil-workers vainly pretend or boast acquaintance with God; but let us not follow that which is proud, selfish, and of bad design, though the example may be given by persons of rank and power; rather let us be followers of God, and walk in love, after the example of our Lord.

13, 14. *He hopes soon to see Gaius.*—A name in the gospel, or a good report in the churches, is better than worldly

honour. Happy those whose spirit and conduct commend them before God and men. We must be ready to bear our testimony to them; and it is well when those who commend, can appeal to the consciences of such as know most of those who are commended. The blessing is, Peace be to you; all happiness attend you. Those may well salute and greet one another on earth, who hope to live together in heaven. By associating with and copying the example of such Christians, we shall have peace within, and live in peace with the brethren; our communications with the Lord's people on earth will be pleasing, and we shall be numbered with them in glory everlasting.

1. Gaius; or Caius, there is uncertainty as to who this really was; the name is mentioned, Acts 19. 29; 20. 4; Rom. 16. 23; 1 Cor. 1. 14. There was also a Caius, bishop of Pergamos. The one to whom the Epistle is written was a private member of a church near Ephesus, as the apostle talked of seeing him shortly, v. 14. In the truth; truly.—2. Wish; it is my prayer.—5. To strangers or travellers; perhaps evangelists or missionaries.—6. After a godly sort; worthy of God.—9. Diotrephes, etc.; it is uncertain who he was. Evidently he was in the church and wishing to rule over them, preventing their using any of the funds of the church for the assistance of strangers, etc.—10. Remember, etc.; or punish and bring his deeds to his bitter remembrance, 1 Cor. 5. 3-5.—11. Seen, by faith in Him.—12. Demetrius; also belonging to the church, and possibly the bearer of this Epistle.—14. Face to face; the Greek rendering is mouth to mouth.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

The design of this Epistle appears to be to guard believers against the false teachers who had begun to creep into the Christian church, and to scatter dangerous tenets, by attempting to lower all Christianity into a merely nominal belief and outward profession of the gospel. The vile character of these seducers is shown, and their sentence is denounced, and the Epistle concludes with warnings, admonitions, and counsels to believers. It is supposed to have been written about A.D. 65.

Ver. 1.—4. *Exhortation to steadfastness in the faith.*—Christians are called out of the world, from the evil spirit and temper of it; called above the world, to higher and better things, to heaven, things unseen and eternal; called from sin to Christ, from vanity to seriousness, from uncleanness to holiness; and this according to the Divine purpose and grace. The mercy of God is the spring and fountain of all the good we have or hope for, mercy, not only to the miserable, but to the guilty. Next to mercy is peace, which we have from the sense of having obtained mercy

From peace springs love; Christ's love to us, our love to him, and our brotherly love one to another. Those who have received the doctrine of this common salvation, must contend for it, earnestly, not furiously. Those who have received the truth must contend for it, as the apostles did, by suffering with patience and courage for it, not by making others suffer if they will not embrace every notion we call faith, or important. We ought to contend earnestly for the faith, in opposition to those who would corrupt or deprave it; who creep in unawares; who glide in like serpents. And those are the worst of the ungodly, who take encouragement to sin boldly, because the grace of God has abounded, and still abounds so wonderfully, and who are hardened by the extent and fulness of gospel grace, which seeks to deliver men from sin, and bring them unto God.

5-7. *The danger of being infected by false professors.*—Outward privileges, profession, and apparent conversion, could not secure those from the vengeance of God, who turned aside in unbelief and disobedience. The destruction of the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness, shows that none ought to presume on their privileges. They had miracles as their daily bread; yet even they perished in unbelief. The fallen angels are kept to the judgment of the great day; and shall fallen men escape it? Consider this instance of the angels, and see that no dignity or worth of the creature is of avail. How then should man tremble, who drinketh iniquity like water! Job xv. 16. The destruction of Sodom is a loud warning to all, to take heed of, and to flee from fleshly lusts that war against the soul, 1 Pet. ii. 11. God is the same holy, just, pure Being now, as then. Let us not, then, rest in any thing that does not make the soul subject to the obedience of Christ; for nothing but the renewal of our souls to the Divine image by the Holy Spirit, can keep us from being destroyed among the enemies of God.

8-16. *A description of these seducers, and their deplorable end.*—False teachers are dreamers; they greatly defile and grievously wound the soul. These teachers are of a disturbed mind and a seditious spirit; forgetting that the powers that be, are ordained of God, Rom. xiii. 1.—It is hard, if not impossible, to find any enemies to the Christian religion, who did not, and do not, live in open or secret contradiction to the principles of natural religion. Such are here compared to brute beasts, though they often boast of themselves as the wisest of mankind. The fault lies not in their understandings, but in their depraved wills, and their disordered appetites and affections.—It is a great reproach, though unjust to religion, when those who profess

it are opposed to it in heart and life. It is sad when men begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh. Of such it is said they are twice dead; they had been once dead in their natural, fallen state; but now they are dead again by the evident proofs of their hypocrisy. Raging waves are a terror to sailing passengers; but when they get into port, the noise and terror are ended. False teachers glare like meteors, or falling stars, and then sink into the blackness of darkness for ever. We find from this prophecy of Enoch, that Christ's coming to judge was prophesied of, as early as the times before the flood. The Lord cometh: what a glorious time will that be!—Notice how often the word "ungodly" is repeated. Many now do not at all refer to the terms godly, or ungodly, unless it be to mock at even the words; but it is not so in the language taught us by the Holy Ghost. Hard speeches of one another, especially if ill-grounded, will certainly come into account at the day of judgment.

17—23. *Believers cautioned.*—Sensual men separate from Christ, and his church, and join themselves to the devil, the world, and the flesh, by ungodly and sinful practices. That is infinitely worse than to separate from any branch of the visible church on account of opinions, or modes and circumstances of outward government or worship.—Our prayers are most likely to prevail, when we pray in the Holy Ghost, under his guidance and influence, according to the rule of his word, with faith, fervency, and earnestness: this is praying in the Holy Ghost. And a believing expectation of eternal life will arm us against the snares of sin: lively faith in this blessed hope will help us to mortify our lusts. We must watch over one another; faithfully, yet prudently reprove each other, and set a good example to all about us. This must be done with compassion, making a difference between the weak and the wilful. Some we must treat with tenderness. Others save with fear; urging the terrors of the Lord.

24, 25. *An encouraging doxology.*—God is able, and as willing as able, to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory. Not as those who never have been faulty, but as those who, but for God's mercy, and a Saviour's sufferings and merits, might most justly have been condemned long ago. Now, our faults fill us with fears, doubts, and sorrows; but the Redeemer has undertaken for his people, that they shall be presented faultless. Let us then more often look up to Him who is able to keep us from falling, to improve as well as maintain the work he has wrought in us, till we shall be presented blameless before the presence of his glory. Then shall our

hearts know a joy beyond what earth can afford; then shall God also rejoice over us, and the joy of our compassionate Saviour be completed. To Him who has so wisely formed the scheme, and will faithfully and perfectly accomplish it, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

1. Jude; or Judas, brother of James the Less.—3. The common salvation; because for all nations, Jew and Gentile.—4. Denying, etc.; in reference to those false teachers who, to escape persecution, acknowledged the gods of the heathen.—5. Numb. 14. 29, 37; 26 64.—7. Gen. 19. 24. The utter destruction of Sodom was an emblem of the irrecoverable ruin of the sinner at the last day.—8. Filthy dreamers; persons of corrupt habits, and who indulged in unholy thoughts, 2 Pet. 2. 10; Exod. 22. 28.—9. As to the contest about the body of Moses, it might be that Satan wished to make the place of his burial known to the Israelites, in order to tempt them to worship him, or render to his memory undue honour. Railing, etc.; in allusion to the vision of Zechariah, where the angels did not revile the enemies of the Jews, but modestly reproved them because they were magistrates. The false teachers reviled the Roman magistrates, verse 8.—11. Gen. 4. 5; Numb. 22. Core, or Korah. Numb. 16.—12. Feasts of charity; the *agapæ*, or love feasts, 1 Cor. 11. 21; see also 2 Pet. 2. 17; Eph 4. 14. Twice dead; a Hebrew phrase, "very dead."—13. Raging waves, denoting their disorderly and turbulent conduct, agitated and agitating "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt," Isa. 57. 20. Teachers among the Jews were called "stars." Wandering; as if a planet should run out to an endless distance from the light and warmth of the sun, it would wander through the blackness of darkness, or impenetrable darkness.—14. Seventh, to distinguish him from the son of Cain, Gen. 4. 17.—19. Separate themselves; they affixed themselves no bounds, or were unrestrained by Scripture, magistrates, or any other discipline.—23. Pulling them out, denoting zeal and earnestness to reclaim the guilty. Fire, the wrath of God to which they are exposed; or it may mean sin, Zech. 3. 2. Spotted; the priest's outward garment was never washed, but he changed his raiment when he engaged in the temple service. It may refer to the garment in which the Jews mourned when they bewailed their captivity.

REVELATION

OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

The Book of Revelation consists of two principal divisions. 1. Relates to "the things which are," that is, the then present state of the church, and contains the addresses or epistles of John to the seven churches. While they refer to the state of the respective churches, as they then existed, they contain much that is suited to instruct the Christian church at all times. 2. Contains a prophecy of "the things which shall be hereafter," and describes the future state of the church.

It is intended for our spiritual improvement ; to warn the careless sinner, point out the way of salvation to the awakened inquirer, build up the weak believer, and comfort the afflicted and tempted Christian.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1—3. *The Divine origin, design, and importance of this book.*—This book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ ; the whole Bible is so ; for all revelation comes through Christ, and all relates to him. Its principal subject is to discover the purposes of God concerning the affairs of the church, and of the nations as connected therewith, to the end of the world. On all who read or hear the words of the prophecy, a blessing is pronounced. Those are well employed who search the Bible. It is not enough that we read and hear, but we must keep the things that are written, in our memories, in our minds, in our affections, and in practice, and we shall be blessed in the deed. Even the mysteries and difficulties of this book are united with discoveries of God, suited to impress the mind with awe, and to purify the soul of the reader, though he may not discern the prophetic meaning. No part of Scripture more fully states the gospel, and warns against the evil of sin.

4—8. *The apostle salutes the seven churches.*—This blessing is in the name of God, of the Holy Trinity, and is an act of adoration. The Father is first named ; he is the Jehovah who is, and who was, and who is to come, eternal, unchangeable. The Holy Spirit is called the seven spirits, the perfect Spirit of God, in whom there is a diversity of gifts and operations. The Lord Jesus Christ was from eternity, a Witness to all the counsels of God. He is the First-born from the dead, who will by his own power raise up his people. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth ; by him their counsels are overruled, and to him they are accountable. Christ has made believers kings and priests to God and his Father. As such they overcome the world, mortify sin, govern their own spirits, resist Satan, prevail with God in prayer, and shall judge the world. He has made them priests, given them access to God, enabled them to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices, and for these favours they are bound to ascribe to him dominion and glory for ever. Attention is called to that great day when all will see the wisdom and happiness of the friends of Christ, and the madness and misery of his enemies. Let us think frequently upon the second coming of Christ. He will come, to the terror of those who wound and crucify him by apostasy : he will come, to the astonishment of the whole world of the ungodly.

9—11. *Declares when, and where, and how the revelation was*

made to him.—The day and time when he had this vision was the Lord's day, the Christian sabbath, the first day of the week, observed in remembrance of the resurrection of Christ. The name shows how this sacred day should be observed; the Lord's day should be wholly devoted to the Lord, and none of its hours employed in a sensual, worldly manner, or in amusements.—He was in a serious, heavenly, spiritual frame, under the gracious influences of the Spirit of God. Those who would enjoy communion with God on the Lord's day, must seek to raise their thoughts and affections from earthly things. If believers are kept on the Lord's holy day, from public ordinances, by necessity and not from choice, they may look for comfort in meditation and secret duties, from the influences of the Spirit; and by hearing the voice, and contemplating the glory, of their beloved Saviour, from whose gracious words and power no confinement or outward circumstances can separate them.

12--20. *His vision in which he saw Christ appear.*—The churches receive their light from Christ and the gospel, and hold it forth to others. They are golden candlesticks; they should be precious and pure; not only the ministers, but the members of the churches; their light should so shine before men, as to engage others to give glory to God. And the apostle saw as though the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in the midst of the golden candlesticks. He is with his churches always, to the end of the world, filling them with light, and life, and love. He was clothed with a robe down to the feet, perhaps representing his righteousness and priesthood, as Mediator. This vest was girt with a golden girdle, which may denote how precious are his love and affection for his people. His head and hairs white like wool and as snow, may signify his majesty, purity, and eternity. His eyes as a flame of fire, may represent his knowledge of the secrets of all hearts, and of the most distant events. His feet like fine brass burning in a furnace, may denote the firmness of his appointments, and the excellence of his proceedings. His voice as the sound of many waters, may represent the power of his word, to remove or to destroy. The seven stars were emblems of the ministers of the seven churches to which the apostle was ordered to write, and whom Christ upheld and directed. The sword represented his justice, and his word, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, Heb. iv. 12. His countenance was like the sun when it shines clearly and powerfully; its strength too bright and dazzling for mortal eyes to behold. The Lord Jesus spake words of comfort; Fear not. Words of instruction; saying who thus appeared. Let us listen to the voice of

Christ, and receive the tokens of his love, for what can he withhold from those for whose sins he has died? May we then obey his word, and give up ourselves wholly to him who directs all things aright.

3. Matt. 13. 16; Luke 11. 28; Rom. 13. 11.—4. Seven churches in Asia; or Asia Minor—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea See v. 11. Seven spirits; generally understood to be a figurative phrase for the most perfect Spirit, or Holy Spirit.—5. Faithful; for he sealed his testimony with his blood.—7. Clouds; an emblem of his glorious appearing, 2 Thess. 1. 7-10.—8. Alpha and Omega; names of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.—9. Patmos; an island in the Archipelago, where the Romans imprisoned or exiled offenders. For the word; or for preaching it.—12. The voice, or person addressing him. Candlesticks; rather, lamp with seven branches (see Exod. 25. 31-37), implying the seven churches which were to be as "lights in the world."—13. The priest stood among the branches of the candlestick, or lamp stand, when he lighted the lamps, Numb. 8. 2, 3.—14. Snow and wool; probably to denote his antiquity, wisdom, and holiness of character. Flame of fire; penetrating, omniscient.—15. Brass; emblematical of durability. The Greek denotes copper found in Lebanon, which was considered purer even than gold.—16. Stars; ver. 20. Sword; see Eph. 6. 17. Shineth. as the sun in his meridian splendour; an emblem of Christ's glory.—18. Hell here denotes the invisible world. Keys; expressive of power and dominion.—20. Angels; ministers, or messengers.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1-7. *Epistle to the church at Ephesus.*—These churches were in such different states as to purity of doctrine and the power of godliness, that the words of Christ to them will always suit the cases of other churches and professors. The church of Ephesus is commended for diligence in duty. Christ keeps an account of every hour's work his servants do for him, and their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. But it is not enough that we are diligent; there must be bearing patience, and there must be waiting patience. The sin Christ charged this church with, is, not the having left and forsaken the object of love, but having lost the fervent degree of it that at first appeared. Christ is displeased with his people when he sees them grow remiss and cold towards him. They must be grieved and ashamed for their sinful declining, and humbly confess it in the sight of God. They must endeavour to recover their first zeal, tenderness, and seriousness, and must pray as earnestly, and watch as diligently, as when they first set out in the ways of God. All who persevere shall derive from Christ, as the Tree of life, perfection and confirmation in holiness and happiness, not in the earthly paradise, but in the heavenly. This is a figurative expression, taken from the account of the garden

of Eden, denoting the pure, satisfactory, and eternal joys of heaven; and the expectation of them in this world, by faith, communion with Christ, and the consolations of the Holy Spirit. Believers, take your wrestling life here, and expect and look for a quiet life hereafter; but not till then.

8—11. *At Smyrna.*—Our Lord Jesus is the First, for by him were all things made; he was before all things, with God, and is God himself. He is the Last, for he will be the Judge of all.—As this First and Last, who was dead and is alive, is the believer's Brother and Friend, he must be rich in the deepest poverty, honourable amidst the lowest abasement, and happy under the heaviest tribulation, like the church of Smyrna. Many who are rich as to this world, are poor as to the next; and some who are poor outwardly, are inwardly rich; rich in faith, in good works, rich in privileges, rich in gifts, rich in hope. Observe the sureness of the reward; "I will give thee:" they shall have the reward from Christ's own hand. Also, how suitable it is; "a crown of life:" the life worn out in his service, or laid down in his cause, shall be rewarded with a much better life, which shall be eternal. If a man is kept from the second death and wrath to come, he may patiently endure the trials he meets with in this world.

12—17. *At Pergamos.*—As our Lord notices all the advantages and opportunities we have for duty in the places where we dwell, so he notices our temptations and discouragements from the same causes. In a situation of trials, the church of Pergamos had not denied the faith, either by open apostasy, or by giving way so as to avoid the cross. Christ commends their steadfastness, but reproves their sinful failures. Repentance is the duty of churches and bodies of men, as well as of particular persons; those who sin together, should repent together. The new name is the name of adoption; when the Holy Spirit shows his own work in the believer's soul, this new name and its real import are understood by him.

18—29. *At Thyatira.*—Here is praise of the ministry and people of Thyatira, by One who knew the principles from which they acted. They grew wiser and better. All Christians should earnestly desire that their last works may be their best works. Yet this church connived at some wicked seducers. God is known by the judgments he executes; and in punishing seducers, he shows his certain knowledge of the hearts of men, of their principles, designs, frame, and temper. Encouragement is given to those who kept themselves pure and undefiled. There is promise of an ample reward to the persevering, victorious believer; also knowledge and wisdom, suitable to their

power and dominion. After every victory, let us follow up our advantage against the enemy, that we may overcome and continue to work for Christ to the end.

1. Ephesus is now reduced to a morass, covered with rushes and mud, which it is unhealthy to approach during six months in the year.—4. First love; the fervent love which they possessed on their first profession of faith in Christ Jesus.—6. The Nicolaitanes were a profligate sect of the Gnostics, who mixed heathen philosophy with Christian doctrine; they considered impure conduct as a matter of indifference.—7. Overcometh; the victor in the Grecian games was generally crowned with a wreath of the leaves of some evergreen, as a mark of honour. Tree of life; eternal life in heaven; an allusion to the tree in the garden of Eden, Gen. 2. 9.—8. Smyrna; the city of Ephesus was regarded as one of the eyes of Asia, on account of its grandeur; Smyrna was considered the "other eye;" it is still a prosperous city.—10. Ten days, probably signify during the reign of ten emperors, or some think ten years, under Diocletian, or it may denote the frequency of their persecutions.—12. Pergamos; formerly the capital of Mysia, on the river Caicus, sixty-four miles north of Smyrna; now called Bergamo.—13. Satan's seat, or where he reigns triumphant.—14. Numb. 25. 1, 2; 31. 16.—17. Hidden manna; doubtless Jesus Christ himself. White stone; in the Olympic games the winner received a white stone, with his name engraved upon it. The Roman judges used to cast a black stone into the urn if they condemned a criminal; if they pardoned him, a white stone. A new name; when a person was raised to new honours it was usual to give him a new name see Gen. 41. 45; Dan. 1. 7.—18. Thyatira; a city of Lydia, in Asia Minor, now called Ak-hissar, about fifty miles south-east of Smyrna, famous for its scarlet dye, Acts 16. 14.—20. Jezebel; may allude to some character as profligate as Ahab's wife, 1 Kings 16. 31; 21. 25; 2 Kings 9. 7; or it means symbolically the Romish church, or sect of seducers from the true religion, as the term woman is often used to signify a nation, a city, a church, or sect. This exactly describes the pretensions of the Romish church.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1—6. *Epistle to the church of Sardis.*—Hypocrisy and lamentable decay in religion are sins charged upon Sardis, by One who knew that church well, and all her works. Outward things appeared well to men, but there was only the form of godliness, not the power; a name to live, not a principle of life. There was great deadness in their souls, and in their services; numbers were wholly hypocrites, others were in a disordered and lifeless state.—Thy works are hollow and empty; prayers are not filled up with holy desires, alms-deeds not filled up with true charity, sabbaths not filled up with suitable devotion of soul to God. In seeking a revival in our own souls, or the souls of others, it is needful to compare what we profess with the manner in which we go on, that we may be humbled and quickened to hold fast that which remains.—Yet our Lord does not leave this sinful people without some en-

couragement. He makes honourable mention of the faithful remnant in Sardis, and gives a gracious promise to them. Christ has his book of life, a register of all who shall inherit eternal life; the book of remembrance of all who live to God, and keep up the life and power of godliness in evil times. Christ will bring forward this book of life, and show the names of the faithful, before God, and all the angels, at the great day.

7—13. *At Philadelphia.*—The same Lord Jesus has the key of government and authority in and over the church. He opens a door of opportunity to his churches; he opens a door of utterance to his ministers; he opens a door of entrance to the heart. He shuts the door of heaven against the foolish, who sleep away their day of grace; and against the workers of iniquity, how vain and confident soever they may be.—The church in Philadelphia is commended; yet with a gentle reproof. Although Christ accepts a little strength, yet believers must not rest satisfied with a little, but strive to grow in grace, to be strong in faith, giving glory to God. Those who keep the gospel in a time of peace, shall be kept by Christ in an hour of temptation; and the same Divine grace that has made them fruitful in times of peace, will make them faithful in times of persecution. Christ promises a glorious reward to the conqueror. He shall be a monumental pillar in the temple of God; a monument of the free and powerful grace of God; a monument that shall never be defaced or removed.

14—22. *At Laodicea.*—Laodicea was the last and worst of the seven churches of Asia. How many professors of gospel doctrine are neither hot nor cold; except as they are indifferent in needful matters, and hot and fiery in disputes about things of lesser moment!—One cause of this indifference and inconsistency in religion is, self-conceit and self-delusion. What a difference between their thoughts of themselves and the thoughts Christ had of them! How careful should we be not to cheat our own souls! Let us beg of God that we may not be left to flatter and deceive ourselves.—Good counsel was given by Christ to this sinful people. He lets them know where they might have true riches, and how they might have them. Some things must be parted with, but nothing valuable; and it is only to make room for receiving true riches. Part with sin and self-confidence, that you may be filled with his hidden treasure. They must receive from Christ the white raiment he purchased and provided for them; his own imputed righteousness for justification, and the garments of holiness and sanctification. Let them give themselves up to his word and Spirit, and their eyes shall be opened

to see their way and their end. Christ stood without; knocking, by the dealings of his providence, the warnings and teaching of his word, and the influences of his Spirit. Christ still graciously, by his word and Spirit, comes to the door of the hearts of sinners. If what he finds would make but a poor feast, what he brings will supply a rich one.—In the conclusion is a promise to the overcoming believer. Christ himself had temptations and conflicts; he overcame them all, and was more than a conqueror. Those made like to Christ in trials, shall be made like him in glory.

1. Sardis is now called Sart, an obscure little village. It was formerly the capital of Lydia, under Cræsus. By earthquakes, spoliations, etc., it has been reduced to its present condition.—2. Things which remain; of real piety.—4. A priest might not perform his office in defiled garments. Holiness the Jews considered the garb of the soul. White was used by the Romans, as a token of joy, at festivals, weddings, etc.; it was an emblem of purity, and a mark of favour and honour.—5. Book of life; see on Phil. 4. 3.—7. Philadelphia; so named from its founder, Attalus Philadelphus; its present name is Allah Shehr, and it consists of about 3000 meanly-built houses. The key of David signifies royal power.—8. Open door; a sphere for usefulness, or favourable opportunity for preaching the gospel.—12. The pillars of a temple are both its strength and ornament; in many of the ancient temples the names and deeds of illustrious nobles were written on them.—14. Laodicea; there were two cities of this name in Asia Minor; this is situated on the boundaries of Lydia and Phrygia. The destruction of this city was more terrible than any other of the seven churches. Beginning; head, or first cause, Col. 1. 15.—16. I will cast thee out of my mouth, or nauseate thee.—20. In the east, the servants sat in the house till a late hour, waiting till the bridegroom's return; when he returned, he knocked, according to the custom, then entered, and made them sit down to eat. It is a figure, showing the means used by Christ in seeking access to the heart, and the blessings resulting from his admission.—21. Sit; partake with him the glories of the heavenly kingdom.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1--8. *A vision of God, as on his glorious throne.*—The apostle saw a throne set in heaven, an emblem of the universal dominion of Jehovah. He saw a glorious One upon the throne, not described by human features, so as to be represented by a likeness or image, but only by his surpassing brightness. The rainbow is a fit emblem of that covenant of promise which God has made with Christ as the Head of the church, and with all his people in him. The prevailing colour was a pleasant green, showing the reviving and refreshing nature of the new covenant.—Around the throne were four-and-twenty elders, representing, probably, the whole church of God. Their sitting denotes honour, rest, and satisfaction; their sitting about the throne signifies nearness to God, the sight and enjoy-

ment they have of him. They were clothed in white raiment; the imputed righteousness of the saints and their holiness: they had on their heads crowns of gold, signifying the glory they have with him.—Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne; the gifts, graces, and operations of the Spirit of God in the churches of Christ, dispensed according to the will and pleasure of Him who sits upon the throne. In the gospel church, the laver for purification is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this all must be washed, to be admitted into the gracious presence of God on earth, and his glorious presence in heaven.—The apostle saw four living creatures, between the throne and the circle of the elders, standing between God and the people. These seem to signify the true ministers of the gospel, because of their place between God and the people. This also is shown by the description given, denoting wisdom, courage, diligence, and discretion, and the affections by which they rise to heaven.

9—11. *The songs of the elders, and of the holy angels.*—All true believers wholly ascribe their redemption and conversion, their present privileges and future hopes, to the eternal and most holy God. Thus rise the forever harmonious, thankful songs for the redeemed in heaven. Would we on earth do like them, let our praises be constant, not interrupted; united, not divided; thankful, not cold and formal; humble, not self-confident.

1. A door, etc., perhaps signifying the opportunity given the apostle for a sight of heavenly things.—2. A throne; emblematical of the glory and majesty of God, Isa. 6.—3. Jasper: a precious stone, "clear as crystal;" sardine is of a flaming red colour. Supposed to denote God's holiness and justice. Like unto emerald; a bright green colour. This colour is particularly grateful to the eye; an emblem of God's mercy.—4. May allude to the division of the priests, 1 Chron. 24, or, as Scott says, to the twelve patriarchs and apostles at the head of the Old and New Testament churches. Crowns of gold; or a superior priesthood to that of the Jews. See 1 Pet. 2. 9.—5—8. Sea of glass; probably in reference to the molten sea in Solomon's temple, 1 Kings 7. 23. Symbolizing, doubtless, the blood of Christ, Zech. 13. 1. The four beasts; or living creatures.—Calf; should be rendered ox. The eyes, wings, and names of animals, seem to denote the knowledge, courage, diligence, foresight, prudence, and meekness of the Christian church, and its readiness to do God's will.—Rest not: marginal reading, "they have no rest;" unwearied in the service of God.—10. Cast their crowns; in token of homage.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1—7. *The book sealed with seven seals.*—The apostle saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, a roll of parchments in the form usual in those times, and sealed with seven seals. This represented the secret purposes of

God about to be revealed. The counsels of God are altogether hidden from the eye and understanding of the creature. The several parts are not unsealed and opened at once, but after each other, till the whole mystery of God's counsel and conduct is finished in the world.—The creatures cannot open it, nor read it; the Lord only can do so. Those who see most of God, are most desirous to see more; and those who have seen his glory, desire to know his will. But even good men may be too eager and hasty to pry into the mysteries of the Divine conduct. We need not weep that we cannot foresee future events respecting ourselves in this world; the eager expectation of future events, or the foresight of future calamities, would alike unfit us for present duties and conflicts, or render our prosperous days distressing. Christ is called a Lion, but he appears as a Lamb slain. He appears with the marks of his sufferings, to show that he pleads for us in heaven, in virtue of his satisfaction. He appears as a Lamb, having seven horns and seven eyes; perfect power to execute all the will of God, and perfect wisdom to understand it, and to do it in the most effectual manner. The Father put the book of his eternal counsels into the hand of Christ, and Christ readily took it; for he delights to make known the will of his Father; and the Holy Spirit is given by him to reveal the truth and will of God.

8—14. *All honour is ascribed to Christ, as worthy to open the book.*—It is matter of joy to all the world to see that God deals with men in grace and mercy through the Redeemer. He governs the world, not merely as a Creator, but as our Saviour. The harps were instruments of praise; the vials were full of odours, or incense, which signify the prayers of the saints: prayer and praise should always go together. Christ has not only purchased liberty for his people, but the highest honour and preferment; he made them kings and priests: kings, to rule over their own spirits, and to overcome the world, and the evil one; and he makes them priests, giving them access to himself, and liberty to offer up spiritual sacrifices.—What words can more fully declare that Christ is, and ought to be, worshipped, equally with the Father, by all creatures? Happy those who shall adore and praise in heaven, and shall for ever bless the Lamb, who delivered and set them apart for himself by his blood.

1. A book; books were made of sheets of parchment, and rolled on a roller; this book might have contained seven sheets, each sheet sealed. Sealed; because not revealed.—5. Lion, etc.; the warlike tribe of Judah is compared to a lion, Gen. 49. 8-10; Christ, our Conqueror, was born of that tribe. Root of David; from the house of David.—6. Lamb; because slain as a sacrifice for sin. Seven horns; denoting perfect authority and power. Seven eyes; may signify per-

fection, knowledge, and wisdom. See on ch. 3. 4.—8. Harps; a figurative expression for praise. Vials; or basins. Odours; incense. At the dedication of the tabernacle incense was offered, Numb. 7. 10, 14. The saints; God's people.—9. They; the elders. A new song; unknown to former ages.—10. Kings and priests; or a royal priesthood.—11. Ten thousand times, etc.; or company not to be numbered.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1—8. *The opening of the first, second, third, and fourth seals.*—Christ, the Lamb, opens the first seal, and there appeared a rider on a white horse. By the going forth of this white horse, a time of peace, or the early progress of the Christian religion, seems to be intended; its going forth in purity, at the time when its heavenly Founder sent his apostles to teach all nations. The Divine religion goes out crowned, having the Divine favour resting upon it, armed spiritually against its foes, and destined to be victorious in the end.—On opening the second seal, a red horse appeared; this signifies desolating judgments.—The sword of war and persecution is a dreadful judgment; it takes away peace from the earth, one of the greatest blessings. Such scenes followed the pure age of early Christianity, when, neglectful of charity and the bond of peace, the Christian leaders, divided among themselves, appeared to the sword, and entangled themselves in guilt.—On opening the third seal, a black horse appeared; a colour denoting mourning and woe, darkness and ignorance. He that sat on it had a yoke in his hand. Attempts were made to put a yoke of superstitious observances on the disciples. As the stream of Christianity flowed further from its pure fountain, it became more and more corrupt. During the progress of this black horse, the necessaries of life should be very dear. According to prophetic language, these articles signified that food of religious knowledge, by which the souls of men are sustained unto everlasting life.—Upon opening the fourth seal, another horse appeared, of a pale colour. The rider was Death, the king of terrors. The attendants, or followers of this king of terrors, hell, a state of eternal misery to all who die in their sins; and in times of general destruction, multitudes go down unprepared into the pit. The period of the fourth seal is one of great slaughter and devastation, destroying whatever may tend to make life happy, making ravages on the spiritual lives of men. Thus the mystery of iniquity was completed, and its power extended both over the lives and consciences of men. The exact times of these four seals cannot be ascertained, for the changes were gradual.

9—11. *The fifth.*—The sight the apostle beheld at the opening the fifth seal was very affecting. He saw the souls of the martyrs under the altar; at the foot of the altar in heaven, at the feet of Christ. God has provided a good place in the better world for those who are faithful unto death. The cause in which they suffered, was for the word of God; the best any man can lay down his life for. As the measure of the sin of persecutors is filling up, so is the number of the persecuted, martyred servants of Christ. When this is fulfilled, God will send tribulation to those who trouble them, and unbroken happiness and rest to those that are troubled.

12—17. *The sixth.*—When the sixth seal was opened, there was a great earthquake. The foundations of churches and states would be terribly shaken. Dread and terror would seize on all sorts of men. Men would be glad to be no more seen; yea, to have no longer any being; for the wrath of the Lamb is exceedingly dreadful. If the Redeemer himself, who appeases the wrath of God, be our enemy, where shall we find a friend to plead for us? It seems that the overthrow of the paganism of the Roman empire is here meant. The idolaters are described as hiding themselves in their dens and secret caves, and vainly seeking to escape ruin. In such a day, when the signs of the times show those who believe in God's word, that the King of kings is approaching, Christians are called to a decided course, and to a bold confession of Christ and his truth before their fellow men.

1. The subject of this prophecy is generally supposed to have commenced from the setting up of Christ's kingdom. Seals; or periods. —2. White horses were used in the Roman triumphs in token of victory; the extension of the kingdom of Christ Jesus is here intended. Bow; crown; emblems of conquest and royalty, Psa. 45. 3-6.—3. This period is supposed to have begun with Trajan, and continued ninety-five years. Red; denoting war and bloodshed.—4. Balances; the Greek word also signifies a yoke, an emblem of slavery. Balances may also denote the care with which food was measured out in a time of scarcity.—5. A measure (see margin); "the word *chouix* signifies a measure containing one wine quart, and the twelfth part of a quart," enough for the daily meal of a poor family, and costing a *denarius*, or day's wages.—6. Death and Hell; alluding to the wars of that period. There was not only much destruction of life, but also of things conducive to its existence.—7, 8. Altar; alluding to the temple altar of burnt-offering. There may be an allusion to the persecutions of Christians from Christ's death till the consummation of all things.—9, 10. White robes. See on ch. 3. 4.—11. Earthquake; referring, doubtless, to great commotion and changes; the downfall of the persecutors and their false religion. It may also allude more particularly to the last day. See 2 Pet. 3.—12. Untimely; unripe, or green.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1—8. *A pause between two great periods. The peace, happiness, and safety of the saints.*—In the figurative language of Scripture, the blowing of the four winds together, means a dreadful and general destruction. But the destruction is delayed. The Lord would not suffer his people to be afflicted before they were marked, that they might be prepared against all conflicts. Observe, of those who are thus sealed by the Spirit, the seal must be on the forehead, plainly to be seen alike by friends and foes, but not by the believer himself, except as he looks stedfastly in the glass of God's word.—The number of those who were sealed, may be understood to stand for the remnant of the people which God reserved. Though the church of God is but a little flock, in comparison with the wicked world, yet it is a society really large, and to be still more enlarged.

9—12. *A song of praise.*—The firstfruits of Christ having led the way, the Gentiles converted later, follow, and ascribe their salvation to God and the Redeemer, with triumph.—They were clothed with the robes of justification, holiness, and victory; and they had palms in their hands, as conquerors used to appear in their triumphs. Such a glorious appearance will the faithful servants of God make at last, when they have fought the good fight of faith, and finished their course. With a loud voice they gave to God and the Lamb the praise of the great salvation.—We see what is the work of heaven, and we ought to begin it now, to have our hearts much in it, and to long for that world where our praises and our happiness will be perfect.

13—17. *The blessed martyrs.*—The way to heaven is through many tribulations; but tribulation makes heaven more welcome, and more glorious. It is not the blood of the martyrs, but the blood of the Lamb, that can wash away sin, and make the soul pure and clean in the sight of God: other blood stains, this is the only blood that makes the robes of the saints white and clean.—They are happy in their employment; heaven is a state of service, though not of suffering; it is a state of rest, but not of sloth; it is a praising, delightful rest. They have had sorrows, and shed many tears on account of sin and affliction; but God himself, with his own gracious hand, will wipe those tears away. As all the redeemed owe their happiness wholly to sovereign mercy, so the work and worship of God their Saviour is their element; his presence and favour complete their happiness; they desire no other joy.

1. Four corners; every part of the earth. Four winds; emblematic

tical of confusion and destruction. A figure to show God's gracious preservation of his people in the fiercest displays of his wrath towards his enemies.—2. Angel would here signify, the means used for the accomplishment of God's purpose.—3. Sealed; a metaphor borrowed from a custom of former times of branding servants in their foreheads, to denote what they were, and whose they were, Eph. 1. 13.—4. Here the universal church is figured under the type of Israel.—5. The tribes of Dan and Ephraim are omitted, perhaps because of their idolatry, Judges 18. 30. Those of Joseph and Levi are inserted in their stead.—9. Palm branches were borne by ancient conquerors.—16. The sun; in the east the sun's rays are very oppressive.—17. Living; fountains were said to be living when constantly flowing.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1—6. *The seventh seal is opened, and seven angels appear with seven trumpets. Another angel casts fire on the earth. The seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets.*—The seventh seal is opened. There was profound silence in heaven for a space: all was quiet in the church, for whenever the church on earth cries through oppression, that cry reaches up to heaven; or it is a silence of expectation. Trumpets were given to the angels, who were to sound them. The Lord Jesus is the High Priest of the church, having a golden censer, and much incense, fulness of merit in his own glorious person.—Would that men studied to know the fulness that is in Christ, and endeavoured to be acquainted with his excellency! Would that they were truly persuaded that Christ has such an office as that of Intercessor, which he now performs with deep sympathy! The Christian worship and religion, pure and heavenly in its origin and nature, when sent down to earth and conflicting with the passions and worldly projects of sinful men, produced remarkable tumults, here set forth in prophetic language, as our Lord himself declared, Luke xii. 49.

7—13 *Four sound them. Another angel denounces greater woes to come.*—The first angel sounded the first trumpet, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood. A storm of heresies, a mixture of dreadful errors falling on the church, or a tempest of destruction.—The second angel sounded, and a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood. By this mountain some understand leaders of the persecutions; others, Rome sacked by the Goths and Vandals, with great slaughter and cruelty.—The third angel sounded, and there fell a star from heaven. Some take this to be an eminent governor; others take it to be some person in power who corrupted the churches of Christ. The doctrines of the gospel, the springs of spiritual life, comfort, and vigour, to the souls of men, are corrupted and made bitter by the mixture of dangerous errors, so that

the souls of men find ruin where they sought refreshment. The fourth angel sounded, and darkness fell upon the great lights of heaven, that give light to the world. The guides and governors are placed higher than the people, and are to dispense light, and kind influences to them. Where the gospel comes to a people, and has not proper effects on their hearts and lives, it is followed with dreadful judgments. God gives alarm by the written word, by ministers, by men's own consciences, and by the signs of the times; so that if people are surprised, it is their own fault. Before the other three trumpets were sounded, there was a solemn warning how terrible the calamities would be that should follow. If lesser judgments do not take effect, the church and the world must expect greater.

2. Seven here denotes the importance of the period, ch. 1. 4.—3. An allusion to the service of the tabernacle; the priest went alone into the holy place, Lev. 16. 17.—4. The people usually stood without, and prayed while the priest offered up the burning incense, Exod. 30. 7, 8; Luke 1. 9, 10. Christ, as the High Priest of his people, renders their prayers acceptable to God.—5. Christ is not only a Mediator but a Judge. Fire denotes the punishments he will execute on his enemies. Voices, etc.; figurative expressions for the calamities which should befall the nations.—7. Trees; green grass; may refer to the destruction of rich and poor, young and old. Trees are figurative of those of high rank, Isa. 2. 13.—8. Sea; a figure for a large multitude of people, ch. 17. 15. War and bloodshed prevailed in a third part of the empire.—9. Denotes that the third part of the inhabitants, by sea and land, were put to death.—10. A star, in prophetic language, means a prince, or a leader. Fell; denoting the suddenness of his coming.—12. Sun, etc.; figures for the eminence of Rome among the nations. Rome became finally a tributary dukedom.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1—12. *The fifth trumpet is followed by another star falling from heaven.*—Upon sounding the fifth trumpet, a star fell from heaven to the earth. Having ceased to be a minister of Christ, he who is represented by this star becomes the minister of the devil; and lets loose the powers of hell against the churches of Christ. On the opening of the bottomless pit, there arose a great smoke. The devil carries on his designs by putting out light and knowledge, and promoting ignorance and error. Out of this smoke there came a swarm of locusts, emblems of the devil's agents, who promote superstition, idolatry, error, and cruelty. The trees and the grass, the true believers, whether young or more advanced, should be untouched. But a secret infection in the soul, should rob many others of purity, and afterwards of peace. The locusts had no power to hurt those who had the seal of God. The power is limited to a short season; but it would be very sharp.

In such events, the faithful share the common calamity, but from the pestilence of error they would be safe. We collect from Scripture, that such errors were to try the Christians, 1 Cor. 11. 19. And early writers plainly refer this to the first great host of corrupters who overspread the Christian church.

13—21. *The sixth trumpet is followed by the loosing of four angels bound in the great river Euphrates.*—The sixth angel sounded, and here the power of the Turks seems the subject. They not only slew in war, but brought a poisonous and ruinous religion. The antichristian generation repented not under these judgments. From this sixth trumpet learn that God can make one enemy of the church a scourge to another. The idolatry in the remains of the eastern church and elsewhere, and the sins of professed Christians, render this prophecy and its fulfilment more wonderful. And the attentive reader of Scripture and history, may find his faith and hope strengthened by events, which in other respects fill his heart with anguish and his eyes with tears, while he sees that men who escape these plagues go on with idolatries, wickedness, and cruelty, till wrath comes upon them to the utmost.

2. Smoke; an emblem of darkness.—3. Locusts; generally understood as heretics, who greatly disturbed the church.—4. Grass, etc.; may be emblems of Christians in a flourishing condition; as fruitful trees of righteousness.—5. Scorpion; the sting of this animal causes excruciating pain; it moves about with its sting always ready to defend itself, or to attack its insect prey.—7. The locust's head is considered by some to resemble the head of the horse.—8. Teeth; a figure denoting cruelty, and rapacity, and plunder, as also strength.—10. Tails, etc.; denoting the injurious influence they left wherever they went.—11. Abaddon; Apollyon; both these names mean destroyer; they may refer to Mohammed, who was the destroyer to all whom he considered his enemies; or to the Romish apostasy; and it also refers to Satan, the prince of the powers of darkness.—12. One woe; denoting one calamitous period.—15. An hour, etc.; figures signifying a definite period.—18. Many have thought that this predicts fighting with guns and powder.—21. Sorceries, or what is called "the black art," we know was much studied and practised in the middle ages.

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1—7. *The Angel of the covenant presents a little open book.*—The apostle saw another representation. The person communicating this discovery probably was our Lord Jesus Christ. He veils his glory, which is too great for mortal eyes to behold; and throws a veil upon his dispensations. A rainbow was upon his head, for he is always mindful of his covenant. His awful voice was echoed by seven thunders, solemn and terrible ways of discovering the mind of God.

We know not the subjects of the seven thunders, nor the reasons for suppressing them. There are great events in history, perhaps relating to the Christian church, which are not noticed in open prophecy. The final salvation of the righteous, and the final success of true religion on earth, are engaged for by the unfailing word of the Lord. Though the time may not be yet, it cannot be far distant. Very soon, as to us, time will be no more; but if we are believers, a happy eternity will follow; we shall from heaven behold and rejoice in the triumphs of Christ, and his cause on earth.

8—11. *A voice directs the apostle to eat the book.*—Most men feel pleasure in looking into future events, and all good men like to receive a word from God. But when this book of prophecy was thoroughly digested by the apostle, the contents would be bitter; there were things so awful, such grievous persecutions of the people of God, and desolations in the earth, that the foreknowledge of them would be painful. Let us seek to be taught by Christ, and to obey his orders; daily meditating on his word, that it may nourish our souls. The sweetness of such contemplations will often be mingled with bitterness, while we compare the Scriptures with the state of the world and the church, or even with that of our own hearts.

1. A rainbow; showing the harmony in all the workings of Providence, and a sign that God will fulfil all his word. Sun; denoting Divine majesty.—2. Little book open; considered by some to be the word of God, which is forbidden to be read in the vulgar tongue by the Roman Catholics, which was opened to all by the Reformation. Right foot, etc.; denotes the universal sovereignty of Christ.—3. By many supposed to refer to the boldness of the reformers. Seven thunders; wars and hostile invasions. Generally understood to denote those which succeeded the Reformation.—5. To lift up the hand is to make solemn oath.—6. Time, etc.; here signifies there should be a fulfilment of God's purposes without delay.—10. Figurative language, denoting the joy which the apostle felt when he understood the meaning of the vision; but that he was grieved when he learned what wars and calamities should follow, Ezek. 2. 10; 3. 3.

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1, 2. *The state of the church under the figure of a temple measured.*—This prophetic passage about measuring the temple seems to refer to Ezekiel's vision. The design of this measuring seems to be the preservation of the church in times of public danger; or for its trial, or for its reformation. The worshippers must be measured; whether they make God's glory their end, and his word their rule, in all their acts of worship. Those in the outer court worship in a false manner, or with dissembling hearts,

and will be found among his enemies. The holy city, the visible church, is trodden under foot; is filled with idolaters, infidels, and hypocrites. But her desolations are limited, and she shall be delivered out of all her troubles.

3-13. *Two witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, and are slain.*-- In the time of treading down, God kept his faithful witnesses to attest the truth of his word and worship, and the excellence of his ways. The number of these witnesses is small, yet enough. They prophesy in sackcloth, which shows their afflicted, persecuted state, and deep sorrow for the abominations against which they protested. They are supported during their great and hard work till it is done. When they had prophesied in sackcloth the greatest part of 1260 years, antichrist, the great instrument of the devil, would war against them, with force and violence for a time. Determined rebels against the light rejoice, as on some happy event, when they can silence, drive to a distance, or destroy the faithful servants of Christ, whose doctrine and conduct torment them.--It does not appear that the term is yet expired, and the witnesses are not at present exposed to endure such terrible outward sufferings as in former times; but such things may again happen, and there is abundant cause to prophesy in sackcloth, on account of the state of religion.--It will be no small part of the punishment of persecutors, both in this world, and at the great day, that they see the faithful servants of God honoured and advanced. The Lord's witnesses must not be weary of suffering and service, nor hastily grasp at the reward; but must stay till their Master calls them. The consequence of their being thus exalted was a mighty shock and convulsion in the antichristian empire. Events alone can show the meaning of this. But whenever God's work and witnesses revive, the devil's work and witnesses fall before him.

14-19. *Under the seventh trumpet, all antichristian powers are to be destroyed.*--The nations met God's wrath with their own anger. It was a time in which he was beginning to reward his people's faithful services and sufferings; and their enemies fretted against God, and so increased their guilt, and hastened their destruction.--By the opening the temple of God in heaven, may be meant, that there was a more free communication between heaven and earth; prayer and praises more freely and frequently going up, graces and blessings plentifully coming down. But it rather seems to refer to the church of God on earth. In the reign of antichrist, God's law was laid aside, and made void by traditions and decrees; the Scriptures were locked up from the people, but now they are brought to the view

of all. This, like the ark, is a token of the presence of God returned to his people, and his favour toward them in Jesus Christ, as the propitiation for their sins. The great blessing of the Reformation was attended with very awful providences; as by terrible things in righteousness God answered the prayers presented in his holy temple now opened.

1. Zech. 2. 1-5; Ezek. 40. A reed; a cane, or stick, used for measuring. An architect formerly took the dimensions of a building before rebuilding it.—3. Two witnesses; probably in allusion to Deut. 19. 17, implying a sufficiency of witnesses to confirm the truth. Marginal reading, "I will give unto my two witnesses that they may prophesy," etc. Sackcloth; an emblem of mourning, on account of persecution, etc., 1 Kings 21. 27; Job 16. 15. In prophetic language, a day generally means a year.—4. Two olive trees, Zech. 4. 3, 11-14.—6. May refer to Elijah, 1 Kings 17. 1, and to the miracles in Egypt, Exod. 7, etc.; signifying God will defend his church as in former days.—9. Antiochus Epiphanes conquered Jerusalem, and had power over it three years and a half; during this time the services of the temple were stopped. The figure conveys the idea that the servants of God would be prevented proclaiming the truth for this period, which was to the world as though they had been dead.—11, 12. Figurative language; illustrating God's gracious interposition for their deliverance, whereby his servants are, as it were, raised from the dead, and held in awe and reverence; exalted, as it were, to heaven.—13. This is supposed to mean some calamity sent on the Romish church.—15. This refers to the destruction of antichrist.—18. The nations; Rome and those who were opposers of the truth. Destroy; corrupt the earth.

CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1-6. *A description of the church of Christ and of Satan, under the figures of a woman and of a great red dragon.*

—The church, under the emblem of a woman, the mother of believers, was seen clothed with the sun, justified, sanctified, and shining by union with Christ, the Sun of righteousness. The moon was under her feet; she was superior to the reflected and feebler light of the revelation made by Moses. Having on her head a crown of twelve stars; the doctrine of the gospel, preached by the twelve apostles, is a crown of glory to all true believers. As in pain to bring forth a holy family; desirous that the conviction of sinners might end in their conversion. A dragon is a known emblem of Satan, and his chief agents, or those who govern for him on earth, at that time the pagan empire of Rome, the city built upon seven hills. As having ten horns, divided into ten kingdoms. Having seven crowns, representing seven forms of government. As drawing with his tail a third part of the stars in heaven, and casting them down to the earth; persecuting and seducing the ministers and teachers. As watchful to crush

the Christian religion; but in spite of the opposition of enemies, the church brought forth a manly issue of true and faithful professors, in whom Christ was truly formed anew. This blessed offspring was protected by God.

7—12. *Michael and his angels fight against the devil and his angels.*—The seat of this war was in the church of Christ, the kingdom of heaven on earth. The strength of the church is in having the Lord Jesus for the Captain of their salvation. Pagan idolatry, which was the worship of devils, was cast out of the empire by the spreading of Christianity. The salvation and strength of the church are only to be ascribed to the King and Head of the church. The conquered enemy hates the presence of God, yet he is willing to appear there, to accuse the people of God. The servants of God overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, as the cause. By the word of their testimony: the powerful preaching of the gospel is mighty, through God, to pull down strongholds. By their courage and patience in sufferings: they loved not their lives so well but they could lay them down in Christ's cause.—These were the warriors and the weapons by which Christianity overthrew the power of pagan idolatry; and if Christians had continued to fight with these weapons, and such as these, their victories would have been more numerous and glorious, and the effects more lasting.

13—17. *The dragon persecutes the church.*—The wilderness is a desolate place, and full of serpents and scorpions, uncomfortable and destitute of provisions; yet a place of safety, as well as where one might be alone. But being thus retired could not protect the woman. The flood of water is explained by many to mean the invasions of barbarians, by which the western empire was overwhelmed; for the heathen encouraged their attacks, in the hope of destroying Christianity. But ungodly men, for their worldly interests, protected the church amidst these tumults, and the overthrow of the empire did not help the cause of idolatry. Or, this may be meant of a flood of error, by which the church was in danger of being overwhelmed. The devil, defeated in his designs upon the church, turns his rage against persons and places. Being faithful to God and Christ, in doctrine, worship, and practice, exposes to the rage of Satan; and will do so till the last enemy shall be destroyed.

1. Wonder; or sign, Ezek. 40.—3. Dragon; a figure for Satan; see ver. 9. Red; purple or scarlet, a favourite colour with popes and cardinals, and which was worn by the emperors of Rome. Seven heads; the hills on which Rome was built, Rev. 17. 9, 10.—4. Stars, kings and potentates of the earth.—7—10. Michael see Dan. 10. 13;

ude 9. Archangel; the term implies rule and authority over other angels. These verses represent the contest between the true church and false teachers, and the final victory of the saints. Many of the defenders of the truth sealed their testimony by a martyr's death, Rom. 8. 36.—13. Cast unto the earth; or defeated by the truth.—14-16. Two wings may allude to Deut. 32. 10, 11. Water; floods; denote great persecution, as of a mighty torrent rushing through the earth.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1—10. *A wild beast rises out of the sea, to whom the dragon gives his power.*—The apostle, standing on the shore, saw a savage beast rise out of the sea; a tyrannical, idolatrous, persecuting power, springing up out of the troubles which took place. It appears to mean that worldly, oppressing dominion, which for many ages, even from the times of the Babylonish captivity, had been hostile to the church. The first beast then began to oppress and persecute the righteous for righteousness' sake, but they suffered most under the fourth beast of Daniel, (the -Roman empire,) which has afflicted the saints with many cruel persecutions.—The source of its power was the dragon; for it was set up by the devil, and supported by him. The wounding the head may be the abolishing pagan idolatry; and the healing of the wound, introducing popish idolatry, the same in substance, only in a new dress, but which as effectually answers the design of Satan. It exercised infernal power and policy, requiring men to render that honour to creatures which belongs to God alone. Yet Christ has a chosen remnant, redeemed by his blood, recorded in his book, sealed by his Spirit; and though the devil and antichrist may overcome the body, and take away the life, they cannot conquer the soul, or prevail with true believers to forsake their Saviour, and join his enemies.

11—18. *Another beast rises, which has two horns like a lamb, but speaks as a dragon.*—Those who understand the first beast to denote a worldly power, take the second to be also a persecuting and assumed power, which acts under the disguise of religion, and of charity to the souls of men. It is a spiritual dominion, professing to be derived from Christ, and exercised at first in a gentle manner, but soon spake like the dragon. Its speech betrayed it; for it gives forth those false doctrines and cruel decrees, which show it to belong to the dragon, and not to the Lamb. It exercised all the power of the former beast. It pursues the same design, to draw men from worshipping the true God, and to subject their souls to human power and control. The second beast has carried on its designs, by methods whereby men should be deceived to worship the former

beast, in the new shape, or likeness made for it. By lying wonders, pretended miracles; and by severe censures. It is made a qualification for buying and selling, as well as for places of profit and trust, that they oblige themselves to use all their interest, power, and endeavour, to forward the dominion of the beast, which is meant by receiving his mark.—The number of the beast is given, so as to show the infinite wisdom of God, and to exercise the wisdom of men. The number is the number of a man, computed after the usual manner among men, and it is 666. What or who is intended by this, remains a mystery. To almost every religious dispute this number has been applied, and it may reasonably be doubted whether the meaning has yet been discovered. But he who has wisdom and understanding, will see that all the enemies of God are numbered and marked out for destruction; and that the term of their power will soon expire.

1. A beast, etc.; denotes a great persecuting power. The sea is often used to signify a vast multitude, or nations, or a disturbed state of things. The horn is a symbol of strength, *Psa.* 75. 5, 10; 89. 17; *Jer.* 48. 25; *Luke* 1. 69. Ten horns; the Roman empire was divided into ten kingdoms.—2. The leopard is a fierce animal, and extremely cruel to man; it combines in itself something of the nature of the lion and panther. It is an apt emblem of a cruel and persecuting power.—4. Worshipped; implies submission.—5. See on 2 *Thess.* 2. 4, etc. To continue, or make war. Forty and two months, or 1260 years.—7. *Dan.* 7. 21, 25.—13, 14. 2 *Thess.* 2. 9–12. Image; this seems to denote that there should be the same intolerance and cruelty as formerly.—15. Life; or breath; that is, the designs and cruelties of the system would be carried on with vigour. The image may signify the acts and councils of the Romish church.—16. Mark; see on Scaled, *ch.* 7. 3.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1–5. *Those faithful to Christ celebrate the praises of God.*—Mount Sion is the gospel church. Christ is with his church. His presence secures perseverance. His people appear honourable. They have the name of God written in their foreheads; they make a bold and open profession of their faith in God and Christ. There were persons in the darkest times, who ventured and laid down their lives for the worship and truth of the gospel of Christ. They kept themselves clean from the wicked abominations of the followers of antichrist. Those who are really justified and sanctified are meant here, for no hypocrite, however plausible, is accounted without fault before God.

6–13. *Three angels; one proclaiming the everlasting gospel; another, the downfall of Babylon; and a third, the dreadful wrath of God on the worshippers of the beast. The blessedness of those who die in the Lord.*—The progress of the Reforma-

tion appears to be here set forth. The four proclamations are plain in their meaning; that all Christians may be encouraged, in the time of trial, to be faithful to their Lord. — If any persist in being subject to the beast, and in promoting his cause, they must expect to be for ever miserable in soul and body. — Observe the description of those that are and shall be blessed: such as die in the Lord; die in the cause of Christ, in a state of union with Christ; such as are found in Christ when death comes. They rest from all sin, temptation, sorrow, and persecution. Their works follow them: do not go before as their title or purchase, but follow them as proofs of their having lived and died in the Lord: the remembrance of them will be pleasant, and the reward far above all their services and sufferings.

14—20. *A vision of a harvest ripe for cutting down, and the emblem of a vintage fully ripe.*—Warnings and judgments not having produced reformation, the sins of the nations are filled up, and they become ripe for judgments, represented by a harvest, an emblem which is used to signify the gathering of the righteous, when ripe for heaven, by the mercy of God. The harvest time is when the corn is ripe; when the believers are ripe for heaven, then the wheat of the earth shall be gathered into Christ's garner. Also by a vintage. The enemies of Christ and his church are not destroyed, till by their sin they are ripe for ruin. The wine-press is the wrath of God, some terrible calamity, probably the sword, shedding the blood of the wicked. The patience of God towards sinners, is the greatest miracle in the world; but, though lasting, it will not be everlasting.

1. Lamb; Jesus Christ, who was, as a lamb, slain as a sacrifice for sin.—2. Waters, thunder, harps, seem to be emblems of strength of chorus and harmony, in allusion to the temple service when the whole nation came up to worship.—4. Virgins; in opposition to the description of Babylon, Rev. 18. Firstfruits; Jas. 1. 18.—6. Seems to denote the various efforts for the spread of the gospel.—8. Babylon, etc.; considered to refer to the fall of the Romish church: in prophecy things are said to be done already, to show that the fulfillment is certain, Isa. 21. 9; Jer. 51. 8.—10. Wine, etc.; probably in reference to the wine which was given to malefactors by the Jews; denoting the great anger of God, Psa. 75. 8. Fire and brimstone; probably in reference to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 19. 24.—12. Patience; what the saints have been expecting or waiting for. They; supposed to mean their triumphs, or the accomplishment of their expectations.—14. Golden crown: denoting Christ's sovereignty.—15. Possibly it is an allusion to the custom in Judæa, at the feast of the passover, when the sannedrim gave orders for the reaping of the first corn: none was reaped till the order was given.—19. Alluding to the treading of the grapes in the wine-press.

CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1—4. *A song of praise is sung by the church.*—This short chapter is introductory to pouring out the vials of divine judgments mentioned in the next chapter. Seven angels appeared in heaven; they are prepared to finish the destruction of antichrist. While believers stand in this world, in times of trouble, as upon a sea of glass mingled with fire, they may look forward to their final deliverance: at the same time, new mercies call forth new hymns of praise. The more we know of God's wonderful works, the more we shall praise his greatness as the Lord God Almighty, the Creator and Ruler of all worlds; but his title of Emmanuel, the King of saints, will make him dear to us. Who that considers the power of God's wrath, the value of his favour, and the glory of his holiness, would refuse to fear and honour him?

5—8. *Seven angels with the seven plagues.*—These angels are prepared for their work, clothed with pure and white linen, their breasts girded with golden girdles, representing the holiness, and righteousness, and excellence of these dealings with men. They are ministers of Divine justice, and do everything in a pure and holy manner. They were armed with the wrath of God against his enemies. The angels received the vials from one of the four living creatures, one of the ministers of the true church, as in answer to the prayers of the ministers and people of God. Antichrist could not be destroyed without a great shock to all the world, and even the people of God would be in trouble and confusion while the great work was doing. The happy state of the true church will not begin till obstinate enemies shall be destroyed, and lukewarm and formal Christians are purified. Then, whatever is against Scripture being purged away, the whole church shall be spiritual, and the whole being brought to purity, unity, and spirituality, shall be firmly established.

2. *Stand on*; some think this should be rendered, *at*. It implies a holy assurance of their safety. The sea may denote the agitated times in which the church lived: of glass; may signify the insecurity of their position considered in itself. Mingled with fire; the persecutions, or trials, to which they were subjected, or as some think, the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit.—3. Deut. 32. 4; Psa. 145. 17; Exod. 15.—5. Tabernacle of the testimony; in allusion to the Holy of Holies.—6. Emblematical of the priesthood, Exod. 28.—7. Golden vials; in allusion to the golden censer of incense, used in the ancient temple.—8. Smoke; may have a reference to the darkness of the dispensations, and may set forth the horrors which the enemies of God would experience while these judgments were executing. The figure may also allude to Exod. 40. 34—38.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1—7. *The first vial is poured out on the earth, the second on the sea, the third on the rivers and fountains.*—Here is a succession of terrible judgments of Providence; there seems to be an allusion to several of the plagues of Egypt. The sins were alike, and so were the punishments. The vials refer to the seven trumpets, which represented the rise of antichrist; and the fall of the enemies of the church shall bear some resemblance to their rise. All things throughout their earth, their air, their sea, their rivers, their cities, all are condemned to ruin, all accursed for the wickedness of the people. No wonder that angels, who witness or execute the Divine vengeance on the obstinate haters of God, of Christ, and of holiness, praise his justice and truth; and adore his awful judgments, when he brings upon cruel persecutors the tortures they made his saints and prophets suffer.

8—11. *The fourth on the sun, the fifth on the seat of the beast.*—The heart of man is so desperately wicked, that the most severe miseries never will bring any to repent, without the special grace of God. Hell itself is filled with blasphemies, and those are ignorant of the history of human nature, of the Bible, and of their own hearts, who do not know that the more men suffer, and the more plainly they see the hand of God in their sufferings, the more furiously they often rage against him.—Darkness is opposed to wisdom and knowledge, and forebodes the confusion and folly of the idolaters and followers of the beast. It is opposed to pleasure and joy, and signifies anguish and vexation of spirit.

12—16. *The sixth on the great river Euphrates.*—This probably shows the destruction of the Turkish power, and of idolatry, and that a way will be made for the return of the Jews. Or, take it for Rome, as mystical Babylon, the name of Babylon being put for Rome, which was meant, but was not then to be directly named. When Rome is destroyed, her river and merchandise must suffer with her. And perhaps a way will be opened for the eastern nations to come into the church of Christ. The great dragon will collect all his forces, to make one desperate struggle before all be lost. God warns his people of this great trial, to engage them to prepare for it. These will be times of great temptation; therefore Christ, by his apostle, calls on his professed servants to expect his sudden coming, and to watch that they might not be put to shame, as apostates or hypocrites. However Christians differ, as to their views of the times and seasons of events yet to be brought to pass, on this one point all are agreed, Jesus Christ, the Lord

of glory, will suddenly come again to judge the world. To those living near to Christ, it is an object of joyful expectation, and delay is not desired by them.

17—21. *And the seventh on the air.*—The seventh and last angel poured forth his vial, and the downfall of Babylon was finished. The church triumphant in heaven saw it and rejoiced; the church in conflict on earth saw it and, became triumphant. God remembered the great and wicked city; though for some time he seemed to have forgotten her idolatry and cruelty. All that was most secure was carried away by the ruin.—Men blasphemed: the greatest judgments that can befall men, will not bring them to repentance without the grace of God. To be hardened against God by his righteous judgments, is a certain token of sure and utter destruction.

1. Pour out; probably alluding to the pouring out of water, etc., on the sacrifices, 1 Kings 18. 33.—2. Grievous sore: see Exod. 9. 9. A virulent ulcer physically disqualifies an individual from doing even what his heart is intent on.—3. May allude to the plague mentioned Exod. 7. 19, 20, and denotes wars, slaughter, etc.—4. Blood to drink; denotes that God would visit them with retribution.—5. The plague of frogs is mentioned, Exod. 8. 5, 6.—6. May allude to the Jewish watchmen. The "man of the mountain," as he was called, used to go round the temple, and if he found any of the watchmen asleep, would set fire to their clothes. If they were compelled to appear in them the next day, it would cause them much shame.—7. Armageddon; "the mountain of destruction."—8. Hail; extreme misery. See Exod. 9. 23-25.

CHAPTER XVII.

Ver. 1—6. *One of the angels who had the vials, explains the meaning of the former vision of the antichristian beast that was to reign 1260 years, and then to be destroyed.*—Rome clearly appears to be meant in this chapter. Pagan Rome subdued and ruled with military power, not by art and flatteries. She left the nations in general to their ancient usages and worship. But it is well known that by crafty and politic management, with all kinds of deceit of unrighteousness, papal Rome has obtained and kept her rule over kings and nations.—Here were allurements of worldly honour and riches, pomp and pride, suited to sensual and worldly minds. Prosperity, pomp, and splendour, feed the pride and lusts of the human heart, but are no security against the Divine vengeance. The golden cup represents the allurements, and delusions, by which this mystical Babylon has obtained and kept her influence, and seduced others to join her abominations. She is named, from her infamous practices, a mother of harlots; training them up to idolatry and all sorts of wickedness. She filled herself with the

blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. She intoxicated herself with it; and it was so pleasant to her, that she never was satisfied. Let us avoid the mysteries of iniquity, and study diligently the great mystery of godliness, that we may learn humility and gratitude from the example of Christ. The more we seek to resemble him, the less we shall be liable to be deceived by antichrist.

7—18. *And interprets the mystery of the woman, and the beast that had seven heads and ten horns.*—The beast on which the woman sat was, and is not, and yet is. It was a seat of idolatry and persecution, and is not; not in the ancient form, which was pagan: yet it is; it is truly the seat of idolatry and tyranny, though of another sort and form.—This beast has seven heads, seven mountains, the seven hills on which Rome stands; and seven kings, seven sorts of government. Five were gone by when this prophecy was written; one was then in being; the other was yet to come. This beast, directed by the papacy, makes an eighth governor, and sets up idolatry again.—It had ten horns, which are said to be ten kings who had as yet no kingdoms; they should not rise up till the Roman empire was broken; but should for a time be very zealous in her interest.—Christ must reign till all enemies be put under his feet. The reason of the victory is, that he is the King of kings, and Lord of lords. He has supreme dominion and power over all things; all the powers of earth and hell are subject to his control. His followers are called to this warfare, are fitted for it, and will be faithful in it.—God so ruled the hearts of these kings, by his power over them, and by his providence, that they did those things, without intending it, which he purposed and foretold. They shall see their folly, and how they have been bewitched and enslaved by the harlot, and be made instruments in her destruction. She was that great city which reigned over the kings of the earth, when John had this vision; and every one knows Rome to be that city.—Believers will be received to the glory of the Lord, when wicked men will be destroyed in a most awful manner; their joining together in sin, will be turned to hatred and rage, and they will eagerly assist in tormenting each other. But the Lord's portion is his people; his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure, to his glory, and the happiness of all his servants.

1. A whore means an idolatrous church, Jer. 3. 1; Hosea 1. 2. The ancient Babylon was situate on the Euphrates, Psa. 137. 1; Jer. 51. 13.—3. Scarlet may denote cruelty. It also may refer to the robes of the Roman magistrates. Scarlet has always been the favourite colours of popes, cardinals, and the Roman emperors: and it is said

that even the mules on which they rode were covered with a scarlet cloth, so that the beast might be called "scarlet-coloured."—9. Ch. 13. 1.—16. Those nations which had supported the arrogant claims of the Romish church shall at length grow weary of her cruelty and assumptions, and turn against her to overthrow her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ver. 1-8. *Another angel from heaven proclaims the fall of mystical Babylon.*—This angel from heaven seems to be Christ himself, coming to destroy his enemies, and to shed abroad the light of his gospel through all nations. The wickedness of this Babylon was very great; she had forsaken the true God, and set up idols, and had drawn all sorts of men into spiritual adultery, and by her wealth and luxury kept them in her interest. The spiritual merchandise, by which multitudes have wickedly lived in wealth, by the sins and follies of mankind, seems principally intended.—Fair warning is given to all that expect mercy from God, that they should not only come out of this Babylon, but assist in her destruction. God's people shall be called out of Babylon, while those that partake with wicked men in their sins, must receive of their plagues.

9-19. *The lamentations over her.*—The mourners had shared Babylon's sensual pleasures, and gained by her wealth and trade. The kings of the earth, whom she flattered into idolatry, allowing them to be tyrannical over their subjects, while obedient to her; and the merchants, those who trafficked for her indulgences, pardons, and honours; these mourn. The spirit of antichrist is a worldly spirit, and this sorrow is a mere worldly sorrow; they do not lament for the anger of God, but for the loss of outward comforts. The spiritual merchandise is here alluded to, when not only slaves, but the souls of men, are mentioned as articles of commerce, to the destroying the souls of millions. But let prosperous traders learn, with all their gains, to get the unsearchable riches of Christ; otherwise, even in this life, they may have to mourn that riches make to themselves wings and fly away, and that all the fruits their souls lusted after, are departed from them.

20-24. *The church called upon to rejoice in her utter ruin.*—That which is matter of rejoicing to the servants of God on earth, is matter of rejoicing to the angels in heaven. The apostles, who are honoured and daily worshipped at Rome in an idolatrous manner, will rejoice in her fall. The fall of Babylon was an act of God's justice. And because it was a final ruin, this enemy should never molest them any more, of this they were assured by a sign. Let us take warning from the things which brought others to

destruction, and let us set our affections on things above, when we consider the changeable nature of earthly things.

1. Ezek. 43. 2—2. Ruined and desolate places have generally become the habitations of cruel, venomous, and unclean beasts, Isa. 13. 19—22; Jer. 50. 39; 51. 3.—3. Isa. 47. 15. Abundance; or power.—6. Double; some of the Jewish laws encouraged retaliation: a thief was required to restore double what he had stolen. There may be an allusion to it here.—12, 13. The ancients held these articles in high esteem: see Ezek. 27. 27—36. Thyine; the margin reads "sweet wood:" supposed to be the *arbor vitæ* of Africa, a sweet-scented wood. Slaves; the margin reads "bodies."—17. In one hour; denoting speed.—19. This was an ancient ceremony in times of mourning, Job 2. 12; 1 Sam. 4. 12; Jonah 3. 6.—23. The voice, etc.; in allusion to ancient marriage processions. See Matt. 25.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 1—10. *The church in heaven and that on earth triumph.*—There is harmony between the angels and the saints in this triumphant song. Christ is the Bridegroom of his ransomed church. This second union will be completed in heaven; but the beginning of the glorious millennium (by which is meant a reign of Christ, or a state of happiness, for a thousand years on earth) may be considered as the celebration of his espousals on earth. Then the church of Christ, being purified from errors, divisions, and corruptions, in doctrine, discipline, worship, and practice, will be made ready to be publicly owned by him as his delight and his beloved. The church appeared; not in the gay, gaudy dress of the mother of harlots, but in fine linen, clean and white. In the robes of Christ's righteousness, imputed for justification, and imparted for sanctification. The promises of the gospel, the true sayings of God, opened, applied, and sealed by the Spirit of God, in holy ordinances, are the marriage-feast. This seems to refer to the abundant grace and consolation Christians will receive in the happy days which are to come.—The apostle offered honour to the angel. The angel directed the apostle to the true and only object of religious worship; to worship God, and him alone. This plainly condemns the practice of those who worship the elements of bread and wine, and saints, and angels; and of those who do not believe that Christ is truly and by nature God, yet pay him a sort of worship.

11—21. *A vision of Christ going forth to destroy the beast and his armies.*—Christ, the glorious Head of the church, is described as on a white horse, the emblem of justice and holiness. He has many crowns, for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. He is arrayed in a vesture dipped in his own blood, by which he purchased his power as Mediator; and in the blood of his enemies, over whom he

always prevails. His name is "The Word of God;" a name none fully knows but himself; only this we know, that this Word was God manifest in the flesh; but his perfections cannot be fully understood by any creature.—Angels and saints follow, and are like Christ in their armour of purity and righteousness. The threatenings of the written word he is going to execute on his enemies.—The powers of earth and hell make their utmost efforts. These verses declare important events, foretold by the prophets. These persons were not excused because they did what their leaders bade them. How vain will be the plea of many sinners at the great day! We followed our guides; we did as we saw others do! God has given a rule to walk by, in his word; neither the example of the most, nor of the chief, must influence us contrary thereto: if we do as the most do, we must go where the most go, even into the burning lake.

1. Alleluia is the Greek; Hallelujah in Hebrew; meaning "praise the Lord."—2. Deut. 32. 43.—7, 9. Marriage; denoting the union of Christ and his church in the heavenly state. In the east, there were "inaugural marriage feasts," in which a king was said to be united to his people, Esther 2.; 9. 20, 22; Matt. 22. 2; 25. 10.—8. Emblematical of the simplicity and purity of the church of God, a striking contrast to the splendours and unholiness of the Romish church.—10. A powerful argument against the worshipping of angels practised by the Romish church. See ch. 22. 9; Col. 2. 18.—11. White horse—see on ch. 6. 2.—13. Isa. 63. 2, 3; John 1. 1; 1 John 5. 7.—15. Isa. 11. 4; 2 Thess. 2. 8. Rod of iron; Psa 2. 9.—16. It was a custom among some of the ancients to write their inscriptions on the thigh of their statues, as is evident from some figures now existing.—17 The sun means a time of light.—18. Flesh, in figurative language, refers to the substance, riches, etc., of the conquered.

CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 1—3. *Satan is bound for a thousand years.*—Here is a vision, showing by a figure the restraints laid on Satan himself. Christ, with almighty power, will keep the devil from deceiving mankind as he has hitherto done. He never wants power and instruments to break the power of Satan. Christ shuts by his power, and seals by his authority. The church shall have a time of peace and prosperity, but all her trials are not yet over.

4—6. *The first resurrection.*—Here is an account of the reign of the saints, for the same space of time as Satan is bound. Those who suffer with Christ, shall reign with him in his spiritual and heavenly kingdom, in conformity to him in his wisdom, righteousness, and holiness: this is called the first resurrection, with which none but those who serve Christ, and suffer for him, shall be favoured.

None can be blessed but those that are holy ; and all that are holy shall be blessed. We know something of what the first death is, and it is very awful ; but we know not what the second death is. It must be much more dreadful ; it is the death of the soul, eternal separation from God. But those who have been made partakers of a spiritual resurrection, are saved from the power of the second death. — We may expect that a thousand years will follow the destruction of the anti-christian, idolatrous, persecuting powers, during which pure Christianity, in doctrine, worship, and holiness, will be made known over all the earth. By the all-powerful working of the Holy Spirit, fallen man will be new-created ; and faith and holiness will as certainly prevail, as unbelief and unholiness now do. We may easily perceive what a variety of dreadful pains, diseases, and other calamities would cease, if all men were true and consistent Christians. All the evils of public and private contests would be ended, and happiness of every kind largely increased. It is our duty to pray for the promised glorious days, and to do everything in our public and private stations which can prepare for them.

7—10. *Satan loosed—Gog and Magog.*—While this world lasts, Satan's power in it will not be wholly destroyed, though it may be limited and lessened. No sooner is Satan let loose, than he again begins deceiving the nations, and stirring them up to make war with the saints and servants of God. It would be well if the servants and ministers of Christ were as active and persevering in doing good, as his enemies in doing mischief. God will fight this last and decisive battle for his people, that the victory may be complete, and the glory be to himself.

11—15. *The last and general resurrection.*—After the events just foretold, the end will speedily come ; and there is no mention of anything else, before the appearing of Christ to judge the world. This will be the great day : the Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ, will then put on majesty and terror. The persons to be judged are the dead, small and great ; young and old, low and high, poor and rich. None are so mean, but they have some talents to account for ; and none so great, as to escape having to account for them. There is a book of remembrance both for good and bad ; and the book of the sinner's conscience, though formerly secret, will then be opened. Another book shall be opened, the book of the Scriptures, the rule of life ; it represents the Lord's knowledge of his people, and his declaring their repentance, faith, and good works ; showing the blessings of the new covenant. By their works men shall be justified

or condemned; he will try their principles by their practices. Those justified and acquitted by the gospel, shall be justified and acquitted by the Judge, and shall enter into eternal life, having nothing more to fear from death, or hell, or wicked men; for these are all destroyed together. This is the second death; it is the final separation of sinners from God. Let it be our great concern to see whether our Bibles justify or condemn us now; for Christ will judge the secrets of all men according to the gospel.

4. Beheaded; a mode of execution under the pagan emperors of Rome.—8. Gog and Magog; figurative personifications of the enemies of God's people. Magog was the son of Japheth, Gen. 10. 2, from whom the nations formerly called Scythians, and in modern times, Tartars, are said to be descended. The Scythian kings went by the name of Gog. Gog is said to mean "covered," alluding to the deceitful character of those who bore the name, Ezek. 38. 2; 39. 1.—11. Him; that is, Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 3. 7, 10, 11.—12. An allusion to the resurrection and judgment-day. Book of life; see on ch. 2. 5.—13. Hell; or the grave.—14. Lake of fire; death and the grave would be swallowed up in eternity, for ever done away, 1 Cor. 15. 26, 54, 55.

CHAPTER XXI.

Ver. 1—8. *A new heaven, and new earth.*—The new heaven and the new earth will not be separate from each other; the earth of the saints, their glorified bodies, will be heavenly. The old world, with all its troubles and tumults, will have passed away. There will be no sea; this aptly represents freedom from conflicting passions, temptations, troubles, changes, and alarms; from whatever can divide or interrupt the communion of saints. This new Jerusalem is the church of God in its new and perfect state, the church triumphant.—The presence of God with his people in heaven, will not be interrupted as it is on earth; he will dwell with them continually. All effects of former trouble shall be done away. They have often been in tears, by reason of sin, of affliction, of the calamities of the church; but no signs, no remembrance of former sorrows shall remain. God gives his titles, Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, as a pledge for the full performance. Sensual and sinful pleasures are muddy and poisoned waters; and the best earthly comforts are like the scanty supplies of a cistern; when idolized, they become broken cisterns, and yield only vexation. But the joys which Christ imparts are like waters springing from a fountain, pure, refreshing, abundant, and eternal. The fearful thirst not meet the difficulties of religion, their slavish fear came from their unbelief; but those who were so dastardly as not to take up the cross of Christ, were yet so desperate as to run into abominable wickedness.

9—21. *Its heavenly origin, glory, and secure defence.*—God has various employments for his holy angels. Sometimes they sound the trumpet of Divine Providence, and warn a careless world; sometimes they discover things of a heavenly nature to the heirs of salvation. The subject of the vision is the church of God in a perfect, triumphant state, shining in its lustre; glorious in relation to Christ; which shows that the happiness of heaven consists in intercourse with God, and in conformity to him. The wall is for security. Heaven is a safe state; those who are there, are separated and secured from all evils and enemies. The city is vast; here is room for all the people of God. The foundation of the wall; the promise and power of God, and the purchase of Christ, are the strong foundations of the safety and happiness of the church. These foundations are set forth by twelve sorts of precious stones, denoting the variety and excellence of the doctrines of the gospel, or of the graces of the Holy Spirit, or the personal excellences of the Lord Jesus Christ.—The gates are all of pearls. Christ is the Pearl of great price, and he is our Way to God. The saints in heaven are at rest, yet it is not a state of sleep and idleness; and they have communion, not only with God, but with one another.

22—27. *Its perfect happiness.*—What a dismal world would this be, if it were not for the light of the sun! What is there in heaven that supplies its place? The glory of God lightens that city, and the Lamb is the light thereof. God in Christ will be an everlasting Fountain of knowledge and joy to the saints in heaven. There is no night, therefore no need of shutting the gates; all at peace and secure. All the inhabitants are made perfect in holiness. Now, the saints feel a sad mixture of corruption, which hinders them in the service of God, and interrupts their communion with him; but, at their entrance into the holy of holies, they are washed in the laver of Christ's blood, and presented to the Father without spot.—As nothing unclean can enter heaven, let us be stirred up by these glimpses of heavenly things, to use all diligence, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God; and let us think of heaven as filled with the glory of God, and enlightened by the presence of Christ.

1. By "sea," is doubtless intended those conflicts, oppositions, and tumultuous passions which Christians have to endure and fight against in the present state of the church.—3. A figure borrowed from the ancient tabernacle where the Shekinah dwelt, an emblem of the true tabernacle, the church of God and his presence in their midst, Lev. 26. 11, 12.—7. All things; marginal reading, "these things."—9. The bride; the church of God.—10. The change of emblems from a bride to a city may show that we are only to take general ideas from

this description.—12. A wall, denoting defence and security. Twelve tribes; perhaps a figure to denote that none but "Israelites indeed" will be admitted to heavenly joys.—16. Twelve thousand furlongs, or fifteen hundred miles, expressive of the great number who shall be saved.—18. Pure gold; this and the following are emblems of the glory and sublimity of the heavenly world.—12. Jasper; probably "a kind of diamond," blue in colour. That which we call jasper is not the precious stone. Sapphire; this pearl is of a fine blue colour, and enduring. Chalcedony; a gem to be found in Chalcedon, in Asia; it is shaded variously, green, white, blackish-brown, yellow, brown, and grey. Emerald; of a vivid green colour.—20. Sardonyx; said to be of the Chalcedonic species, with alternate layers of red and white cornean. Sardius, of a blood-red colour. Chrysolite; a gem called by the ancients, from its yellow colour, "golden stone;" called a topaz by the moderns. Beryl; a clear gem, colour bluish-green. Topaz; a very soft gem, of a dark or nut-coloured green. Chrysoprasus; of the chrysolite kind, of a bluish tint. Jacinth; of a violet colour. Amethyst; rosy-coloured and very brilliant.—25. In allusion to the shutting of the gates of Jerusalem at sunset, to keep out thieves and foes.

CHAPTER XXII.

Ver. 1-5. *A description of the heavenly state, under the figures of the water and tree of life.*—All streams of earthly comfort are muddy; but these are clear, and refreshing. They give life, and preserve life, to those who drink of them, and thus they will flow for evermore. These point to the quickening and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, as given to sinners through Christ. The tree of life is fed by the pure waters of the river that comes from the throne of God. This tree was an emblem of Christ, and of all the blessings of his salvation; and the leaves for the healing of the nations, mean that his favour and presence supply all good to the inhabitants of that blessed world. Service there shall be not only freedom, but honour and dominion. There will be no night; no affliction or dejection; no pause in service or enjoyment; no diversions or pleasures of man's inventing will there be wanted. How different all this from gross and merely human views of heavenly happiness!

6-19. *The truth and certain fulfilling of all the prophetic visions.*—The Lord Jesus spake by the angel, solemnly confirming the contents of this book, particularly of this last vision. He spake of things that must shortly be done; and he will come quickly, and put all things in order. The angel refused to accept religious worship from John, and reproved him for offering it. This presents another testimony against idolatrous worship of saints and angels. Never let us think that a dead or disobedient faith will save us, for the First and the Last has declared that those alone are blessed who do his commandments. Jesus, who is the Spirit of prophecy, has given his churches this

morning-light of prophecy, to assure them of the light of the perfect day approaching. All is confirmed by an open and general invitation to mankind, to come and partake freely of the promises and of the privileges of the gospel. The Spirit, by the sacred word, and by convictions and influence in the sinner's conscience, says, Come to Christ for salvation; and the bride, or the whole church, on earth and in heaven, says, Come and share our happiness. Lest any should hesitate, it is added, Let whosoever will, or, is willing, come and take of the water of life freely. May every one who hears or reads these words, rejoice at once to accept the gracious invitation.

20, 21. *The closing blessing.*—After discovering these things to his people on earth, Christ seems to take leave of them, and return to heaven; but he assures them it shall not be long before he comes again. And while we are busy in the duties of our different stations of life; whatever labours may try us, whatever difficulties may surround us, whatever sorrows may press us down, let us with pleasure hear our Lord proclaiming, Behold, I come quickly; I come to put an end to the labour and suffering of my servants. I come, and my reward of grace is with me, to recompense, with royal bounty, every work of faith and labour of love. I come to receive my faithful, persevering people to myself, to dwell for ever in that blissful world. Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus.—A blessing closes the whole. By the grace of Christ we must be kept in joyful expectation of his glory, fitted for it, and preserved to it; and his glorious appearance will be joyful to those who partake of his grace and favour here. Let all add, Amen. Let us earnestly thirst after greater measures of the gracious influences of the blessed Jesus in our souls, and his gracious presence with us, till glory has perfected his grace to us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

1. Water, an emblem of the pure enjoyments of heaven.—2. In allusion to ancient Eden, Gen. 2 Twelve; denoting variety. Fruits; pleasures, etc. Healing; keeping up the health, or for the service of the nations.—3. Curse may be either in reference to the ancient paradise, or may refer to the utter destruction of ancient Jerusalem (Zech. 14. 11), implying that the New Jerusalem, the holy city, shall abide for ever. Serve; it is a mark of honour to wait upon monarchs.—4. There may be here an allusion to the high priest, who wore on his mitre "Holiness to the Lord," Exod. 28. 36-38.—5. Light; a figure frequently used in prophecy to denote prosperity or joy; Darkness, or night; that which is adverse.—14. Right; rather privilege.—15. Dogs; the figure of a city being still kept up, here may be reference to the dogs which ranged the streets at large. It was a mark of dis

gust or contempt to call a man a dog.—16. Root, etc.; Christ, as God, was the source of all those spiritual gifts which David possessed; but as man, he was the Son of David. Morning star; Christ introduced the gospel, which was to the world as a bright morning after a dark night.—18. Alluding probably to Deut. 4. 2; 12. 32; and the Jews adhered very closely to this command, which has preserved us the Hebrew text in all its integrity, as they would not alter the text or letter of the law one single iota.—19. Out of the book; marginal reading, "from the tree of life."

THE END.

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

The following concise Harmony will be found useful to the reader of the New Testament. It exhibits the sacred narratives at one view, with their concurrent circumstances, and the places where the events occurred.

	MATT.	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF OUR LORD.				
<i>TIME: About thirteen years and a half.</i>				
Preface to Luke's Gospel.			1. 1-4	
An angel appears to Zacharias.— <i>Jerusalem; in the Temple.</i>			1. 5-25	
The same angel appears to Mary.— <i>Nazareth.</i>			1. 26-38	
Mary visits Elisabeth.— <i>Jutta</i>			1. 39-56	
Birth of John the Baptist.— <i>Jutta</i>			1. 57-60	
An angel appears to Joseph.— <i>Nazareth.</i>	1. 18-25			
The birth of Jesus.— <i>Bethlehem.</i>			2. 1-7	
An angel appears to the shepherds.— <i>Near Bethlehem.</i>			2. 8-20	
The presentation of Jesus in the temple.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>			2. 21-38	
The Magi.— <i>Jerusalem. Bethl-Jerm.</i>	2. 1-12			
The flight into Egypt, and return.— <i>Bethlehem. Nazareth.</i>	2. 13-23		2. 39, 40	
Jesus goes to the passover.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>			2. 41-52	
ANNOUNCEMENT AND INTRODUCTION OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.				
<i>TIME: About one year.</i>				
The ministry of John the Baptist.— <i>The Desert.</i>	3. 1-12	1. 1-6	3. 1-18	
The baptism of Jesus.— <i>The Jordan.</i>	3. 13-17	1. 9-11	3. 21-23	
The temptation.— <i>Desert of Judaea.</i>	4. 1-11	1. 12, 13	4. 1-13	
Testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus.— <i>Bethabara beyond Jordan.</i>				1. 19-34
The marriage at Cana of Galilee.				2. 1-12
OUR LORD'S FIRST PASSOVER, AND THE SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS UNTIL THE SECOND.				
<i>TIME: One year</i>				
Jesus drives the traders out of the Temple.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>				2. 13-5
Our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>				3. 1-21

	MATT.	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Further testimony of John the Baptist.— <i>Ænon</i> . Jesus departs into Galilee.	4. 12, 14. 3-5	1. 14; 6. 17-20	4. 14; 8. 19, 20	3. 22-36 4. 1-4
Our Lord's discourse with the Samaritan woman.— <i>Suchar</i> Jesus teaches publicly in Galilee. Jesus heals the son of a nobleman.— <i>Cana of Galilee</i> .	4. 17	1. 14, 15	4. 14, 15	4. 4-42 4. 43-45 4. 46-51
Jesus rejected at Nazareth. The call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John, with the miraculous draught of fishes.— <i>By the sea of Galilee, near Capernaum</i> .	4. 13-16		4. 16-21	
Healing of a demoniac.— <i>Capernaum</i> . Healing of Peter's wife's mother.— <i>Capernaum</i> . The healing of a leper.— <i>Galilee</i> . The healing of the paralytic.— <i>Capernaum</i> . The call of Matthew.— <i>Capernaum</i> .	4. 18-22 8. 14-17 9. 2-4 9. 2-8 9, 9	1. 16-20 1. 21-28 1. 29-34 2. 1-12 2. 13, 14	5. 1-11 4. 31-37 4. 33-41 5. 12-16 5. 17-26 5. 27, 28	
OUR LORD'S SECOND PASSOVER, AND THE SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS UNTIL THE THIRD.				
TIME: <i>One year.</i>				
The pool of Bethesda, the healing of the infirm man.— <i>Jerusalem</i> .				5. 1-47
The disciples pluck ears of grain on the sabbath.— <i>On the way to Galilee?</i>	12. 1-6	2. 23-28	6. 1-5	
The healing of the withered hand on the sabbath.— <i>Galilee: Capernaum</i>	12. 9-14	3. 1-6	6. 6-11	
Jesus chooses the twelve.— <i>Near Capernaum</i> . Sermon on the Mount.— <i>Near Capernaum</i> . Healing of the centurion's servant.— <i>Capernaum</i> .	10. 2-4 5. 1-8. 1	3. 13-19	6. 12-19 6. 20-43	
Raising of the widow's son.— <i>Nain</i> . John the Baptist in prison sends disciples to Jesus.— <i>Galilee: Capernaum?</i>	4. 5-13 11. 2-19		7. 1-10 7. 11-17 7. 18-35	
Jesus anointed by a woman who had been a sinner.— <i>Capernaum?</i> Jesus makes a second circuit in Galilee.			7. 36-50 8. 1-3	
The healing of a demoniac.— <i>Galilee</i> .	12. 22-37	3. 19-30	11. 14, 15, 17-23	
The scribes and Pharisees seek a sign.— <i>Galilee</i>	12. 38-45		11. 16, 24-36	
The true disciples of Christ his nearest relatives.— <i>Galilee</i> .	12. 46-50	3. 31-35	8. 19-21	
At a Pharisee's table, Jesus denounces woes against the Pharisees and others.— <i>Galilee</i> . Parable of the barren fig tree.— <i>Galilee</i> . Parable of the sower.— <i>Sea of Galilee</i> . Parable of the tares.— <i>Near Capernaum?</i> Jesus stills the tempest.— <i>Sea of Galilee</i> . The two demoniacs of Gadara.— <i>South-east coast of the Sea of Galilee</i> .			11. 37-51 13. 1-9 8. 4-18 8. 22-25	
Levi's feast.— <i>Capernaum</i> . The raising of Jairus's daughter. The woman with an issue of blood.— <i>Capernaum</i> . Two blind men healed, and a dumb spirit cast out.— <i>Capernaum?</i> Jesus again rejected at Nazareth. A third circuit in Galilee. The twelve sent forth.— <i>Galilee</i> .	9. 1 9. 10-17 9. 18-26 9. 27-34 13. 54-58 9. 35-38 10. 1, 5-42 11. 1	5. 1-21 2. 15-22	8. 26-40 5. 29-39 8. 41-50 6. 1-6 6. 6-13	
Five thousand are fed.— <i>Capernaum. North-east coast of the Sea of Galilee</i> .	14. 13-21	6. 30-34	9. 10-17	8. 1-44

	MATT.	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Jesus walks upon the water— <i>Sea of Galilee, Gennesareth.</i>	14. 22-36	6. 45-56		6. 15-21
Our Lord's discourse to the multitude in the synagogue. Peter's profession of faith— <i>Capernaum.</i>				6. 44-71 7. 1
FROM THE THIRD PASSOVER DURING OUR LORD'S MINISTRY UNTIL HIS FINAL DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE AT THE FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES.				
TIME: <i>Six months.</i>				
Our Lord justifies his disciples for eating with unwashed hands.— <i>Capernaum.</i>	15. 1-20	7. 1-23		
The daughter of a Syrophenician woman is healed.— <i>Region of Tyre and Sidon.</i>	15. 21-28	7. 24-30		
A deaf and dumb man healed. Four thousand healed.— <i>The Decapolis.</i>	15. 29-34	7. 31-37 8. 1-9		
The Pharisees and Sadducees again require a sign.— <i>Near Magdala.</i>	15. 35	8. 10-12		
The disciples cautioned against the leaven of the Pharisees, etc.— <i>North-east coast of the Sea of Galilee.</i>	16. 1-4			
A blind man healed.— <i>Bethsaida (Julias).</i>	16. 4-12	8. 13-21 8. 22-26		
Our Lord foretells his own death and resurrection.— <i>Region of Caesarea Philippi.</i>	16. 21-28	8. 31-38 9. 1	9. 22-27	
The transfiguration.— <i>Region of Caesarea Philippi.</i>	17. 1-13	9. 2-13	9. 28-36	
The healing of a demoniac.— <i>Region of Caesarea Philippi.</i>	17. 14-21	9. 14-29	9. 37-43	
Jesus again foretells his own death and resurrection.— <i>Galilee.</i>	17. 22, 23	9. 30-32	9. 43-45	
The tribute-money miraculously provided.— <i>Capernaum.</i>	17. 24-27	9. 33		
The disciples contend who should be the great st.— <i>Capernaum.</i>	18. 1-35	9. 38-50	9. 46-50	
Jesus goes up to the festival of tabernacles. His final departure from Galilee.			9. 51-62	7. 9-10
The seventy instructed and sent out.— <i>Samaria</i>			10. 1-16	
Ten lepers cleansed.— <i>Samaria!</i>			17. 11-19	
THE FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES, AND THE SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS UNTIL OUR LORD'S ARRIVAL AT BETHANI SIX DAYS BEFORE THE FOURTH PASSOVER.				
TIME: <i>Six months less one week.</i>				
Jesus at the festival of tabernacles.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>				7. 11-53 8. 1
The woman taken in adultery.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>				8. 2-11
Our Lord reproves the Jews, and escapes from their hands.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>				8. 12-59
A lawyer instructed. Parable of the good Samaritan.— <i>Near Jerusalem.</i>			10. 25-37	
Jesus in the house of Martha and Mary.— <i>Bethany.</i>			10. 38-42	
The disciples again taught how to pray.— <i>Near Jerusalem.</i>			11. 1-13	
The seventy return.— <i>Jerusalem?</i>			10. 17-24	
A man born blind is healed on the sabbath.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>				9. 1-41 10. 1-21
Jesus at the festival of dedication.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>				10. 22-42
The raising of Lazarus.— <i>Bethany.</i>				11. 1-45

	MATT.	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
The counsel of Caiaphas against Jesus, who retires from Jerusalem.— <i>Jerusalem. Ephraim.</i>				11. 47-54
The healing of the infirm woman on the sabbath.— <i>Valley of Jordan. Peraa.</i>	19. 1,2	10. 1	13. 10-21	
Our Lord dines with a chief Pharisee on the sabbath.— <i>Peraa.</i>			14. 1-24	
Parable of the lost sheep, and prodigal son.— <i>Peraa.</i>			15. 1-32	
Parable of the unjust steward.— <i>Peraa.</i>			16. 1-18	
Parable of the rich man and Lazarus.— <i>Peraa.</i>			16. 14-31	
Jesus inculcates forbearance, faith, humility.— <i>Peraa.</i>			17. 1-10	
Parables of the importunate widow, and the Pharisee and publican.— <i>Peraa.</i>			18. 1-14	
Jesus receives and blesses little children.— <i>Peraa.</i>	19. 13-15	10. 13-16	18. 15-17	
The rich young man Parable of the labourers in the vineyard.— <i>Peraa.</i>	19. 16-30			
Jesus a third time foretells his death and resurrection.— <i>Peraa.</i>	20. 1-16	10. 17-31	18. 16-30	
James and John make their ambitious request.— <i>Peraa.</i>	20. 17-19	10. 32-34	18. 31-54	
	20. 20-28	10. 35-45		
The healing of two blind men near Jericho.	20. 20-34	10. 46-52	18. 35-43	
The visit to Zaccheus. Parable of the ten pounds.— <i>Jericho.</i>			19. 1	
			19. 2-28	
OUR LORD'S PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, AND THE SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS BEFORE THE FOURTH PASSOVER.				
TIME: Five days.				
Our Lord's public entry into Jerusalem.	21. 1-11	11. 1-11	19. 29-44	12. 12-13
The barren fig-tree. The cleansing of the Temple.— <i>Bethany. Jerusalem.</i>	14-17		19. 45-48	
The barren fig-tree withers away.— <i>Between Bethany and Jerusalem.</i>	21. 12, 13, 18, 19	11. 12-19	21. 37, 38	
Parable of the two sons.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	21. 20-22	11. 20-26		
Parable of the wicked husbandmen.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	21. 23-32	11. 27-33	20. 1-8	
Parable of the marriage of the king's son.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	21. 33-46	12. 1-12	20. 9-19	
Insidious question about tribute to Caesar.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	22. 1-14			
Insidious question about the resurrection.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	22. 15-22	12. 13-17	20. 20-28	
A lawyer questions Jesus.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	22. 23-33	12. 18-27	20. 27-40	
Woes against the scribes and Pharisees. Lamentation over Jerusalem.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	22. 34-40	12. 28-34		
The widow's mite.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	23. 13-39	12. 40	20. 47	
Certain Greeks desire to see Jesus.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>		12. 41-44	21. 1-4	12. 20-25
Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple and the persecution of his disciples.— <i>Jerusalem. Mount of Olives.</i>	24. 1-14	13. 1-13	21. 5-19	
The signs of Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem.— <i>Mount of Olives.</i>	24. 15-42	13. 14-27	21. 20-36	
Exhortation to watchfulness. Parables: the ten virgins; the five talents.— <i>Mount of Olives.</i>	24. 43-51			
Scenes of the judgment day.— <i>Mount of Olives.</i>	25. 1-30			
The rulers conspire. The supper at Bethany. Treachery of Judas.— <i>Jerusalem. Bethany.</i>	25. 31-46			
	26. 1-16	14. 1-11	23. 1-6	12. 49-52

	MATT.	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
THE FOURTH PASSOVER; OUR LORD'S PASSION, AND THE ACCOMPANYING EVENTS UNTIL THE END OF THE JEWISH SABBATH.				
Time: <i>Two days.</i>				
Preparation for the Passover.— <i>Bethany. Jerusalem.</i>	26. 17-19	14. 12-16	22. 7-13	
The passover meal. Contention among the twelve.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	26. 20	14. 17	22. 14-18, 24-30	
Jesus washes the feet of his disciples.— <i>Jerusalem.</i> Jesus points out the traitor. Judas withdraws.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	26. 21-25	14. 18-21	22. 21-23	13. 1-20
Jesus foretells the fall of Peter.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	26. 31-35	14. 27-31	22. 31-33	13. 21-32
The Lord's supper.— <i>Jerusalem.</i> Jesus comforts his disciples. The Holy Spirit promised.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	26. 26-29	14. 22-23	22. 19, 20	11. 23-27 1 COR.
Christ the true vine.— <i>Jerusalem.</i> Persecution foretold. Further promise of the Holy Spirit.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>				JOHN 14. 1-31 15. 1-17
Christ's last prayer with his disciples.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>				16. 1-33
The agony in Gethsemane.— <i>Mount of Olives.</i>	26. 30, 36-46	14. 26, 32-42	22. 39-46	17. 1-26
Jesus betrayed, and made prisoner.— <i>Gethsemane.</i>	26. 47-56	14. 43-52	22. 47-53	18. 1
Jesus before Caiaphas. Peter thrice denies him.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	26. 57, 58, 69-75	14. 53, 54, 66-72	22. 54-62	18. 2-18 23-27
Jesus before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim is condemned and mocked.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	26. 59-68	14. 55-65	22. 63-71	18. 19-24
The Sanhedrim lead Jesus away to Pilate.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	27. 1, 2, 11-14	15. 1-5	23. 1-5	18. 28-38
Jesus before Herod.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>			23. 6-12	
Pilate seeks to release Jesus.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	27. 15-26	15. 6-15	23. 13-25	18. 39, 40
Pilate delivers up Jesus to death. He is scourged and mocked.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	27. 26-30	15. 15-19		19. 1-3
Pilate, after again seeking to release Jesus, delivers him to be crucified.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>				19. 4-16 ACTS
Judas repents and hangs himself.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	27. 3-10			1. 18, 19
Jesus is led away to be crucified.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	27. 31-34	15. 20-23	23. 26-38	10. 16, 17
The crucifixion.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	27. 35-38	15. 24-28	23. 33, 34, 38	19. 16-24
The Jews mock at Jesus on the cross. He commends his mother to John.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	27. 39-44	15. 29-32	23. 35-37, 39-43	10. 25-27
Darkness prevails. Christ expires on the cross.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	27. 45-50	15. 33-37	23. 44-46	19. 29-30
The veil of the temple rent, and graves opened. Judgment of the centurion. The women at the cross.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	27. 51-56	15. 38-41	23. 45, 47-49	
The taking down from the cross. The burial.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	27. 57-61	15. 42-47	23. 50-56	19. 31-42
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OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION, HIS SUBSEQUENT APPEARANCES, AND HIS ASCENSION.				
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Visit of the women to the sepulchre. Mary Magdalen returns.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	28. 1	16. 2-4	24. 1-8	20. 1, 2

	MATT.	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Vision of angels in the sepulchre.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	28. 5-7	16. 5-7	24. 4-8	
The women return to the city. Jesus meets them.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	28. 8-10	16. 8	24. 9-11	20. 8-11
Peter and John run to the sepulchre.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>			24. 12	
Our Lord is seen by Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>		16. 9-11		20. 11-14
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Our Lord is seen by Peter. Then by two disciples on the way to Emmaus.— <i>Jerusalem. Emmaus.</i>	1 con. 15. 5	16. 12, 13	24. 13-25	
Jesus appears in the midst of the apostles, Thomas being absent.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	1 con. 15. 5	16. 14-18	24. 36-40	20. 19-28
Jesus appears in the midst of the apostles, Thomas being present.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>				20. 21-28
The apostles go away into Galilee. Jesus shows himself to nine of them at the sea of Tiberias.— <i>Galilee.</i>	MATT. 20. 16			21. 1-24 1 con.
Jesus meets his apostles and about five hundred brethren on a mountain in Galilee.	28. 16-20			15. 6 1 con.
Our Lord is seen of James; then of all the apostles.— <i>Jerusalem.</i>	1. 3-8 ACTS			15. 7
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THE END.

