

EXPOSITION

James M. Cook
OF

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS :

WITH

REMARKS

ON THE

COMMENTARIES OF DR MACKNIGHT, PROFESSOR
THOLUCK, AND PROFESSOR MOSES STUART.

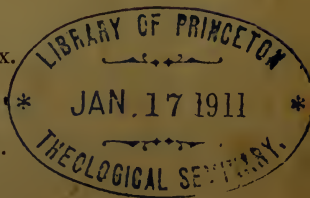
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INTRODUCTION.

IN attentively studying the Epistle to the Romans, nothing is more manifest than the direct opposition between the doctrine of inspiration with respect to the state and prospects of mankind, and the doctrine of human science. The Apostle Paul contemplates all men in their natural state as ruined by sin, and utterly unable to restore themselves to the Divine favour. Philosophers, on the contrary, survey the aspect of society with real or affected complacency. They perceive, indeed, that imperfection and suffering prevail to a considerable extent: but they find a vast preponderance of happiness and virtue. They cannot deny that man is of a mixed character; but this is necessary, in order that his virtue may be his own, and that in pressing onwards to the summit of moral excellence, his strength of principle may be more illus-

triously displayed. His happiness is thus promoted by his progress in virtue, as well as by his advancement in knowledge. Nor is this remarkable difference altogether confined to philosophy. Even many professors and expounders of Christianity cannot entirely accord with the Apostle Paul in his representations of human nature. Man, it seems to them, is not so completely lost but that he may do something to regain the Divine favour; and if a sacrifice were necessary for the expiation of sin, its blessing must be equally bestowed on all mankind.

In reference to justification in particular, how wonderful is the contrast between the justification of which this Apostle treats, and the justification which critical ingenuity has often extorted from his epistles! While Paul speaks of the believer as possessing a righteousness perfectly commensurate to all the demands of the law, and standing at the bar of God spotless and blameless, human wisdom has contrived to exhibit his doctrine as representing salvation to be the result of a happy combination of mercy and merit.

The doctrine of salvation by faith without works has ever appeared to the wise men of this world not only to be a scheme that does

not sufficiently secure the interests of morality, but one which tends to disparage the Divine authority. Yet its good effects are fully justified in every age; and while nothing but the doctrine of salvation by grace has ever produced good works, this doctrine, so far as it has been received, has never failed of its designed object. In all the ways of God there is a characteristic wisdom which stamps them with the impress of divinity. There is here a harmony and consistency in things the most different in appearance; while the intended effect is invariably produced, although in a way which to man would appear most unlikely to secure success.

By studying the Epistle to the Romans, an exact and comprehensive knowledge of the distinguishing doctrines of grace in their various bearings and connexions may, by the blessing of God, be obtained. They appear here, in all their strength and clearness, untinged with the wisdom of man. The human mind is ever prone to soften the strong features of Divine truth, and to bring them more into accordance with its own wishes and preconceived notions. Those lowering and debasing modifications of the doctrines of Scripture, by which, in some popular works, it is endeavoured to reconcile

error with orthodoxy, are imposing only in theory, and may easily be detected by a close and unprejudiced inspection of the language of this epistle.

In the five first chapters, the Apostle had established the doctrine of the justification of believers by the righteousness of Christ without any regard to their works. This doctrine manifests in all their extent the guilt, depravity, and helplessness of man, in order to magnify grace in his pardon. But as it might be thought to set aside the necessity of obedience to God, the sixth and seventh chapters are intended to prove, that so far from this being the case, that doctrine stands in indissoluble connexion with the only foundation of holiness and obedience. This foundation is union with the Redeemer, through that faith by which the believer is justified. On the contrary, the law, instead of sanctifying, operates by its restraints to stimulate and call into action the corruptions of the human heart, while at the same time it condemns all who are under its dominion. But through their union with Christ, believers are delivered from the law; and being under grace, which produces love, they are enabled to bring forth fruit acceptable to God. The law, however, is,

in itself holy, and just, and good. As such, it is employed by the Spirit of God to convince his people of sin, to teach them the value of the remedy provided for sin in the Gospel, and to lead them to cleave unto the Lord from a sense of the remaining corruption of their hearts. This corruption the Apostle, by giving a striking description of his own experience, shows, will continue to exert its power in believers so long as they are in the body.

As a general conclusion from all that had gone before, the believer's entire freedom from condemnation, through union with his glorious Head, and his consequent sanctification, are both asserted in the eighth chapter, neither of which effects could have been accomplished by the law. The opposite results of death to the carnal mind, which actuated man in his natural state, and of life to the spiritual mind, which he receives in his renovation, are clearly pointed out; and as the love of God had been shown in the fifth chapter to be so peculiarly transcendent, from the consideration that Christ died for men, not as friends and worthy objects, but as "without strength," "ungodly," "sinners," "enemies," so here the natural state of those on whom such unspeakable blessings are bestowed,

is described as “enmity against God.” The effects of the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit on them who are regenerated are next declared, together with the glorious privileges connected with it. Amidst present sufferings, the highest consolations are presented to the children of God, and their original source and final issue are pointed out.

The contemplation of such ineffable blessings reminds the Apostle of the mournful state of the generality of his own countrymen, who, though distinguished in the highest degree by their external privileges, still, as he himself had once done, rejected the Messiah. Nothing in all this, however, had frustrated the purpose of God; his word had taken effect so far as he had appointed. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty is fully treated of in the ninth chapter, and that very objection which is daily made, “Why doth he yet find fault?” is stated and silenced. Instead of national election, the great subject is national rejection; and the personal election of a small remnant, without which the whole nation would have been destroyed. So devoid of reason is the objection usually made to the doctrine of election, that it is a cruel doctrine.

The Apostle is thus led to the consideration of the fatal error of the great body of the Jews who sought justification by works, and not by faith. Mistaking the intent and the end of their law, they stumbled at this doctrine, which is the common stumbling-stone to unregenerate men. In the end of this chapter, and also in the tenth, it is shown how the Jews thus excluded themselves from salvation, not discerning the true character of the Messiah of Israel as the fulfiller of the law, and the author of righteousness to every believer. And yet when they reflected on the declaration of Moses, that to obtain life by the law, the perfect obedience which it demands must in every case be yielded, they might have been convinced that on this ground they could not be justified; on the contrary, by the law they were universally condemned. The Apostle next exhibits the freeness of salvation through the Redeemer, and the certainty that all who accept it shall be saved. And since faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, the necessity of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles is inferred and asserted. The result corresponded with the prediction. The righteousness which is by faith was re-

ceived by the Gentiles, although they had not been enquiring for it; while the Jews, who sought after righteousness, which they were earnestly invited to accept, nevertheless rejected it.

EXPOSITION, &c.

CHAPTER VI.

HAVING in the preceding part of the Epistle fully exhibited the universal depravity and guilt of man, and the free salvation through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Apostle now proceeds to show how the doctrine of the justification of believers is connected with their sanctification. He commences by stating an objection which has in all ages been advanced as an unanswerable argument against salvation by grace. He asks what is the consequence of the doctrine he has been inculcating? If justification be bestowed through faith without works, and if, where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded, may we not then continue in sin that grace may still more abound, and be still more illustriously displayed? No objection could be more plausible. It is such as will

forcibly strike every natural man, and is as common now as it could have been in the days of the Apostle.

Paul repels this charge by showing, that the sanctification of believers rests on the same foundation as their justification, and that the one is inseparable from the other. They both depend upon union with Jesus Christ, by which, as is represented in baptism, his people are dead to sin, and risen with him to walk in newness of life. Having established these important truths, he urges on those whom he addresses the duty of being convinced that such is their actual state. In verses 12 and 13, he warns them not to abuse this conviction, and for their encouragement in fighting the good fight of faith, to which they are called, he gives them, in the 14th verse, the assurance that sin shall not have the dominion over them, because they are not under the law but under grace. Thus the Apostle proves that by the gracious provision of the covenant of God, ratified with the blood of him with whom they are inseparably united, believers cannot continue to live in sin. But though sin shall not rule over them, still as their sanctification is not yet perfect, he proceeds to address them as liable to temptation. What he had said, therefore, concerning their state as being in Christ, did not preclude the duty of

watchfulness ; nor, since they had formerly been the servants of sin, of now proving that they were the servants of God, by walking in holiness of life. Paul concludes by an animated appeal to their own experience of the past, and their prospects of the future. He asks what fruit had they in their former ways, which could only conduct to shame and death? On the other hand, he exhorts them to press onwards in the course of holiness, at the end of which they would receive everlasting life. But along with this assurance, he reminds them of the important fact, that while the just *recompense* of sin is death, eternal life is purely the *gift* of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

V. 1.—What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

What shall we say then?—That is, what conclusion are we to draw from the doctrine previously taught? This asks the question in a general way. The following words ask it particularly :—*Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?* Many expound this objection as coming from a Jew, and imagine a sort of dialogue between him and the Apostle. For this there is no ground. The supposition of a dialogue in different parts of this epistle has been said to give life and interest to the argument ; but instead of this, it only encumbers and entangles it.

There is no necessity for the introduction of an objector. It is quite sufficient for the writer to state the substance of the objection in his own words. It was essential for the Apostle to vindicate his doctrine, not only from the misrepresentations of the enemies of the Cross of Christ, to whom he has an eye throughout the whole of the epistle, but also to Christians themselves, whom he was directly addressing. We see, in his reply to the objections thus proposed, what an ample field it opened to him for demonstrating the beautiful harmony of the plan of salvation, and of proving how every part of it bears upon and supports the rest.

V. 2.—God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Paul, in his usual manner on such occasions, strongly rejects such a consequence, and asks another question, which implies the incongruity of the supposition of a Christian's being emboldened by the doctrine of justification by grace to continue in sin. The fact on which he grounds his denial of the consequence is, that Christians are *dead to sin*. Formerly they were dead in sin, but now they were dead to it, delivered from it. In the same sense it is affirmed in the seventh chapter that they are dead to the law. By union with Christ, their connexion with the law in the view in which the Apostle is there

regarding it, is brought to an end, as the marriage connexion between husband and wife ceases by the death of one of the parties. And just so the connexion between sin and the believer is dissolved by the death of Christ, his covenant head and surety. In the tenth verse it is said that Christ died unto sin, and believers are with him also dead to sin.

Dr Macknight translates the phrase "have died by sin." This does not convey the Apostle's meaning, but an idea entirely different, and misrepresents the real import of the passage. All men have died by sin, but believers only are dead to sin, and it is of such exclusively that the Apostle here speaks. *Unbelievers will not through all eternity be dead to sin.* Dr Macknight says that the common translation is absurd. "For," says he, "a person's living in sin who is dead to it, is evidently a contradiction in terms." But he ought to have perceived that the phraseology to which he objects is not an assertion that they who are dead to sin also live in it, but is a question that supposes the incompatibility of the things referred to.

Mr Stuart entirely misunderstands the signification of the expression "dead to sin," which, he says, 'means to renounce sin; to become as 'it were insensible to its exciting power or influence (as a dead person is incapable of sensi-

‘ bility).’ The clause that follows—shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? he interprets thus,—‘ How shall we who have renounced sin, and profess to be insensible to its influence, any more continue to practise it, or to be influenced by it?’ His explanation of becoming insensible to the exciting power, or influence of sin, as a dead person is incapable of sensibility, perfectly coincides with the Popish interpretation of the passage. ‘ The spirit, the heart, the judgment, have no more life for sin than those of a dead man for the world.’ But Quesnel, perceiving that his interpretation is contradicted by all experience, immediately adds: ‘ Ah, who is it that is dead and insensible to the praises, to the pleasures, to the advantages of the world?’ Mr Stuart, however, disregarding fact, adheres to his interpretation, and announces it the third time. ‘ *To become dead to sin, or to die to sin*, plainly means, then, to become insensible to its influence, to be unmoved by it; in other words, to renounce it and refrain from the practice of it.’ This is justly chargeable with the absurdity that Dr Macknight unjustly charges on the common translation of the passage. The assertion then would be, as we refrain from the practice of sin, we cannot continue to practise it. According to Mr Stuart’s interpretation, when it is enjoined

on believers, v. 11, to reckon themselves dead to sin, the meaning would be that they should reckon themselves perfect.

In order to understand the manner in which the Apostle meets and obviates the objection, that the doctrine of justification by grace tends to encourage Christians to continue in sin, the ground on which he founds his denial of its possibility must be particularly attended to. This is the more necessary, as it is so generally misunderstood. Paul does not rest it on believers having ceased, according to Mr Stuart, to feel the influence of sin, which is contrary to fact, to scripture, and to experience; nor on any change in themselves more or less. Neither does he found it on the motive which Dr Macknight supposes, namely, that having died by sin they cannot "hope to live eternally by continuing in it;" nor does it mean, according to Chrysostom, quoted with approbation by Mr Tholuck, that they 'obey it in nothing any more.' The ground on which the Apostle repels the objection is exclusively that of *the power and appointment of God, through union with Jesus Christ*. It may here be remarked, that the answer which Paul gives to the supposed objection to his doctrine of justification cannot be understood by the natural man, to whom it must appear foolishness. Hence the

same calumny is repeated to this day against this part of divine truth.

The objection proposed in the first verse follows from the doctrine of justification, and amounts to this, if we are justified by grace—absolved from guilt, and accounted righteous by the judgment of God, and are thus dead to sin, and if, consequently, our own works do not in any degree contribute to bring us into this state of justification, may we not continue in sin, that grace, by which we are justified, may abound? The incompatibility of this consequence with the doctrine of justification the Apostle exposes by showing that *the sanctification of believers rests on the same foundation, and springs from the same source, as their justification*; and, therefore, so far from the one being contrary to the other, they are *absolutely inseparable*. In the conclusion of the preceding chapter, he had declared that sin had reigned unto death. It reigned unto the death of Jesus Christ, the surety of his people, who, as is said in the tenth verse of the chapter before us, “died unto sin.” But as in his death its reign over him terminated, so its reign also terminated over all his people, who with him are dead to sin. The effect then of his death being the termination of the reign of sin, it was at the same time to them the commencement of the reign of grace, which took place “through righteousness,”

namely, the everlasting righteousness brought in by his death. Instead, therefore, of being under the reign of sin, Christians are dead to sin. They are not under the law, as is declared in verse 14, which is the strength of sin, but they are under grace, whereby they serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Heb. xiii. 28.

It should be observed, that when the Apostle here asserts that we are "dead to sin," he is not introducing something new, as would be the case were Dr Macknight's explanation of the passage, "have died by sin," correct. He is referring to what he had already said on the doctrine of justification, for his object in this place is to prove that the doctrine which he had been exhibiting does not lead to sin, according to the objection he is now combating. This, in effect, he had shown already, in the preceding chapter, in which he had exhibited the accompaniments of justification. Being justified by faith, he there says, we have peace with God, and access into a state of grace; we rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in tribulations, which work patience, experience, and hope; and we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the reconciliation. All this is the very opposite of continuing in sin. But as the objection he had now stated is so constantly

preferred, and so congenial to human nature, the Apostle still considered it proper directly to advert to it, and formally to repel such a calumny against his doctrine, by re-stating the ground of our justification, namely, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, ch. iv. 25, and by clearly drawing the conclusion of our having died and risen with him, to walk in that newness of life which in the fifth chapter he had been describing.

The term "dead to sin," which signifies justified from sin, v. 7, means dead to the condemning power of sin; in other words, to its power to separate us from God; as it is said, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God," Is. lix. 2, and in ch. viii. that "to them who are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation." Believers are dead to sin as being dead to the law by the body of Christ, ch. vii. 4, for the strength of sin is the law; 1 Cor. xv. 56. In those who are united to Christ, sin has lost its strength. They who are dead to sin can say, It is not I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me, ch. vii. 17. The emphatic force of the expression "dead to sin," will be known in all its unspeakable importance in the great day of account, when not one sin will be laid to the charge of the redeemed, any more than one good work will be acknowledged as having been wrought by the condemned.

The ground, then, of the Apostle's peremptory denial that believers might continue in sin that grace may abound, is their union with Jesus Christ, through whom they are brought into a state of reconciliation with God, and consequently have become partakers of the blessings of the new covenant. This is the sum and force of what Paul here teaches on this subject; and in the 14th verse he accordingly asserts, in direct terms, what is the result of it, namely, that sin shall not have dominion over them, for they are not under the law but under grace. It may further be remarked, that although such is the ground of the Apostle's denial that believers might continue in sin that grace may abound, and of their absolute security that it shall not be so; yet in his statements conducting to this conclusion, motives are not wanting powerfully to influence believers. The consideration that they died with Christ, and are risen with him to walk in newness of life, in the 3d and 4th verses, with the certainty that they shall live with him in future glory, expressed in the 5th and 8th verses, furnish the strongest motives to the love of God, which is the grand spring of obedience; for we love him when we know that he hath first loved us. That this view of the death of Christ, and of our death with him, operates as a powerful motive to the love of God, is

shown, 2d Cor. v. 14, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead (or all died). And that he died for all (all believers), that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." Although, then, the exhibition of motives is not here the principal thing intended—although the solid ground and absolute security against believers living in sin, is shown to consist in their union with Christ—yet motives are not excluded.

The expression, then, "dead to sin," has no reference whatever to the *character* of believers, as seems to be so generally understood, but exclusively to their *state before God*, as the ground on which their sanctification is secured. As justified persons they are dead to sin, being delivered from its condemning power by the death of Christ, their head and surety. Their sins, which separated between them and their God, have been borne away to a land not inhabited; cast into the depths of the sea; blotted out as a cloud, and as a thick cloud; removed from them as far as the east is from the west. "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that

justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

The full import and consequence of being dead to sin, will be found, ch. iv. 7, 8, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." They who are dead to sin are those from whom, in its condemning power, it is, in Christ Jesus, entirely removed. But such persons, whose sins are thus covered, are pronounced "blessed." They enjoy the favour and blessing of God. The necessary consequence of this blessing is declared in the new covenant, according to which, when God is merciful to the unrighteousness of his people, and *remembers their sins and iniquities no more*, he puts his laws into their mind and writes them in their hearts, and promises that he will be to them a God, and they shall be to him a people. In one word, they who are dead to sin are separated from the curse pronounced upon those who, being under the law, continue not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, and are united to him who is the fountain of life and holiness. It is upon this ground that the Apostle rests his absolute denial that the doctrine of justification by

grace, which he had been unfolding, is compatible with continuing to live in sin.

In proof that the above is the correct view of the subject, let it be observed that the whole of the Apostle's answer to the objection, from this second verse to the end of the tenth, with which he concludes it, rests not on the circumstance that sin is mortified in himself and those whom he is addressing, or that they are dead to any propensity to sin, but on the fact of their being one with Jesus Christ. They were united to Christ in his death, and consequently in his life, which was communicated to them by Him who is "a quickening spirit"—and thus their walking in newness of life and their resurrection with him are secured. These ideas are exhibited in the 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th verses. In the 7th verse, the reason of the whole is summed up; "for he who is dead" (with Christ) "is justified from sin;" and in the eighth verse, that which follows our being justified from sin is stated—"If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." Finally, in the 9th and 10th verses, the Apostle declares the consequence of Christ's dying to sin to be, that he liveth unto God. The same effect in respect to the members must follow, as to the Head with whom believers are one; and, therefore, he immediately proceeds to assure them,

in the 14th verse, that sin shall not have dominion over them. The effect, then, of the doctrine of justification by grace, is the very reverse of giving not merely license, but even place to continue in sin. On the contrary, according to that doctrine, *the power of God is engaged to secure a life of holiness.*

Live any longer therein.—To “continue in sin,” and to “live any longer therein,” are equivalent expressions, implying that before their death to sin, the Apostle himself, and all those whom he now addressed, were enslaved by sin, and lived in it. In the same way—in writing to the Saints at Ephesus—he says that formerly he and all of them had their conversation among the children of disobedience, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. By denying that believers continue in sin, Paul does not mean to say that they never commit sin, or fall into it, or, according to Mr Stuart, have “become insensible to its influence;” for, as is abundantly shown in the seventh chapter, where he gives an account of his own experience (which is also the experience of every Christian as long as he is in this world), this is very far from being a fact.

V. 3.—Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

The Apostle here proceeds to show that

Christians are dead to sin, because they died with Christ. The rite of Baptism exhibits Christians as dying, as buried, and as risen with Christ. *Know ye not.*—He refers to what he is now declaring as a thing well-known to those whom he addresses. *Baptized into Jesus Christ.*—By faith believers are made one with Christ; they become members of his body. This oneness is represented emblematically by baptism. *Baptized into his death.*—In Baptism, they are also represented as dying with Christ. This rite, then, proceeds on the fact that they have died with him who bore their sins. Thus, the satisfaction rendered to the justice of God by him, is a satisfaction from them, as they are constituent parts of his body. The believer is one with Christ as truly as he was one with Adam—he dies with Christ as truly as he died with Adam. Christ's righteousness is his as truly as Adam's sin was his. By a divine constitution all Adam's posterity are one with him, and so his first sin is really and truly theirs. By a similar divine constitution, all Christ's people are one with him, and his work is as truly theirs as if they had performed it, and his death as if they had suffered it. When it is said that Christians have died with Christ, there is no more figure than when it is said that they have died in Adam.

The figure of baptism was very early mistaken for a reality, and accordingly some of the fathers speak of the baptized person as truly born again in the water. They supposed him to go into the water with all his sins upon him, and to come out of it without them. This indeed is the case with baptism figuratively. But the carnal mind soon turned the figure into a reality. It appears to the impatience of man too tedious and ineffectual a way to wait on God's method of converting sinners by his Holy Spirit through the truth, and therefore they have effected this much more extensively by the performance of external rites. When, according to many, the rite is performed, it cannot be doubted that the truth denoted by it has been accomplished. The same disposition has been the origin of Transubstantiation. The bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are figuratively the body and blood of Christ; but they have been turned into the real body, blood, soul, and divinity of the Lord, and the external rite has become salvation.

So many of us.—This does not imply that any of those to whom the Apostle wrote were not baptized, for there could be no room for such a possibility. It applies to the whole of them, as well as to himself, and not merely to a part. It amounts to the same thing as if it had been said, “ We who were baptized;” as in Acts, iii.

24, "As many as have spoken," that is, all who have spoken, for all the prophets spoke.

V. 4.—Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death : that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

The death of Christ was the means by which sin was destroyed, and his burial the proof of the reality of his death. In the same way, Christians are represented as buried with him by baptism into his death, in token that they really died with him ; and if buried with him, it is not that they should remain in the grave, but that as Christ arose from the dead they should also rise. Their baptism, then, is the figure of their complete deliverance from sin, signifying that God places to their account the death of Christ as their own death : it is also a figure of their purification and resurrection for the service of God.

By the glory of the Father.—The exercise of that Almighty power of God, by which, in various passages, it is asserted that Christ was made alive again, was most glorious to God who raised him. Christ's resurrection is also ascribed to himself, because he was a partaker with the Father of that power by which he was raised. "I lay down my life that I might take it again." "Destroy this temple, and in three

days I will raise it up." To reconcile these, and similar passages, with those that ascribe his resurrection to the Father, it must be observed, that if the principle be regarded by which our Lord was raised up, it is to be referred to that divine power which belongs in common to the Father and the Son. The Son was raised equally by his own power as by that of his Father, because he possessed the divine as well as the human nature. But as in the work of redemption the Father acts as the Sovereign ruler, it is He who has received the satisfaction, and who having received it, has given to the Son its just recompense in raising him from the dead. His resurrection, then, in this view, took place by the decree of the Eternal Father, pronounced from his tribunal.

Even so we also should walk in newness of life.—It is the purpose of our rising with Christ, that we also, by the glory or power of the Father, should walk in newness of life. The resurrection of Christ was the effect of the power of God, not in the ordinary way of nature, but of a supernatural exertion of power. In the same manner, believers are raised to walk in newness of life. It is thus, that when Paul, Eph. i. 20, exalts the supernatural virtue of grace by which we are converted, he compares it to that power by which Christ was raised

from the dead. This shows the force of the Apostle's answer to the objection he is combating. Believers are dead to sin, and, if so, every ground of their separation from God being removed, his Almighty power is engaged and exerted to cause them to walk with their risen Lord in that new life which they derive from him. It was, then, the purpose of Christ's death that his people should become dead to sin, and alive unto righteousness. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness."—"He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."—1 Peter, ii. 24; iv. 1.

Dr Macknight is greatly mistaken, when he applies what is said in this verse to the new life, which does not take place till after the resurrection of the body. This destroys the whole force of the Apostle's reasoning, who is showing that believers cannot continue in sin, not only as they are dead to sin, but as they are risen with Christ, thus receiving a new and supernatural life, for the purpose of walking in obedience to God.

V. 5.—*For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection :*

For if.—The conditional statement is here evidently founded on what is premised. The Apostle does not pass to a new argument to

prove that we are dead with Christ; but having shown the burial of the Christian in baptism, he goes on to show that his resurrection is equally important. If we have been buried with Christ so we shall rise with him. *Planted together.*—The word in the original, when it refers to trees, does not designate the operation of grafting, but of planting them in the same place or bed. It signifies the closest union of any kind, as being incorporated, growing together, united, joined with. The meaning then is, that as in baptism we have been exhibited as one with Christ in his death, so in due time we shall be conformed to him in the likeness of his resurrection.

We shall be.—The use here of the future tense has caused much perplexity respecting the connexion of this verse with the preceding, and contrary to its obvious meaning, the present time has been substituted. But while the proper force of the future time is preserved, the two verses stand closely connected. Both a spiritual and a literal resurrection are referred to in the emblem of baptism; but in the preceding verse, the former only is brought into view, as being that which served the Apostle's immediate purpose. In this verse, in employing the future tense, he refers to the literal resurrection which will take place, as being inseparably connected with what he had just advanced concern-

ing walking in newness of life; and thus he unfolds the whole mystery included in dying and rising with Christ, both in this world and the world to come. Believers have already been raised spiritually with Christ to walk with him on earth in newness of life, and with equal certainty they shall be raised to live with Him in Heaven. This meaning is confirmed by what is said afterwards in the 8th and 9th verses. How powerful is this consideration, if viewed as a motive to the believer to walk at present with his risen Lord in newness of life. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." 1 John, iii. 3.

V. 6.—Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Knowing this.—That is assuming it as a thing with which they were already well acquainted, or a thing which they should know, *That our old man is crucified with him.* Paul draws here the same conclusion from the believer's crucifixion with Christ that he had previously drawn from his baptism into Christ's death. All believers died with Christ on the Cross, as they were all one in him, and represented by him. Their old man, Eph. iv. 22, Col. iii. 9, or sinful nature, is crucified together with Christ. If, then, their old man has been crucified with him,

it cannot be that they will for the future live according to their old nature. *That the body of sin might be destroyed.*—Body of sin, that is, sin as a body, meaning the whole combination and strength of corruption, as having all its members as a perfect body. The purpose of his people's crucifixion with Christ was, that this body of sin should finally perish and be annihilated. It is called a body, as consisting of various members, like a complete and entire body—a mass of sin; not one sin, but all sin. The term body is used, because it is in such a view that there can be a crucifixion, and this body is called the body of sin, that it may not be supposed that it is the natural body which is meant.

That henceforth we should not serve sin.—The design of the believer's crucifixion with Christ is that he may not henceforth be a slave to sin. This implies that all men who do not believe in Christ are slaves to sin, as wholly and as absolutely under its power as a slave is to his master. But the end of our crucifixion with Christ by faith in his death, is, that we may be delivered from this slavery. Believers, then, should resist sin as they would avoid the most cruel slavery. If this be the end of crucifixion with Christ, those cannot be considered as crucified with Christ who are the slaves of sin. Christians,

then, may be known by their lives, as the tree is known by its fruits. The effect of Paul's crucifixion with Christ was, that Christ lived in him. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," Gal. ii. 20.

V. 7.—*For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

For he that is dead; that is, dead with Christ, as is said in the following verse.—This does not mean natural death, but death in all its extent, signifying "the second death," the penalty of which Christ suffered, and therefore all his members have suffered it with him. *Freed from sin.*—The original word, which is here translated *freed*, different from that rendered *free* in verses 18, 20, 22; is literally *justified*. It occurs fifteen times in this Epistle, and twenty-five times in other parts of the New Testament; and except in this verse, and one other where it is translated righteous, is uniformly rendered by the word justified. Hence it appears, that, in this verse, as in all the other passages, its proper rendering ought to be retained, and not exchanged for the term "*freed*," which has evidently been selected to convey a different sense. To retain its proper translation in this place is absolutely necessary, in order clearly to perceive the great and cheering truth here announced, as well as to apprehend the full force of the

Apostle's answer to the objection stated in the first verse. As to the phrase "justified from sin," we find the Apostle expressing himself in the same manner (Acts, xiii. 39), "By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

No objection can be made to the use of the expression "justified," since the Apostle is speaking of the *state* of believers, to which it is strictly applicable. In justification, which is a judicial and irrevocable sentence pronounced by God, there are two parts: the one includes absolution from the guilt of the breach of the law; the other, the possession of that obedience to its precepts which the law demands. These being inseparable, they are both included in the expression *justified from sin*. If a man be dead with Christ, he possesses, as has been observed, all the blessings which, according to the tenor of the new covenant, are included in and connected with the state of justification by grace. Instead, then, of giving him encouragement to continue in sin, this furnishes absolute security against such a result, and ensures the certainty that he shall walk in newness of life until he attains the possession of eternal glory. The Apostle, therefore, is so far from admitting that, according to the supposed objection which he is combating, gratuitous justification is op-

posed to sanctification, that, after having shown, in the preceding verses, that sanctification springs from union with Christ, he here asserts, as he had formerly proved, that on the very same ground is the doctrine of justification established. The one cannot, therefore, be hostile to the interests of the other.

The bond by which sinners are kept under the power of sin, is the curse of the law. This curse, which is the penalty of disobedience, consists in man being cut off from all communion with God. By throwing off his allegiance to his Creator, he has become the subject of the devil, and is led captive by him at his will. The curse consists in being given up to sin, which is represented as reigning over the human race, and exercising an absolute dominion. So long as the sinner is under the guilt of sin, God can have no friendly intercourse with him; for what communion hath light with darkness? But Christ having cancelled his people's guilt, having redeemed them from the curse, and invested them with the robe of his righteousness, there is no longer any obstacle in the way of their communion with God; there is no barrier to prevent the free ingress of sanctifying grace. As the sin of the first man was the cause of all his descendants being divested of holiness, and of each individual coming into the world dead

in trespasses and sins, in like manner the obedience of the second Adam is the cause of holiness being imparted to all his members, so that they cannot remain under the thralldom of sin. Were a redeemed sinner not also sanctified, it would argue that he was still under the curse, and not restored to the favour of God. Besides, what is the state of the believer? He is now united to him who has the inexhaustible fulness of the Spirit, and he cannot fail to partake of the spirit of holiness which dwells without measure in his glorious Head. It is impossible that the streams can be dried up when the fountain continues to flow, and it is equally impossible for the members not to partake of the same holiness which dwells so abundantly in the Head. As the branch when united to the living vine necessarily partakes of its life and fatness, so the sinner when united to Christ must receive an abundant supply of sanctifying grace out of his immeasurable fulness. The moment, therefore, that he is by faith brought into union with the second Adam—the grand truth on which the Apostle had been insisting in the preceding part of this chapter, by means of which believers are dead to sin—in that moment the source of sanctification is opened up, and streams of purifying grace flow into his soul. He is delivered from the law whereby sin had dominion over

him. He is one with him who is the fountain of holiness.

These are the grounds on which justification and sanctification are inseparably connected; and the reasons why those who are dead to sin cannot live any longer therein. From all this, we see the necessity of retaining the Apostle's expression in the verse before us, *justified* from sin. That it has been exchanged for the term *freed* in the English, as well as in most of the French versions, and that commentators are so generally undecided as to the proper rendering, arises from not clearly perceiving the ground on which the Apostle rests his denial of the consequence charged on his doctrine of justification, as leading to licentiousness. But on no other ground than that, as above explained, on which he has vindicated it from this supposed pernicious consequence, can it be proved not to have such a tendency, or not to lead to such a result. On this ground, his vindication must for ever stand unshaken. Had his answer to the question in the first verse ultimately rested, according to the reason given by Dr Macknight, on the force of a motive presented to believers, however strong in itself, such as their having felt the dreadful effects of sin in having died for it, or on the fallacious idea, according to Mr Stuart, that they were insensible to its influence,

how weak, insufficient, and delusive, considering the state of human nature, would such reasons have been, on which to have rested his confident denial that they could continue to live in sin. But when the Apostle exhibits, as the cause of the believers' not continuing in sin, the purpose and power of God in Christ Jesus, as he does through all the preceding verses, he rests it on a foundation as stable as the throne of God. He had taught, in the foregoing part of the Epistle, that Jesus Christ is made to his people righteousness; he here teaches that he is also made to them sanctification. Throughout the whole of the discussion, it is material to keep in mind, that they to whom, along with himself, the Apostle is referring, are those whom he had addressed (chap. i. 7) as "Beloved of God;" "Called;" "Saints."

The same great truths are fully developed in the 28th and 29th verses of the eighth chapter, where it is shown that the persons who were conformed to the image of Christ, were those who were justified, and who shall be glorified, the whole of which Paul there traces up to the sovereign appointment of God. There, in like manner, he shows that the people of God, being conformed to Christ in his death, are also conformed to him in their walking in newness of life, as the prelude of their resurrection with

him to glory. To the same purpose he writes the saints at Colosse, where he assures them that they are complete in Christ, being buried and risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead.

V. 8.—Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

Believers being one with Christ in his death, they have the certain prospect of for ever living with him. That the life here mentioned is the life after the resurrection, as in verse 5, appears from the phraseology. The Apostle speaks of it as a future life, which it is unnatural to interpret as signifying the believer's spiritual life here, or as importing the continuation of it to the end of his course. There is no need of such straining, when the obvious meaning is most true and important. Besides, the point is decided by the assertion, "we believe." It is a matter of faith, and not of present experience.

"*We believe.*"—Upon this it is useful to remark, that though the Apostle reasons and deduces from principles, yet we are to be cautious not to consider his doctrine as needing any other support but his own assertion. His statement, or expression of belief, is demonstration to a Christian. It was a truth believed by those

whom he addressed, because taught by Paul, and the other Apostles.

V. 9.—Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

Knowing that.—The Apostle states the assumption that, as Christ having been raised from the dead, will not die again, so neither will those die again who have died and risen with him. This obviously refers to the resurrection life, and not to the present spiritual life. It is a fact of inconceivable consolation, that, after the resurrection, the believer will never again die. All the glory of heaven could not make us happy without this truth.

Death hath no more dominion over him.—This implies that death had once dominion over Christ himself. He was its lawful captive, as he took our place, and bore our sins. It is far from being true, according to Mr Tholuck, that the word here used ‘seems to involve the idea of a ‘usurped power, for properly, as Christ,’ he says, ‘was an innocent being, there was no reason why he should die.’ Christ was lawfully under the power of death for a time, and the word which signifies this, applies to a lawful lord as well as to an usurper. Jesus Christ being declared by his resurrection to be the Son of God, with power, his people are engaged to put their trust in him as the Creator and ruler of

the universe. In his resurrection they receive the assurance of the effect of his death, in satisfying divine justice while making full atonement for their sins; and in his rising from the dead to an immortal life, as their Lord and Head, they have a certain pledge of their own resurrection to life and immortality.

V. 10.—For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

In that, or with respect to that, he died. *Died unto sin.*—Jesus Christ suffered the penalty of sin, and ceased to bear it. Till his death he had sin upon him; and therefore, though it was not committed by him personally, yet it was his own, inasmuch as he took it on him. When he took it on him, so as to free his people from its guilt, it became his own debt as truly as if it had been contracted by him. When, therefore, he died on account of sin, he died to it, as he was now for ever justified from it. He was not justified from it till his death, but from that moment he was dead to it. When he shall appear the second time, it will be “without sin.”—Heb. ix. 28.

Once.—He died to sin once, and but once, because he fully atoned for it by his death. On this circumstance, the Apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, lays much stress, and in proving the excellence of his sacrifice beyond the legal

sacrifices, often repeats it, Heb. ix. 12, 26, 28 ; x. 10, 12, 14. *He liveth unto God.*—It need not excite any surprise, that Christ is said henceforth to live unto God. The glory of God must be the great end of all life. Christ's eternal life in human nature will no doubt, more than all things else, be for the glory of God.

V. 11.—Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Believers, in consequence of their relation to Christ, are here commanded to reckon themselves to be really and effectually dead to sin, as he died to it, and alive unto God in virtue of the mediation of Jesus Christ as their Lord. The obligation thus enjoined follows from all that the Apostle had been insisting on respecting their blessed state as partakers with Christ, both in his death and in his life. As this is their real condition, he here commands them to maintain a full sense and conviction of it. The duties of the Christian life, that flow from their union with Jesus Christ, and acceptance with God, he immediately proceeds in the sequel to enforce. But here it is the obligation to maintain this conviction of their state that he exclusively presses upon them. To note this is of the greatest importance. Unless we keep in mind that we are dead to sin, and alive unto

God, we cannot serve him as we ought: we shall otherwise be serving in the oldness of the letter, and not in newness of Spirit. But when the believer's state of reconciliation with God, and his death to sin, from which he is delivered, is steadily kept in view, then he cultivates the spirit of adoption—then he strives to walk worthy of his calling, and in the consideration of the mercies of God, presents his body a living sacrifice holy and acceptable unto God, Rom. xii. 1.

Of their high privileges and state of acceptance with God, believers are ever reminded in Scripture; and it is not till a man has the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. iii. 21, and a sense of being justified from sin, *having his conscience purged from dead works* by the blood of Christ, that he can serve the living God, Heb. ix. 14. How important, then, is this admonition of the Apostle, *Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin*, though often much obscured by false glosses turning it away from its true and appropriate meaning. By many it would be accounted presumptuous in Christians to take it home to themselves. Hence they are not aware of the obligations they are under to labour to maintain the *assurance* of their union with Christ, and of their

participation with him in his death and resurrection. But we see that the Apostle, after he had fully developed the blessed state of believers, with which their continuing to live in sin is incompatible, *expressly enjoins this* on those whom he addresses, and consequently on all Christians, and thus reminds them that what he had said was not to be viewed in the light of abstract truth, but ought to be practically and individually brought home to their own bosoms. How seldom is this use made of the text before us! How seldom, if ever, is the duty it enjoins urged upon Christians! How little is it considered as binding upon them! Yet, without attending to it, which, in connexion with a right understanding of the Gospel, is consistent with the deepest humility, how can they bring forth those precious fruits of the Spirit, which lie at the foundation of all the rest, *love, joy, peace?* How can they walk with God?

V. 12.—*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

Having proved how unfounded is the objection that the doctrine of justification leads to the indulgence of sin, the Apostle now exhorts those whom he addresses to live agreeably to the nature and design of the Gospel. With this object he presents, throughout the rest of the chapter, various considerations adapted to induce them

to walk in that newness of life to which they are risen with Christ. It should here be remarked, that although the Apostle had expressly taught that they who are justified are likewise sanctified, yet as God is pleased to cause his people to act with him in their sanctification—so that they shall both will and do, because he worketh in them to will and to do of his good pleasure—the earnest exhortations to obedience, and the motives held forth in the conclusion of the chapter, are entirely consistent with what had been declared as to the certainty of their sanctification resting on the power of God.

Therefore.—The exhortation in this verse is founded on the preceding. Here, then, we have an example of the manner in which the Apostle urges believers to the performance of their duty to God. On the ground of their conviction that they were dead to sin which he had just before enjoined them to maintain, he exhorts them in this and the following verse to abstain from sin. Unless they possessed that conviction, the motive on which he here rests his exhortation would have no application. This is his manner in all his Epistles, in common with the other Apostles, of enforcing the obligation of Christians to the performance of their duty. “Be ye kind one to another, forgiving one another, *even as God for Christ's sake hath*

forgiven you.” He proceeds on the fact of their knowledge that their sins were forgiven.

It is not easy to see what precise idea the Apostle intends to communicate by the addition of the epithet *mortal*; yet it is certain that he uses no unmeaning appendages, and that this word must add to the sense. The propriety of the epithet as ascribed to the body is evident; but still why is this epithet added here? Paul had just charged believers to reckon themselves dead to sin, but alive to God. When, therefore, he here urges them not to allow sin to reign in their bodies, and designates their bodies as mortal, it may be, that he means to intimate either that their struggle with sin, which will only continue while they are in the body, will be short, or to contrast the present state of the body with its future spiritual state. As in its future glorified state it is to live entirely to God, and to be without sin, so it follows that, even in its present mortal state, sin should not have it in subjection. Calvin is undoubtedly wrong in saying that the word body here ‘is not taken in ‘the sense of flesh, skin, and bones; but means, ‘if I may be allowed the expression, the whole ‘mass of the man;’ that is, man as soul and body in his present earthly state. This would import that the soul is now mortal.

Sin reign.—Sin is here personified and viewed

as a King. Such a ruler is sin over all the world, except those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 John v. 19. This is the reason why men will spend their substance and their labour in the works of the flesh. Sin rules in them as a sovereign; and they of their own accord with eagerness pursue every ungodly course to which their corrupt nature impels them; and in the service of sin they will often ruin their health as well as their fortune. *That ye should obey it*, or so as to obey it.—Sin is still a law in the members of believers, but it is not to be allowed to reign. It must be constantly resisted. *Obey it in the lusts thereof*.—That is to obey sin in the lusts of the body. Sin is obeyed in gratifying the lusts or corrupt appetites of the body.

V. 13.—Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Neither yield.—That is, do not present, afford, or make a donation of your members. *Instruments*—or weapons, or organs, to be employed in works of unrighteousness. *Unto sin*.—This surrender, against which the believer is cautioned, is to sin. They who employ the members of their bodies in doing the works of the flesh, present their bodies to sin as their king. *Members*.—There is no occasion, with Dr Mac-

knight and others, to suppose that the word members here includes the faculties of the mind as well as the members of the body. It is of the body that the Apostle is speaking. It follows, indeed, as a consequence, that if sin is not to be practised through the members of the body, neither is it to be indulged in the thoughts of the mind, for it is the latter that leads to the former. The word instruments evidently limits the expression to the members of the body.

But yield yourselves unto God.—Yield yourselves soul and body. The exhortation, as it respected the service of sin, mentions only the members of the body which are the instruments of gratifying the corruptions of the mind. But this, as was observed, sufficiently implies that we are forbidden to employ the faculties of the soul in the service of sin, as well as the members of the body. There can be no doubt that all we are commanded to give to God we are prohibited from giving to sin. If we are commanded to present ourselves unto God, then we are forbidden to present either the faculties of the mind or the members of the body to sin. The believer is to give himself up to God, without any reservation. He is to employ both body and mind, in every work that God requires of him. He must decline no labour that God sets

before him, no trial to which he calls him, no cross which he lays upon him. He is not to count even his life dear if God demands it from him.

As those that are alive from the dead.—Here again Christians are addressed as those who know their state. They are already in one sense raised from the dead. They have a spiritual life, of which they were by nature entirely destitute, and of which unbelievers are not only altogether destitute, but of which they cannot even conceive. *Your members as instruments of righteousness.*—The members of the body are not only to be used in the direct worship of God, and in doing those things in which their instrumentality is required, but in every action of life they ought to be employed in this manner, even in the common business of life, in which the glory of God should be constantly kept in view. The labourer when he toils in the field, if he acts with an eye to the glory of God, ought to console himself with the consideration that when he has finished his day to man, he has wrought a day to God. This view of the matter is a great relief under the toils of life. *Unto God.*—That is, yield your members unto God. As the natural man presents his members to sin, so the believer is to present his members to God.

V. 14.—*For sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

For sin shall not have dominion over you.—Some understand this as a precept, but it is evidently an assertion of a truth. No truth is more certain than that sin shall not have dominion over believers. God's veracity and glory are pledged to prevent it. The first *for* in this verse gives a reason why believers should exert themselves to give their members to the service of God. They shall not fail in their attempt, for sin shall not have dominion over them. The next *for* gives the reason why sin shall not have dominion over them.

For ye are not under the law—literally, under law. A great variety of interpretations are given of this declaration. But the meaning cannot be a matter of doubt to those who are well instructed in the nature of salvation by grace. It is quite obvious, that the law which believers are here said not to be under, is the moral law, as a covenant of works. To affirm that law here is the legal dispensation, is to say, that all who lived in the time of the law of Moses were under the dominion of sin. In the sense in which law is here understood, the Old Testament saints were not under it. They had the Gospel in figure. They trusted in the promised Saviour, and sought not to justify them-

selves by their obedience to the law. Besides, all unbelievers, both Jews and Gentiles, are under the law, in the sense in which believers are here said not to be under it. Believers are not under the law, because they have endured its curse, and obeyed its precept in the person of their great Head. But every man, till he is united to Christ, is under the law, which condemns him. When united to him, the believer is no longer under the law either to be condemned or to be justified. When Mr Stuart says, that it is from the law, ‘as inadequate to effect the sanctification, and secure the obedience of sinners,’ that the Apostle here declares us to be free, he proves that he entirely misunderstands what is meant. The circumstance that the law cannot sanctify the sinner, and secure his obedience, confers no emancipation from its demands. He is free from the law, because another has taken his place, and fulfilled it in his stead. This implies that all who are under the law, are also under the dominion of sin, and under the curse. Gal. iii. 10. Those self-righteous persons who trust in their works, and boast of their natural ability to serve God, are under the dominion of sin, and the very works in which they trust are sinful, or “dead works,” as the Apostle terms them, Heb. ix. 14. They are such works as men per-

form before their consciences are purged by the blood of Christ.

But under grace.—Believers are not under the covenant of works, but under the covenant of grace, by which they enjoy all the blessings of that gracious covenant. They are in a state of reconciliation with God. They know the Lord. His law is written in their hearts, and his fear is put within them, so that as he has promised not to depart from them, they shall not depart from him. Jer. xxxii. 40. Being made partakers of the favour of God through Jesus Christ, in whom grace was given them before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9., they have every spiritual supply through him who is full of grace. His grace is sufficient for them, 2 Cor. xii. 9. The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, that hath appeared to all men, teacheth them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, Titus, ii. 11. Not only is this grace manifested to them, but it operates within them. God works in them what is well pleasing in his sight, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Those who are under the law have nothing but their own strength for their obedience. But those who are under grace are by God himself thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Sin, therefore, shall not have dominion over them.

The great principle of evangelical obedience is taught in this passage. Holiness is not the result of the law, but of the liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free. He sends forth the spirit of grace into the hearts of all who belong to the election of grace, whom God hath from the beginning chosen to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth; and the word of God worketh effectually in all who believe, 1 Thes. ii. 13. Jesus Christ is the absolute master of the hearts of his people, of which he has taken possession, and in whom he reigns by the invincible power of the Spirit of Grace. The new covenant made with him, for those whom he has redeemed, and which is ratified with his blood, is immutable and irreversible.

Here, again, it should be observed, that the assurance thus given to believers that sin shall not have dominion over them, could not be duly appreciated, except on the ground that they *knew* that they were dead to sin and alive to God. Just in proportion as Christians are convinced of this, they will feel encouragement from this promise to persevere in their course. The assurance given to them that sin shall not have the dominion over them is then very far from furnishing a pretext or inducement to a life of sin. On the contrary, they are thereby bound, by every consideration

of love and gratitude, to serve God, while, by the certain prospect of final victory, they are encouraged to persevere, in spite of all difficulties and opposition, either from within or from without.

V. 15.—What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

The Apostle had been proving that his doctrine of a free justification by faith without works gives no license to believers to continue in sin, but, on the contrary, that the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of his people, and his resurrection for their justification, secures their walking in holiness of life. On this ground, in verses 12 and 13, he had urged on them the duty of obedience to God; and having finally declared, in the 14th verse, that, by the blessing of God, they should be enabled to perform it, he now proceeds to caution them against the abuse of this gracious declaration. If a man voluntarily sins, on the pretext that he is not under the law, but under grace, it is a proof that the grace of God is not in him. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

*What then?—*What is the inference which should be deduced from the preceding declaration? *Shall we sin, because we are not under the*

law, but under grace?—This question, proposed by the Apostle as an objection likely to be urged against his doctrine, plainly shows in what sense we are to understand the term *law* in the 14th verse. Were it not understood of the moral law, it would not be liable to the supposed objection. The fact of not being under the ceremonial law, or of a change of dispensation from that of Moses to that of Christ, would never lead to it. No one could suppose that the abolition of certain external rites would authorize men to break moral precepts. No view of the law could give occasion to the objection but that which includes freedom from the moral law. This would at once appear to furnish a license to sin with impunity; and it would be justly liable to this objection if freedom from the moral law meant, as some have argued, a freedom from it in every point of view. The freedom from the moral law which the believer enjoys is a freedom from an obligation to fulfil it in his own person for his justification—a freedom from its condemnation on account of imperfection of obedience. But this is quite consistent with the eternal obligation of the moral law as a rule of life to the Christian. Nothing can be more self-evidently certain than that if the moral law is not a rule of life to believers, they are at liberty to disregard it. But this thought is abo-

minable. The Apostle therefore rejects it in the strongest terms, in the way in which he usually expresses his disapprobation of what is most egregiously wrong.

V. 16.—Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Know ye not.—That is, the thing by which I am now going to illustrate the subject, is a fact of which you cannot be ignorant. All of them well knew the truth of what Paul was about to say, and by this similitude they would be able to comprehend the doctrine he was teaching. The ground, however, of the use of this phraseology has no resemblance, as Mr Stuart supposes, to that used in verses 6 and 9. Here, the Apostle speaks of a thing which all men know, and which belongs to the common relations of society—There, he speaks of what they know only as Christians by revelation.

Yield yourselves, or present yourselves.—Not, as Mr Stuart translates it, “proffer yourselves.” It is possible among men, that proffered service may be rejected; or that, at least, something may occur to prevent performance of the actual service—and it is of transactions among men that the Apostle is speaking; but in the Apostle’s view, the presented service is accepted. Mr Stuart’s translation in his commentary is better.

‘ Where you have once given up yourselves to ‘ any one’ as servants. This, however, is quite a different idea from what he expresses in the text.

Servants to obey, literally, unto obedience.—Mr Stuart’s translation is not to be approved of here, “ready to obey,” or “bound to obey.” The idea is not that they were bound by this presentation of themselves to continue in obedience to the master. The servants unto obedience, are not servants who are bound to obey, but servants who have actually obeyed—whose servitude is proved and perfected in their works. Mr Stuart entirely mistakes the sentiment expressed by the Apostle, when he paraphrases thus:—‘ When you have once given up yourselves to any one as δούλους εἰς ὑπακοήν, you are no ‘ longer your own masters, or at your own disposal; you have put yourselves within the ‘ power, and at the disposal of another master.’ The language of the Apostle is not designed to prove that, by presenting themselves to a master, they are bound to his service, but to state the obvious fact that they are the servants of him whose work they do. If we see a number of labourers in a field, we know they are the servants of the proprietor of the field—of the person in whose work they are employed. The application of this fact to the Apostle’s purpose is obvious and important. If men are doing the

work of Satan, must they not be Satan's servants? —If they are doing God's work, must they not be the servants of God? Mr Stuart's exposition leads entirely away from the Apostle's meaning.

Of Sin.—Sin is here personified, and sinners are its servants. *Unto death.*—That is, which ends in death. This is the wages with which sin rewards its servants. *Obedience unto righteousness.*—Obedience is also personified, and the work performed to obedience is righteousness; that is, the works of the believer are righteous works. Nothing can be more false as a translation, or more erroneous in sentiment than the version of Mr Stuart. “Obedience unto justification.” In his paraphrase, he says, “But if ‘you are the servants of that *obedience which is ‘unto justification, i. e. which is connected with ‘justification, which ends in it—then you may ‘expect eternal life.’* Δικαιοσύνη, which he here translates justification, is righteousness, and never justification. In verses 18, 19, and 20, that follow, he himself translates it righteousness. And what can be more completely subversive of the doctrine of justification, and of the Gospel itself, than the assertion that obedience “ends in,” or, as he says afterwards, *will lead to justification?* This is the translation of the English Socinian version, and of that adopted in their different editions of the New Testa-

ment by the Socinian pastors of the church of Geneva. ‘De l’obeissance qui *conduit* à la justification.’ Of obedience which leads to justification. They have, however, printed the word “conduit” (leads to) in italics, to show that it is a supplement.

Mr Stuart says that his view seems to him quite clear from justification being the antithesis unto death. But justification is not an exact antithesis to death. It is life that is the antithesis to death. There is no need, however, that there should be such an exact correspondence in the parts of the antitheses as is supposed. And there is a most obvious reason why it could not be so. Death is the wages of sin, but life is not the wages of obedience. Mr Stuart asks, ‘How can *δικαιοσύνην* here mean ‘holiness, uprightness, when *ὑπακοή* itself necessarily designates this very idea? What is an ‘obedience which *leads* to righteousness? Or ‘how does it differ from righteousness itself, ‘inasmuch as it is the very act of obedience ‘which constitutes righteousness in the sense ‘now contemplated?’ It is replied that obedience is here personified, and therefore righteous actions are properly represented as performed to it. Mr Stuart might as well ask why are obedience to sin, and the lusts of sin, supposed different things in verse 12. In like man-

ner we have righteousness and holiness in verse 19, and fruit and holiness in verse 22. Besides, obedience and righteousness are not ideas perfectly coincident. Righteousness refers to works as to their nature; obedience refers to the same works as to their principle. Mr Stuart's remark is both false in criticism, and heretical in doctrine.

V. 17.—But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

The Apostle here expresses his thankfulness to God, that they who had formerly been the servants of sin were now the servants of righteousness. To suppose, as some do, that sin itself could be a matter of thankfulness, is a most palpable error, than which nothing can be more remote from the meaning of this passage. *Obeyed from the heart.*—Christian obedience is obedience from the heart, in opposition to an obedience which is by constraint. Any attempt at obedience by an unconverted man, is an obedience produced by some motive of fear, self-interest, or constraint—and not from the heart. Nothing can be a more convincing evidence of the truth of the Gospel than the change which, in this respect, it produces on the mind of the believer. Nothing but Almighty power could at once transform a man from the love and power of sin to the love of holiness.

That form of doctrine which was delivered you.—There are various solutions of this expression, all substantially agreeing in meaning, but differing in the manner of bringing out that meaning. The most usual way of solving it is, by supposing that there is a reference to melted metals transferred to a mould, which obey or exactly conform to the mould. It might, perhaps, be as probable that the reference is to wax or clay, or any soft matter that takes the form of the stamp or seal. There is another way of explaining the phraseology that may be worthy of consideration—Ye have obeyed from the heart that form or model of doctrine unto which you have been committed. In this way, the form of doctrine or the Gospel is considered as a teacher, and believers are committed to its instructions. The word translated delivered, will admit of this interpretation, and it is sufficiently agreeable to the general meaning of the expression. The substance of the phrase, however, is obvious, and, let it be translated as it may, there is no essential difference in the meaning.

V. 18.—*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

Being then made free from sin.—There is here a reference to the emancipation of slaves from the power of their masters. Formerly they were slaves to sin, now they have been emancipated

by the Gospel. This deliverance is called their freedom. It does not by any means import what has been called sinless perfection, or an entire freedom from the influence of sin. Indeed it has no reference at all to this subject. *Ye became servants of righteousness.*—Here we see the proper meaning of the word *δικαιοσύνη*. The servants of righteousness are men devoted to the practice of such works as are *righteous*. What would be the meaning of servants of justification? The idea is that the believer ought to be as entirely devoted to God as a servant or slave is to his master. Mr Stuart is here compelled to allow the true meaning of the same word, which in the 16th verse, in consistency with his unscriptural system, he had mistranslated, by rendering it justification.

V. 19.—I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

I speak after the manner of men.—This refers to the illustration of the subject by the customs of men as to slavery. Mr Stuart has either missed the idea here, or expressed it too generally. He translates, ‘in language usual to men,’ and expounds, ‘I speak as men are accustomed to speak, viz. I use such language as they usually employ in regard to the affairs

‘ of common life.’ This makes the reference merely to the words used; whereas the reference is to the illustration drawn from human customs. In what way could the Apostle speak but as men are accustomed to speak? Could he speak in any other language than that which was usual to men? This is a thing in which there is no choice. If he speaks at all he must use human language. But to illustrate spiritual subjects by the customs of men is a matter of choice, because it might have been avoided. This establishes the propriety of teaching divine truth through illustrations taken from all subjects with which those addressed are acquainted. This method not only facilitates the right perception or apprehension of the subject, but also assists the memory in retaining the information received. Accordingly it was much used by our Lord and his Apostles.

Calvin has not caught the spirit of this passage: ‘ Paul,’ says he, ‘ means that he speaks ‘ after the manner of men with respect to forms, ‘ not the subject-matter, as Christ (John iii. ‘ 12) says “ If I have told you earthly things,” ‘ when he is, however, discoursing on heavenly ‘ mysteries, but not with so much majesty as ‘ the dignity of the subject demanded, because ‘ he accommodated himself to the capacity of a ‘ rude, dull, and slow people.’ Here Calvin

also makes the reference to be not to human customs, but to human language and style. It may also be justly asked why the Lord did not express himself with so much majesty as the dignity of the subject demanded? It cannot be admitted that his language, or the language of inspiration, ever falls short of the dignity demanded by the subject.

Because of the infirmity of your flesh.—That is, the weakness of their spiritual discernment through the corruption of human nature. This does not refer, as Mr Stuart supposes, to ‘the feeble or infantile state of spiritual knowledge among the Romans,’ but is applicable to mankind in general. Men in all places, and in all ages, and in every period of their lives, are weak through the flesh, both in spiritual discernment, and in the practice of holiness. Men of the most powerful mental capacity are naturally dull in apprehending the things of the Spirit. Accordingly, errors abound with them as much as with the most illiterate, and often in a far greater degree. Besides, such a peculiar application to those in the church at Rome is inconsistent with ch. xv. 14, where the Apostle says that they were “filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”

For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness.—This shows the state of men by

nature, and especially the state of the heathen world at the period of the highest refinement. *Uncleanness* means all impurity, but especially the vice opposed to chastity. *Iniquity*, as distinguished from this, refers to conduct opposed to laws human and divine. The one refers principally to the pollution, the other to the guilt of sin.

Unto iniquity.—Some understand this as signifying from one iniquity to another, or from one degree of iniquity to another, which is not its meaning. Neither can it signify, as sometimes it is understood, for the purpose of iniquity, for men often sin when it cannot be justly said that they do so *for the purpose of sinning*. They often sin from the love of the sin, when they wish it was not a sin. Their object is selfish gratification. It is evident that the phrase is to be understood on a principle already mentioned, namely, that iniquity is in the first occurrence personified, and in the second, it is the conduct that obedience to this sovereign produces. They give their members as slaves to iniquity as a king, and the result is, that iniquity was practised. This corresponds with the sense, and suits the antithesis. *Righteousness unto holiness*.—Righteousness is here personified as iniquity was before, and obedience to this sovereign produces holiness.

V. 20.—For when ye were the servants of sin ye were free from righteousness.

Mr Tholuck misunderstands this verse, which, in connexion with the 21st, he paraphrases thus: ‘ While engaged in the service of sin, you possessed, it is true, the advantage of standing entirely out of all subjection to righteousness; but let us look to what is to be the final result.’ The Apostle is not speaking of freedom from righteousness as an advantage either real or supposed. He is speaking of it as a fact; and from that fact he argues, that, as they were free from righteousness when they were slaves to sin, so now, as they are the servants of righteousness, they ought to hold themselves free from the slavery of sin. The consequence, indeed, is not drawn, but is so plain that it is left to the reader. The sentiment is just and obvious. When they were the subjects of their former sovereign, they were free from the service of their present sovereign. So now, as they are subjects to righteousness, they ought to be free from sin.

Mr Stuart also misunderstands this verse. He explains it thus: ‘ When you served sin, you deemed yourselves free from all obligation to righteousness.’ This the Apostle neither says, nor could say. For it is not a fact that natural men, whether Pagans, or under a profession of Christianity, regard themselves as

bound by no obligations to righteousness. The law of nature teaches them the contrary. But whatever is their light on this subject, that they are free from righteousness, is a fact. This, we learn, is the state of all natural men, they are free from righteousness.

V. 21.—What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

What fruit had ye then in those things.—Besides the exhortations to holiness which he had already employed, the Apostle here sets before believers the nature and consequences of sin. Unprofitable and shameful in its character, its end is death. He asks what advantage had they derived from their former conduct. Fruit here signifies advantage, and not pleasure. Many interpret this verse as if the Apostle denied that they had any pleasure in those sins at the time of committing them. This the Apostle could not do; for it is a fact that men have pleasure in sin. To say that sinful pleasure is no pleasure, but is imaginary, is to abuse terms. All pleasure is a matter of feeling, and a man is no less happy than he feels himself to be; if he imagines that he enjoys pleasure, he actually enjoys pleasure. But what advantage is there in such pleasure? This is the question which the Apostle asks.

Whereof ye are now ashamed.—It is a remarkable fact that men in a state of alienation from

God will commit sin, not only without shame, but will glory in many things of which they are ashamed the moment they are changed by the gospel. They now see their conduct in another light. They see that it was not only sinful but shameful. *For the end of those things is death.*—Here is the answer to the question, with respect to the fruit of unrighteous conduct. Whatever pleasure they might have found in it, the end of it is ruin. *Death.*—This cannot be confined to natural death, for that is equally the end with respect to the righteous as well as the wicked. It includes the whole penalty of sin—eternal punishment.

V. 22.—But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Having concluded his triumphant reply to the objection, that his doctrine concerning justification leads to indulgence in sin, the Apostle here assures those to whom he wrote of the blessed effects of becoming servants to God. In the eighth chapter these are fully developed. *But now being made free from sin*, that is, emancipated from a state of slavery to sin. *Fruit unto holiness.*—Fruit in this verse denotes conduct, and holiness its specific character or quality. When conduct or works are called fruit, their nature is not expressed. They are merely con-

sidered as the production of the man. Fruit unto holiness is conduct that is holy. *And the end everlasting life.*—Fruit unto holiness, or holy conduct, is the present result of freedom from sin, and of becoming servants to God; eternal life is the final result. Eternal life is the issue of the service of God, but it is not the reward of its merit. Hence, the Apostle here uses the phrase eternal life, when he is speaking of the issue of the service of God. But in verse 16, he says, “obedience unto righteousness, and not obedience unto eternal life,” because he had, in the preceding member of the sentence, spoken of death as the punishment of sin. Had he used the word eternal life in connexion with obedience in this antithesis, it would have too much resembled an assertion, that eternal life is the reward of our obedience.

V. 23.—For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The wages of sin is death.—Here, as in the conclusion of the preceding chapter, death is contrasted with eternal life. Sin is a service or slavery, and its reward is death or eternal misery. As death is the greatest evil in this world, so the future punishment of the wicked is called death figuratively, or the second death. In this sense death is frequently spoken of in Scripture, as when our Lord says, “whosoever

believeth on me shall never die.” This is the just recompense of sin. The Apostle does not add, but the wages of obedience is eternal life. This is not the doctrine of Scripture. He adds, *but the gift of God is eternal life.* The gift that God bestows is eternal life. He bestows no less upon any of his people; and it is the greatest gift that can be bestowed.

Dr Gill on this passage remarks—‘ These words, at first sight, look as if the sense of them was, that eternal life is the gift of God through Christ, which is a great and glorious truth of the Gospel; but their standing in opposition to the preceding words require another sense, namely, that God’s gift of grace issues in eternal life, through Christ: Wherefore by *the gift of God* is not meant eternal life, but either the gift of a justifying righteousness, or the grace of God in regeneration and sanctification, or both, which issue in eternal life.’ This remark does not appear to be well founded. The wages of sin do not issue in or lead to death, but the wages of sin is death. Death is asserted to be the wages of sin, and not to be another issue to which the wages of sin lead. And the gift of God is not said to issue in eternal life, but to be eternal life. Eternal life is the gift here spoken of. It is not, as Dr Gill represents, “ eternal life is

the gift of God," but "the gift of God is eternal life." The meaning of these two propositions, though nearly alike, are not entirely coincident. The common version is perfectly correct. Both of the propositions might with truth be rendered convertible, but as they are expressed by the Apostle they are not convertible; and we should receive the expression as it stands. No doubt the gift of righteousness issues in eternal life; but it is of the gift of eternal life itself, and not of the gift of righteousness, that the Apostle is here speaking, and the Apostle's language should not be pressed into a meaning which is foreign to his design.

Life and death are set before us in the Scriptures. On the one hand, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; on the other, glory, and honour, and peace. To one or other of these states every child of Adam will finally be consigned. To both of them, in the concluding verse of this chapter, our attention is directed, and the grounds on which never-ending misery or everlasting blessedness will be awarded, are expressly declared. "The wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The punishment of that *death* which was the threatened penalty of the first transgression, will, according to Scripture, consist in the pains

both of privation and suffering. Its subjects will not only be bereaved of all that is good, they will also be overwhelmed with all that is terrible. As the chief good of the creature is the enjoyment of the love of God, how great must be the punishment of being deprived of the sense of his love, and oppressed with the consciousness of his hatred. The condemned will be entirely divested of every token of the protection and blessing of God, and visited with every proof of his wrath and indignation. According to the awful declaration of the Apostle, they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, in that day "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This punishment will be adapted to both the component parts of man's nature, to the soul as well as to the body. It will connect all the ideas of the past, the present, and the future. As to the past, it will bring to the recollection of the wicked the sins they had committed, the good they had abused, and the false pleasures by which they were deluded. As to the present, their misery will be aggravated by their knowledge of the glory of the righteous, of

which they themselves are for ever deprived, and by the company of the devil and his angels, to the endurance of whose slavery they are for ever doomed. As to the future, the horrors of their irreversible condition will be rendered more insupportable by the overwhelming conviction of its eternity. To the whole must be added, that rage against God, whom they will hate as their enemy, without any abatement or diminution.

It is not to be questioned that there will be degrees in the punishment of the wicked. This is established by our Lord himself, when he declares that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment than for the Jews. This punishment being the effect of Divine justice, the necessary proportion between crime and suffering will be observed, and as some crimes are greater and more aggravated than others, there will be a difference in the punishment inflicted. In one view, indeed, all sins are equal, because equally offences against God and transgressions of his law; but, in another view, they differ from each other. Sin is in degree proportioned not only to the want of love to God and man, which it displays, but likewise to the manner in which it is perpetrated. Murder is more aggravated than theft, and the sins against the second table of the law are

less heinous than those committed against the first. Sins likewise vary in degree, inasmuch as one is carried into full execution, and another remains but in thought or purpose. The difference in the degree of punishment will not consist, however, in what belongs to privation—for in this it must be equal to all—but in those sufferings which will be positively inflicted by God.

Our Lord, three times in one discourse, repeats that awful declaration, “ Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” The term fire presents the idea of the intensity of the wrath or vengeance of God. It denotes that the sufferings of the condemned sinner are such as the body experiences from material fire, and that entire desolation which accompanies its devouring flames. Fire, however, consumes the matter on which it acts, and is thus itself extinguished. But it is not so with those who shall be delivered over to that fire which is not quenched. They will be upheld in existence by Divine justice, as the subjects on which it will be ever displaying itself. The expression, “ their worm dieth not,” indicates a continuance of pain and putrefaction such as the gnawing of worms would produce. As fire is extinguished when its fuel is consumed, in the same way the worm dies when the subject on which

it subsists is destroyed. But here it is represented as never dying, because the persons of the wicked are supported for the endurance of this punishment. In employing these figures, the Lord probably refers to the two ways in which the bodies of the dead were in former times consigned to darkness and oblivion, either by incremation or interment. In the first way, they were consumed by fire—in the second devoured by worms. The final punishment of the enemies of God is likewise represented by their being cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. This imports the multitude of griefs with which the wicked will be overwhelmed. What emblem can more strikingly portray the place of torment than the tossing waves, not merely of a flood of waters, but of liquid fire? And what can describe more awfully the intensity of the sufferings of those who are condemned, than the image of that brimstone by which the fierceness of fire is augmented?

These expressions, their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, to which it is added, "For every one shall be salted with fire," preclude every idea either of annihilation or of a future restoration to happiness. Under the law the victims offered in sacrifice were appointed to be salted with salt, called "the salt of

the covenant," Lev. xi. 13. Salt is an emblem of incorruptibility, and the use of it announced the perpetuity of the covenant of God with his people. In the same manner all the sacrifices to his justice will be salted with fire. Every sinner will be preserved by the fire itself, becoming thereby incorruptible, and fitted to endure those torments to which he is destined. The just vengeance of God will render incorruptible the children of wrath, whose misery, no more than the blessedness of the righteous, will ever come to an end.

"The Son of Man," said Jesus, "goeth, as it is written of him; but wo unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born." If the punishment of the wicked in the future state was to terminate in a period, however remote, and were it to be followed with eternal happiness, what is here affirmed of Judas would not be true. A great gulf is fixed between the abodes of blessedness and misery, and all passage from the one to the other is for ever barred.

The punishment, then, of the wicked will, according to the figures that are employed, as well as to the express declarations of Scripture, be eternal. Sin being committed against the infinity of God, merits an infinite punishment. In the natural order of justice this

punishment ought to be infinitely great; but as that is impossible, since the creature is incapable of suffering pain in an infinite degree, infinity in greatness is compensated by infinity in duration. The punishment, then, is finite in itself, and on this account it is capable of being inflicted in a greater or less degree; but as it is eternal, it bears the same proportion to the greatness of Him who is offended.

The metaphors and comparisons employed in Scripture to describe the intensity of the punishment of the wicked, are calculated deeply to impress the sentiment of the awful nature of that final retribution. “Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.” Isaiah xxx. 33.

While the doctrine of eternal happiness is generally admitted, the eternity of future punishment is doubted by many. The declarations, however, of the Holy Scriptures respecting both are equally explicit. Concerning each of them the very same expressions are used. “These shall go away into everlasting (literally eternal) punishment: but the righteous unto life eternal.” Matt. xxv. 46. Owing to the hardness of their hearts men are insensible to

the great evil of sin. Hence the threatenings of future punishment, according to the word of God, shock all their prejudices, and seem to them unjust, and such as never can be realized. The tempter said to the woman, “ *Ye shall not surely die,*” although God had declared it. In the same way he now suggests that the doctrine of eternal punishment, though written as with a sunbeam in the book of God, and expressly affirmed by the Saviour in the description of the last judgment, and so often repeated by him during his abode on earth, is contrary to every idea that men ought to entertain of the goodness and mercy of God. He conceals from his votaries the fact that if God is merciful he is also just; and that while forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, he will by no means clear the guilty. Some who act as his servants in promoting this delusion, have admitted that the Scriptures do indeed threaten everlasting punishment to transgressors; but they say that God employs such threatenings as a veil to deter men from sin while he by no means intends to execute them. The veil, then, which God has provided is, according to them, too transparent to answer the purpose he intends, and they in their superior wisdom have been able to penetrate it. And this is one of their *apologies* for the Bible, with the design of making its doc-

trines more palatable to the world. On their own principles, then, they are chargeable with doing all in their power to frustrate what they affirm to be a provision of mercy. Shall men, however eminent they may be esteemed, be for a moment listened to, who stand confessedly guilty of conduct so impious ?

Infinitely great are the obligations of believers to that grace by which they have been made to differ from others, to flee to the refuge set before them in the Gospel, and to wait for the Son of God from Heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from wrath to come.

Of the nature of that glory of which the people of God shall be put in possession in the day of their redemption, we cannot form a clear and distinct idea. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." In the present state, believers, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. This transformation, while they see only through a glass darkly, is gradually proceeding ; but when they see face to face, and shall know even as they are known, this image shall be perfected. Their blessedness will consist in a knowledge of God

and his mysteries, a full and exquisite sense of his love, ineffable consolation, profound tranquillity of soul, a perfect concord and harmony of the soul with the body, and with all the powers of the soul among themselves ; in one word, in an assemblage of all sorts of blessings. These blessings will not be measured in the proportion of the creatures who receive them, but of God who confers them ; and of the dignity of the person of Jesus Christ, and of his merit ; of his person, for they shall obtain that felicity only in virtue of the communion which they have with him ; of his merit, for he has acquired it by the price of his blood. So far, then, as we can conceive of majesty, of excellency, and of glory, in the person of the Redeemer, so far, keeping always in view the proportion of the creature to the Creator, ought we to conceive of the value, the excellence, and the abundance of the eternal blessings which he will bestow upon his people. The Scriptures call it a fulness of satisfaction, not a fulness of satiety, but a fulness of joy, at the right hand of God, where there are pleasures for evermore. It will be a crown of righteousness ; they shall sit down with Christ on his throne, as he is set down with his Father on his throne. “ Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb.”

As to the duration of this blessedness, it shall

be eternal. But why eternal? Because God will bestow it upon a supernatural principle, and, consequently, upon a principle free from changes to which nature is exposed, in opposition to the happiness of Adam, which was natural. Because God will give it not as to hirelings, but as to his children in title of inheritance. "The servant," or the hireling, says Jesus Christ, "abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever." Because God will confer it as a donation, that is to say, irrevocably. On this account, Paul declares, that "eternal life is the gift of God." None of the causes which produce changes will have place in heaven;—not the inequality of nature, for it shall be swallowed up in glory,—not sin, for it will be entirely abolished,—not the temptations of Satan, for Satan will have no entrance there,—not the mutability of the creature, for God will possess his people fully and perfectly.

Through Jesus Christ.—Eternal life comes to the people of God as a free gift, yet it is through Jesus Christ. By his mediation alone reconciliation between God and man is effected, peace established, communion restored, and every blessing conferred. The smallest as well as the greatest gift is bestowed through him; and they are not the less free gifts from God, because Christ our Lord has paid the price of redemp-

tion. He himself is given for this end by the Father, and he and the Father are one. He, then, who pays the ransom is one and the same who justifies, so that the freeness of the gift is not in the smallest degree diminished.*

This gift of eternal life is bestowed through Jesus Christ, and by him it is dispensed. "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life." *Our Lord.*—His people are constantly to keep in mind that Jesus Christ is their Lord, whose authority they are ever to regard, and whom, as their Lord and Master, they are implicitly to obey. He is the Lord both of the dead and the living, to whom every knee shall bow, and before whose judgment-seat we shall all stand.

The manner in which the Apostle winds up his discussion on the free justification of sinners, in the close of the preceding chapter, and that in which he now draws to a conclusion the doctrine of their sanctification, are strikingly similar. "Grace," he there says, reigns "through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our

* See 2d Ed. vol. i. 321.

Lord ;” and through Him, it is here said, “ the gift of God is eternal life.” All is of grace, all is a free gift, all is vouchsafed through, and in Him, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, from whom neither death nor life shall separate us. “ Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”

The doctrine of free justification by faith without works, on which the Apostle had been insisting in the preceding part of the epistle, is vindicated in this chapter from the charge of producing those consequences which are ascribed to it by the wisdom of the world, [and by all who are opposed to the Gospel. Far from conducting to licentiousness, as many venture to affirm, it stands indissolubly connected with the sanctification of the children of God.

In the conclusion of the preceding chapter, Paul had asserted that, as the reign of sin had been terminated by the death of the Redeemer, so the reign of grace, through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, our Lord, has succeeded. He had shown in the third and fourth chapters, that this righteousness is upon all them that believe, who are thus justified freely by grace. In the fifth chapter, he had exhibited the effects and accompaniments of their justification. The objection which he had,

notwithstanding, seen it proper to introduce in the beginning of this sixth chapter, had led to a further developement of the way in which these blessed effects are produced. In order to this, he says nothing, as has been observed, of the character or attainments of believers, but proceeds to describe their state before God, in consequence of their union with Christ. The sanctification of believers, he thus shows, proceeds from the sovereign determination, the eternal purpose, and the irresistible power of God, which are exerted according to his everlasting covenant, through the mediation of his beloved Son, and in consistency with every part of the plan of salvation. While this, however, is the truth—truth so consolatory to every Christian—it is an incumbent duty to consider, and to seek to give effect to those motives to holiness, presented by the Spirit of God in his own word, as the means which he employs to carry on this great work in the soul—presented, too, in those very doctrines, which the wisdom of the world has always supposed will lead to licentiousness. Every view of the character of God, and every part of the plan of salvation, tends to promote holiness in his people, and on every doctrine contained in the Scriptures, holiness is inscribed.

The doctrine of justification without works, so far from leading to licentiousness, furnishes the

most powerful motives to obedience to God. They who receive the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of God, have the fullest and most awful sense of the obligation which the holy law of God enforces on his creatures, and of the extent and purity of that law connected with the most profound sentiment of the evil of sin. Every new view that believers take of the Gospel of their salvation, is calculated to impress on their minds a hatred of sin, and a desire to flee from it. In the doctrine of Christ crucified, they perceive that God, who is holy and just, pardons nothing without an atonement, and manifests his hatred of sin by the plan he adopts for the salvation of sinners. The extent of the evil of sin is exhibited in the dignity and glory of him by whom it has been expiated, the depth of his humiliation, and the greatness of his sufferings; together with the obligation of the law of God, derived from its purity and sanction.

If the principal object, or one of the essential characteristics of the doctrine of justification by faith, was to represent God as easily pacified towards the guilty, as taking a superficial cognizance of the breach of his holy law, and punishing it lightly, it might with reason be concluded that it relaxes the bonds of moral obligation. But so far is this from being the case, that this doctrine maintains in the highest

degree the holiness of God, and discovers the danger of continuing in sin. It teaches that even when the Almighty is determined to show compassion to the sinner, he cannot exercise it until his justice is satisfied. That Jesus Christ should have purchased, at the price of his own blood, a license to sin against God, would be contradictory in itself, and incompatible with the wisdom and uniformity of the Divine government. God cannot hate sin before its expiation by his Son, and love it after the sufferings inflicted on account of it. If it behoved him to punish sin so severely in the divine Surety of his people, it can never be pleasing to him in those for whom the Surety has made satisfaction. His holiness is farther displayed by this doctrine, which teaches that it is only through a righteous advocate and intercessor that they who are justified have access to God.

The Gospel method of justification by the blood of Christ discovers sin and its fatal consequences in the most hideous aspect, while at the same time it displays the mercy of God in a manner the most attractive. Believers are punished with death in the person of their Divine Surety, according to the original and irrevocable sentence pronounced against man on account of his transgression. But as Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead by the power of the Fa-

ther, they also have been raised with him to walk in newness of life. They are, therefore, bound, by every consideration of love and fear, of gratitude and joyful hope, to regulate the actions of that life which has thus been granted to them in a new and holy way. Being baptized into the death of Christ, in whom they are "complete," they ought to be conformed to him, and to separate themselves from sin by its entire destruction. Their baptism, which is the instituted sign of their regeneration, of their forfeiture by sin of Adam's life, and their fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection, exhibits to them in the clearest manner the necessity of purity and holiness; the way by which these are attained conformably to the Gospel, and their obligation to renounce every thing incompatible with the service of God. "I am crucified," says the Apostle Paul, "with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." And addressing the believers to whom he wrote, he says, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Ye are "buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead."

Ch. xi. 12. These blessings believers enjoy by that faith which unites them to Christ, and which is wrought in their hearts by the same power that raised up Jesus from the dead, and that will raise them up at the last day.

The inducements, then, to love and gratitude to God, held out and enforced by the doctrine of justification by faith, are the strongest that can be conceived. The inexpressible magnitude of the blessings which they who are justified have received; their deliverance from everlasting destruction; the right they have obtained to eternal blessedness, and their meetness for its enjoyment; the infinite condescension of the great author of these gifts, extending mercy to those who, so far from serving him, have provoked his wrath; the astonishing means employed in the execution of his purpose of saving them, and the conviction which believers entertain of their own unworthiness, all impose the strongest obligations, and furnish the most powerful motives to walk in obedience to God. "We have known and believed," says the Apostle John, "the love that God hath to us." As long as the sinner continues to live under the burden of unpardoned guilt, so long as he sees divine justice and holiness armed against him, he can only be actuated, in any attempt towards obedience, by servile fear; but when he believes the precious pro-

mises of pardon flowing from the love of God, when he knows the just foundation on which this pardon is established, he cleaves with reciprocal love to God. He rests his confidence solely on the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, and ascribes to his heavenly Father all the glory of his salvation. Being justified by faith, he has peace with God, which he no longer labours to acquire by his own works. His obedience is a constant expression of love and thankfulness for the free gift of that righteousness which the Son of God was sent to accomplish, which he finished on the cross, and which confers a title to divine favour sufficient for the most guilty of mankind. If any man professes to believe in Jesus Christ, to love his name, and to enjoy communion with God, yet obeys not his commandments, he "is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him, verily, is the love of God perfected." That which does not produce obedience is not love, and what does not proceed from love is unworthy of the name of obedience. The pretence of love without obedience is hypocrisy, and obedience without love is a real slavery.

The sanctification of the people of God depends on the death of Christ in the way of its meritorious cause : for through the death of Jesus Christ they receive the Holy Spirit, who sanc-

tifies them. He has also sanctified himself, that he might sanctify them—He had, indeed, no corruption from which he needed sanctification ; but when he took on him the sins of his people, they were his sins as truly as if he had been personally guilty. This is in accordance with what is declared, 2 Cor. v. 21—“ He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin : that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” In this light, then, he must be sanctified from sin, and this was effected by his suffering death. He was sanctified from the sin he had taken upon him by his own blood shed upon the cross, and in him they are sanctified.

The sanctification of believers depends, too, on the death of Jesus Christ in the way of obligation ; for, having redeemed his people to himself, he has laid them under an inviolable obligation to be holy. “ Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver or gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” “ Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” Their sanctification arises also from the example of Jesus Christ ; for, in his death as well as in his life, all Christian virtues were exhibited and exercised in a manner

the most admirable, and set before us for our imitation. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps."

The sanctification of believers likewise depends on the death of Christ in the way of motive; for it furnishes an almost infinite number of motives to holiness of life. In his death, believers discover the profound misery in which they were plunged in the slavery of sin and Satan—children of rebellion and wrath separated from the communion of God. To procure their deliverance it was necessary, not only that the Son of God should come into the world, but that he should suffer on the cross; whence they ought to regard their former condition with holy terror and abhorrence. In his death they perceive how hateful sin is in the sight of God, since it was necessary that the blood of an infinite and Divine person should be shed in order to its expiation. In that death they discover the ineffable love of God, which has even led to the delivering up of his only begotten Son for their salvation. They discover the love and compassion of the Son himself, which induced him to come down from heaven to save them, which should beget reciprocal love, and an ardent zeal for his service. They perceive the hope of their calling, and realize the blessings of the eternal inheritance of God, which have been acquired by

that death. They see the honour and dignity of their adoption, for Jesus Christ has died that they might become the children of God. They have been born of his blood, which binds them never to lose sight of this heavenly dignity, but to conduct themselves in a manner suitable to their high vocation.

In the death of Jesus Christ the eyes of believers are directed to the Spirit of sanctification, whom God hath sent forth; for in dying Jesus Christ has obtained for his people the inexhaustible graces of the Holy Spirit. This leads them to renounce the spirit of the world, and submit to the direction and guidance of the Spirit from on high. They discover the honour of their communion with Jesus Christ, being his brethren and joint heirs, the members of his body, those for whom he shed his blood, and whom he hath redeemed at so astonishing a price. They see the peace which he hath made between God and them, which imposes on them the duty of never disturbing that blessed reconciliation, but on the contrary of rendering the most profound obedience to the divine law. They see the most powerful motives to humility, for the death of Jesus Christ is a mirror in which they behold the vileness and indignity of their natural corruption, and perceive that they have nothing in themselves wherewith to satisfy

divine justice for their sins. His death placing before their eyes their original condition, leads them to cry out before God, "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee; but unto us confusion of face." "Our justification is a blessing which proceeds from thy grace, thou hast conferred on us the righteousness of thy Son, but to ourselves belongeth nothing but misery and ruin." The death of Jesus Christ presents the strongest motives to repentance, for if, after the redemption he has wrought, they should still continue in their sins, it would be making him, as the Apostle says, "the minister of sin." And, finally, the death of Jesus Christ teaches them not to dread their own death, for he hath sanctified the tomb, and rendered death itself innocuous to his people, since he has condescended to suffer it for them. Their death is the last part of their fellowship on earth with their suffering Redeemer; and as his death was the gate through which he entered into his glory, so the earthly house of their tabernacle must be dissolved, that they may be also glorified together with him. O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as his death, presents the strongest motives for the encouragement and sanctification of believers.

His resurrection establishes their faith, as being the heavenly seal with which God has been pleased to confirm the truth of the Christian religion. Having been declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead, they are led to regard him as the Creator of the world, and the eternal Son of the Father. It assures them of the effect of his death in expiating their sins, and obliges them to embrace the blood of his cross as the price of their redemption. His resurrection being the victory which he obtained over the enemies of his church, they are bound to place all their confidence in him, and to resign themselves for ever to his guidance. It presents the most powerful motive to have constant recourse to the mercy of the Father, for having himself raised up the Head and Surety of his people; it is an evident pledge of his eternal purpose to love them, and of their freedom of access to God by his Son.

In the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ believers are taught the certainty of their immortality and future blessedness. Lazarus and others who were raised up, received their life in the same state as they possessed it before; and after they arose they died a second time; but Jesus Christ, in his resurrection, received a life entirely different. In his birth a life was communicated to him which was soon to termi-

nate on the cross. His resurrection communicated a life imperishable and immortal. Jesus Christ being raised from the dead, death hath no more dominion over him. Of this new life the Apostle speaks as being already enjoyed by his people. "He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Elsewhere he calls that heavenly life which Jesus Christ now possesses, their life. "Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, ye also shall appear with him in glory." "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me," he himself hath said, "shall never die." All this should inspire his people with courage to finish their course here, in order to go to take possession of the heavenly inheritance which he has gone before to prepare for them, and from whence he will come to receive them to himself. It should inspire them with fortitude, that they may not sink under the afflictions and trials which they experience on earth. The Apostle counted all things but loss and dung, that he might win Christ—that he might know him and the power of his resurrection. On the resurrection of Jesus Christ he rests the whole value and evidence of the truth of the Gospel. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain." "But now is Christ

risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.”

The resurrection of Jesus Christ, on which believers rest their hope, is intimately connected with every part of the Christian religion. The perfections of the Father, his power, his justice, his faithfulness, were all engaged in raising up his Son from the grave. The constitution of the person of Jesus Christ himself also required it. He was the Son of God, the Prince of Life, holy, and without spot, consequently having nothing in common with death. His body was joined with his divinity, of which it was the temple, so that it could not always remain under the power of the grave. His resurrection was also necessary on account of his office as Mediator, and of the general purposes of his coming into the world, to destroy the works of the devil, to subvert the empire of death, to make peace between God and man, and to bring life and immortality to light. It was necessary, too, in consideration of his office as a Prophet, in order to confirm by his resurrection the word which he had spoken; and of his office as a Priest, for, after having presented his sacrifice, he must live to intercede for and to bless his people. And to reign as a King, he must first triumph personally himself over

all his enemies, in order to cause his people to triumph.

Upon the whole, as in the preceding part of the Epistle the Apostle had rested the justification of believers on their union with Jesus Christ, so upon this union he rests in this chapter their sanctification. It is in virtue of this union between Him as the head, and the Church as his body, that the elect of God are the subjects of his regenerating grace, enjoy the indwelling of his Spirit, and bring forth fruit unto God. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing."

This union of believers with Jesus Christ is represented in Scripture in various expressions and by different images. The Scriptures declare that we are one with him, that he dwells in our hearts, that he lives in us and we in him, that we are changed into his image, and that he is formed in us. This union is spoken of as resembling the union of the head with the other parts of the body, and the foundation with the superstructure. This union does not result solely from Jesus Christ having taken upon him, by his incarnation, the human nature. For if in

this alone all communion with him consisted, unbelievers would be as much united with him as believers. The union of believers with Jesus Christ is a spiritual and mystical union; and as one with him they are represented by him. He represents them in the act of making satisfaction to the Father, taking their sins upon him, and enduring the punishment they deserved; for it was in their place, as their head and mediator, that he presented to God that great and solemn sacrifice which has acquired for them heavenly glory. He represents them in the act of his resurrection, for as the head he has received for them from his Father life and immortality. He represents them in his intercession in their name; and also in his exaltation on his throne. The spiritual life which they derive from him consists in present grace and future glory. In grace there are three degrees. The first is peace with God; the second is holiness, comprehending all that constitutes their duty; and the third is hope, which is as an anchor of the soul, and enters into that within the veil. In glory there are also three degrees; the resurrection of the bodies of believers; their elevation to heaven; and the eternal enjoyment of the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

Paul enjoins on Titus constantly to affirm the great doctrines of grace, in order that they who

have believed in God may be careful to maintain good works. These doctrines alone, which in the opinion of many make void the law, and give a license to sin—against which, since the days of the Apostle, the same objections have been repeated which in this chapter Paul combats—these doctrines are the means which the Holy Spirit employs for the conversion of sinners, and for producing effects entirely the opposite in their hearts. The Bible teaches us that the plan of salvation which delivers man from sin and from death by the death of the Son of God, which had its origin in eternity in the counsels of God, in the choice of its objects, in the manner in which they are both justified and sanctified, and in its consummation in glory, is founded wholly in grace. “By the grace of God,” says Paul, “I am what I am.” “Now, unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

CHAPTER VII.

IN the preceding chapter the Apostle had answered the principal objection against the doctrine of justification by faith without works. He had proved that, by union with Christ in his death and resurrection, believers who are thereby justified are also sanctified, and had exhibited and enforced the motives to sanctification furnished by the consideration of that union. He had, moreover, affirmed that sin shall not have dominion over them; for this specific reason, that they are not under the law, but under grace. It was necessary to revert to this declaration, both to explain its meaning and to state the ground of deliverance from the law. This, again, rendered it proper to vindicate the holiness of the law, as well as to show its use in convincing of sin; while at the same time he proves that all the light and authority of the law are insufficient to subdue sin. On the contrary, by the strictness of the precepts and the sanctions of the law, the corruptions of the heart are the more excited and brought into action.

Paul next proceeds plainly to show what might be inferred from the preceding chapter. Although he had there described believers to be dead to sin, he had, notwithstanding, by his earnest exhortations to watchfulness and holiness, clearly intimated that, in another view, they were still liable to its seductions. He now exhibits this fact by relating his own experience since he became dead to the law and was united to Christ. By thus describing his inward conflict with sin, and showing how far short he came of fulfilling the demands of the law, he proves the necessity of being dead to the law as a covenant, since, in the highest attainments of grace to which any one is advanced in this life, the old nature, which he calls flesh, still remains in believers. At the same time he represents himself as delighting in the law of God, hating sin, and confidently looking forward to future deliverance from its power. In this manner he illustrates not only the believer's real character, but the important fact that the obedience of the most eminent Christian, which is always imperfect, cannot have the smallest effect in procuring his justification. He had shown that men cannot be justified by their works in their natural state. He now shows, by a reference to himself, that as little can they be justified by their works in their regenerated state

And thus he confirms his assertion in the third chapter, that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified. He might have given a general description of the incessant combat between the old and new natures which subsist in the believer; but he does it more practically, as well as more efficiently, by relating it in his own person.

V. 1.—Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

Brethren.—Some have supposed that, by employing the term brethren, the Apostle was now addressing himself exclusively to the Jews who belonged to the church at Rome; but this is erroneous. He is here, as in other parts of the epistle, addressing the whole church; all belonging to it, both Jews and Gentiles, being equally concerned in what he was teaching. It is evident, besides, that he continues in the following chapters to address the same persons to whom he had been writing from the commencement of the epistle. They are the same of whom he had affirmed, in the preceding chapter, verse 14th, that they were not under the law, which is the proposition he is here illustrating. Brethren is an appellation whereby Paul designates all Christians, Gentiles as well as Jews, and by which, in the tenth chapter,

he distinguishes them from the unbelieving Jews.

Know ye not.—This expression is usual with Paul, when he is affirming what is sufficiently clear in itself, as in Ch. vi. 16.—1 Cor. iii. 16.—vi. 19. He here appeals to the personal knowledge of those to whom he wrote. *For I speak to them that know the law.*—This parenthesis appears to imply, that, as they were acquainted with the nature of the law, they must in the sequel be convinced of the truth of the explanations he was about to bring under their notice; and in this manner he bespeaks their particular attention to what follows.

The law hath dominion over a man.—Man here is not the man as distinguished from the woman, but man including both men and women, denoting the species. This first assertion is not confined to the law of marriage, by which the Apostle afterwards illustrates his subject, but extends to the whole law, namely, the law of God in all its parts. *As long as he liveth.*—The words in the original, as far as respects the phraseology, are capable of being rendered, either as long as he liveth, or as long as it liveth. It appears, however, that the meaning is, as long as the man liveth; for to say that the law hath dominion as long as it liveth, would be saying it is in force as long as it is in force.

V. 2.—For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

V. 3.—So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

The Apostle here proves his assertion by a particular reference to the law of marriage. And no doubt this law of marriage was purposely suited by God to illustrate and shadow forth the subject to which Paul here applies it. Had it not been so, it might have been unlawful to be a second time a wife or husband. But the Author of human nature and of the law, by which man is to be governed, has ordained the lawfulness of second marriages for the purpose of shadowing forth the truth referred to, as marriage itself was from the first a shadow of the relation between Christ and his church. Some apply the term law in this place to the Roman law, with which those addressed must have been acquainted; but it is well known that it was usual for both husbands and wives among the Romans to be married to other husbands and wives during the life of their former consorts, without being considered guilty of adultery. The reference is to the general law of marriage as instituted at the beginning.

V. 4.— Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

In the illustration it was the husband that died, and the wife remained alive to be married to another. Here it is the wife who dies; but this does not make the smallest difference in the argument; for whether it is the husband or wife that dies, the union is equally dissolved.

Dead to the law.—By the term law, in this place, is intended the whole law that is obligatory, both on Jews and Gentiles. It is the law, the work of which is written in the hearts of all men; and that law which was given to the Jews in which they rested, ch. ii. 7. It is the law, taken in the largest extent of the word, including the whole will of God in any way manifested to all mankind, whether Jew or Gentile. All those whom the Apostle was addressing, had been under this law in their unconverted state. Under the ceremonial law those among them who were Gentiles had never been placed. It was, therefore, to the moral law only, that they had been married. Those who were Jews had been under the law in every form in which it was delivered to them, of the whole of which the moral law was the grand basis and sum. To the moral

law exclusively, here and throughout the rest of the chapter, the Apostle refers.

Mr Stuart understands the term "dead to the law," as importing to renounce it, "as an adequate means of sanctification." But renouncing it in this sense is no freedom from the law. A man does not become free from the law of his creditor, when he becomes sensible of his insolvency. The most perfect conviction of our inability to keep the law, and of its want of power to do us effectual service, would not have the smallest tendency to dissolve our marriage with the law. Mr Stuart entirely misapprehends this matter. Dead to the law means being freed from the power of the law, as having endured its curse. It has ceased to have a claim on the obedience of believers, in order to life, though it still remains their rule of duty. All men are by nature placed under the law as the covenant of works made with the first man, who, as the Apostle had been teaching in the fifth chapter, was the federal or covenant head of all his posterity.

What is simply a law implies no more than a direction and obligation enforcing obedience by authority. A covenant implies promises made on certain conditions, and threatenings added, if such conditions be not fulfilled. The language, accordingly, of the law, as the covenant of works,

is, "Do and live;" or, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;" and "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." It thus requires perfect obedience as the condition of life, and pronounces a curse on the smallest failure. This law is here represented as being man's original or first husband. But it is now a broken law, and therefore all men are by nature under its curse. Its curse must be executed on every one of the human race, either personally on all who remain under it, or in Christ who was made under the law, and who, according also to the fifth chapter of this epistle, is the covenant head or representative of all believers who are united to him and born of God. For them he has borne its curse under which he died, and fulfilled all its demands, and they are consequently dead to it, that is, no longer under it.

By the body of Christ.—That is, by "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." Heb. x. 10. Although the body is only mentioned in this place, as it is said on his coming into the world, "a body hast thou prepared me," yet his whole human nature, composed of soul and body, is intended. Elsewhere his soul, without mentioning his body, is spoken of as being offered. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin."

Isa. liii. 10. Dead to the law by the body of Christ, means dead to it by dying in Christ's death. As believers are one body with Christ, so when his body died they also died. They are, therefore, by the sacrifice of his body, or by his death, Col. i. 22, dead to the law. They are freed from it, and done with it, as it respects either their justification or condemnation, its curse or its reward. They cannot be justified by it, having failed to render to it perfect obedience, Rom. iii. 20; and they cannot be condemned by it, being redeemed from its curse by him who was made a curse for them. As then the covenant relation of a wife to her husband is dissolved by death, so believers are released from their covenant relation to the law, by the death of Christ, with whom they died.

Married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead.—Being dead to the law, their first husband, by their union with Christ in his death, believers are married to him, and are one with him in his resurrection. Christ is now their lawful husband according to the clear illustration employed by the Apostle respecting the institution of marriage, so that, though now married to him, no fault can be found in respect to their original connexion with their first husband, which has been dissolved by death. This is a most consoling truth to believers. They are

as completely and as blamelessly free from the covenant of the law as if they had never been under it. Thus the Apostle fully explains here what he had briefly announced in the 14th verse of the preceding chapter, “ye are not under the law, but under grace.” From the covenant of Adam or of works, believers have been transferred to the covenant of Christ or of grace. I will “give thee for a covenant of the people”—all the redeemed people of God.

Before the coming of Christ, those who relied on the promise concerning him, likewise partook of all the blessings of the marriage union with him, and were, therefore, admitted to heavenly glory, though as to their title to it, not “made perfect” (Heb. xii. 23) till he died under the law, and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Till that period there was in the Jewish ceremonial law a perpetual recognition of sin, and of a future expiation which had not been made while that economy subsisted. It was, so to speak, the bond of acknowledgment for the debt yet unpaid—the handwriting of ordinances which Jesus Christ, in paying the debt, cancelled and tore asunder, “nailing it to his cross.” Col. ii. 14.

Christ, then, is the husband of the church; and under this figure his marriage relation to his people is very frequently referred to in Scripture. Thus it was exhibited in the marriage of

our first parents. In the same way it is represented in the book of Psalms, and the Song of Solomon, and in the New Testament. What ignorance, then, does it argue in some to deny the inspiration and authenticity of the Song of Solomon, because of the use of this figure.*

But though believers, in virtue of their marriage with Christ, are no longer under the law in respect to its power to give them life or death, they are, as the Apostle says, 1 Cor. ix. 21, "Not without law to God, but under law to Christ." They receive it from his hand as the rule of their duty, and are taught by his grace to love it and delight in it; and being delivered from its curse, they are engaged by the strongest additional motives to yield to it obedience. He hath made it the inviolable law of his kingdom. When Luther discovered the distinction between the law as a covenant and as a rule, it gave such relief to his mind, that he considered himself as at the gate of heaven.

That we should bring forth fruit unto God.—One of the great ends of marriage was to people the world, and the end of the marriage

* On the genuineness and authenticity of the Song of Solomon, see the author's work on "The Books of the Old and New Testament proved to be canonical, and their Verbal Inspiration maintained and established; with an Account of the introduction and character of the Apocrypha." Fourth edition, enlarged, 3s. 6d.

of believers to Christ is that they may bring forth fruit to God. From this it is evident that no work is recognised as fruit unto God before union with Christ. All works that appear to be good previous to this union are “dead works,” proceeding from self-love, pride, self-righteousness, or such other motives. “They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” We can never look upon the law with a friendly eye till we see the sting of death taken out of it; and never can bear fruit unto God, nor delight in the law as a rule, till we are freed from it as a covenant, and are thus dead unto sin. How important, then, is the injunction—“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Ch. vi. 11.

V. 5.—For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

When we were in the flesh, that is, in our natural state.—The flesh here means the corrupt state of nature, not “the subjects of God’s temporal kingdom,” as paraphrased by Dr Mac-knight, to which many of those whom the Apostle was addressing never belonged. Flesh is often opposed to spirit, indicating that new and holy

nature communicated by the Spirit of God in the new birth. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John iii. 6. In these words our Lord points out the necessity of regeneration, in order to our becoming subjects of his spiritual kingdom. The nature of man since the fall, when left to itself, possesses no renovating principle of holiness, but is essentially corrupt and entirely depraved. On this account, the word flesh signifies man in his ruined condition, or that state of total corruption in which all the children of Adam are born. On the other hand, the word spirit has acquired the meaning of a holy and divine principle, or a new nature, because it comes not from man but from God, who communicates it by the living and permanent influence of his Holy Spirit. Hence the Apostle Peter, in addressing believers, speaks of them as "partakers of the divine nature."

The motions of sins, or affections or feelings of sins.—When the Apostle and the believers at Rome were *in the flesh*, the desires or affections forbidden by the law forcibly operated in all the faculties of their depraved nature, subjecting them to death by its sentence. Dr Macknight and Mr Stuart translate this our "sinful passions." But this has the appearance of asserting that the evil passions of our nature

have their origin in the law. The Apostle does not mean what, in English, is understood by the passions, but the working of the passions. *Which were by the law.*—Dr Macknight translates the original thus, “which we had under the law.” But the meaning is not which we had under the law, but that are through the law. They are called into action through the law. *Did work in our members.*—The sinful principle of the mind employs the various members of the body in a manner adapted to different occasions and constitutions. Members appear to be used here rather than body, to denote that sin, according to the various desires of the evil principle, employs as its slaves all the different members of the body. *To bring forth fruit unto death.*—This personifies death, and makes it the father of those actions which also issue in death. The result of the various sinful actions committed through the different members of the body is death, as they are the offspring of death.

V. 6.—*But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*

But now we are delivered from the law.—This does not import merely that the Jews were, according to Dr Macknight, delivered from the law of Moses, but that believers were delivered

from the moral law, in that sense in which they were bound by it when in unbelief. Christ hath fulfilled the law, and suffered its penalty for them, and they in consequence are free from it as a law of life by their own personal obedience. Mr Stuart paraphrases thus, ‘ No longer placing
 ‘ our reliance on it as a means of subduing and
 ‘ sanctifying our sinful natures.’ But to cease to rely on the law for such a purpose was not, in any sense, to be delivered from the law. The law never proposed such a thing, and therefore to cease to look for such an effect is not a deliverance from the law.

That being dead wherein we were held.—By death, whether it be considered of the law to believers, or of believers to the law, the connexion in which they stood to it, and in which they were held in bondage under its curse, is dissolved. All men, Jews and Gentiles, are by nature held down in bondage to the moral law, under its condemning power and curse, from which nothing can to eternity deliver them but Christ. Dr Macknight translates the passage, “ having died in that by which we were tied,” and paraphrases thus, ‘ But now we Jews are
 ‘ loosed from the law of Moses, having died with
 ‘ Christ by its curse, in that fleshly nature by
 ‘ which, as descendants of Abraham, we were
 ‘ tied to the law.’ But this most erroneously

confines the declaration of the Apostle to the Jews and the legal dispensation.

That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.—This is the effect of being delivered from the law. The Apostle here refers to the difference in practice between those who were married to Christ, and those who were still under the law. A believer serves God from such principles, dispositions, and views, as the Spirit of God implants in hearts renewed by him. Serving in the spirit is a service of filial obedience to him who gave himself for us, as constrained by his love, and in the enjoyment of all the privileges of the grace of the new covenant. Believers have thus become capable of serving God according to the spiritual meaning of the law, as his children, with cordial affection and gratitude, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, with that new and divine nature of which they partake. It is serving not with the view of being saved by the keeping of the law, but of rendering obedience to their Great Deliverer.

Serving in the oldness of the letter respects such service as the law, by its light, authority, and terror, can procure from one who is under it, and seeking life by it, without the Spirit of God, and his sanctifying grace and influence. Much outward conformity to the law may in this way

be attained from the pride of self-righteousness, without any principle better than that of a selfish, slavish, mercenary, carnal disposition, influenced only by fear of punishment and hope of reward. Serving then in the oldness of the letter is serving in a cold, constrained, and wholly external manner. Such service is essentially defective, proceeding from a carnal unrenewed heart destitute of holiness. In this way Paul describes himself, Phil. iii., as having formerly served, when he had confidence in the "flesh," as he there designates such outward service. Serving in newness of spirit and in oldness of the letter are here contrasted, as not only differing, but as being incompatible the one with the other.

V. 7.—What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

*What shall we say then? Is the law sin?—*In the fifth verse Paul had described the effect of the law on himself and those whom he addressed before conversion, while he and they were under its dominion. In the sixth verse he had spoken of their deliverance and his own from the law; here and in the four verses that follow he relates what were the effects of the law on himself. While he peremptorily rejects the supposition that there was any thing evil in the law, he

shows that, by the strictness of its precepts exciting the corruptions of his heart, it was the means of convincing him that he was a sinner and under its condemnation.

Mr Stuart says this is the language of an objector against the Apostle. For this there is no foundation whatever. It is an objection stated by the Apostle in his own name. That there is here a kind of discussion between the Apostle and a Jewish objector is a mere figment. This objection, that will occur to the carnal mind in every age and country, is therefore properly introduced by the Apostle. If the law occasions more sin is it not itself sinful? *God forbid.*—Literally, let it not be—by no means. It is the expression, as formerly noticed, by which the Apostle usually intimates his abhorrence of whatever is peculiarly unworthy of God. Paul now begins to describe his own experience respecting the operation of the law.

Nay.—Mr Stuart says that this expression intimates, that the Apostle had some exception to the universal sense of the words translated God forbid. But this is not the effect here of the word rendered “Nay.” There could be no exception to the denial of the consequence in the sense in which the thing is denied. Is it possible that there can be any exception to the denial that the law is sinful? It is not possible.

That the law is the occasion of sin, or, as Mr Stuart expresses it, though ‘not the sinful or ‘efficient cause of sin,’ is no exception to the universal denial in any point of view. An occasion of sin and a cause of sin are two things essentially different. It is no exception to the assertion that the law is not the cause of sin, to say that it is the occasion of sin. The word here translated *nay*, intimates opposition. So far from the law being sinful, I had not known sin, says the Apostle, but by the law.

Known sin.—This, Dr Macknight and Mr Stuart understand in a comparative sense, on the ground that the heathens are guilty who have not the law. But Paul does not say that he would not have been a sinner without the law, but that he would not have known sin as now he knew it, or have seen himself to be a sinner. Now, though no man is without sin, yet a proud Pharisee might think himself free from sin by his keeping the law, when he did not look to it as extending to the thoughts of the heart. Paul, referring to his state before his conversion, says that, as to the righteousness of the law, he was blameless, and it was only when he understood the law in its full extent that he was self-condemned.

*I had not known lust.**—That is, I had not

* The original word for lust, the same which in the next

known that the desire of what is forbidden is sinful ; that the very thought of sin is sin, is known only by the word of God. Indeed, many who hear that word will not receive this doctrine. The Roman Catholics hold that such desires are not criminal, if the mind do not acquiesce in them. *Thou shalt not covet.*—This implies lusting against the will of God, and extends to the first rise and lowest degree of every evil thought. It is not to be confined to what are called inordinate desires, or desires carried to excess, but comprehends every desire contrary to the commandment.

V. 8.—But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

In the preceding verse, Paul had shown that the law does not cause sin, but discovers it, stripping it of its disguise, and bringing it to light. Here he asserts that the commandment discovered to him the sinful nature of evil desires. It laid on him the most solemn obligations to resist them ; and the natural corruption of his heart took occasion from the restraints of the law to struggle against it, and break out with more violence. Sin, he says, wrought in him all manner of concupiscence. It excited and

verse is translated concupiscence, signifies strong desire, whether good or bad. Here it is used in a bad sense.

discovered in him those corruptions which, till they were met by the restraints of the law, had not been felt by him. Nothing can more clearly show the depravity of human nature than the holy law of God, the unerring standard of right and wrong, becoming an occasion of sin; yet so it is. Whatever is prohibited is only the more eagerly desired. So far, then, was the law from subduing the love of sin, that its prohibitions increased the desire of what it prohibited. It may restrain from the outward act, but it excites the evil inclinations of the mind.

Without the law sin was dead.—Some understand this as meaning the same thing with the declaration, that “where there is no law there is no transgression;” but the connexion requires that we understand it of the sleeping or dormant state of sin. The Apostle would not have felt the action of his unlawful desires, if the strictness of the commandment had not become the occasion of exciting and making them manifest; for without the law sin, or the workings of his corrupt nature, encountering no opposition, their operation would not have been perceived.

Every Christian knows by experience the truth of all the Apostle declares in this verse. He knows that as soon as his eyes were opened to discover the spirituality of the law, he dis-

cerned in himself the fearful working of that corruption in his heart, which, not being perceived before, had given him no uneasiness. He knows that this corruption was even increased in violence by the discovery of the strictness of the law, which makes not the smallest allowance for sin, but condemns it in its root, and in its every motion. ‘The wicked nature,’ says Luther, ‘cannot bear either the good, or the demands of the law; as a sick man is indignant when he is desired to do all that a man in health can do.’ Such is the effect of the law when the eyes of the understanding are first opened by the Spirit of God. A power, formerly latent and inefficacious, then appears on a sudden to have gathered strength, and to stand up in order to oppose and defeat the purposes of the man, who hitherto was altogether unconscious of the existence of such malignity in himself as that which he now feels.

V. 9.—For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

I was alive.—That is, in my own opinion. Mr Stuart finds fault with this sense as given by Augustine, Calvin, and many others. But his reasons are without weight. After exhibiting the meaning of the whole connexion in this view, he asks, ‘Is this then the way in which

‘ the law of God proves *fatal* to the sinner, viz. ‘ by convincing him of the true and deadly ‘ nature of sin?’ Not fatal to the sinner, but fatal to his view of salvation by the law. Nothing can be clearer than this passage; and nothing more consistent than this meaning with the whole context. *Without the law once.*—Was Paul ever without the law? He was in ignorance of it till his conversion; and this he here calls being without the law. He was ignorant of its spirituality, and consequently had no true discernment of his innate corruption. Mr Stuart asks, ‘ But when did the *commandment* come?’ and answers, ‘ We may suppose it to be in childhood, or in riper years.’ It cannot have been in childhood or in riper years, at any time previous to his seeing Christ. For if he had had such a view of the law previously, he would not, in his own opinion, have been blameless concerning its righteousness. It is obvious that Paul had his proper view of the law only in the cross of Christ.

When the commandment came.—That is, when he understood the true import of the commandment as forbidding the desires of every thing prohibited by the law. He had heard and studied it before in its letter; but never till then did it come in its full extent and power to his conscience.

Sin revived.—It was in a manner dead before, dormant, and unobserved. Now that the law was understood, it was raised to new life, and came to be perceived as living and moving. The contrast is with sin as dead, without the understanding of the law. It is true, as Mr Stuart observes, that sin gathers additional strength in such circumstances; but this is not the idea held forth in the context. *I died.*—That is, I saw myself dead by the law, as far as my own observance of the law was concerned. All Paul's hopes founded on what he was in himself were destroyed, and he discovered that he was a sinner condemned by the law; so that the law, which promised life to those who observed it, by which he had looked for justification, he now saw subjected him to death. The expression by no means imports, as Mr Stuart seems to understand it, that Paul, at the period referred to, was really under the sentence of death as a sinner who had not fled to Jesus. "I fell under the sentence of death," is the explanation that Mr Stuart gives, which he confirms by "the soul that sinneth shall die." "The wages of sin is death." At the period when Paul *died* in the sense of this passage, he was really brought to spiritual life. It was then that he through the law became dead to the law, that he might live unto God; Gal. ii. 19.

Thus Paul was without the law during all that time when he profited in the Jews' religion above many of his equals, and when, according to the strictest sect of their religion, he lived a Pharisee, and as touching the law, according to the common estimation, was blameless. He was without its spiritual application to his heart; but, in his own esteem, he was *alive*. He was confident of the Divine favour. Sin lay as dead in his heart. He could therefore go about to establish his own righteousness. He had not found the law to be "a killing letter," working wrath; so far from it, he could make his boast of the law, and assume it as the ground of his rejoicing before God. But when the commandment came, sin revived and he died. Such is the account which Paul now gives of himself, who declared, Acts, xxii. 3, that formerly he had been "zealous toward God;" and as he declares, in the beginning of the tenth chapter, that the unconverted Jews still were.

V. 10.—And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

And the commandment, which was ordained to life.—Literally, the commandment which was unto life. That is, the commandment which it would have been life to obey. By the commandment here referred to, the law, in all its parts, may be meant, with a special allusion to

the tenth commandment, which shows that the desire of what is forbidden is sin. This commandment might well be put for the whole law; for it could not be kept without the whole law being kept. The law held out the promise of life to those who obeyed it; and on this ground Paul had sought and imagined he had attained a title to eternal life. *Unto death.*—As soon as it came home to his conscience, Paul found himself condemned by that law from which he had expected life. It then destroyed all the hope he had founded on it, and showed him that he was obnoxious to the curse which it pronounces on all transgressors. The law, however, which was ordained to life, will at last be proved to have attained this object in all in whom it has been fulfilled, Rom. viii. 4, by him who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. All such shall, according to its original appointment, obtain everlasting life.

V. 11.—*For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.*

Sin, by blinding his mind, so as not to perceive the extent of the demands of the law, had led Paul to believe that he could fulfil it, and by it obtain justification and life, and had thus by the law taken occasion to deceive him. Till the commandment came home to him in its

spiritual application, sin was never brought to such a test as to make a discovery to Paul of its real power. But when he was enlightened to perceive this, sin by the law slew him. It showed him that he was a transgressor of the law, and therefore condemned by that very law from which he had before expected life. Thus sin, as he had said, revived and he died. All his high thoughts of himself and confidence, from supposing that he had kept the law, were destroyed.

V. 12.— *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

Having now shown that the law is not the cause, but only the occasion of sin, Paul here draws the conclusion as to its character and excellence. The two words law and commandment appear to be used to give the more force to his declaration; thus meaning the law and every precept it enjoins. It is *holy*, in opposition to whatever is sinful, being the perfect rule of what is right and conformable to the character of God. It is *just*. Can any thing be more just than that we should not desire the things that God prohibits? It is highly just that we should not only abstain from doing what God forbids, but that we should not even desire what is forbidden. It demands all that is equitable, and all that is due to God, and nothing more.

And good. It is not only just, it is also good. It is good in itself, and its whole tendency is adapted to maintain perfect order, and to establish in the highest degree the happiness of all who are under its authority. Every commandment of the decalogue tends to promote human happiness. While this is not the ground of obedience, it is the glory of the law. If God had left men free from the law, it would be for the happiness of society that they should strictly walk according to the law.

V. 13.—Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

Was that then which is good made death unto me?—This is not, as Dr Macknight supposes, an objection in the person of a Jew, but an objection put by the Apostle himself, which was likely to occur to every carnal man in every age. It might require an answer even with respect to Christians themselves. If the law is holy, just, and good, how could it be found by the Apostle to be unto death? Could a good law be the cause of death? By no means; the thought is execrable. It was not the good law that was the cause of death. *But sin.*—That is, it is sin that causeth death.

That it might appear sin.—Dr Macknight

translates, ‘that sin might appear working out death.’ But the construction evidently is, “But sin has caused death, that it might appear sin;” that is, that it might manifest itself in its own proper character. *Working death in me by that which is good.*—It was not the good law that wrought death in him, but sin by means of the good law. Hence the manifestation of the exceeding vileness and hatefulness of sin. How evil must that thing be which works the greatest evil through that which is the perfection of righteousness! *That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*—This again is another form of expression designed to aggravate the evil character of sin. There is nothing worse than sin itself. The Apostle then does not resolve it into supposed first principles that would exhibit its guilt. The worst that can be said of it is that it is *sin*, and is so in excess.

V. 14.—*For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

In the foregoing verses the Apostle had exhibited the effect of the law on himself, in convincing him that he was a condemned sinner, and had asserted its holiness and excellence. He now proceeds to show how far he fell short of its demands.

For we know.—This is the usual form under

which Paul states what needs no proof. This is a thing of which no Christian is ignorant. It cannot be supposed that the contrary is allowed to be possible. No man who fears God can ascribe any evil to his law. *The law is spiritual.*—That is, it proceeds from the Holy Spirit of God, and is agreeable to his will; and demands not only the obedience of external conduct, but the internal obedience of the heart to its utmost power. Paul had affirmed that the law is holy, just, and good; and if he had still regarded it merely as a rule extending to his outward conduct, he might have continued to suppose himself just and good; as he had formerly done. But when he perceived that it was also spiritual, extending to the thoughts and desires of the heart, he discovered in himself so much opposition to it, that, as he had said, sin revived and he died. Perceiving, then, that it requires “truth in the inward parts,” and prohibits the smallest deviation from holiness even in thought, Paul the Apostle, a man of like passions with ourselves, exclaims, “I am carnal, sold under sin.” Paul here changes the past time to the present, in which he continues afterwards to speak to the end of the chapter.

I am carnal.—This respects what the Apostle was in himself. It does not imply that he was

not regenerated, but shows what he was even at present, so far as concerned any thing that was natural to him. Every Christian in this sense is carnal, even in his best estate. In himself he is corrupt. The word carnal has not here exactly the same meaning that it has in 1 Cor. iii. 3. The Corinthians were comparatively carnal. Their disputes and envyings showed their attainments in the divine life to be low. But, in the sense of the word in this place, all Christians—the best on earth not excepted—are always carnal. They have an evil principle in their hearts or nature. While in this world, Adam lives in them, called the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.

Sold under sin.—Dr Macknight and Mr Stuart suppose that this expression decidedly proves that this account of carnality belongs not to the regenerate, but only to the unregenerate. It has, however, no such import. All men have been sold under sin by the fall, and as long as any of the evil of their nature introduced by the fall remains in them, so long do they remain sold under sin, to whatever extent and in whatever respect it exists. The Christian, it is true, receives a new nature, and the old nature is mortified; but it still lives, and so far as it lives, the individual is properly said to be sold under

sin. The old nature is not made holy, but a new nature is communicated. As far then as the old man manifests himself, and acts, so far even the Christian is *sold under sin*. It is not to be admitted, as these writers take it for granted, that the phrase imports the height of wickedness. Let it be remarked also, that, as signifying the greatest wickedness, the expression is not more suitable to their own view, than it is to that of those whom they oppose. If the Apostle speaks of unregenerate men, it must be in a character that will suit all unregenerate men. But all unregenerate men are not excessively abandoned to wickedness. Many of them are moral in their lives.

Looking to the external form of the law, the Apostle declares (Phil. iii. 6) that he was, in his unconverted state, blameless; and in respect to his conduct afterwards, as before men he could appeal to them (1 Thess. xi. 10.) how holily, and justly, and unblamably he had behaved himself among them. But in referring also, as he does here, to what is internal, and therefore speaking as before God, who alone searcheth the heart, and measuring himself by the Holy law in all its extent, he confesses himself to be carnal and sold under sin. His nature, or old man, was entirely opposed to the spirituality of the law. He felt a law or power within him against which

he struggled, from which he desired to be free, but which still asserted its authority. Notwithstanding the grace he had obtained, he found himself far from perfection, and in all respects unable, though ardently desiring to attain to it. When he says he is carnal—sold under sin—he expresses the same sentiment as in the 18th verse, where, distinguishing between his old and new nature, he says, “in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing;” or, as he speaks elsewhere concerning the old man in believers, “which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,” which he exhorts them to put off. It ought to be noted, that when the Apostle says, I am carnal, sold under sin, it is the language of bitter complaint, as appears from the sequel, and especially from the 24th verse, which expresses a feeling respecting sin that does not belong to any unregenerate man.

It is, then, in comparing himself with the holy, just, good, and spiritual law, now come home in its power to his conscience, that the Apostle here declares himself to be *carnal, sold under sin*. The law requires us to love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength; and our neighbour as ourselves. Of this, every man in his best state and in his very best thought or action falls continually short. He proceeds

a certain length in his obedience, but beyond that he cannot go. And why is it that into the region beyond this he does not advance? Because he is carnal, sold under sin. The sin that remains in him binds him so that he cannot proceed. Sin, however, does not reign over him; otherwise, as it is directly opposed to every degree of obedience to the law, it would not suffer him to do any thing, even the least, in conformity to the will of God. Yet it so far prevails, as to hinder him, as is here immediately added, from doing the good that he would; and in so far, he is sold under it. It therefore prevents him from attaining to that perfection of obedience to the law of God which is the most earnest desire of every Christian, and to which the believer shall attain when he sees his blessed Lord as he is, 1 John iii. 2. That Paul had not attained to this state of perfection he, in another place, assures us, Phil. iii. 12. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." How then are these expressions, carnal, sold under sin, not applicable to the Apostle?

If Paul had said he had no sin, he would have deceived himself, and the truth would not have been in him.—1 John, i. 8. And if he had sin, and was unable to free himself from its power, was he not carnal, sold under it? There was

spirit in him, but there was also flesh, and in his flesh he tells us dwelt no good thing : it was still sin or corrupt nature, and nothing but sin. In one point of view, then, Paul the Apostle could truly say that he was spiritual ; in another, with equal truth, that he was *carnal*, literally and truly both spiritual and carnal. “The flesh lusted against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these were contrary the one to the other.” He was sold under sin as a child of Adam, and he delighted in the law of God as a child of the second Adam. Accordingly, through the whole of this passage, to the end of the chapter, Paul describes himself as a twofold person, and points to two distinct natures operating within him. This is a universal truth respecting all believers. As Paul declares to the churches of Galatia ; and, as in the passage before us, he affirms of himself, they cannot do the things that they would.—Gal. iv. 17. In the end of this chapter he asserts the same truth. *So then with the mind*—what he before called the inward man—*I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh*—what remained of his corrupt nature, in which dwelt no good thing—*the law of sin*.—Sin was displaced from its dominion but not from its indwelling. There was, then, in the Apostle Paul, as in every Christian, “as it were the company of two armies.” From this warfare, and these

opposing principles within, no Christian in this world is ever exempt; and of this every one who knows the plague of his own heart is fully convinced.

V. 15.—*For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

For.—This verse explains and confirms the preceding. *That which I do, I allow not.*—Literally, I know not. The English word *know*, as well as the word in the original, is often used as implying recognition or acknowledgment. We are said not to know a person whom we do not wish to recognise. Paul committed sin, but he did not recognise or approve it. He disclaimed all friendly acquaintance with it. *For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.* Every man, regenerate or unregenerate, must be sensible of the truth of this, so far as it imports that he does what he knows to be wrong. As there is no regenerate man in whom this is not verified, it cannot be confined to the unregenerate. But as it is of the regenerate the Apostle is here speaking; that is, as he is speaking of himself at the time of writing, it is necessary to apply it here peculiarly to the regenerate. Besides, as it is said that he did what he hated, it must be here applied exclusively to the regenerate. Though an unregenerate man disapproves of evil, he cannot be said to *hate sin*. This is

characteristic of the regenerate, and of such only. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil."—Ps. xcvii. 10. It is characteristic of the Redeemer himself: "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity."—Heb. i. 9. The following words are decisive on the subject:—"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil."—Prov. viii. 3. Some suppose that what the Apostle says in this verse is to the same purpose with the noted heathen confession,—"*Video meliora proboque, deteriora Sequor.*" "I see what is better and approve of it; I follow what is worse." But these propositions are not at all identical. The heathen confesses that he practises what he knows to be wrong, but his inconsistency arises from the love of the evil. Paul confesses that he does what is wrong, but declares that instead of loving the evil he regards it with hatred and abhorrence.

V. 16.—*If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.*

If then I do that which I would not—Dr Mac-knight translates "*which I incline not.*" But this is not according to fact. A man may do what he approves not, but in doing so he does not act contrary to his *inclination*. Inclination is a tendency or bent in a particular direction, and the bent of every man naturally is to sin. Mr Stuart translates the word "desire," but neither is this correct. Sin may be contrary to

reason and conscience, but it is agreeable to desire. *I consent unto the law that it is good.*—When a regenerate man does what he hates, there is the testimony of his own mind that he regards the law that forbids the thing which he has practised to be a good law.

V. 17.—Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

By the *I* here, Dr Macknight and Mr Stuart understand reason and conscience. But reason and conscience can in no sense be called a man's *self*. In this way a murderer might say that it was not he who committed the crime, for no doubt his reason and conscience disapproved of the action. It is quite obvious that the reason why Paul says that it was not *he* but *sin* in him, is because, as he had just stated, that which he did he allowed not, for he did that which he would not. This implies more than reason and conscience. It was, therefore, *sin that dwelt in him*—the old man, his carnal nature, which not only existed and wrought in him, but had its abode in him, as it has in all those who are regenerated, and will have as long as they are in the body. It is not, then, to extenuate the guilt of sin, or to furnish an excuse for it, that Paul says, it is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me; but to show that notwithstanding his seeing it to be evil, and hating it, the root still

subsisted in him, and was chargeable upon him. It is not necessary to be able to point out metaphysically the way in which the truth that all sin is voluntary, harmonizes with Paul's declaration, *the good that I would I do not*. Things may be consistent which the human mind cannot penetrate. We are to receive God's testimony from the Apostle, and believe it on God's authority; and every Christian knows, by painful experience, the truth of all that the Apostle asserts.

'What here would strike my mind free of bias,' says Mr Frazer in his excellent exposition of this chapter, in his work on Sanctification, 'is, that this (I) on the side of holiness against sin, is the most prevailing, and what represents the true character of the man; and that *sin* which he distinguishes from this (I) is not the prevailing reigning power in the man here represented; as it is, however, in every unregenerate man.'* On this verse Calvin also has remarked—'This passage clearly proves

* A man of God, so deeply acquainted with the human heart, and so advanced in the divine life as this writer evidently was, is a much better judge of the import of this chapter than a mere critic, however eminent may be his talents and learning. With eminent godliness Mr Frazer possessed a remarkable portion of profound penetration and discrimination; qualities in which many critics who attempt to expound the Scriptures are greatly deficient.

‘ Paul is disputing concerning none but the
 ‘ pious, who are now regenerated. For man,
 ‘ while he continues like himself, whatever his
 ‘ character may be, is justly considered to be
 ‘ vicious.’ No one can disclaim sin, as in this
 verse it is disclaimed, except the converted man ;
 for who besides can conscientiously and intelli-
 gibly affirm, ‘ Now then it is no more I that do
 it, but sin that dwelleth in me ?’

V. 18.—For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

I know.—This is a thing which Paul knew as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he must have known by experience also. Whoever has a thorough knowledge of himself will be convinced that naturally there is nothing good in him. What Paul knew was, that in him dwelt no good thing. This goes beyond what he had asserted in the end of the preceding verse. There he asserts that the evil which he did was caused by sin dwelling in him. Here he asserts not only that sin dwelt in him, but that *no good thing dwelt in him*. But how could he say so if he was a regenerated man? If there was something in him that he calls himself which he would not allow to have any share in his sin, how can he say that there is in him no good thing? Is not this principle that hates the sin

which he commits a good principle? Certainly it is. And to prevent such a consequence from being deduced from his words, he explains by a parenthesis the sense in which he asserts that no good thing dwelt in him. *That is in my flesh.*—He confines the assertion to his carnal nature. Nothing can more clearly and expressly show that this description is a description of the regenerate man. What has an unrenewed man but flesh? His very reason and conscience are not uncorrupted.—Titus, i. 15.

To will is present with me ; but how to perform that which is good I find not.—‘That is,’ says Mr Frazer, ‘to will what is good and holy : ‘and thus it is with him habitually and ready ‘with him.’ Mr Stuart, in his commentary, renders this, ‘for to will that which is good, is ‘in my power ; but to do it, I do not find (in ‘my power).’ Yet in the text he translates it, ‘for to desire what is good, is easy for me, but ‘to do it I find difficult,’ which is an entirely different and contradictory idea. A thing that is very difficult may yet be performed. Dr Macknight renders it, ‘indeed to incline lies ‘near me, but to work out what is excellent, I ‘do not find NEAR ME,’ giving no distinct sense, from an affectation of rendering literally. Calvin says, ‘He (Paul) does not mean that he ‘has nothing but an ineffectual volition and de-

‘sire, but he asserts the efficacy of the work does not correspond to the will, because the flesh hinders him from exactly performing what he is engaged in executing.’

V. 19.—*For the good that I would I do not : but the evil which I would not, that I do.*

For the good that I would I do not.—This does not imply that he did not attempt, or in some sense perform what he purposed, but that in all he came short. Calvin, in continuation of the last quotation from him, says, ‘what follows—to do the evil which he would not, must also be taken in the same sense, because the faithful are not only hindered from running speedily by their own flesh, but it also opposes many obstacles against which they stumble ; and they do not, therefore, perform their duty, because they do not engage in it with becoming alacrity. The *will*, therefore, here mentioned, is the readiness of faith, while the Holy Spirit forces the pious to be prepared and zealous in employing their time to perform obedience to God. But Paul, because his power is unequal to the task, asserts, that he does not find what he was wishing to attain—the accomplishment of his good desires.’ *But the evil which I would not, that I do.* So far from being unsuitable to the real character of a regenerate man, every such man must be sen-

sible from his own experience that this charge is true.

V. 20.—Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

This is a confirmation of what was asserted, verse 17, by alleging the reason on which the assertion is founded. It is not reason and conscience that Paul here asserts have no share in the evil; it is the will which he expressly mentions, and, whatever metaphysical difficulties it may involve, of the will it must be understood. The conclusion we ought to draw, is not to contradict the Apostle by denying that he speaks of the will, but that in one sense it is true that no sin is involuntary, and that in another sense, what the Apostle here asserts is also an undoubted truth.

V. 21.—I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

The evil propensity of our nature the Apostle calls a law, because of its strength and permanence. It has the force of a law in corrupt nature. This affords proof that it is of himself as to his present state that the Apostle speaks. None but the regenerate man is properly sensible of this law. It does not refer to conscience, which in an unregenerate man will smite him when he does that which he knows to be wrong. It refers to the evil principle which counteracts

him when he would do that which is right. This law is the greatest grievance to every Christian. It disturbs his happiness and peace more than any other cause. It constantly besets him, and from its influence, his very prayers, instead of being in themselves worthy of God, need forgiveness, and can be accepted only through the mediation of Christ. It is strange that any Christian should have a doubt about the character in which the Apostle uses this language. It entirely suits the Christian, and in all its parts has not the most distant appearance of suiting any other character.

V. 22.—For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

In the preceding verse Paul had said, I would do good; here he more fully expresses the same desire after conformity to the holy law. *For I delight in the law of God.*—This is decisive of the character in which the Apostle speaks. None but the regenerate delight in the law of God. Mr Stuart, after Whitby and Taylor, &c. has referred to a number of passages, in order to lower the import of this term. But they have no similarity to the present case. They are too numerous to be introduced and discussed in this place; but whoever wishes to examine them may consult Mr Frazer's work on Sanctification, in

which they are most satisfactorily proved to be misapplied.

To delight in the law of the Lord is characteristic of the regenerate man. The unregenerate man hates that law as far as he sees the extent of its demands to transcend his power of fulfilment. He is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; chap. viii. 7. How then can he delight in it? *After the inward man.*—The inward man is a term used only by Paul, and in reference to those who are regenerated. It is the new or spiritual nature, not merely the reason and conscience. Than this nothing can be more obviously characteristic of the Christian. Notwithstanding the evil of his corrupt nature, he is conscious of delighting in the law of God in its full extent.

V. 23.—But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

In the preceding verse, the Apostle had spoken of the law of God in the inward man; here he speaks of *another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind.* Thus he denominates his new and spiritual nature his “inward man,” and his “mind,” and his old and carnal nature his “members.” The bent of the Apostle’s mind, according to his renewed nature, inclined

him to delight in the law of God. But he found an opposite bent in his corrupt nature, which he calls a law in his members. This he represents as warring against the others. Is not this the experience of every Christian? Is there not a constant struggle of the corruptions of the heart against the principle of holiness implanted by the Spirit of God in the new birth?

And bringing me into captivity to the law of sin and death.—Mr Stuart endeavours to aggravate this description in such a manner as to render it unsuitable to the regenerate man. He supposes that this represents the person as brought entirely and completely into captivity, which cannot be supposed of the regenerate. He refers to captives taken in war, who are entirely in the power of their conquerors, and are reduced to the most abject slavery. This is feeble reasoning. How far this captivity extends cannot be known from the figure. And as a matter of fact, if the evil principle of our nature prevails in exciting one evil thought, it has taken us captive. So far it has conquered, and so far we are defeated and made prisoners. But this is quite consistent with the supposition that on the whole we may have the victory over sin.

V. 24.—O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

O wretched man that I am.—This language is

suitable only to the regenerate. An unregenerate man does not feel the wretchedness here expressed. He is indeed wretched, but he does not feel that he is so. He may be sensible of misery, and he may be filled with fearful forebodings; but the person here described is wretched only from a feeling of that evil principle which is in his members. Such a feeling no unregenerate man ever possessed. An unregenerate man may wish to be delivered from danger and punishment; but instead of wishing to be delivered from the law of his nature, he delights in that law. He has so much pleasure in indulging that law, that he risks all consequences in obeying it.

The body of this death.—Some understand this of his natural body, and suppose the exclamation to be a wish to die. But this would be a sentiment totally at variance with the principles of the Apostle, and unsuitable to the scope of the passage. It is evidently an expression of a wish to be free from that corrupt principle which caused him so much affliction. This he calls a body, as before he had called it his members. And he calls it *a body of death*, because its demerit is death. It causes death and everlasting ruin to the world; and had it not been for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, it must have had the same consequences with respect to all.

V. 25.—I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God: but with the flesh the law of sin.

I thank God.—Some suppose that this expresses thanks for the victory as already obtained. But this cannot be the meaning; as in the same breath, the Apostle speaks of his wretchedness because of the existence of the evil. Some, again, supposing that it refers to present deliverance, explain it to be the freedom from the law spoken of in the preceding part of the chapter. But this would make the Apostle speak entirely away from the purpose. He is discoursing of that corruption which he still experiences. Besides, the form of the expression requires that the deliverance should be supposed future, *who SHALL deliver me? I thank God through Jesus Christ.* The natural supplement is, *he will deliver me.* At death Paul was to be entirely freed from the evil of his nature. The consolation of the Christian against the corruption of his nature is, that although he shall not get free from it in this world, he shall hereafter be entirely delivered.

So then.—This is the consequence which Paul draws, and the sum of all that he had said from the 14th verse. In one point of view he served the law of God, and in another the law of sin. Happy is the man who can thus, like Paul,

with conscious sincerity say to himself,—“ *With the mind I myself serve the law of God ; but with the flesh the law of sin.*” Beyond this no child of God can go while in this world ; it will ever remain the character of the regenerate man. But this fully ascertains that he himself, in his predominant disposition and fixed purpose, serves God, although he is compelled to acknowledge that the power of the old man within him still subsists, and exerts itself ; while it is his earnest desire daily to put him off, Eph. iv. 22, and to be transformed by the renewing of his mind.

In every believer, and in no one else, there are these two principles, sin and grace, flesh and spirit, the law of the members, and the law of the mind. This may be perverted by the opposer of divine truth to afford a handle against the gospel, and by the hypocrite to form an excuse for his sin. But it gives ground to neither. It is the truth of God, and the experience of every Christian. If any man will pervert it to a wicked purpose, he shall bear his sin. We are not at liberty to pervert the word of God in order to preserve it from a contrary perversion. Many, no doubt, wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. *I myself.*—As if to render it altogether impossible to imagine that the Apostle was personating another man, he uses the

strongest and most pointed language in the present time throughout the whole passage; concluding it with this expression, which cannot, if language has a meaning, be applied to another person. It is a phrase which again and again he employs. Rom. ix. 3; 2 Cor. x. 1, and xii. 13.

On the whole, then, we here learn that the Apostle Paul, notwithstanding all the grace with which he was favoured, found a principle of evil operating so strongly in his heart that he denominates it a law always present and active to retard him in his course. He was not, however, under its dominion. He was in Christ Jesus a new creature, born of God, renewed in the spirit of his mind. He delighted in the holy law of God in all its extent and spirituality, while at the same time he felt the influence of the other hateful principle, that tendency to evil which characterises the old man, which waged perpetual war against the work of grace in his soul, impelling him to the commission of sin, and constantly tending to bring him under its power. Nothing can more clearly demonstrate the fallen state of man, and the entire corruption of his nature, than the perpetual and irreconcilable warfare which that corruption maintains in the hearts of all believers against "the divine nature" of which they are made partakers.

When in the hour and power of darkness the Prince of this world came to assault the Redeemer, he found nothing in him—nothing on which his temptations could fix or make an impression; but how different was it when he assailed the Apostle Peter. Him he overcame, and to such an extent as to prevail on him to deny his Lord and Master, notwithstanding all the firmness and sincerity of his previous resolutions. Had not the Lord interposed to prevent his faith from entirely failing, Satan would have taken full possession of him as he did of Judas. In the same way it was only by grace that the Apostle Paul was what he was, 1 Cor. xv. 10; and by that grace he was enabled to maintain the struggle against his old corrupt nature, until he could exclaim in the language of triumphant victory, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” “My grace,” said Jesus to him, “is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”*

* See Dr Macknight's extraordinary interpretation of the concluding verse of this chapter, and also that of Professor Tholuck, as pointed out in the author's pamphlet, entitled, “*For the consideration of the Ministers of the Church of Scotland, Remarks on Dr Tholuck's Exposition of St Paul's Epistle to the Romans, translated by one of themselves.*” 1837.

The warfare between the flesh and the spirit, described in this chapter, has greatly exercised the ingenuity of men who have not been practically acquainted with its truth. Few are willing to believe that all mankind are so bad by nature as they are here represented, and it is fondly imagined that the best of men are much better than this description would prove them to be. Every effort of ingenuity has accordingly been resorted to, to divert the Apostle's statements from the obvious conclusion to which they lead, and so to modify his doctrine, as to make it worthy of acceptance by human wisdom. But they have laboured in vain. Their theories not only contradict the Apostle's doctrine, but are generally self-contradictory. Every Christian has in his own breast a commentary on the Apostle's language. If there be any thing of which he is fully assured, it is that Paul has in this passage described his experience; and the more the believer advances in knowledge and holiness, the more does he loathe himself as by nature a child of that corruption which still so closely cleaves to him. So far is the feeling of the power of indwelling sin from being inconsistent with regeneration, that it must be experienced in proportion to the progress of sanctification. The more sensitive we are, the more do we feel pain; and the more our hearts

are purified, the more painful to us will sin be. Men perceive themselves to be sinners in proportion as they have previously discovered the holiness of God and of his law.

The conflict here described by Paul, his deep conviction of sin consisting with delight in the law of God, and this agreement of heart with its holy precepts, are peculiar to those only who are regenerated by the Spirit of God. They who know the excellence of that law, and earnestly desire to obey it, will feel the force of the Apostle's language. It results from the degree of sanctification to which he had attained, from his hatred of sin and profound humility. This conflict was the most painful of his trials, compelling him to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am!"—an exclamation never wrung from him by all his multiplied persecutions and outward sufferings. The proof that from the fourteenth verse to the end of the chapter, he relates his own experience at the time when he wrote this portion of his epistle, is full and complete.

Throughout the whole of this passage, instead of employing the past time, as he does from the seventh to the fourteenth verse, Paul uniformly adopts the present, while he speaks in the first person about forty times, without the smallest intimation that he is referring to any

one else, or to himself at any former period. His professed object all along is to show that the law can effect nothing for the salvation of a sinner, which he had proved to be the character of all men; and, by speaking in his own name, he shows that of this every one who is a partaker of his grace is in his best state convinced. In the end he triumphantly affirms that Christ will deliver him, while in the mean-time he experiences this painful and unremitting warfare, and he closes the whole by saying, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Can it be supposed that in saying, "I myself," the Apostle meant another man, or that in using the present time he refers to a former period? Of what value is language, if it can be so tortured as to admit of an interpretation at direct variance with its obvious meaning? To suppose that another, and not the Apostle himself, is here designed, is contrary to every principle of sound interpretation.

Paul, in this chapter, contrasts his former with his present state. Formerly, when ignorant of the true import of the law, he entertained a high opinion of himself. "I was alive without the law once." In the same way he speaks, in other parts of his writings, of his sincerity, his religious zeal, and his irreproachable

conduct before his conversion. Afterwards he judged that at the time he had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious, and in unbelief; so that, when he was an Apostle, he calls himself the chief of sinners. If he was convinced that he had been a sinner, condemned by the law, it was when the Lord Jesus was revealed to him; for till then he was righteous in his own esteem. Before that time he was dead in trespasses and sins, having nothing but his original corrupted nature, which he calls sin. He had no conviction that he was radically and practically a sinner, of which the passage before us proves he was now fully conscious. From this period the flesh or sin, which he elsewhere calls "the old man," remained in him. Though it harassed him much, he did not walk according to it; but being now in the spirit, the new nature which he had received predominated. He therefore clearly establishes in this chapter the opposition between the old man and the working of the new nature. This is according to the uniform language of his epistles, as well as of the whole of Scripture, both in its doctrinal and historical parts. In consistency with this, he exhorts the "*saints*" at Ephesus to "put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;" and calls on the "*faithful brethren*" at Colosse to mortify their

members which are upon earth. All his instructions to "*them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus*" proceed on the same principle. And why were they cautioned by him even against the grossest sins, but because there was still a principle in them disposed to every sin?

There are three circumstances in this passage which are of themselves decisive of the fact, that Paul here recounts his present experience. The first is that the Apostle hates sin. He hates it as it is rebellion against God and the violation of his law. This no unconverted man does. He may dislike the evil effects of sin, and consequently wish that he had not committed it; but he does not, as the Apostle here declares of himself, hate *sin*. Hating sin is the counterpart of loving the law of God.

The second circumstance in proof the Apostle is here referring to the present time, is that he delights in the law of God after the inward man. Now it is only when sin is dethroned and grace reigns in the heart, that this can be a truth. "I delight," says the Psalmist, "to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is in my heart." "I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I love."—Ps. xl. 8.; cxix, 16, 24, 35, 47, 92, 97, 174. Delight in his law and the fear of God cannot be separated. The Holy Spirit pronounces such persons blessed. "Blessed is

the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.”—Ps. cxii. 1. “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord.”—Ps. i. 1. Thus the man that takes pleasure in the law of the Lord is blessed; and who will affirm that an unconverted man is blessed? Far from taking pleasure in the law of God, the first commandment of which is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,” “the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Such is the state of every unconverted man. In short, if enmity against God be the characteristic of the wicked, and delight in God and his law be the characteristic of a regenerate man, as all Scripture attests, by what perversion of language, by what species of sophistry can it be affirmed, that the Apostle, while describing his inward delight in God, is to be regarded as portraying himself in his original unconverted state? So far was he, while in that state, from delighting in God, either inwardly or outwardly, that his carnal mind was enmity against Jehovah, and his zeal was manifested in persecuting the Lord of Glory.

The third circumstance which incontestably proves that Paul is here relating his present personal experience, is his declaration that he expects his deliverance from Jesus Christ. Is this the language of a man dead in trespasses and sins—of one who is a stranger to the truth as it is in Jesus, and to whom the things revealed by the Spirit of God are foolishness?—1 Cor. xi. 14. “No man,” says Jesus, “can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” How then shall an unconverted man look to him for deliverance?

In another place already referred to, the Apostle describes the internal warfare experienced by Christians between the flesh and the spirit, or the old and new man, in language precisely similar to what he here employs concerning himself: “The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”—Gal. v. 17.

In the midst of his Apostolic labours, where he is endeavouring to animate those to whom he wrote, Paul represents himself engaged as here in the same arduous struggle. “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”—

1 Cor. ix. 27. Having there a different object in view, he refers to his success in the struggle ; while, in the chapter before us, his design is to exhibit the power of the enemy with whom he has to contend. But, in both cases, he speaks of being engaged with an enemy within, striving to bring him into captivity to sin and death. In another place, addressing those at Ephesus, whom he describes as “ quickened together with Christ,” and including himself, whilst speaking in the character of “ an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,” he uses the following unequivocal and energetic language—“ For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” He therefore calls on those to whom he wrote to “ take the whole armour of God, that they may be able to withstand and to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.”—Eph. vi. 12. Does not this describe a conflict equally severe as that in which, in the passage before us, he represents himself to be engaged ? Does not this imply that evil existed in himself, as well as in those to whom he wrote, without which the fiery darts of the devil could have taken no more effect than on him in whom the prince of this world when he came found “ nothing ?” And what is the pur-

pose of the Christian armour, but to fit us to fight with flesh and blood; namely, our corruptions, as well as other enemies, against which Paul says *we* wrestle?

Was the Apostle Peter chargeable with the sin of dissimulation, and did the Apostle Paul experience no internal struggle with the old man which caused the fall of his fellow Apostle? Did Paul call upon other saints to put off the old man, and was there not in him an old man? Did he admonish all his brethren, without exception, to mortify their members which were upon the earth, and had he no sins to mortify? And why was it necessary for the Lord to send him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, to prevent him from being exalted above measure, had it not been for the remaining corruption of his nature working powerfully in his heart, which from this it appears all his other severe trials and afflictions were insufficient to subdue? This alone determines the question. It was incumbent too on Paul, as on all other believers, to pray daily for the forgiveness of his sins. It was necessary for him, like David, to pray that his heart might be enlarged that he might run the way of God's commandments.—Ps. cxix. 32.

All that Paul says in this chapter concerning himself and his inward corruption entirely cor-

responds with what we are taught both in the Old Testament and the New respecting the people of God. The piety and devotedness to God of the holiest men did not prevent the evil that was in them from appearing in many parts of their conduct ; while at the same time we are informed of the horror they expressed on account of their transgressions. God declares that there was no man like Job on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil ; and by God himself Job is classed with two others of his most eminent saints, Ezek. xiv. 14. Yet Job exclaims, “ Behold I am vile ; what shall I answer thee ? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.” “ I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear ; but now mine eye seeth thee : wherefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes,” Job, xl. 4. ; xli. 5. “ My soul,” says the Psalmist in the same Psalm in which he so often asserts that he delights in the law of God, “ My soul cleaveth unto the dust,” while in the preceding sentence he had declared, “ Thy testimonies also are my delight :” and again, “ I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved ;” “ O how I love thy law ! it is my meditation all the day ;” “ My soul hath kept thy testimonies ; and I love them exceedingly ;” yet he says, “ Mine iniquities are gone over my head as an heavy burden ; they are too heavy

for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness ;” “ my loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh ;” “ my groaning is not hid from thee ;” “ I will declare mine iniquity.” Yet in the same Psalm David says, “ In thee, O Lord, do I hope.” “ They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries ; because I follow the thing that is good. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.” Iniquities, he says, prevail against me, while he rejoices in the forgiveness of his sins. Psalm, lxxv. 3.

“ Woe is me,” exclaims the Prophet Isaiah, “ for I am a man of unclean lips,” vi. 5. “ Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin ?” Prov. xx. 9. God promised to establish an everlasting covenant with Israel, Ezek. xvi. 63 ; and the consequence would be their loathing themselves and being confounded when God was pacified towards them. The complaints of the servants of God all proceed from the same source, namely, their humiliating experience of indwelling sin, at the same time that, after the inward man, they *delighted* in the law of God. And could it be otherwise in men who by the Spirit of God were convinced of sin ? John, xvi. 8. There is not a man on earth that *delights* in the law of God who does not know that his soul *cleaveth unto the dust*.

Comparing himself with the law of God, Paul might well lament his remaining corruption, as the Apostle Peter, experiencing the same consciousness of his sinfulness, exclaims, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord;" or, as the Apostle James confesses, "In many things we all offend;" or as the Apostle John says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Were Paul, when judged at the tribunal of God, to take his stand on the best action he ever performed in the midst of his apostolic labours, he would be condemned for ever. Imperfection would be found to cleave to the very best of his services; and imperfection, even in the least possible degree, as it respects the law of God, is sin. "Cursed is every one that *continueth* not in *all things* that are written in the book of the law to do them." And who is the mere man that, since the fall, came up for one moment to the standard of this holy law, which says, "Thou shalt love the Lord with *all* thy heart?"

It was on a ground very different from that of his own obedience, that Paul, when about to depart from the world, joyfully exclaimed, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day." Yes, it will

be a crown of *righteousness*, because Christ having been made of God unto him “wisdom,” Paul had renounced his own righteousness, that so being found in Him, he might possess “the righteousness which is of God, by faith.” He was, therefore, covered with the robe of righteousness, even the righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. And thus, in the judgment of *strict justice*, Paul and all believers, notwithstanding all his and their sins and shortcomings, shall be pronounced “righteous,”—a character twice given to those who shall appear on the right hand of the throne, Mat. xxi. 37-46,—in that day, when the “righteous servant” of Jehovah shall judge the world in righteousness. Thus, too, when the great multitude of those who have washed their robes in the *blood* of the Lamb shall stand before the throne, the full import of the words of Paul, with which in the fifth chapter of this Epistle he closes the account of the entrance of sin and death, and of righteousness and life, will be made gloriously manifest, “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through *righteousness* unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” That great truth which Paul has also declared will then be seen to be fully verified, that the gospel is the

power of God unto salvation, because *therein is the righteousness of God revealed.*

With carnality then—the corruption of his nature—Paul the Apostle was chargeable, and of this, at all times after his conversion, he was fully sensible. Conscious that he had never for one moment attained to the perfection of obedience to the law of God; and knowing by the teaching of the Spirit of God that there was a depth of wickedness in his heart which he never could fathom—for who but God can *know* the heart, which “is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,” Jer. xvii. 9;—well might he designate himself a “wretched man,” and turn with more earnestness than ever to his blessed Lord to be delivered from such a body of death. With what holy indignation would he have spurned from him such perverse glosses as are put upon his words, to explain away their obvious import, by men who profess to believe the doctrines, and to understand the principles which form the basis of all he was commissioned by his divine Master to proclaim to the fallen children of Adam. He would have warned them not to think of him above that which is written—1 Cor. iv. 6. And most assuredly they who cannot persuade themselves that the confessions and lamentations in the passage before us, strong as they undoubtedly are, could

possibly be applicable to the Apostle Paul, do think of him above what is declared in every part of the word of God to be the character of every renewed man while he remains in this world.

In Mr Toplady's works it is stated that some of Dr Doddridge's last words were, 'The best prayer I ever offered up in my life deserves damnation.' In this sentiment Dr Doddridge did not in the smallest degree exceed the truth. And with equal truth Mr Toplady says of himself, 'Oh, that ever such a wretch as I should be tempted to think highly of himself! I that am of myself nothing but sin and weakness. In whose flesh naturally dwells no good thing; I who deserve damnation for the best work I ever performed.' — Vol. iv. 171, and 1-41. These are the matured opinions concerning themselves of men who had been taught by the same Spirit as the Apostle Paul.

Every man who knows "the plague of his own heart," whatever may be the view he has taken of this passage, *knows for certain*, that even if the Apostle Paul has not given here an account of his own experience at the time when he wrote this Epistle, *such was actually the Apostle's experience day by day*. He also knows that the man who is not daily constrained to cry out to himself, "O wretched man that I am," from a sense

of his indwelling corruption and his shortcomings, *is not a Christian*. He has not been convinced of sin by the Spirit of God; he is not one of those, who, like the Apostle Paul, are forced to confess, ‘ We that are in this tabernacle ‘ do groan,’ 2 Cor. v. 4; or to say, ‘ We ourselves also which have the first fruits of the ‘ Spirit, even *we ourselves*, groan within ourselves.’ Rom. viii. 23. The Apostle’s exclamation in the passage before us, “ O wretched man that I am,” is no other than this *groaning*. And every regenerate man, the more he is convinced of sin, which in his natural state never disturbed his thoughts, the more he advances in the course of holiness, and the more nearly he approaches to the image of his Divine master, the more deeply will he groan under the more vivid conception and the stronger abhorrence of the malignity of his indwelling sin.

It is easy to see how suitable it was that the author of this Epistle should detail his own experience, and thus describe the internal workings of his heart, and not merely refer to his external conduct. He speaks of himself, that it might not be supposed that the miserable condition he described did not concern believers; and to show that the most holy ought to humble themselves before God; and that God would find in them a body of sin and death; that is,

guilty, as in themselves, of eternal death. Nothing then could serve more fully to illustrate his doctrine in the preceding part of it, respecting human depravity and guilt, and the universality of the inveterate malady of sin, than to show that it was capable, even in himself, with all the grace of which he was so distinguished a subject, of opposing with such force the principles of the new life in his soul. In this view, the passage before us perfectly accords with the Apostle's design in this chapter, in which, for the comfort of believers, he is testifying that, by their marriage with Christ, they are *dead to the law*, as he had taught in the preceding chapter, that, by union with him in his death and resurrection, they are *dead to sin*, which amounts to the same thing. As, in the concluding part of that chapter, he had shown by his exhortations to duty, that, by affirming that they were dead to sin, he did not mean that they were exempt from its commission; so, in the concluding part of this chapter, he shows, by detailing his own experience, that he did not mean that, by their being dead to the law, they were exempt from its violation. In one word, while, by both of these expressions, dead to sin, and dead to the law, he intended to teach that their justification was complete, he proves, by what he says in the concluding parts of both

chapters, that their sanctification was incomplete. And as, referring to himself personally, he proves the incompleteness of the *sanctification* of believers, by looking forward to a *future* period of deliverance, saying, who *shall* deliver me ; so, referring to himself personally in the beginning of the second verse of the next chapter, he proves the completeness of their *justification*, by speaking of his deliverance in respect to it as *past*, saying, “ The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus *hath* made me free from the law of sin and death.”

The view which the Apostle here gives of his own experience clearly demonstrates, that the pain experienced by believers in their internal conflicts is quite compatible with the blessed and consolatory assurance of eternal life. This he also shows, 2 Cor. v. 1, “ We *know*, that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this (tabernacle) we *groan*, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.”

It was, then, to confirm the faith of the disciples, and furnish a living exhibition of their spiritual conflict, that Paul here lays open his own heart, and discloses the working of those two warring principles, which contend to a

greater or less extent in the bosom of every child of God. The wisdom discovered in making the present experience of Paul the object of contemplation ought to awaken in our hearts feelings of the liveliest gratitude. Had we been presented with a spectacle of the internal feelings of one less eminently holy, the effect would have been greatly weakened. But when this Apostle, whose life was spent in labouring for the glory of God; when he, whose blameless conduct was such as to confound his enemies who sought occasion against him; when he, who finished his course with joy, having fought a good fight, and kept the faith; when he, whose conscience enabled him to look back with satisfaction on the past, and forward with joy to the future; when he, who stood ready to receive the crown of righteousness which, by the eye of faith, he beheld laid up for him in heaven; when one so favoured, so distinguished, as the great Apostle of the Gentiles, is himself constrained, in turning his eye inward upon the rebellious strivings of his old nature, to cry out, "O wretched man that I am!"—what a wonderful exhibition do we behold of the malignity of that sin, which has so deeply poisoned and corrupted our original nature, that death itself is needful in order to remove its pollution from the soul!

This passage, then, is in a remarkable manner fitted to comfort, in the midst of their spiritual conflicts, unknown to all except to themselves and the searcher of hearts, those who are oppressed with a sense of indwelling sin. There may be some believers who, not having examined it with sufficient care, or being misled by false interpretations, mistake its natural and obvious meaning, and fear to apply the words which it contains to Paul as an Apostle. When these shall have viewed this portion of the Divine Word in its true light, they will bless God for the instruction and consolation it is calculated to afford; while the whole of the representation, under this aspect, will appear foolishness to all who are Christians only in name, and who never experienced in themselves that internal conflict which the Apostle here describes. It is a conflict from which not one of the people of God, since the fall of the first man, was ever exempted—a conflict which He alone never experienced who is called “the Son of the Highest,” of whom, notwithstanding, it has of late been impiously affirmed, that he also was subjected to it.

CHAPTER VIII.

THIS chapter presents a glorious display of the power of divine grace ; and of the provision which God has made for the consolation of his people. While the Apostle had proved, in the sixth chapter, that his previous doctrine gave no license to believers to continue in sin, he had still kept in view his main purpose of establishing their free justification. In the seventh chapter he had prosecuted the same object, declaring that by their marriage with Christ they were delivered from the law as a covenant of life, while he vindicated its character and authority. In this chapter, he continues the subject of justification, and resumes that of the believer's assurance of his salvation, of which he had spoken in the fifth, establishing it on new grounds ; and from the whole train of his argument from the commencement of the Epistle, he now draws the general conclusion, that to them who are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation. While this could not have been accomplished by the law, he shows that it had been effected by the

incarnation of the Son of God, by whom the law has been fulfilled for all who are one with him as members of his body. Paul next points out the difference of character between those who, being in their natural state under the law and under sin, are carnally-minded; and those who, being renewed by grace, in whom the law has been fulfilled, are spiritually-minded. The condition of the former is death, that of the latter life and peace. Of these last he proceeds, through the remaining part of the chapter, to assert the high privileges and absolute security.

Those who are spiritually-minded have the Spirit of Christ, and possess spiritual life. Although their bodies must return to the dust, they shall be raised up again. They are led by the Spirit; they are the sons of God, and in his service are delivered from a spirit of bondage. They look to him as their Father; are heirs of God; and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. To encourage believers to sustain the sufferings to which, while in this world, they are exposed, the most varied and abundant consolations are exhibited. Their salvation is declared to have taken its rise in the eternal councils of God, by whom, through all its steps, it is carried into effect. Their condemnation, then, is impossible,—for who shall condemn those whom God justifieth—for whom Christ died and rose, and

intercedes? The Apostle concludes by defying the whole universe to separate believers from the love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. In this manner he follows out, in this chapter, what had been his grand object through all the preceding part of the Epistle.

V. 1.—*There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Therefore.—This is an inference from the general strain of the doctrine which the Apostle had been teaching in the preceding part of the Epistle;—especially, it follows from what he had asserted, in the sixth and seventh chapters, with respect to believers dying with Christ, and consequently being dead to sin and to the law.

Now no condemnation.—This implies that there would have been condemnation to those to whom he wrote, had they remained under the law; but *now*, since they have died with Christ, and thereby given complete satisfaction to the law, both in its penalty and precept, it is not possible that by it they can be condemned. And to mark the completeness of this exemption, he says there is *no* condemnation to them; the reason of which he fully explains in the 2d, 3d, and 4th verses. This is according to our Lord's declaration, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on

him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." Here it is often remarked that the Apostle does not say that there is in them neither matter of accusation nor cause of condemnation; and yet this is all included in what he does say. And afterwards, in express terms, he denies that they can be either accused or condemned—which they might be, were there any ground for either. All that was condemnable in them, which was sin, has been condemned in their Surety, as is shown in the third verse.

To them.—The Apostle, discoursing in the preceding chapter of the remainder of sin in believers, speaks of himself in his own person, in order to show that the most advanced in grace are not exempted from the internal warfare which he there describes. But in this verse he changes the number, and does not say, there is no condemnation to *me*, but to *them*, who are in Christ Jesus. Again, in the fourth verse, he speaks of the righteousness of the law being fulfilled in *us*; thus showing that the unspeakable blessing of exemption from condemnation equally belongs to all the people of God. In the second verse, for an obvious and important reason, as we shall presently see, he reverts again to the singular number, and says, hath made *me* free. This manner of expressing himself ought to be par-

ticularly noted; for we are certain that in the word of God nothing of this kind occurs without a purpose.

Which are in Christ Jesus.—To be in Christ Jesus is to be one with him as united to him by faith. Those and those only who are thus one with him are the persons to whom there is no condemnation. All who are not in Christ Jesus are under the law and its curse. It is not here said that Christ is with his people, or at their right hand, but that they are *in* him, in order that they may know that being in him they have nothing to fear; for what evil can reach those who are one with the Son of God? This union was represented in the person of the High Priest under the law, who carried on his breast the twelve stones on which were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of the Children of Israel; so that when he appeared before God, all the people appeared in him; thus showing that all believers are before God *in* Jesus Christ, their great High Priest. They are all delivered from condemnation in being one body with Christ. As the debts of a wife must be discharged by her husband, and as by her marriage all her previous obligations are at once transferred to him, so the believer being married to Christ is no longer exposed to the curse of the law. All its demands have been met and satisfied by his

covenant head, with whom, as the wife is one with the husband, so he is one.

It is by the human nature of Jesus Christ that we enjoy union with his divine nature, and that he is Immanuel God with us. His humanity is the medium by which his divinity communicates itself with all its graces. Under the former dispensation, God communicated with his people through the ark of the covenant which was a type of the human nature of Jesus Christ, in order to show us that by it we have communion with the whole of his person. And by communion with the person of Jesus Christ we obtain communion with the Father. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."

It is not by nature that we come to enjoy this communion, since by nature we are "children of wrath" and "without Christ." The means by which we are united to Christ are on his part by his Spirit, and on our part by faith. He communicates his Spirit to us, which is as the soul that unites all the members of the body with the head, so that "he who is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit." On our part we receive Jesus Christ by faith which his Spirit produces in us, in order that we may reciprocally receive him in our hearts. He dwells in our hearts by faith, and thus we learn what is meant when it

is said we are justified by faith, not as being a work, or any thing meritorious, but as the medium through which the graces and blessings that are in Jesus Christ are communicated to our souls.

On account of this union all believers bear the name of Christ, being that of their Head. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." 1 Cor. xii. 12. And in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle denominates the Church, not only the body of Jesus Christ, but even his fulness. God "gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."—Eph. i. 22. He thus shows that this union with Jesus Christ is such, that he who filleth all things would consider himself without his people to be imperfect and incomplete.

Who walk not after (according to) the flesh, but after (according to) the spirit.—These words, not being found in all the manuscripts, are considered by some as spurious. They connect, however, perfectly well with the preceding clause of the verse, as characterising those who are in Christ Jesus.

The expression to walk is frequently employed

in Scripture to denote the course of life in which we are proceeding, as it is said, Eph. ii. 2, "Ye walked according to the course of this world." In this way, comparing our life to a journey, according to the usual style of Scripture, the Apostle comprehends all our actions under the figure of walking. To walk according to the flesh, is to act agreeably to the principles of corrupt nature. To walk according to the spirit, means to regulate the conduct according to the influence and dictates of the Holy Spirit, who has given us a new nature.

The terms flesh and spirit have various significations in Scripture, and are employed in different senses in this chapter. The word flesh is used in a sense either bad or indifferent. Sometimes it means simply human nature, and sometimes corrupt human nature, or man in his natural state without the Holy Spirit, and frequently wicked works. At other times it denotes outward services in adherence to the law for justification. To the word spirit, various meanings are likewise attached. It imports the angelic nature, or the soul of man, and also the Holy Spirit, or the renewed image of the Son of God in the soul. In both of these last senses it is employed by our Lord, when declaring the necessity of regeneration, he says, "That which is born of the spirit, is spirit." Sometimes when

opposed to flesh or to *letter*, it is used as equivalent to the new covenant,—“who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the *spirit*.”

The expression, walking not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, in the verse before us, is generally interpreted as referring to the practice of wicked works. It is supposed that the Apostle is here guarding his doctrine of gratuitous justification from abuse, by excluding all claim to union with Christ, and to exemption from condemnation where there is not purity of conduct, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. This is undoubtedly a highly important truth which is to be constantly affirmed and insisted on. Holiness of life and conversation is an inseparable concomitant of union with Christ, for to whom he is made righteousness, he is also made sanctification, and they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections, and lusts. Of this the Apostle never loses sight, not indeed in any point of view as the cause of that union, but as its never-failing consequence, as he has abundantly proved in the sixth chapter. There are, however, many different paths in the broad way; that is, many ways of walking after the flesh, all of which lead to destruction. Among these, that of seeking acceptance with God by works of righteousness,

either moral or ceremonial, is equally opposed to union with Christ, and freedom from condemnation, as living in the grosser indulgence of wicked works: and this way of going about to establish their own righteousness by those who profess to have received the gospel, and who even have a zeal of God, chap. x. 2, is probably that by which the greater number of them are deceived. There is the greatest danger lest the fleshly wisdom, the pretension of a zeal for God, and of regard for the interests of virtue, should set them upon the painful endeavour of working out their salvation by keeping the law as a covenant, thus attending to its requirements for justification, serving in the oldness of the letter, and not in newness of spirit. In this way it is to be feared that multitudes who profess to have received the gospel are walking, seeking to satisfy their conscience, and are saying peace when there is no peace.

While, therefore, the other ways of walking according to the flesh, may all be comprehended under this term, as here used by the Apostle: it would appear that it is to the above import of the word, rather than to immoral conduct, that in this place he is referring. In this way, Paul himself walked before his conversion, when he thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; and

it was this way of walking according to the flesh, which he so strongly opposes in his Epistle to the churches of Galatia. We see, therefore, how necessary it was for the Apostle particularly to direct the attention of those to whom he was now writing to this point.

In the clause before us, then, and in the fourth verse of this chapter, when the same words again occur, where their genuineness is not disputed, Paul appears to be prosecuting his main design, which is to prove that believers are justified not by works of righteousness which they have done, of whatever description, but solely by faith in Jesus Christ, in whom their reconciliation with God is complete. It is this grand truth, which from the beginning of the Epistle he had been exhibiting, for the conviction and establishment in the faith, of those to whom he wrote. It is indeed a truth in which Christians need to be fully instructed, which they all find to be so difficult not to let slip out of their mind, and by which they are saved, if they keep it in memory. There is nothing which so much retards them in their course as their proneness to walk according to the flesh, in seeking to establish their own righteousness; and nothing more powerfully tends, when giving way to it in any degree, to bring them into bondage, to lead them to serve in the oldness of the letter,

and to mar their joy and peace in believing. It confirms this view of the meaning of the clause before us, and in the fourth verse, that it is in this train the Apostle proceeds in the two following verses ; and that, in the fifth verse, he distinguishes between walking after the flesh, and minding the things of the flesh. The expression, “ who walk not after the flesh,” is similar to that which occurs, Acts xxi. 21, “ that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.”

In further confirmation of the interpretation here given of walking not according to the flesh, it may be observed, that in the sense thus ascribed to it, the word flesh is employed in the beginning of the fourth chapter of this Epistle. Flesh, in that place cannot, it is evident, signify immoral conduct, for that Abraham was justified by wicked works never could be supposed. It must there signify works moral or ceremonial, as is proved by the rest of that chapter.

In the Epistle to the Galatians, the terms flesh and spirit are likewise used in this acceptation. “ Are ye so foolish ? having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh ? ” Gal. iii. 3. Having begun your Christian course by receiving the doctrine of the new covenant, —namely, justification by the righteousness of

Christ, are ye seeking to be made perfect by legal observances, or works of any kind? In this passage, the word flesh cannot be taken for wicked works, any more than in the fourth chapter of the Romans, just quoted. It must be understood in the sense of working for life, or self-justification, in opposition to the way of salvation according to the Gospel. The Apostle's main object in the whole of that Epistle, is to reclaim the Galatian churches from the error of mixing ceremonial observances or any works of law with the faith of Christ, and thus walking according to the flesh, and not according to the spirit. "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from (the doctrine of) grace. For we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." This reasoning applies to all works of law, of whatever description, as clearly appears by the third chapter of the Epistle.

In the same manner, the terms flesh and spirit are employed, Phil. iii. 3, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence

in the flesh." In the sequel, Paul furnishes a practical commentary on these words, by referring to his own conduct, as having formerly walked according to the flesh, resting in external privileges, and observances, and obedience to the law ; but afterwards as renouncing all of these, and relying solely on "the righteousness which is of God by faith."

According, then, to the above signification of the word flesh, as employed in the fourth chapter of this Epistle, and of the word spirit, denoting the new covenant, 2 Cor. iii. 6, in which sense, too, it occurs in the following verse of the chapter before us, this clause, "who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit," indicates the conduct of those who are not walking according to the old covenant,—seeking justification by the works of law ; but who attain it by faith in Him who is the Lord the Spirit.—2 Cor. iii. 17. The same idea appears to be expressed here as in the preceding chapter, where the Apostle reminds believers that they are delivered from the law under which, while in the flesh, they were held, that they should *serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*. This is consistent with the whole of the previous train of the Apostle's reasoning, in which, as has already been noticed, he has been asserting the freedom of believers from the law, and

their justification by the righteousness of Christ through faith, in opposition to all self-justifying efforts or obedience of their own. They who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, are no longer seeking justification by works of law, but are brought to act on gospel and spiritual principles. They live in the Spirit, and they also walk in the Spirit.

V. 2.—For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

This verse, as is evident by the particle *for*, with which it commences, stands connected with the preceding, and assigns the reason why there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. They are delivered from the curse of the broken law. Many, by the phrase “law of the spirit of life,” understand the Holy Spirit to be intended, as the author of sanctification; and by “the law of sin and death,” the corrupt principle or prevailing power of sin in the soul, as in chap. vii. 21, 23, 25. But these explanations do not suit the context. The main proposition contained in the preceding verse is, that to them who are in Christ Jesus there is *no condemnation*. But why is there no condemnation? Is it because they are sanctified? No; but because they have been freed from the law and its curse, as the Apostle had fully shown in the preceding chapter. Besides, it is not true that believers

are yet delivered from the law of sin in their members. This would contradict what had just before been said of the Christian's internal warfare, and of his deliverance from it being future, ch. vii. 24, as well as his constant experience. Nor do the above explanations accord with the verse that follows, in which the word law is evidently taken in the same sense as in the verse before us, of which it is explanatory, where it means the moral law. The law of the Spirit of life, then, signifies the Gospel or new covenant, and the law of sin and death the moral law.

Law of the Spirit of life.—The Gospel is called a law, because as a law has authority and binds to obedience, so the Gospel bears the stamp of the divine authority, to which it is our duty to *submit*.—Rom. x. 3. “Out of Zion shall go forth the law,” meaning the Gospel, “and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”—Isa. ii. 3. It is the law of the spirit of life, as being ministered by the Spirit. It is called the spirit, in opposition to the letter, and is the spirit that giveth life, opposed to the letter, or law, that killeth.—2 Cor. iii. 6, 8. “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”—John, vi. 63. The Gospel is the law of the spirit of life in *Christ Jesus*, denoting that it is so in and from

him as its author. "The Lord is that Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 17, who communicates life to those who had lost it.

In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, xv. 45, the Apostle speaks of two sources of life. He says, "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was a quickening spirit." By the living soul he means the principle of natural life which we derive from Adam by natural generation. The quickening Spirit refers to the heavenly and supernatural life communicated from Jesus Christ. The reason of the comparison is, that as Adam receiving a living soul his body was made alive, in like manner, we receiving in our souls the Spirit of Christ receive a new life—new in wisdom, in righteousness and holiness. It is not meant that the Spirit of Christ is not also the author of our natural life; but here the life referred to is that life which the Apostle calls "the life of God."—Eph. iv. 18. For before regeneration we are dead in trespasses and sins.

The spirit of life is in *Christ Jesus*.—Jesus Christ is set before us in two points of view, namely, as God and Mediator. As God, the spirit of life resides in him as its origin; but as Mediator, the spirit of life has been given to him in all its plenitude to be communicated to his people. That Jesus Christ is the source of

the spirit of life, not only as God, but also as Mediator, is a ground of the most unspeakable consolation. It might be in him as God, without being communicated to men; but, as the head of his people, it must be diffused through them as his members. In this way they are "complete in him," and from this they learn their adoption as the sons of God.

Law of sin and death.—The word law is used in different senses. In the conclusion of the preceding chapter, the law of sin, which the Apostle says he served with his flesh, signifies the powerful corrupt principle in the heart operating with the force of a law. But through the former part of the same chapter, the word law is employed to denote the moral law. It is there spoken of as the law of God with its sanction, which, although holy, and just, and good, is, to fallen man, the occasion of both sin and death. Although it was ordained to life, it brings the sinner under the penalty of death. Ch. vii. 10. "The letter"—the law written on tables of stone—"killeth." The ministration of it is the ministration of condemnation and death.—2 Cor. iii. 3, 7, 9. In this view, then, it may, without arguing the smallest disrespect to the holy law, or disparagement of it, be called the law of sin and death. In the Westminster Confession of Faith, in which an

explanation of the verse before us is given, it is said, ‘ Albeit the Apostle himself, (brought in
 ‘ here for example’s cause), and all other true
 ‘ believers in Christ, be by nature under the
 ‘ law of sin and death, or under the covenant of
 ‘ works (called the law of sin and death, because
 ‘ it bindeth sin and death upon us, till Christ
 ‘ set us free); yet the law of the spirit of life
 ‘ in Christ Jesus, or the covenant of grace, (so
 ‘ called, because it doth enable and quicken a
 ‘ man to a spiritual life through Christ,) doth
 ‘ set the Apostle, and all true believers, free from
 ‘ the covenant of works, or the law of sin and
 ‘ death; so that every man may say with him,
 ‘ “ The law of the spirit of life,” or the cove-
 ‘ nant of grace, “ hath made me free from the
 ‘ law of sin and death,” or covenant of works.’
 The import, then, of the verse before us, is that
 there is no condemnation to them that are in
 Christ Jesus, because, by their union with
 him—being dead to the law by the body of
 Christ, and being married to him who is raised
 from the dead, ch. vii. 4—they have been freed
 from the curse of that law, which, though good
 in itself, is the occasion of sin and death to all
 who remain under it, and are consequently justi-
 fied before God.

Hath made me free.—On this it is to be re-
 marked, that the Apostle, instead of speaking

generally of believers, as he does in the first and fourth verses, saying, "them" and "us," changes the mode of expression, and refers to himself particularly—hath made *me* free. A very striking contrast is thus pointed out between his declaration in the 24th verse of the preceding chapter, and that contained in the verse before us. There he is speaking of the *pollution* of sin, which adheres to believers as long as they are in this world. Here he is speaking of the *guilt* of sin, from which they are perfectly freed the moment they are united to the Saviour. In the former case, therefore, where he is speaking of sanctification, he refers to his deliverance, verse 24, as future, and exclaims, who *shall* deliver me! In reference to the latter, in which he is treating of justification, he speaks of his deliverance as already obtained, and affirms that he *hath* been made free.

V. 3.—*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh :*

This verse confirms the interpretation that has been given of the preceding, with which it stands connected. It is introduced to explain what is said in the two preceding verses. Both this and the following verse are illustrations of that great truth, that the believer in Christ is

not liable to condemnation. There are here three principal considerations; namely, the misery of our natural condition; the mercy of God in the incarnation of his Son; and the effect of sending him into the world, which is our redemption. Under these three heads the Apostle removes the difficulties that might present themselves from what he had asserted in the preceding verse, by which it might be supposed that, on account of some imperfection in the law, it could not justify. In answer to this, it is here shown that the imperfection is not in the law, but in us. The law could justify those who fulfilled it, as it is said, “the man that doeth them shall live in them;” but the corruption of human nature renders this impossible. And as it might be objected, that the law, which subjects every transgressor to death, is violated by the freedom from it which we obtain by the death of Jesus Christ, the Apostle shows that the punishment it demands was inflicted upon him. Hence the first proposition, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, is established; and in the following verse it is added, that the law, which we were required to fulfil, has been fulfilled in us by him. In this view the justice of God, which naturally terrifies man, inspires us with confidence. For if God is just, will he exact double payment and

satisfaction? Will he condemn those for whom the Surety has borne the condemnation? No; "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," for "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.—The law here meant is the moral law, under which our first parents in the state of innocence were placed, which was afterwards promulgated by the ministry of Moses. This law was ordained to life, ch. vii. 10; that is, to justify man, if he had remained in innocence; but by his sinning it condemned him, as the Apostle adds, "I found it to be unto death;" so that the law is now unable to justify, but powerful to condemn.

This verse proves that the method which God takes to justify the sinner is entirely consistent with law and justice. First, the Apostle shows the necessity of this method. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.*—What is it that the law could not do? It could not justify. Mr Frazer, however, says that the reason of this alleged weakness of the law forbids this interpretation. 'That,' says he, 'is not the reason why the law cannot justify.' But surely it is the very reason why the law cannot justify. Were it not for the weakness of the flesh, or the corruption and

sinfulness of man, the law could justify. ‘But,’ he continues, ‘To turn the disability of the law to justify the sinner, upon the corruption of his nature, as the text would do, according to the interpretation I am considering, would imply something by no means consistent with the Apostle’s clear doctrine, viz., that after a person had transgressed he might be justified, even by the law, for returning to his duty, and for his subsequent righteousness, if the weakness and poverty of his nature, called *the flesh*, did not disable him from doing his duty, which, how contrary to Scripture doctrine I need not stay to prove, the thing is so clear.’ But did this acute and worthy author overlook what our Lord says to the rich young man: “If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments?” In fact, the commandments could not be kept unless every commandment that has respect to man is obeyed. Therefore, the commandment in the Garden of Eden is included. Because, being guilty of breaking it, no man can be said to have obeyed God as he ought. The weakness of the flesh includes every thing that we received by the fall. Every man is as accountable for that first sin of Adam as truly as he is for his own personal sins, and, therefore, as long as he is under condemnation for that sin, he cannot be said to keep the com-

mandments. “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” It is the test of men being sinners. If it were kept this would prove that we were not sinners. It entered that the offence might abound, and the Lord applied this test for the young man’s conviction. Yet what he said was truth; if the young man had kept the commandments he would, as a holy creature, have enjoyed life. He would not have been a sinner. But he was so ignorant as to say he had kept them all. The Lord replied, “one thing thou lackest, Follow me.” If he had really kept the commandments he would have had no need of a Saviour; but he was a sinner, and Christ informed him of the only way of salvation. The law could not give life to one by whom it was forfeited.

The weakness of the law through the flesh Mr Stuart explains thus—‘because, through ‘the strength of our carnal inclinations and ‘desires, it was unable to regulate our lives, so ‘that we should be perfect or actually free from ‘sin.’ But as Christ is said to do what the law through this weakness could not do, this interpretation supposes that Christ has enabled us to regulate our lives so as to be entirely free from sin. Nothing can be more obvious than that the weakness of the law through the flesh is its inability to justify, as it would have done, had

not sin entered. The weakness of the law for justification is no disparagement to it. It was never designed to save a *sinner*. How could it be supposed that a creature who had apostatized, and was a rebel against God, could re-establish himself in the divine favour? Yet such re-establishment, in order to the enjoyment of the favour of God, was necessary. A creature in such circumstances could only be re-established by God himself, and that by an act of free and sovereign mercy, compatible with his justice and truth, and with the essential glory of his character. It was also impossible that mercy could be extended in any other way than that which the Gospel reveals. How could the justice of God be satisfied but by an atonement of infinite value to meet the infinite evil of sin? And how could such an atonement be made for man, but by one who was at the same time both God and man—the infinite God manifest in human nature? This was the remedy which God provided, therefore it was the best remedy. It was the highest possible remedy, therefore there could be no other. It would be inconsistent with infinite wisdom to employ means greater than are necessary in order to accomplish an end. The law was strong to perform its own office; that is, to justify all by whom it was perfectly obeyed. Its weakness was through the flesh;

that is, the guilt and corruption of our nature. The weakness was not in the law; it was in men.

God sending his own Son.—God sent his Son to do that which the law could not do. He sent him in consequence of his great love to his people, 1 John, iv. 9; and as the accomplishment of his divine purpose, Acts, iv. 28. The object, then, of Christ's mission was not merely that of a messenger or witness. It was to effect the salvation of guilty sinners in a way of righteousness. He did what the law could not do. The law could justify those only by whom it was observed. But it could not justify or save those who should violate even the least of its commands. But Jesus Christ both saves and justifies the ungodly.

His own Son.—Christ was God's own Son in the literal sense. It is on this supposition only that the sending of him is a manifestation of infinite love to men. There is no more appearance of any figurative meaning in the use of this appellation, when ascribed to Jesus Christ, than there is when Isaac is called the son of Abraham. He is here emphatically called not only the Son of God, but the Son of himself, or his own Son; his very Son. Whether Christ's Sonship is a relation in Godhead, or a figurative Sonship, has been much disputed. Many who hold the Godhead of Christ explain the passages that

assert his Sonship as referring to his incarnation. That the phrase *Son of God* imports the divine nature of Jesus Christ, there can be no doubt, John, v. 18 (see vol. i. 39, Second Edit.); and that it relates not merely to his incarnation, but to his eternal relation to the Father, appears the obvious testimony of Scripture. No reasoning from the import of the relation among men can form a valid objection to this view.

Adam is called the Son of God because he was created by the immediate exercise of Divine power. The Angels are called the Sons of God on account of their creation, and the greatness of their condition; believers, by the right of their adoption and regeneration; but none except the Messiah is called the only begotten of the Father. These words, I have begotten thee, are indeed applied to Jesus Christ, Acts, xiii. 33; not with respect to his eternal generation, but to his resurrection and establishment in the priesthood; and import that he was thus made known to be the Son of God, as it is said, Rom. i. 4, that he was declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead. The exaltation of Jesus Christ, whether in his office of Mediator, or of Sovereign glory, is the authoritative declaration of the Father, that he was his Son, his only begotten Son, and this is signified in the second Psalm. There the ele-

vation of Jesus Christ to the sovereign empire of the world is spoken of. "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." It is as to the act of his elevation that this declaration is made. "I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Thus, according to the usual style of Scripture, things are said to be done when they are declared or publicly manifested. When it is said, this day have I begotten thee, the eternal dignity of the Saviour, which had been before concealed, was brought to light and fully discovered.

In the likeness of sinful flesh.—Jesus Christ was sent, not in the likeness of flesh, but in the flesh. He was sent, however, not in sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh. Nothing can more clearly prove that the Lord Jesus Christ, though he assumed our nature, took it without taint of sin or corruption. To his perfect holiness the Scriptures bear the fullest testimony. "He knew no sin." "The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." His absolute freedom from sin was indispensable. As God becoming manifest in the flesh, he could not unite himself to a nature tainted with the smallest degree of impurity. He was conceived by the power of the Holy

Ghost, and did not spring from Adam by the way of ordinary generation ; and not belonging to his covenant, had no part in his sin. His freedom from sin, original and actual, was necessary, in order that he should be offered as “ a lamb without blemish, and without spot,” so that he might be the truth of his types, the legal sacrifices, which it was expressly provided should be free from all blemish ; thus distinctly indicating this characteristic of him who was to be the one great sacrifice.

If the flesh of Jesus Christ was the likeness of sinful flesh, there must be a difference between the appearance of sinful flesh and our nature, or flesh in its original state when Adam was created. Christ, then, was not made in the likeness of the flesh of man before sin entered the world, but in the likeness of his fallen flesh. Though he had no corruption in his nature, yet he had all the sinless infirmities of our flesh. The person of man in his present state may be greatly different from what it was when Adam came from the hand of his Creator. Jesus Christ was made in man's present likeness. Tradition speaks of the beauty of his person when on earth. But this is the wisdom of man. The Scriptures nowhere represent Christ in his manhood as distinguished by personal beauty. No observation of this kind, proceeding either from

his friends or enemies, is recorded in the gospels.

And for sin.—The reason of the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ into the world, of his incarnation and humiliation, was the abolition of sin, its destruction both as to its guilt and power. The same expression occurs, 1 Pet. iii. 18, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” It is sin that is the cause of separation from God, and by its removal reconciliation is made and peace restored.

Condemned sin in the flesh.—Here by the flesh is meant not the body of Jesus Christ only, but his human nature. In this sense the word flesh is used, where it is said, “the word was made flesh,” that is to say, was made man, and took our nature composed of body and soul. The nature and the person who suffered must also be distinguished. Respecting the person, it is Jesus Christ, God and man. As to the nature in which he suffered, it is in the flesh. Of the person we can say that it is God, as the Apostle says that God hath purchased the church with his own blood, and consequently that his suffering was of infinite value, since it is that of an infinite person; and this is the more evident, since Jesus Christ is mediator in both his natures, and not in his human nature

only. For if this were so, his suffering would be finite, since his human nature, by which he offered his sacrifice, is only finite; and if he had been mediator only as to his human nature—which, however, could not be, as he represents both God and man—he could not have been the mediator of the Old Testament, when he had not taken the human nature. And as it is necessary that, in regard to his person, we should consider Jesus Christ suffering, it is also necessary that we consider that it was in the flesh that he suffered; that is to say, in our nature, which he took and joined personally to the Divine nature. In this we may admire the wisdom of God, who caused sin to be punished and destroyed in the human nature in which it had been committed.

Condemned sin.—Condemnation is here taken for the punishment of sin. God punished sin in Christ's human nature. This is the method that God took to justify sinners. It was God who, by his determinate counsel and foreknowledge, Acts, ii. 23, punished sin by inflicting those sufferings on Christ of which men were only the instruments. Sin had corrupted the flesh of man, and in that very flesh it was condemned. The guilt and punishment of sin are eminently seen in the death of Christ. Nowhere else is sin so completely judged and con-

demned. Not even in hell are its guilt and demerit so fully manifested. What must be its demerit, if it could be atoned for by nothing but the death of the Son of God? And what can afford clearer evidence of God's determination to punish sin to the utmost extent of its demerit, than that he thus punished it even when laid on the head of his only begotten Son?

In all this we see the Father taking the place of Judge against his Son, in order to become the Father of those who were his enemies. The Father condemns the Son of his love, that he may absolve the children of wrath. If we enquire into the cause that moved God to save us by such means, what can we say but that it proceeded from his incomprehensible wisdom, his ineffable goodness, and the unfathomable depth of his mercies? For what was there in man that could bind the Creator to act in this manner, since he saw nothing in him, after his rebellion by sin, but what was hateful and offensive? And what was it but his love that passeth knowledge which induced the only begotten Son of God to take the form of a servant, to humble himself even to the death of the cross, and to submit to be despised and rejected of men? These are the things into which the Angels desire to look.

But besides the love of God, we see the wonderful display of his justice in condemning sin in his Son, rather than to allow it to go unpunished. In this assuredly the work of redemption surpasses that of creation. In creation God had made nothing that was not good, and nothing especially on which he could exercise the rigour of his justice; but here he punishes our sins to the utmost in Jesus Christ. It may be enquired, if, when God condemned sin in his Son, we are to understand this of God the Father, so as to exclude the Son, or if we can say that God the Son also condemned sin in himself. This can undoubtedly be affirmed; for in the Father and the Son there is only one will and one regard for justice; so that, as it was the will of the Father to require satisfaction for sin from the Son, it was also the will of the Son to humble himself, and to condemn sin in himself. We must, however, distinguish between Jesus Christ considered as God and as our Surety and Mediator. As God, he condemns and punishes sin; as Mediator, he is himself condemned and punished for sin.

When sin was condemned or punished in the Son of God, to suppose that he felt nothing more than bodily pain, would be to conclude that he had less confidence in God than many martyrs who have gone to death cheerfully and

without fear. The extremity of the pain he suffered, when he said in the garden, “ My soul is sorrowful even unto death,” was the sentiment of the wrath of God against sin, from which martyrs felt themselves delivered. Such was the grief which he experienced when on the cross he cried, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” What forsaking was this, unless that for a time God left him to feel the weight of his indignation against sin? This feeling is the sovereign evil of the soul, in which consists the griefs of eternal death; as, on the other hand, the sovereign good of the soul, and that in which the happiness of eternal life consists, is to enjoy gracious communion with God.

V. 4.—That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.—The original word, here translated *righteousness*, is the same as is rendered judgment or sentence, Rom. i. 32, where, and also in the verse before, it is, in some of the French versions, and in the Dutch annotations, rendered “ right.” It is properly here the right or the righteousness of the law. The right of the law is twofold, being that which belongs to it at all times, or what only belongs to it in the event of sin. The first is obedience to its precepts; the second, subjection to its penalty.

The first, or what may be called the proper right of the law, corresponds with its proper end, according to which it was ordained unto life to all who obey it. What it demands beyond its proper or first end, is the right of its penalty, as cursing all who disobey it. For it is not the first end of the law to curse men, but only what it demands since the entrance of sin. Such is the right of the law. The Gospel does not take away this right; for it does not make void the law, Rom. iii. 31, but establishes it. In those, therefore, who are saved by the Gospel, they being all sinners, both the one and the other of the rights of the law are fulfilled in Christ, who is the end or fulfilling of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, Rom. x. 4. His people having sinned, he fulfils its right as to them, in suffering the punishment of sin; namely, the curse of the law, to save them from punishment. And to introduce them into life, he accomplishes its proper or original right, according to which he that doeth those things shall live in them. For if the Gospel establishes the law, it must do so as to its first end, and it must also do so as to its end since the entrance of sin, otherwise the law would, as to those who are saved, rather be abolished than fulfilled by the Gospel. In this way Christ has fully satisfied the law, having fulfilled its right-

eousness—all that conformity to it in every respect, and under every aspect, and as to every state of those who are under it, which it demands. And as his people are in him, so the law is thus, in all its extent, fulfilled in them, which is the very circumstance in which their justification consists. For if they are one body, or one with him, as the Apostle had been showing, his righteousness is their righteousness. Such being their communion with him that they sit with him in heavenly places, Eph. ii. 6; by the same communion his righteousness is their righteousness.—2 Cor. v. 21.

The end, then, of Christ's mission was that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in his people. Here we see the ground on which believers are saved. It is in a way consistent with the law, a way in which righteousness is fulfilled in them, even the righteousness of the law. The mercy, then, which saves sinners does not interfere with justice. They who are saved by mercy have that very righteousness which the law demands. In Christ they have paid the penalty of their disobedience, and in Christ they have yielded obedience to every precept of the law. This fulfilling of the law cannot mean that righteousness which believers are enabled to perform by the Holy Spirit, in their regenerate state. For it is obvious that

this is not the righteousness of the law. The very best of all their actions and thoughts come short of the perfection which the law demands; besides, its penalty would in this way be unfulfilled. They are indeed sanctified, but their sanctification is far from being commensurate with the claims of the holy law, either as to its penalty or its precept.

Here there is solid consolation for the believer in Jesus. For divested as he is of righteousness in himself, he enjoys the blessedness of having the righteousness of God—the righteousness of his Lord and Saviour imputed to him, so that the law which had been broken is fulfilled in him in all its precepts and in its full penalty.

Who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.—This is a repetition of the last clause of the first verse, characterising those in whom the righteousness of the law is fulfilled. They are not walking according to the covenant of works, but according to that covenant of which the Lord Jesus is the spirit. All men who profess to worship God in any form walk by nature according to the flesh. As man was originally placed under the law to live by his obedience to it, so ever since it has been broken he naturally seeks justification by the works of the law. This is fully verified by the children

of Adam in all nations, who are not in Christ. All men, without exception, have the work of the law* written on their hearts, and if ignorant of the only Saviour of sinners, they attempt to satisfy their conscience by means of some religious observances or moral works. The Idolater by his sacrifices, the Mahometan by his lustrations, the Brahmin by his austerities, the Roman Catholic by his masses and penances, the Socinian by his vaunted philanthropy, the nominal Christian by his assiduous attendance at the Lord's Supper and other religious services, and all in some way or other by the merit of their works, moral or ceremonial, seek to obtain their acquittal from sin before God, and a favourable sentence at his tribunal. All of them are going about to establish their own righteousness, being ignorant of the righteousness of God. In this way Saul of Tarsus, as has been noticed, describes himself as having walked when he had "confidence in the flesh." To wait through the Spirit for the hope of righteousness by faith, is peculiar to those to whom, being in Christ Jesus,

* *The work of the law*, Rom. ii. 15. Here let us admire the accuracy with which the Scriptures are written. Speaking of the Gentiles, the Apostle does not say, who have the law written in their hearts. This is the promise of the new covenant, and peculiar to those who belong to it; but he says "the work of the law." For the import of this term, see Vol. i. p. 196, second edition.

there is no condemnation, and in whom the righteousness of the law is by him fulfilled.

V. 5.—For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

This appears to confirm the explanation that has been given of the last clause of the first verse and of the fourth, for the Apostle here distinguishes between walking after the flesh and minding the things of the flesh, and between walking after the Spirit and minding the things of the Spirit. As he had proved that union with Christ is necessary to justification, he here shows that its certain consequence is also sanctification, while they who do not possess it are still under the dominion of sin.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.—This verse connects with the one that precedes it, and states the different effects that follow from walking according to the flesh, or according to the Spirit. If a man walks according to the flesh, seeking, as has been explained, acceptance with God by his own works, moral or ceremonial, however earnest or sincere he may be in such endeavours, he will remain under the prevalence and dominion of sinful appetites. Such persons attend to the things that gratify their corrupt nature. They have no relish for spiritual things. What-

ever they may be induced to do from fear or hope of reward, with respect to a future world, they have no desire but for the things of this world; and whatever may be their profession of religion, they are supremely engrossed with earthly things. If they could obtain a continuation of them through eternity, they would gladly accept it instead of all the glories of heaven.

But they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.—They who seek acceptance with God by faith in him who is “The Lord, the Spirit,” 2 Cor. iii. 17, attend to spiritual things. Jesus Christ is the source of every blessing, and they who are in him are not only justified, on account of which there is no condemnation to them, but also walk in holiness of life. Such persons employ their thoughts and efforts about the things of God. To these they attend, and set their affections on them. None will seek those things which are above, but they who serve God in newness of spirit.

On the verse before us, Mr Adam remarks, “For they that are after the flesh (that is, according to the common interpretation, not led and governed by the Spirit in practice, ‘still under the direction of the flesh, and its sinful appetites,’ says Mr Lock), do mind the things of the flesh: (very true; but then this is only

affirming a thing of itself, or saying it twice over. And, therefore, to clear St Paul of this absurdity, we suppose, that by ‘they that are after the flesh,’ he means those who are destitute of faith, or not in Christ; and of them he affirms, that let them pretend to do what they will, they are still under the prevalence of flesh and its appetites, and cannot act from a higher principle, or a nature which they have not. And it must be observed that he is now advancing a step farther in the doctrine of faith, and besides the necessity of it in order to justification, showing its happy effects as a principle of holiness); but they that are after the Spirit; (in the Spirit’s dispensation of grace, through faith; and say that Jesus is the Lord by the Holy Ghost, by whom only they can say it, mind the things of the Spirit, now possessing and ruling them.”)

V. 6.—For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace

In the preceding verse the Apostle speaks of the dispositions and practices of believers and unbelievers; here he contrasts their opposite states and conditions. These two states of carnal and spiritual mindedness include and divide the whole world. All men belong either to the one or the other. They are either in the flesh or in the spirit, in a state of nature, or in a state of grace. *For to be carnally minded is death.*—This

is the awful state of the carnal mind—the mind of the flesh without faith in Christ, and renovation of the Spirit of God. It is death spiritual and eternal. All the works of those who are in this state are “dead works,” Heb. ix. 14. “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord,” although the Lord commanded to offer sacrifices, which therefore was in itself a good work. “She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.” All by nature being in this carnal state are “dead in trespasses and sins.” Let those who have their minds set on the things of the world consider this fearful saying, that to be carnally minded is death, and let them look to Jesus the Saviour of the guilty, through whom alone they can escape condemnation.

But to be spiritually minded is life and peace.—These are the effects of being enlightened and guided by the Spirit of God, and so having the mind turned from earthly things to the things of the Spirit. To be spiritually minded is *life*, even eternal life. This life is already enjoyed by the believer. “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life,” and with his Redeemer, he has risen to walk in this new life. It is also *peace* with God both here and hereafter. This peace is the harmony of all the faculties of the soul with God, and with his

will. It is altogether the opposite of what is declared in the following verse concerning the carnal mind as enmity against God. While there is nothing so miserable for man as war with his Creator, there is nothing so blessed as peace and communion with God. It is peace in the conscience, in opposition to doubt, for which the Church of Rome contends, as if the effect of being spiritually minded, instead of peace and confidence in God, was servile fear and distrust. That Church maintains that the man who is regenerated should doubt of his salvation, and be uncertain of God's love to him. What, then, becomes of this peace that flows from being spiritually minded—which passeth all understanding, keeping the heart and mind through Christ Jesus—this peace, which is one of the fruits of the Spirit, and a characteristic of the kingdom of God, Rom. xiv. 17. The peace here spoken of is opposed to the terrors of conscience which the unregenerate experience, and to every idea of peace they can imagine. “There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.” But again it is said, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.”

V. 7.—Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.—This is the reason why the carnal mind is punished with death. The mind of the flesh, or of man in his unconverted state, walking according to the flesh, in its best as well as in its worst character—whether seeking acceptance with God by its own services, or following altogether the course of this world, is not merely an enemy, but enmity in the understanding, will, and affections against God. Every man who has his heart set on this world hates God—1 John, ii. 15; and every one who has not been renewed in his mind by the Spirit of God has his heart set on this world. Men of this character, however, have no notion that they hate God. Nay, many of them profess to love him. But God's testimony is, that they are his enemies; and his testimony is to be taken against the united testimony of all men. This, however, does not suppose that men may not be conscious of having love to God in the character in which they view him. But such a character is not the character which God will acknowledge as his. It is a God of their own fancy. A man may love a god who is the idol of his own vain imagination, and who he supposes will save him in his sins, a god of mercy without justice. But this man abhors the just God and the Saviour, who is the God of the

Scriptures. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is."—Heb. xi. 6. He must believe that he is what he is.*

For it is not subject to the law of God.—The carnal mind is not under subjection to the law of God. Whatever it may do to obtain salvation or avoid wrath, it does it not from subjection to the law. It has a rooted aversion to the spiritual law of God. Every thing it performs springs from selfish motives, and a hope that, on account of what it does, it will be accepted; whereas the holy law of God utterly rejects all such service. So far from giving the law all it demands, the carnal mind gives it nothing. Nothing which it does constitutes obedience to the law. The law does not in any degree, or in any instance, recognise the works of the carnal mind as obedience to its requirements.

Neither indeed can be.—Not only is it a matter of fact, that the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, but such subjection is impossible. Sin cannot be in subjection to the law. This would be a contradiction in terms. For, so far as it would be subject to the law of God, it would be holy. If, then, sin is essentially, and in direct terms, contrary to holiness, the

* Of this passage Mr Tholuck gives a most extraordinary and erroneous interpretation; which the reader may see in the pamphlet referred to, p. 151.

sinful nature can never yield subjection to the holy law. Men may speculate about metaphysical possibilities ; but whatever explanation may be given of the matter, the decision of the Apostle is, that the thing is impossible.

That an unconverted man cannot be subject to the law of God, appears to many a hard saying ; but it is the uniform doctrine of the word of God. All men in their natural state, though they boast that they are free, are the slaves of sin. When Jesus, addressing the Jews who professed to believe in him, but who understood not his doctrine, said to them, “ Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,” they answered, “ We were never in bondage to any man ; how sayest thou, ye shall be made free ?” In the same manner the unconverted boast of their freedom. They affirm that their will is free ; and that as they can choose the evil, so they can choose the good. If, by this freedom, they intend that they can choose without any external force constraining or preventing them, it is true that, in this sense, they are free. But a moral agent chooses according to his inclinations or dispositions. It should always be recollected that the will is the will of the mind, and the judgment the judgment of the mind. It is the mind that judges and that wills. A fool judges foolishly ; a wicked man

judges wickedly ; a good man wills that which is good. In Scripture, it is said that God *cannot* deny himself ; that he *cannot* lie. His nature being perfectly holy, it is impossible that he *can* do what is wrong. On the other hand, the wicked and condemned spirits *cannot* choose what is holy. When the devil “ speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own ; for he is a liar, and the father of it.” Man, therefore, in his carnal state, chooses what is evil ; but he *cannot* choose what is good, not indeed because of any external obligation, for in that case he would not be criminal, but by reason of the opposition of his perverse dispositions. He is inclined to do evil, and evil he will do. “ *Can* the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” His language is, “ I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.” “ As for the word that thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee.” “ My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would have none of me.” They say “ unto God, Depart from us.” “ Depart from us ; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.” “ We will not have this man to reign over us.” Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us.”

It is thus that “ wickedness proceedeth

from the wicked." "Neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he *cannot* see the kingdom of God." "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he *cannot* enter the kingdom of God." "How *can* ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" "No man *can* come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." "Therefore said I unto you, that no man *can* come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither *can* he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "Their ear is uncircumcised, and they *cannot* hearken." "How *can* ye being evil speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." "The Spirit of truth whom the world *cannot* receive." "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye *cannot* hear my word." "No man *can* say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

According, then, to Scripture, the natural man is entirely incapable of choosing what is good, although it is his duty, and fit that it should be enjoined upon him. He is "without strength."
—Rom. v. 6. Men in this state are represented

as walking according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; as being under "the power of Satan," and "taken captive by him at his will." They are his lawful captives, because they are so voluntarily. From this slavery they cannot be freed but by means of the word of God, the sword of the Spirit, which the Lord employs; granting to those to whom it seemeth good the blessing of regeneration; "distributing his gifts, and dividing to every man severally as he will." It is God "who hath delivered us," says the Apostle, "from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." "Who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." "If the Son shall make you *free*, ye shall be *free* indeed."

When God purposes to do good to men, he fulfils to them this gracious promise, "I will give them a heart to know me." It was this preparation of heart that David prayed to God to grant to his son Solomon. At the same time he acknowledged with gratitude that his own willingness to offer to God, of which he was conscious, and that of his people, were from him. After celebrating the praises of Jehovah, David says, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so

willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. . . . O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their hearts unto thee." 1st Chron. xxix. 10-19.

There is nothing to prevent men from obeying the will of God but their own depraved dispositions, their aversion to the things of God. The natural faculties of men would be sufficient to enable them to do what he commands, if they employed them properly. If they employ them otherwise, the fault rests exclusively with themselves. And as the corruption of our nature does not deprive a man of any of his natural faculties, or of perfect liberty to act conformably to the decision of his own mind, the obligation under which he lies to act right continues in full force. From this we see, first, how justly God punishes men for their crimes, who cannot, unless inclined and enabled by his grace, liberate themselves from the slavery of sin; and, further, that the inability of men to obey God, not being natural but moral inability, cannot deprive God of the right to command obedience, under the pain of his most awful displeasure.

On this subject the distinction between natural and moral inability should always be kept in

view. Natural inability consists in a defect in the mind or body, which deprives a man of the power of knowing or doing any thing, however desirous he may be of knowing or doing it. Natural inability, then, can never render a man criminal. Moral inability consists in an aversion so great to do any thing, that the mind, though acting freely, cannot overcome it, that is, though it chooses, without any external impulse or constraint. When this aversion exists to what is good, it is inseparable from blame, and the greater this aversion is, the greater is the criminality. All men are daily accustomed to make these distinctions, and according to this rule they constantly form their opinion of the conduct of others.

It is impossible, in the nature of things, that the eternal rules of the justice of God can cease to demand of reasonable creatures perfect obedience. To say that the moral inability of man to obey the law of God destroys or weakens in the smallest degree his obligation to obey that law, is to add insult to rebellion. For what is that moral inability? It is no other than aversion to God, the depraved inclination of the carnal mind, which not only entertains and cherishes enmity against God, but which is itself that enmity. And let it not be said that the idea the Scriptures give of the natural de-

pravity of men, and of the sovereign and efficacious grace of God, reduces them to the condition of machines. Between men and machines there is this essential difference, and it is enough for us to know, that man is a voluntary agent both in the state of nature and of grace. He wills and acts according to his own dispositions, while machines have neither thought nor will. As long as a man's will is depraved and opposed to God, his conduct will be bad; he will fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and on the other hand, when God gives the sinner a new disposition, and a new spirit, his conduct will undergo a corresponding change.

Is it objected, that if a man be so entirely corrupt that he cannot do what is right, he should not be blamed for doing what is evil? To this it is sufficient to observe, that if there be any force in the objection, the more a voluntary agent is diabolically wicked, the more innocent he should be considered. A creature is not subject to blame if he is not a voluntary agent; but if he be so, and if his dispositions and his will were absolutely wicked, he would certainly be incapable of doing good, and according to the above argument he could not be blamed for doing evil. On this ground the Devil must be excused, nay, held perfectly innocent in his desperate and irreconcilable enmity against God.

A consequence so monstrous totally destroys the force of the objection whence it is deduced. But if the objection be still pressed, if any one proudly demands who hath resisted his will, why hath he made me thus? the only proper answer is that of the Apostle, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"

Some, indeed, taking a different and the most common view of this matter, deny the innate depravity of their nature, and in spite of all that the Scriptures declare on this subject, persist in maintaining that they have not an inclination to evil, and that they are under no moral incapacity to do what is right. To such persons the same reply should be made as that of our Lord to the ignorant young man who asked him what he should do to inherit eternal life. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." You cannot refuse to admit that this is your duty. You ought to love God with all your heart and soul, and strength, and in all things constantly to obey him. Have you done so? No! Then on your own principles you are justly condemned, for you say that you can do what is right, and yet you have not done it: If then you will not submit unconditionally, and without reserve, to be saved in the way which the Gospel points out, in which you learn at once your malady and the remedy of which you

stand in need, your blood will be upon your own head. "Now you say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth." The whole, then, resolves itself into this, that all is according to the good pleasure of God. "Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his fruit. Every good tree bringing forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Ye shall know them by their fruits." Every man, then, being by nature bad, must be made good before he can do good.

From the passage before us, we learn how miserable the state of man is by nature, since even the wisdom and intelligence of man in his unconverted state is enmity against God, and that he cannot submit himself to his law. We learn, too, that all willing and doing any thing good, must be from God. We should adore his compassion and mercy to us, if our natural enmity against him has not only been subdued, but that we have been reconciled to God by the death of his Son. And in proportion to the greatness of this compassion, we should place our entire confidence in him as our covenant God. For if when we were enmity against him he loved us, how much more now that we are

reconciled, and his children.—Rom. v. 10. And since there are still remains of the flesh, and enmity against God and his holy law in our minds, we ought to deny ourselves daily, and flee to him who can and will entirely deliver us from the body of this death.

V. 8.—So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

This is the result of what has been said. A man must be born again before he can even begin to serve God. How unscriptural and pernicious, then, is that system which teaches men to seek to please God by commencing a religious life, that God may be induced to co-operate with them in their further exertions. If the man who is not born again cannot please God, every act of the sinner before faith must be displeasing to God. An action may be materially good in itself; but unless it proceed from a right motive—the love of God, and be directed to a right end, his glory—it cannot be acknowledged by God. Before a man's services can be acceptable, his person must be accepted, as it is said, "The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering." "Without faith it is impossible to please God." It is by faith we are united to Christ, and so reconciled to God; and till this union and reconciliation take place, there can be no communion with him. If, then, no man who is in the flesh, that is, in his natural

or unconverted state, can please God, how dreadful is the situation of those who do not even profess to be renewed in the spirit of their mind. How many are there who discard the idea of regeneration. However specious may be the works of such persons in the eyes of men, they cannot please God; and not pleasing God, they must abide the condemnation that awaits all his enemies.

V. 9.—But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

In the preceding verses the Apostle had given a description of carnal and spiritual mindedness, Here he applies what he had said to those whom he was addressing. *Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.*—This was the state of all in the church at Rome at that time. All belonging to it were, as far as man could judge, saints, Ch. i. 7, the regenerated children of God. They were not in the corrupt state of nature, but in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, renewed by the Spirit of God. How different at that period was the church at Rome from that which now usurps its name. Not only are natural or carnal men recognised as its members, but, like the temples of heathenism, it is filled with abominations and filthiness. *If so be the Spirit of God dwell in you.*—The Apostle, in order to

confirm those to whom he wrote in the assurance of their happy condition, now calls their attention to the evidence of being in a converted state; namely, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. "Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."—1 John, iv. 13. In the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is included his gracious and continuing presence and his operation in the soul. The effects of these are illumination, sanctification, supplication, and consolation. The indwelling of the Spirit is a sure evidence of a renewed state; and believers should be careful not to grieve the Spirit, and should labour to enjoy a constant sense of his presence in their hearts.

Now, or rather, But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.—Here is a necessary reservation. If the Spirit of God did not really dwell in them, they were still in the flesh, notwithstanding all their profession and all their present appearances. And no doubt some will be found to have escaped for a time the pollutions of the world, who may afterwards show that they were never renewed in heart. Many ridicule the pretensions of those who speak of the Holy Spirit as dwelling in believers; yet if the Spirit of God dwell not in any, they are still in the flesh; that is, they are enemies to God.

The same Spirit that is called the Spirit of

God in the preceding part of the sentence, is in the latter part called the Spirit of Christ. Christ then must be God. Every Christian has the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him. When Christ takes possession of any man as his, he puts his Holy Spirit within him. Without the presence of his Spirit we can have no interest in Christ.

Jesus Christ, as Mediator, having satisfied the justice of God, the Spirit of life has been communicated to him to be poured out on all believers. On this account the sending of the Spirit in his fulness was deferred till, as Mediator, Jesus Christ had entered into heaven, to appear in the heavenly sanctuary with his blood, when the Father, solemnly accepting his offering, granted to him, as a testimony of that acceptance, to communicate the Holy Spirit to his people. Accordingly the Apostle says, that God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." He says, "spiritual blessings," because he speaks of the graces of the Holy Spirit. He says, "in Christ," because it is on account of the merit of the Mediator, and in his communion, that these graces are conferred. He says, "in heavenly places," because, as anciently the High Priest entered into the sanctuary with the blood of the sacrifice, that God having accepted that blood he might bless the people; in like manner,

Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, entered the heavenly sanctuary, that God having accepted his sacrifice, he might, as Mediator, be made the source of all grace to communicate it to his church.

V. 10.—And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin ; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

We have here a remarkable example of the accuracy with which the Scriptures are written. The Apostle does not say that the body is *dead*, and the Spirit alive or *living* ; or that the body is *death*, and the Spirit *life*. Either of these would have formed the natural contrast ; but neither would have conveyed the important sense of this passage, but, on the contrary, a false one. He says the body is *dead*, and the Spirit is *life*. The body is not death, that is, in a state of everlasting death. It is only dead, and shall live again. On the other hand, the Spirit is not merely said to be alive, which it might be, although under sentence of death, afterwards to be inflicted ; but it is *life*, in the sense of that declaration of our Lord, “ He that hath the Son hath life ; ” and “ He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life.” The body is dead on account of sin ; that is, the body is not only mortal, but may, in some sense, be said to be already dead, being under sentence of death, and in constant

progress towards dissolution. It remains with its infirmities unaltered. There is no difference between the body of the wicked man and the body of the believer. Every one may perceive a difference in their minds. The believer's body is dead because of sin, according to the original sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." But the Spirit is life—possessed of life eternal, in virtue of its union with him who is "the life."

The Apostle having affirmed in the second verse, that the law of the Spirit of life had made him free from the law of sin and death; and having declared in the third and fourth verses, in what manner we are freed from the law as the law of *sin*, it remained for him to show how we are freed from it as the law of *death*, which accordingly he does in this and the following verse. In the seventh and eighth verses, he had confirmed his declaration in the sixth, that to be carnally minded is death; he now illustrates his other declaration, that to be spiritually minded is life. He admits, however, that, notwithstanding the believer's communion with Christ, the body is dead; but to this he opposes the double consolation of the eternal life of our souls on account of the righteousness of Christ, and, in the next verse, the resurrection of our bodies by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

There is in this verse a triple opposition : first, of the body to the soul ; second, of a state of death to a state of life ; third, of sin to righteousness. It was necessary to remove the objection that is replied to in this verse, especially as the Apostle had said, that to those who are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation. Whence then, it might be asked, does it happen that we who are in him are still subject to death like other men ? He answers, If Jesus Christ be in you the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. In what follows, he abundantly shows that the temporary sufferings of believers, among which is the death of the body, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them ; and that in the mean-time all things that happen to them are working for their good. The term body is, in this verse, to be taken, as is evident from the following verse, in its literal signification ; and by the spirit, as opposed to it, is meant the soul, as in the 16th verse, where our spirits are distinguished from the Holy Spirit.

And, or rather, But if Christ be in you.—The Apostle had just affirmed, that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his ; but if he be *in us*, then the consequences here stated follow. Jesus Christ, in regard to his Divine

nature, is everywhere present ; but he is in a special manner in believers, as it is said, Eph. iii. 17, “ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” This indwelling of Christ signifies two things ; namely, the close and intimate communion we have with him, and his operation in us. As the Scriptures declare that Jesus Christ is in us, they also assure us that we are in him.—Ch. viii. 1 ; 1 Cor. i. 30 ; 2 Cor. v. 17 ; Col. i. 27. And thus we dwell in him and he in us.—John, vi. 56. This communion with Jesus Christ is necessary, in order that he should work in us. For he works only in his members ; so that, for this purpose, we must be first incorporated in him.—John, xv. 4. By this communion we participate in his grace ; because, as we are in him and he in us, we have all things with him in common. Our sins are reputed his sins, and his righteousness ours. He that persecutes his people persecutes him ; he that touches them touches the apple of his eye. And as in this life they partake of his grace, so in the life to come they shall participate in his glory.

The body is dead.—Notwithstanding our communion with Jesus Christ our bodies are dead. The Scriptures speak of three kinds of death ; one is in this life, the other at the end of this life, and the third after this life. The first is

spiritual death, Luke, ix. 60 ; Eph. ii. 1. Natural death takes place at the separation of the soul from the body, and after this life is the second or eternal death, which consists in everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. It is only of the second or natural death that the Apostle here speaks, for believers are delivered from the first and the third. He says the body is dead, to show that it is the lowest part of man that for a time is affected by death, as it is said, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was."—Eccl. xii. 7.

Because of sin.—First for the sin of Adam, "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin," and it was said by God, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Secondly, for the remainder of sin that is in our members. But why do believers die, since death is the punishment of sin, and God hath remitted to them this punishment? for the Apostle shows, chap. iv., that their sins are not imputed to them; in chapter vi., that they are dead to sin; and in the beginning of the chapter before us, that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. Jesus Christ, too, has made complete satisfaction for the punishment of their sins, sin having been condemned in his flesh. The Apostle also says, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being

made a curse for us ;” but death is among the curses of the law ; we must then distinguish between death considered in itself, and in its nature, and as having changed its nature in Jesus Christ our Lord. In itself death is the punishment of sin and a curse of the law, and it is such to the wicked and unbelievers. But by the work of Christ it is to his people no more the punishment of sin but the destruction of sin. It is no more a curse of the law, but is changed into a blessing, and has become the passage to eternal life, and the entrance into the heavenly paradise.

That believers die, does not, then, in the least degree, derogate from the complete satisfaction of Jesus Christ, and the perfect redemption from the curse of the law ; since their death is not a punishment of sin, in vindictive justice, as all the afflictions of this life as well as death are to the enemies of God. But by Jesus Christ in respect to those whom the Father hath given to him, and who are united to him, God acts in mercy, and afflictions and death are only chastisements from his fatherly hand ; trials of their faith, and salutary discipline, as the Apostle in this chapter declares, that all things work together for their good ; and in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, iii. 22, that all things are theirs, whether life or death. Without then making

void the first sentence awarding death, God has formed another covenant, which is that of grace, according to which those who partake in the death of Christ, by which that sentence was, as to them, carried into full execution, must indeed die; but death to them is swallowed up in victory; and instead of the day of their death being a day of punishment of sin, it is a day of triumph over death. For as to their bodies, they derive from the grave what is contrary to its natural character. They are sown in corruption, but it is to rise in incorruption. They are sown in weakness, but it is to rise in power. They are sown in dishonour, but it is to rise in glory. They are sown natural bodies, but it is to rise spiritual bodies. And as to the soul, death indeed separates it from the body, but transmits it to God. It is evident, then, that such a death is not the punishment of sin, or the curse of the law. Its end and use to the regenerate is to extirpate and destroy the sin that remains in them; they must die in order to be purified. The inherence of that vicious quality has so corrupted our bodies, that, like the leprous house, they must be taken down and renewed, to be purified from sin. As the grain is not quickened except it die, in the same way our bodies die and perish in the dust to be revived and reconstructed in holiness.

If it be said, that God without obliging his people to die could have changed them in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, as he will do with respect to those who shall survive to the day of his coming, it should be considered that the wisdom of God hath judged it proper that the believer should be subjected to the death of the body. This tends to lead him to hold sin in abhorrence whence death proceeds. He also sees in death the goodness and the severity of God, and by it and his other afflictions he may judge what will be the end of those whom God punishes in his anger. He may observe in it the goodness of God to him in depriving it of its sting, and ordering it so that he may more fully taste the sweetness of a permanent and immortal life. Such discipline, too, tends to humble the believer, by which also his graces, given to him by God, are increased, and the power of the Lord made manifest in his weakness. Finally, believers die, that in their death they may be conformed to Jesus Christ; for if he died, shall they, who are his members, be exempt from this lot? and if he must in that way enter into his glory, shall they, who are his members, enter by another way? And this assuredly is a great consolation, that in dying we follow Jesus Christ, our head, who hath gone before us.

The eye of nature, which loves its preserva-

tion, regards death with fear, in which it sees its destruction. The eye of the flesh, which is enmity against God, regards it with still greater dread, perceiving in it the summons to stand before the tribunal of God. But the believer, by the eye of faith, discovers in death what dissipates the fears of nature, and repels the despair of the flesh. To nature which apprehends its destruction, faith opposes the weakness of death, which cannot prevent the resurrection; and to the condemnation which the flesh apprehends, opposes that life which it discovers under the mask of death. It sees, that though its appearance be terrific, yet in Christ it has lost its sting. It is like the phantom walking on the sea which approached to the terrified disciples, but it was Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour. If unknown evils be apprehended that may happen in death, the believer remembers that the very hairs of his head are all numbered. Jesus who is with him he knows will not abandon him. He will not permit him to be tempted above what he is able to bear, for "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

But the Spirit is life.—To the fact that the body is *dead*, the Apostle here opposes, as a

ground of comfort, the consideration that our souls are *life*. The life here spoken of is the life of God in the soul ; it is the new and eternal life which his Spirit communicates in regeneration. The souls of believers are possessed of this spiritual life, of which the Scriptures inform us when they say that God hath “ quickened us together with Christ.” “ Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood *hath* eternal life.” It is life and eternal life already possessed, and the commencement of that glorious life which shall be enjoyed in heaven. It is the blessing which the Lord commands, “ even life for evermore.” This life, which, being borne down by so many encumbrances here, is still feeble and but imperfectly enjoyed, shall, in the world to come, flourish in full vigour and without any abatement. It is the life of our Lord and Saviour, subsisting in him and derived from him. In him his people shall rise, and live, and live for ever. He himself hath said, “ I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.”

Because of righteousness.—Here a great difficulty is removed ; for it may be said, if our bodies are dead because of sin, how is it that our souls are life, since they are stained with sin,

and that it is on account of their sinfulness that our bodies are infected with the same malady? The Apostle, in answer, brings into view the righteousness of him who is in us, and shows that it is on account of his righteousness that our souls are life. And this necessarily follows; for if we have such communion with our Lord and Saviour, that we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones, that we are his members, and if he and we are one, his righteousness must be ours; for where there is one body, there is one righteousness. On the other hand, through the same union our sins have been transferred to him, as is said by the Prophet Isaiah, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." And the Apostle Peter says, that he "bore our sins in his own body on the tree;" he bore their punishment. "He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." An exchange, then, of sin and righteousness has taken place. He has been made sin by imputation, and we also by imputation are made righteousness. Jesus Christ, as being the Surety of the new covenant, has appeared before God for us, and consequently his righteousness is ours.

In the verse before us we have an undeniable proof of the imputation to us of righteousness, for otherwise it would be a manifest contradic-

tion to say that we die on account of our sins, and that we have life on account of our righteousness; for what is sin but the opposite of righteousness? Whoever, then, dies on account of the sin that is in him, cannot obtain life by his own righteousness. Now, all men die on account of sin, as the Apostle here teaches; then no man can have life by his own righteousness.

V. 11.—But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

The Apostle here obviates a difficulty which might present itself from what he had said in the preceding verse, of the bodies of believers being dead though their souls have life. He now assures them that if the Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in them, God will also raise up their bodies, though at present mortal. Thus he sets before them, first the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and next their own resurrection, as being his members; for he deduces their resurrection from his resurrection. Their Head has conquered death and the grave, and with him they shall overcome. Their freedom, then, from death, he rests on the same foundation on which he had already shown that their freedom from sin was secured—on Jesus Christ, the Surety of God's gracious covenant. From the power of sin they have been freed, it

being "condemned" in him; from the power of death they are released by his resurrection. On Jesus Christ, then, the sure foundation, is the whole of our salvation built. In him God is well pleased. Through him the Holy Spirit comes. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the "All in All."

Quicken your mortal bodies.—From this it appears that as to their substance the bodies of believers will, in their resurrection, be the same as those that died. "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."—Job, xix. 26. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."—Isa. xxvi. 19. The soul of each man will be reunited to his own body in which he has done good or evil. For as the body is the organ of the soul in this world, so it must participate in the felicity or punishment that shall follow, either as the whole man has remained under the law or has been received into the covenant of grace. But as to the qualities of the bodies of believers, these will be different from what they were here, as the Apostle teaches, 1 Cor. xv. 50. For as in this world they have borne the image of the first man, who was of the earth, earthy; so in the

resurrection, when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, they shall bear the image of the second man, which is heavenly, the bodies of their humiliation being fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Son of God, Phil. iii. 21. What, then, will be the condition of the soul in proportion to such a body? “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

Mr Stuart explains the quickening of our mortal bodies, as signifying—“Will make them active instruments.” But we do not see any alteration made in this world on the bodies of believers. They are, indeed, made active instruments, but this is not by any change on their bodies, but in the mind which governs them. Besides, any change that in this respect might be supposed to take place on the members of the body, would take place at the renewing of the mind. But the change here spoken of looks forward to something future, which has not yet taken place. Dr Macknight paraphrases the words thus, ‘*Will make even your dead bodies, your animal passions, together with the members of your mortal bodies alive, that is, subservient to the spiritual life.*’ But animal passions, under the figure of *dead bodies*, must mean the animal passions as they are sinful, and sin is

never turned into holiness. The flesh is not subject to the law of God, and never will be.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who communicates life to those who are habitations of God through him,⁹ is here set before believers as a pledge that their bodies shall not remain under the power of death. This indwelling, which renders their resurrection certain, imports his love, his government, and his care to adorn and to beautify the temple in which he resides; and the end of it is to confer everlasting life, everlasting purity, and everlasting communion. There is too much majesty and glory belonging to the blessed Spirit to allow those bodies, in which he dwelt as his temple, to lie for ever in ruins in the dust. And God, who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, will, in virtue of that blood, which purchased not only the redemption of the soul, but also of the body, v. 23, raise up the bodies of his people. Here the power and efficacy of the three glorious persons of the Godhead are brought into view as securing the complete re-establishment of the bodies of believers, which, though at present mortal, shall hereafter partake in all the glories and blessedness of eternal life.

This concurrence of the power of the Godhead in the plan of redemption, is established in

a multitude of passages of the Holy Scriptures. In this economy the Father occupies the place of the founder of the church, the sovereign of the world, the protector and avenger of his laws, and the first director of the work of our salvation. The Son has taken the part of mediator between God and man, to do every thing necessary for our redemption. And the Holy Spirit has assumed that of the Comforter and sanctifier of the church. The first thing prepared for our salvation is what the Father has done, namely, in the plan which he has formed, in the appointment of the sacrifice, in the transfer of our sins to him who has suffered, and, in respect to the satisfaction he has received. The second thing is, what the Son has acquired and merited in coming into the world, in dying, and rising again. The third thing is, that the Holy Spirit has made actual application of the whole, producing in us faith and sanctification, diffusing in our hearts the sentiment of our peace with God on our justification, causing us to persevere to the end, and raising us up again, as he will do, at the last day. In this divine economy the Son has taken his mission from the Father to come into the world. On this account he so often refers his first advent to his being sent by the Father to take on himself the office of the Prophet, the Priest, and the King of his Church.

To this inequality of office such passages as the following ought to be referred:—"My Father is greater than I," John, xiv. 28; and that in 1 Cor. xv. 28, where it is said, "Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him;" thus terminating his mediatorial office in delivering up the kingdom by an act of humiliation, in the same way as he had entered upon it. For in neither of these texts is any personal inequality spoken of between the Father and the Son; but of an inequality of office, according to which the Father is greater than the Son, and the Son inferior to the Father.

The resurrection of Christ, in the passage before us, is ascribed to the Father; but in other places this is also ascribed to the Son himself. The Father, and the Son, then, must be one God. It is only those in whom the Spirit of God that raised Jesus from the dead dwells, who shall have their mortal bodies quickened by that Spirit, so as to rise again in glory. Christ, indeed, will also raise his enemies, but his own people will be made alive,—which is never said of the wicked—to live with him in glory for ever.

V. 12.—Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

This is a consequence drawn from what the Apostle had said with reference to the state of

enmity against God, and of death of those who are in the flesh ; and likewise from what he had been showing to be the great privilege of believers, as being not in the flesh but in the Spirit ; as having the Spirit of God dwelling in them ; and not only giving life to their souls, but securing the future quickening and the raising of their bodies. From all this he infers their obligation to live a holy life in walking according to the Spirit in the character which he had shown belonged to them. They were not then debtors to the flesh, the state in which they were by nature, which is a state of corruption, guilt, and weakness, to live after the flesh, either to expect life from its best efforts, or to obey it in the lusts thereof. The ways of the flesh promise happiness, but misery is their reward. On the contrary, it is implied that they were debtors to God, to whom they were under so great obligations as being redeemed from the law of sin and death, to serve and obey him in walking according to the Spirit in that new and divine nature which he had graciously imparted to them.

V. 13.—For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

For if ye live after the flesh.—If ye live agreeably to your carnal nature, without Christ and faith in him, and according to the corrupt principles that belong to man in the state in which

he is born, *ye shall die*. Ye shall suffer all the misery that throughout eternity is the portion of the wicked, which is called death, as death is the greatest evil in this world. This denounces the wrath of God against all who do not live to God, and seek salvation in the way he has appointed, however harmless, and even useful they may be in society. At the same time, it proves that nothing that can be done by man in a state of nature, in his best efforts and highest attainments, will lead to God and to life. The Apostle thus repeats what he had affirmed in the sixth verse, that to be carnally minded is death.

But if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body.—The deeds of the body are the works which corrupt nature produces. The believer does not walk according to them or indulge these, but mortifies them or puts them to death. Those to whom the Apostle wrote had mortified the deeds of the body, yet they are here called to a further mortification of them, which imports that this is both a gradual work, and to be continued and persevered in while we are in the world. This shows that the sanctification of the believer is progressive.

Some persons have objected to the doctrine of progressive sanctification, and have conceived that it is a very great error. They hold that there is no more progress in sanctification than

there is in justification, and that both are complete at once on believing the truth. There is just as much truth in this as serves to make the error plausible. It is quite true that there is a sense in which believers are perfectly sanctified from the moment they believe. That sanctification, however, is not in themselves; it is in Christ, as much as their justification. The moment they believe they are justified in Christ, and perfectly righteous, and the moment they believe, they are sanctified in him and are perfectly holy. Viewed in Christ, they are "complete." But there is a personal sanctification, which commences with the new birth on believing the truth, and which is not perfected till death. Many passages of Scripture import this doctrine. The following prayer of the Apostle is explicit and decisive:—"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." 1 Thess. v. 23. The Apostle Peter begins his second Epistle by praying that grace might be multiplied to those to whom he wrote, and concludes it by enjoining on them to *grow in grace*. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Believers have sanctification *through the truth*. John, xvii. 17. It must then be in proportion as the truth is understood and believed. It is also through faith in Christ, Acts, xxvi. 18. If

so, according to the degree of faith will be the degree of sanctification. But all Christians are not equal in faith, neither then are they equal in sanctification; and as a Christian advances in faith, he advances in sanctification. If he may say, Lord increase my faith, he may likewise say, Lord increase my sanctification. In Christ Jesus there are little children, young men, and fathers. 1 John, ii. 12.

Through the Spirit.—It is through the power of the Holy Spirit, who testifies of Christ and his salvation, and according to the new nature which he communicates, that the believer mortifies his sinful propensities. It is not then of himself he is able to do this. No man overcomes the corruptions of his heart but by the influence of the Spirit of God. Though it is the Spirit of God who enables us to mortify the deeds of the body, yet it is also said that we do it. We do this through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in men according to the constitution that God has given them. The same work is, in one point of view, the work of God, and in another the work of man.

Ye shall live.—Here eternal life is promised to all who, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body. The promises of the Gospel are not made to the work, but to the worker; and to the worker, not for his work, but *according*

to his work, for the sake of Christ's work. The promise, then, of life is not made to the work of mortification, but to him that mortifies his flesh; and that not for his mortification, but because he is in Christ, of which this mortification is the evidence. That they who mortify the flesh shall live, is quite consistent with the truth, that eternal life is the free gift of God; and in the giving of it there is no respect to the merit of the receiver. This describes the character of all who shall receive eternal life; and it is of great importance. It takes away all ground of hope from those who profess to know God, and in works deny him.

V. 14.—For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Here is a proof of what had just been said: namely, that if, through the Spirit, those whom the Apostle addressed mortified the deeds of the body, they should live; for all who do so are led by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads those in whom he dwells to the mortification of sin. He takes of the glory of the person of Jesus, as God manifest in the flesh, and of his office, as the one Mediator between God and man, and discovers it to his people. Convincing them of their sinful condition, and of Christ's righteousness, he leads them to renounce every thing of their own, in the hope of acceptance with God.

He teaches them as the Spirit of truth, shines upon his own word, strives with them by it externally, and internally by his grace conducts, guides, and brings them forward in the way of duty, and, as the promised Comforter, fills them with divine consolation. Thus he leads them to Christ, to prayer as the Spirit of grace and of supplications, to holiness, and to happiness. This shows us the cause why the children of God, notwithstanding their remaining ignorance and depravity, and the many temptations with which they are assailed, hold on in the way of the Lord. “Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.” “Thy Spirit is good, lead me to the land of uprightness.” This leading is enjoyed by none but Christians; for “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

The sons of God.—God has appointed that, in two ways, his people should be his sons; one is by adoption, the other is by birth. The Apostle here, and in the following verses, exhibits four proofs of our being the sons of God. The first is our being led by the Spirit of God; the second is the Spirit of adoption which we receive, crying, Abba, Father; the third is the witness of the Spirit with our spirits; the fourth is our sufferings in the communion of Jesus

Christ; to which is joined the fruit of this state of being the sons of God, the Apostle saying, that if children we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

By this title of the sons of God, the doubts and servile fears of the Church of Rome are condemned, which teaches that believers should be uncertain respecting their salvation and the love of God. But ought they to doubt of the love of their heavenly Father? This error the Apostle combats in the following verse. This title, then, is full of consolation; for we thus approach to God as our Father, and have access with boldness to his throne of grace. Even in our afflictions we lift up our eyes to him, not as a severe master, but a gracious Father; and we know that our afflictions are only chastisements and trials from his paternal love, which he employs for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.

V. 15.—For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

It is of the greatest importance to believers to be assured that they are indeed the sons of God. Without a measure of this assurance, they cannot serve him with love in newness of spirit. The Apostle, therefore, enlarges here

on his preceding declaration, that as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. In confirmation of this, he reminds those whom he addresses, that they had not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, leading them to call on God as their Father.

The word spirit occurs twice in this verse. In this chapter, as has already been remarked, it is used in various senses. Sometimes it is taken in Scripture in a bad sense, as when it is said, Isaiah, xix. 14, "The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof;" and again, Isaiah, xxix. 10, "For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep." In the verse before us it is taken both in a bad sense, signifying a sinful affection of the mind, namely, the spirit of bondage, and in a good sense, signifying by the spirit of adoption, the Holy Spirit; as in the preceding verse, and likewise in the verse that follows, where it is said, "the Spirit itself," and also in the parallel passage, Gal. iv. 3, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

The spirit of bondage.—All who are not dead to the law, and know of no way to escape divine wrath but by obeying it, must be under the spirit of bondage; serving in the oldness of the

letter, and not in newness of spirit. For so far from fulfilling the demands of the law, they fail in satisfying themselves. A spirit of bondage then must belong to all who are not acquainted with God's method of salvation.

The spirit of bondage is the effect of the law, which manifesting his sinfulness to man, and the fearful anger of God, makes him tremble under the apprehension of its curse. The Apostle, comparing the two covenants, namely, the law from Mount Sinai, and the Gospel from Mount Zion, says, that the one from Mount Sinai gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar, but Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of all believers; because, like Isaac, they are the children of the promise. Now, this promise is the promise of grace. For as man has sinned, the law which demands of him perfect obedience, and pronounces a curse against him who continues not in all things which it commands, must condemn him, and reduce him to the condition of a slave, who after he transgresses expects nothing but punishment. On this account, when God promulgated his law amidst thunderings and lightnings, the mountain trembled. This showed that man could only tremble under the law, as he could not be justified by it; but that he must have recourse to another covenant, namely, the covenant of

grace, in which God manifests his mercy and his love, in which he presents to sinners the remission of their sins, and the righteousness of his well-beloved son ; for in this covenant he justifies the ungodly, Rom. iv. 5, and imputes to them righteousness without works. He makes those his children who were formerly children of wrath, and gives the Spirit of adoption to those who had before a spirit of bondage and servile fear.

Again to fear.—Paul uses the word *again* to indicate a double opposition, the one of the state of a man before and after his regeneration, the other of the New Testament and the Old. Before regeneration, a man sensible that he is a sinner, cannot but be apprehensive of punishment, not having embraced the way of the remission of his sins by Jesus Christ. Not that it should be supposed that this is the case with all unregenerate men, or at all times, but only when their consciences are awakened, summoning them before the judgment-seat of God. For the greater part of them live in profane security, having their consciences hardened without any apprehension of their ruined state. God, however, often impresses that fear on those whom he purposes to lead to the knowledge of his salvation. But when they are born of the Spirit, this servile fear gives place to a filial fear

which proceeds from love, as the proper effect of the Spirit of adoption. “ Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment ; because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love : but perfect love casteth out fear ; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

The other opposition which the Apostle marks in saying *again*, is between the churches of the Old and of the New Testament. Not that the believers under the Old Testament had not the Spirit of adoption ; for they were sanctified by the Spirit of God, and had fellowship with Jesus Christ the promised Messiah, being justified by faith, as is declared in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, and calling God their Father. Isa. lxiii. 16. But the church under the Old Testament, being still in its infancy, did not enjoy the Spirit of adoption in that abundance, nor had it so clear a revelation of grace as that of the New. Believers only saw Christ at a distance under shadows and figures, while the law and its curses were strongly exhibited. Thus, in comparison of the New Testament and its freedom, they were in a measure held under bondage.—Gal. iv. 1, 3. The believers at Rome, then, whether originally Jews or Gentiles, had not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.

They were not come unto the Mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, or to the law, the work of which is written in the hearts of all men, which speaks nothing of mercy, but they were come to Mount Zion. It was the design of the sending of Christ that believers in him might serve God without fear.—Luke, i. 74. Jesus Christ came that through death he might destroy death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil, and to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.—Heb. ii. 14. All the movements that the spirit of bondage excites in a man are only those of a slave; selfish and mercenary motives of desire, hope of what will give them happiness, and fear of evil, but no movement of love either for God or holiness, or of hatred of sin.

♦ The passage before us, and many others, as that of 2 Tim. i. 7—“ God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,” teaches us that servile fear ought to be banished from the minds of believers; and that they receive such support as to deliver them from the fear of the wrath of God and future punishment, and that in nothing should they be terrified by their adversaries. For if fear of man, or of any evil from the world, deter them from doing their duty to God, it arises

from the remains of carnal and unmortified fear. But nothing is more unworthy of the Gospel, or more contrary to its spirit, which communicates support, joy, peace, and consolation in every situation in which the believer can be placed. There is, indeed, as we learn from other parts of Scripture, a reverential fear of God, impressed by a sense of his majesty, which his children should at all times cherish, which is the beginning of wisdom; but this fear is connected with the consolations of the Holy Spirit. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." There is also a salutary fear which ought always to be maintained in the hearts of Christians, from the consideration of their weakness, their propensity to evil, and the danger from their spiritual enemies, with whom they are surrounded. On this account they are commanded to work out their salvation "with fear and trembling." The Apostle Peter enjoins on those whom he addressed as elect unto obedience, through the foreknowledge of God, as loving Jesus Christ, and as rejoicing in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory, to pass the time of their sojourning here in fear, because they had been redeemed with the precious

blood of Christ. This consideration shows how horrible and dangerous is the nature of sin, which works in our members. This fear implanted in the hearts of the children of God, tends to their preservation in the midst of dangers, as that instinctive fear, which exists in all men, operates to the preservation of natural life. But this fear is consistent with the fullest confidence in God, with love, and joyful hope of eternal glory.

But ye have received the Spirit of adoption.—The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of adoption, either as the cause by which God makes us his children, or as the earnest and seal of our adoption. Contrary to the spirit of bondage, the Spirit of adoption produces in the heart a sense of reconciliation with God, love to him, a regard to holiness, hatred of sin, and peace of conscience through the knowledge of the love of God in Jesus Christ. It begets a desire to glorify God here on earth, and to enjoy the glory of heaven hereafter. Formerly, in their unregenerate state, those to whom Paul wrote had the spirit of slaves, now they had the spirit of sons.

Adoption is not a work of grace in us, but an act of God's grace without us. According to the original word, it signifies putting among children. It is taking those who were by nature children of wrath from the family of Satan,

to which they originally belonged, into the family of God. Adoption is before regeneration. Men are regenerated because they are adopted. Adoption gives the *name* of Sons, and a *title* to the inheritance; regeneration gives the *nature* of Sons, and a *meetness* for the inheritance. Adoption and regeneration are both declared in John i. 12, 13. By communion with Jesus Christ, being joined with him, we are one body, and we enter into the communion of his righteousness, and of his title as the Son of God, so that as we are righteous in him, we are also in him as his members the sons of God, who, in the moment that the Holy Spirit unites us to Jesus Christ, receives us as his children, and forms in us his image. He enlightens our understanding, sanctifies our will, purifies our affections; and by the communication of these qualities, which have a relation to his divine nature, he begets us in his image and likeness, which is the new man of which the Apostle speaks, Eph. iv. 23, 24; Col. iii. 10; and, as the Apostle Peter, in his second Epistle, declares, we are partakers of his divine nature. All this shows us how great is the benefit which we obtain when we receive the Spirit of adoption and communion with the Son of God. We are thus made children of God, the sons of the

Father of lights—a title permanent, and a nature divine and immortal.

Our adoption reminds us of our original state as children of wrath and rebellion, and strangers to the covenant of God. It presents to us the honour to which God has called us, in becoming our Father and making us his children, including so many advantages, rights, and privileges, and at the same time imposing on us so many duties. These may be comprised under four heads. The first regards the privilege and glory of having God for our Father, and being his children. The second includes the rights which this adoption confers, as of free access to God, the knowledge of his ways, and the assurance of his protection. The third implies the love of God for us, his jealousy for our interest, and his care to defend us. The fourth, all the duties which the title or relation of children engages us to perform towards our Father and our God.

The term adoption is borrowed from the ancient custom prevalent among the Romans, of a man who had no children of his own adopting into his family the child of another. The father and the adopted child appeared before the Prætor, when the adopting father said to the child, *Wilt thou be my son?* and the child answered, *I*

will. The allusion to this custom reminds believers that they are not the children of God otherwise than by his free and voluntary election; and that thus they are under far more powerful obligations to serve him than their own children to obey them, since it is entirely by his love and free good pleasure that they have been elevated to this dignity. We should also remark the difference between the adoption of man and the adoption of God. In choosing a son by adoption, the adopting party has regard to certain real or supposed qualities which appear meritorious or agreeable. But God, in adopting his people, himself produces the qualities in them that are pleasing to him. Man can impart his goods, and give his name to those whom he adopts, but he cannot change their descent, nor transfer them into his own image. But God renders those whom he adopts not only partakers of his name and of his blessings, but of his nature itself, changing and transforming them into his own blessed resemblance.

Abba, Father.—The interpretation which is generally given of this expression is, that Paul employs these two words, Syriac and Greek, the one taken from the language that was used by the Jews, the other from that of the Gentiles, to show that there is no longer any distinction

between the Jew and the Greek, and that all believers, in every nation, may address God as their Father in their own language. It would rather appear that the Apostlè alludes to the fact, that among the Jews slaves were not allowed to call a free man *Abba*. "I cannot help remarking" (says Claude in his essay on the composition of a sermon) "the ignorance of Messieurs of Port Royal, who have translated this passage, *My Father*, instead of *Abba, Father*, under pretence that the Syriac word *Abba* signifies *Father*. They did not know that St Paul alluded to a law among the Jews, which forbade slaves to call a free man *Abba*, or a free woman *Imma*. The Apostle meant that we were no more slaves, but freed by Jesus Christ, and consequently that we might call God *Abba*, or we may call the Church *Imma*. In translating the passage, then, the word *Abba*, although it be a Syriac word, and unknown in our tongue, must always be preserved, for in this term consists the force of the Apostle's reasoning."

Whereby we cry.—The Spirit of adoption, which enables those who receive it to address God as their Father, gives filial dispositions and filial confidence. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying *Abba, Father*."—Gal. iv. 6.

It is by the Spirit of God that we cry unto him, according to what is said afterwards, that the Spirit "helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." This teaches us that it is not our own disposition that excites us to prayer, but the Spirit of God. Accordingly, we are commanded to pray, "always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," Eph. vi. 18, and to build up "ourselves in our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost," Jude, 20. He is called "the Spirit of grace and of supplications," Zech. xii. 10, to teach us that prayer being his work, and not an effort of our own strength, we are to ask of God his Spirit to enable us to pray. This is the source of our own consolation, that since our prayers are effects of his own Spirit within us, they are pleasing to God. "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of adoption, also influences the prayers of believers in regard to their manner and earnestness, for by him they not only say, but *cry*, Abba, Father. They not only speak, but they *groan*, for they cry not so much with the mouth as with the heart.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

A second thing intimated by the term “we cry,” is that of the assurance and faith with which we ought to draw near to God. This expression signifies that we address God with earnestness and confidence; and that, having full reliance in God’s promises, which he hath confirmed, even with an oath, we should “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need.” We are also commanded to ask in faith, nothing wavering, for we come before the throne of God by his beloved Son. We appear as his members, in virtue of his blood, by which our sins, which would hinder our prayers from being heard, are expiated, so that God has no more remembrance of them. It is on this ground that we pray with assurance, for as we cannot pray to God as our Father, but by his Son, so we cannot cry Abba, Father, but by him; and on this account Jesus says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Thus, the consideration that we invoke God as our Father forms in believers a holy assurance, for as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Since, then, we call God our Father, as our Lord teaches us to address him, we should do it with

the assurance of his love, and of his readiness to hear us. "Thou shalt call me, My Father; and thou shalt not turn away from me," Jer. iii. 19.

The word Father also indicates the substance of our prayers, for when we can say no more to God than "O God, thou art our Father," we say all, and comprehend in this all that we can ask; as the church said in its captivity, "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us." Thus, in whatever situation the believer finds himself, the crying Abba, Father, contains an appeal sufficient to move the compassion of God. Is he in want? he says Abba, Father, as if he said, O Lord, thou feedest the ravens, provide for thy son. Is he in danger? it is as if he said, have the same care of me as a father has for his child, and let not thy compassion and thy providence abandon me. Is he on the bed of death? it is as if he said, since thou art my Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. All acceptable prayer must proceed from the Spirit of adoption, and the cry of the Spirit of adoption is no other than *Abba, Father.*

The crying Abba, Father, then, denotes the earnestness and importunity in prayer to God which is the effect of the Spirit of adoption in the hearts of the children of God, as well as that holy familiarity, to the exercise of which, as

viewing God sitting on a throne of grace, they are encouraged. They call upon God, as their Father, after the example of our Lord, who at all times addressed God in this manner during his ministry on earth, with only one exception, when, under the pressure of the sins of his people, and the withdrawing of the light of his countenance, he addressed him not as his Father but his God. After his resurrection, in like manner, he comforted his disciples with the consolatory assurance that he was about to ascend to his Father and their Father.

The different expressions which the Scriptures employ to denote the filial relation of his people to God, are calculated to aid their conceptions, and to elevate their thoughts to that great and ineffable blessing. One mode of expression serves to supply what is wanting in another. The origin of the spiritual life, and the re-establishment of the image of God in the soul, are expressed by these words—*born of God*. But that they may not forget the state of their natural alienation from God, and in order to indicate their title to the heavenly inheritance, it is said that they are *adopted* by God. And lest they should suppose that this adoption is to be attributed to any thing meritorious in them, they are informed that God has *predestinated* them unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to

himself, *according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace.* Eph. 1. 5.

V. 16.—The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

In the preceding verse it is said, Ye have received the Spirit of adoption; here it is added, The Spirit itself—the same Spirit—beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God. In this verse the Apostle shows that the sons of God may be assured of their adoption, because it is witnessed by the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit, in the heart of a believer, joins his testimony with his spirit, in confirmation of this truth, that he is a son of God. It is not merely the fruits of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers which afford this testimony, but the Spirit himself, by imparting filial confidence, inspires it in the heart. This is a testimony which is for the satisfaction of believers themselves, and cannot be submitted to the scrutiny of others.

The witnesses here spoken of are two—our own spirit, and the Spirit of God together with our spirit. We have the testimony of our own spirit when we are convinced of our sinfulness, misery, and ruin, and of our utter inability to relieve ourselves from the curse of the broken law, and are at the same time convinced of the righteousness of Christ, and of our dependence upon him for acceptance with God. We have

this testimony when we possess the consciousness of cordially acquiescing in God's plan of salvation, and of putting our trust in Christ; and when we are convinced that his blood is sufficient to cleanse us from all sin, and know that we are willing to rest on it, and when in this way, and in this way alone, we draw near to God with a true heart, sprinkled from an evil conscience in the discernment of the efficacy of his atonement, thus having the answer of a good conscience towards God. And we have the above testimony confirmed to us when we experience and observe the effects of the renovation of our souls in the work of sanctification begun and carrying on in us; and that not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have our conversation in the world.

In all this the Holy Spirit enables us to ascertain our sonship, from being conscious of and discovering in ourselves the true marks of a renewed state. But to say that this is all that is signified by the Holy Spirit's testimony, would be falling short of what is affirmed in this text; for in that case the Holy Spirit would only help the conscience to be a witness, but could not be said to be a witness himself, even another witness besides the conscience, which the text asserts. What we learn therefore from it, is, that the Holy Spirit testifies to our spirits in a

distinct and immediate testimony, and also with our spirits in a concurrent testimony. This testimony, although it cannot be explained, is nevertheless felt by the believer; it is felt by him too, in its variations, as sometimes stronger and more palpable, and at other times more feeble and less discernible. As the heart knoweth its own bitterness, in like manner a stranger does not intermeddle with the joy communicated by this secret testimony to our spirits. Its reality is indicated in Scripture by such expressions as those of the Father and the Son *coming* unto us, and making their *abode* with us—Christ *manifesting* himself to us, and his *supping* with us—his giving us the *hidden manna*, and the *white stone*, denoting the communication to us of the knowledge of an acquittal from guilt, and a *new name* written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” 1 John v. 10. This witnessing of the Spirit to the believer’s spirit communicating consolation, is never his first work, but is consequent on his other work of renovation. He first gives faith, and then seals. “After that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” He also witnesseth with our spirits, graciously shining on his own promises—making

them clear, assuring us of their truth, enabling our spirits to embrace them and to discover our interest in them. He witnesseth with our spirits in all the blessedness of his gracious fruits, diffusing through the soul love, and joy, and peace. In the first method of his witnessing with our spirits we are passive; but in the last method there is a concurrence on our part with his testimony. The testimony of the Spirit, then, is attended with the testimony of conscience, and is thus a co-witness with our spirits. It may also be observed that where this exists it brings with it a disposition and promptitude for prayer. It is the testimony of the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father. It disposes the soul to holiness.

The important truth here affirmed, that the Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirits, does not seduce believers from the written word, or expose them to delusions mistaken for internal revelations differing from the revelations of Scripture. This internal revelation must be agreeable to Scripture revelation, and is no revelation of a new article of faith unknown to Scripture. It is the revelation of a truth consonant to the word of God, and made to a believer in that blessed book for his comfort. The Spirit testifies to our sonship by giving an external revelation in the Scriptures that believers are the sons of

God. He concurs with this testimony by illuminating the mind and understanding, and persuading it of the truth of this external revelation. He concurs with this testimony by reason of his gracious, sanctifying presence in us, and is therefore called the earnest of our inheritance—and God's seal marking us as his own.

V. 17.—And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

If children, then heirs.—The Apostle having proved the adoption of believers, from the confirmation of the double and concurrent testimony of their own spirit and the Spirit of God, here infers from it the certainty of their possessing the eternal inheritance. The fact of their being heirs, he deduces from their being children. In this world, children are, in all nations, heirs of their parents' possessions. This is the law of nature. As such it not only illustrates but confirms the fact, that believers are heirs as being children. By the declaration that they are heirs, we are reminded that it is not by purchase, or by any work of their own that they obtain the inheritance to which they are predestinated, Eph. i. 11, and begotten, 1 Pet. i. 3. It is solely in virtue of their sonship. The inheritance, which is a kingdom, was provided for them from the foundation of the world, before they existed.

They are heirs according to the promise, Heb. vi. 17. Heirs of the promise, Gal. iii. 29 ; that is, of all the blessings contained in the promise of God, which he confirmed by an oath. Heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 14. Heirs of the grace of life, 1 Pet. iii. 7. Heirs according to the hope of eternal life, Titus, iii. 7. Heirs of righteousness, Heb. xi. 7. Heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised, James, ii. 5. All things are theirs, for they are Christ's, and Christ is God's, 1 Cor. iii. 23.

Heirs of God.—This expression has a manifest relation to the title of son, which is given by adoption ; on which account the Apostle here joins them together. This teaches that believers have not only a right to the good things of God ; but that they have this right by their adoption, and not by merit. As the birthright of a child gives it a title to the property of its father, and so distinguishes such property from what it may acquire by industry and labour, so also is the case with adoption. Here we see the difference between the law and the Gospel. The law treats men as mercenaries, and says, Do this and live ; the Gospel treats them as children. God is the portion of his people, and in him who is “the possessor of heaven and earth” they inherit all things. “He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God,

and he shall be my son." Rev. xxi. 7. God is all-sufficient, and this is an all-sufficient inheritance. God is eternal and unchangeable, and therefore it is an eternal inheritance—an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. They cannot be dispossessed of it—for the omnipotence of God secures against all opposition. It is reserved for them in heaven, which is the throne of God, and where he manifests his glory. It is God himself, then, who is the inheritance of his children. They possess God as their inheritance in two degrees, namely, in possessing in this life his grace, and in the life to come his glory. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee!" Ps. lxxiii. 24. And what is the inheritance in glory, if it be not God who is all in all! Here we have the life of grace—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." In the life to come, it is the enjoyment or the vision of God which, in the 17th Psalm, the prophet opposes to the inheritance of the men of this world. "Deliver me, O Lord! from men of the world, which have their portion in this life. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteous-

ness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Into this inheritance Moses, that is to say, the law, cannot introduce us ; He alone can do it who is the great Joshua—Jesus Christ, the mediator of a better covenant.

Joint heirs with Christ.—This, with the expression, heirs of God, shows the glorious nature of the inheritance of the children of God. What must this honour be when they are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ? Christ is the heir, as being the Son of God ; all things that the Father hath are his, and as Mediator, he is appointed "heir of all things." The inheritance to be possessed by them is the same in its nature as that possessed by the man Christ Jesus, and the glory that the Father gives to him, he gives to them ; John, xvii. 22. They participate of the same Spirit with him, for they that have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his. That same life that he has is conferred on them ; and because he lives, they live also. He is the fountain of their life ; Psalm, xxxvi. 9. The glory of their bodies will be of the same kind with his ; Phil. iii. 21. The love that the Father hath to him, he has given to them ; John, xvii. 23. They shall be admitted to the same glorious place with him ; John, xiv. 3. There must be a conformity between the head and the members,

but as to the degree, he who is the first-born among many brethren must in all things have the pre-eminence.

If so be that ye suffer with him.—The Apostle had shown that believers are the adopted children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. He now refers to a possible objection, namely, that notwithstanding this, they are often full of trouble and afflictions in this life, which appears not to be suitable to so near a relationship with God. This he obviates by reminding them that they suffer with Christ, and that their sufferings, which result from their bearing them with him, will issue in future glory.

The sufferings of Jesus Christ are to be regarded in two points of view. On the one hand, he suffered as the propitiation for the sins of his people. On the other hand, his sufferings are to be viewed as the road conducting him to glory. In the first of these his people have no part; he alone was the victim offered for their salvation; he alone made satisfaction to the justice of God; and he alone merited the reward for them. But in the second point of view, he is the pattern of their condition; in this they must follow his steps, and be made conformable to him. Suffering, then, is a peculiarity in the earthly lot of all the heirs of heaven; they are all called to suffer with Christ. The man pro-

fessing Christ's religion, who meets with no persecution or opposition from the world for Christ's sake, may well doubt the sincerity of his profession. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." All the heirs will come to the enjoyment of their inheritance through tribulation; most of them through much tribulation; but so far from this being an argument against the sure prospect of that inheritance, it tends to confirm it. The expression "if so be," or since, does not intimate that this is doubtful; but establishes its certainty. God causes his children to suffer in different ways, and for different reasons, for their good, as for the trial of their faith, the exercise of patience, the mortification of sin, and in order to wean them from this world and prepare them for heaven. Their sufferings are effects of his Fatherly love, and the great object of them is, that they may be conformed to Christ. Sufferings are appointed for them in order that they should not be condemned with the world, and to work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

That we may be also glorified together.—This ought to support Christians under their sufferings. What a consolation in the midst of afflictions for Christ's sake, that they shall also be glorified together with him. In his sufferings

he is set forth as their pattern, and the issue of them is their encouragement. They have the honour of suffering with him, and they shall have the honour of being glorified with him. They not only accompany him in his sufferings, but he also accompanies them in theirs; not only to sympathize with them, but to be their Surety and defender.

This community in suffering with Jesus Christ is sufficient to impart to his people the greatest consolation. What an honour is it to bear, here below, his cross, on the way to having one day a place upon his throne? Having the same enemies with him, they must have the same combats, the same victories, and the same triumphs. Since the Lord has been pleased to suffer for them before reigning over them in heaven, it is proper that they should suffer also for his sake and in the prospect of reigning with him. For suffering with him they shall overcome with him, and overcoming with him, they shall obtain the crown of life and eternal glory.

V. 18.—For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

The Apostle had been reminding those to whom he wrote, that their sufferings with Christ is the way appointed by God to bring them to glory. Here he encourages them to endure

affliction, because there is no comparison between their present sufferings and future glory. In order to encourage the Israelites to sustain the difficulties that presented themselves to their entry into Canaan, God sent them of the fruits of the land while they were still in the desert. Our blessed Lord, too, permitted some of his disciples to witness his transfiguration, when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light. This was calculated to inspire them with an ardent desire to behold that heavenly glory of which, on that occasion, they had a transient glimpse, and to render them more patient in sustaining the troubles they were about to encounter. In the same manner God acts towards his people when they suffer in this world. He sends them of the fruits of the heavenly Canaan, and giving them to enjoy a measure of that peace which passeth all understanding, he favours them with some foretastes of the glory to be revealed.

The first testimony to the truth that the Apostle is here declaring is his own. *I reckon.*— Paul was better qualified to judge in this matter than any other man, both as having endured the greatest sufferings, and as having been favoured with a sight of the glory of heaven. His sufferings, 1st Cor. iv. 9, 2d Cor. xi. 23, appear not to have been inferior to those which

exercised the patience of Job, while his being caught up into the third heaven was peculiar to himself. But, independently of this, we have here the testimony of an inspired Apostle, which must be according to truth, as being immediately communicated by the Holy Ghost. Paul makes use of a word which refers to the casting up of an account, marking accurately the calculation, by comparing one thing with another, so as to arrive at the true result.

The sufferings of the present time.—By this we are reminded that the present is a time of suffering, and that this world is to believers as a field of battle. The shortness, too, of the period of suffering is indicated. It is limited to the *present* life, respecting which man is compared to a flower which cometh forth and is cut down; to a shadow that fleeth and continueth not. His days are swifter than a post; and as the flying of the eagle that hasteth after its prey. It is in the present time exclusively that sufferings are to be endured by the children of God. But if they promise to themselves the enjoyment of ease and carnal prosperity, they miscalculate the times, and confound the present with the future. They forget the many assurances of their heavenly Father that this is not their rest. They overlook the example of those who by faith obtained a good report.

Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. David, envying for a moment the prosperity of the wicked, having entered the sanctuary and considered their end, views it in a different light. "Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by thy right hand; thou shalt guide me with thy council, and afterward receive me to glory." "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." "Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety."

Christians often reckon upon their own sufferings, while they overlook the sufferings of their Lord, to whom they must be conformed. They forget their sins, on account of which they receive chastisement that they may not be condemned with the world, and for which they must also partake of their bitter fruits. But as there is no proportion between what is finite, however great it may be, and what is infinite, so their afflictions here, even were their lives prolonged to any period, and although they had no respite, would bear no proportion to their future glory either in intensity or duration. The felicity of

that glory is sovereign, but their afflictions here are not extreme. They are always accompanied with the compassion and the consolations of God. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." The patriarch Jacob, a fugitive from his father's house, constrained to pass the night without a covering, with stones only for his pillow, enjoys a vision excelling all with which he had been before favoured. This is recorded to show that the believer, in his tribulation, often experiences more joy and peace, than in his prosperity. "Thus saith the Lord God, although I have cast them far off among the Heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come." God never permits the sufferings of his Church to be extreme.

The glory that shall be revealed.—While the sufferings of believers here are only temporary, the glory which is to be revealed is eternal. Though yet concealed, it is already in existence, its discovery only is future. Now it is veiled from us in Heaven, but ere long it shall be revealed. God is a source of ineffable light, joy, knowledge, power, and goodness. He is the sovereign good, and will communicate himself

to them that behold him, in a way that is incomprehensible.

In us.—The glory here spoken of is that to which the Apostle John refers, when he says, that we shall see the Lord as he is, and that we shall be made like him. If the rays of the sun illuminate the darkness on which they shine, what will be that light which the sun of righteousness will produce in the children of him who is the Father of lights! If the face of Moses shone, when amidst the terrors of the law he talked with God, what shall their condition be, who shall behold him not on the mountain that might be touched, and that burned with fire, but in the heaven of heavens; not amidst thunders and lightnings, but amidst the express testimonies of his favour and blessing! They shall appear in the sanctuary of the Lord, and see plainly the mysteries of the wisdom of God. They shall behold not the ark and the propitiatory, but the things in the heavens which these were made to represent. They shall see as they are seen, and be known as they are known. To the enjoyment of this glory after the persecutions and troubles of this life, the bridegroom is represented as calling his church. “Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, and the time of

the singing of birds is come. Arise my love, my fair one, and come away." As there is no proportion between finite and infinite, so no comparison can be made between the things that are seen and temporal, and the things that are unseen and eternal—between our light afflictions which are but for a moment, and that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that shall be revealed in us. Such is the consolation which the Apostle here presents to the children of God.

V. 19.—For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

V. 20.—For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.

V. 21.—Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

V. 22.—For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

In the eighteenth verse, the Apostle, for the comfort of believers, had declared that there is reserved for them a weight of glory to which their sufferings while in this world bear no comparison. To the same purpose he now refers to the existing state and future destination of the visible creation. In thus appealing to two testimonies—the one the voice of grace uttered by himself, the other the voice of universal nature, which speaks the same language—he encourages

the children of God to endure with patience their present trials.

In the verses before us, Paul, by an example of personification common in the Scriptures,* which consists in attributing human affections to things inanimate or unintelligent, calls the attention of believers to the fact, that the whole creation is in a state of suffering and degradation; and that, wearied with the vanity to which it has been reduced, it is earnestly looking for deliverance.

That interpretation which, according to Dr Macknight and Mr Stuart, applies this expectation to mankind in general, is contrary to fact. Men in general are not looking for a glorious deliverance, nor is it a fact that they will obtain this, but it is a fact that there will be new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. All that Mr Stuart alleges against this is easily obviated. Most of it applies to passages that have been injudiciously appealed to on the subject, which do not bear the conclusion. But if the earth, after being burnt up, shall be restored in glory, there is a just foundation for the figurative expectation. In order to understand these verses, it is neces-

* Ps. xcvi. 11, 12—cviii. 8—cxlviii. 3 10; Is. lv. 12; Hab. iii. 16.

sary to ascertain the import, 1st, of the term *creation*, or creature; 2d, of that of the *vanity* to which it is subjected; 3d, of that *deliverance* which it shall experience.

Creature.—The word in the original, which is translated in the 19th, 20th, and 21st verses, creature, and in the 22d, creation, can have no reference to the fallen angels, for they do not desire the manifestation of the children of God; this they dread, and looking forward to it, tremble. Neither can it refer to the elect angels, of whom it cannot be said that they shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, for to this they were never subjected. It does not apply to men, all of whom are either the children of God or of the wicked one. It cannot refer to the children of God, for they are here expressly distinguished from the creation of which the Apostle speaks; nor can it apply to wicked men, for they have no desire for the manifestation of the sons of God, whom they hate, nor will they ever be delivered from the bondage of corruption, but cast into the lake of fire. It remains, then, that the creatures destitute of intelligence, animate and inanimate, the heavens and the earth, the elements, the plants and animals, are here referred to. The Apostle means to say, that the creation, which, on account of sin, has, by the sentence of God, been subjected to vanity, shall be res-

cued from the present degradation under which it groans, and that, according to the hope held out to it, is longing to participate with the sons of God in that freedom from vanity into which it shall at length be introduced, partaking with them in their future and glorious deliverance from all evil. This indeed cannot mean that the plants and animals, as they at present exist, shall be restored; but that the condition of those things which shall belong to the new heavens and the new earth, prepared for the sons of God, shall be delivered from the curse, and restored to a perfect state, as when all things that God had created were pronounced by him very good, and when as at the beginning, before sin entered, they shall be fully adapted to the use of man.

As men earnestly desire to obtain what is good, and, on the contrary, groan and sigh in their sufferings, the like movements of joy or sorrow are here ascribed to the inanimate and unintelligent creation. In this way the prophets introduce the earth as groaning, and the animals as crying to God, in sympathy with the condition of man. "The land mourneth, for the corn is wasted; the new wine is dried up; the oil languisheth, because joy is withered away from the sons of men! How do the beasts groan! the beasts of the field cry also unto Thee!" Joel, i. 10-20. "How long shall

the land mourn and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell thereon." Jer. xii. 4. "The earth mourneth and fadeth away; the world languisheth and fadeth away; the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled, even the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth. The new wine mourneth; the wine languisheth!" Isaiah, xxiv. 4-7. To the same purpose, Is. xiii. 13—xxxiii. 9—xxxiv. 4. On the other hand, the prophet, Is. xlix. 13, predicting a better state of things, exclaims, "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted!" And in Ps. xcvi. 4-6, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all the earth, make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praises! Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof! Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together!" Thus, in the language of Scripture, the sins of men cause the creation to mourn; but the mercy of God withdrawing his rebukes causeth it to rejoice.

Vanity.—What is called vanity in the twentieth verse is in the twenty-first denominated *bondage of corruption*. When the creation was

brought into existence, God bestowed on it his blessing, and pronounced every thing that he had made very good. Viewing that admirable palace which he had provided, he appointed man to reign in it, commanding all things to be subject to him whom he had created in his own image. But when sin entered, then in a certain sense it may be said that all things had become evil, and were diverted from their proper end. The creatures by their nature were appointed for the service of the friends of their Creator, but since the entrance of sin they have become subservient to his enemies. Instead of the sun and the heavens being honoured to give light to those who obey God, and the earth to support the righteous, they now minister to rebels. The sun shines upon the wicked, the earth nourishes those who blaspheme their Maker, while its different productions, instead of being employed for the glory of God, are used as instruments of ambition, of avarice, of cruelty, of idolatry, and are often employed for the destruction of his children. All these are subjected to vanity when applied by men for vain purposes. This degradation is a grievance to the works of God, which in themselves have remained in allegiance. They groan under it, but keeping within their proper limits, hold on their course. Had it been the will of the Crea-

tor, after the entrance of sin, the creature might have refused to serve the vices or even the necessities of man. This is sometimes threatened. In reproving the idolatry of the children of Israel, God speaks as if he intended to withdraw his creatures from their service, in taking them entirely away. "Therefore will I return and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness." Hosea, ii. 9. And sometimes the creature is represented as reclaiming against the covetousness and wickedness of men. "The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." Hab. ii. 11.

The whole creation is under the bondage of the sin of man, and has suffered by it immensely. As to the inanimate creation, in many ways it shows its figurative groaning, and the vanity to which it has been reduced. The ground brings forth thistles, and all noxious weeds; in certain situations it corrupts and becomes offensive. It is subject to earthquakes, floods, and storms destructive to human life, and in various respects labours under the curse pronounced upon it. The lower animals have largely shared in the sufferings of man. They are made "to be taken and destroyed," 2 Peter, 11, 12, by man, and devour one another. They have become

subservient to his criminal pleasures, and are the victims of his oppressive cruelty. Some partake in the labours to which he was subjected, and all of them terminate their short existence by death, the effect of sin. All that belongs to the creation is fading and transitory. The heavens and the earth shall wax old like a garment. The earth once perished by water, and now it is reserved unto fire. "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up. The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved." The cause of this subjection to vanity is not from their original tendencies, or from any fault in the creatures. They have been so subjected by reason of the sin of man, and in order to his greater punishment. The houses of those who were guilty of rebellion were destroyed, Ezra, vi. 11, Dan. ii. 5, not that there was guilt in the stones or the wood, but in order to inflict the severer punishment on their criminal possessor, and also to testify the greater abhorrence of his crime in thus visiting him in the things that belong to him. In the same manner, man having been constituted the lord of the creatures, his punishment has been extended to them. This in a very striking manner demonstrates the hatred of God against

sin. For as the leprosy not only defiled the man who was infected with it, but also the house he inhabited, in the same way sin, which is the spiritual leprosy of man, has not only defiled our bodies and our souls, but by the just judgment of God, has infected all creation.

In whatever way it may be attempted to be accounted for, it is a fact that the world and all around us is in a suffering and degraded condition. This state of things bears the appearance of being inconsistent with the government of God, all-powerful, wise, and good. The proud sceptic is here entirely at a stand. He cannot even conjecture why such a state of things should have had place. With Mr Hume, the language of every reflecting unbeliever must be, 'The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspense of judgment, appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny concerning this subject.' The Book of God alone dispels the darkness, and unveils the mystery.

Here, then, we learn how great is the evil of sin. It has polluted the heavens and the earth, and has subjected the whole to vanity and corruption. Evil and misery prevail, and creation itself is compelled to witness the dishonour done to its Author. It would be derogatory to the glory of God to suppose that his works are now

in the same condition in which they were at first formed, or that they will always continue as at present. In the mean-time, all the creatures are groaning under their degradation, until the moment when God shall remove those obstacles which prevent them from answering their proper ends, and render them incapable of suitably glorifying him. But the righteous judge who subjected them to vanity in consequence of the disobedience of man, has made provision for their final restoration.

The creation, then, is not in that state in which it was originally constituted. A fearful change and disorganization even in the frame of the natural world has taken place. The introduction of sin has brought along with it this subjection to vanity and the bondage of corruption, and all that ruin under which nature groans. How miserable, then, is the condition of those who have their portion in this world. Of them it may be truly said, "Surely they have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit." Of those "who mind earthly things," it is written, their "end is destruction." "The heavens and the earth, which are now by the same word, are kept in store reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

Delivered.—Some suppose that the word de-

livered signifies an entire annihilation, and in support of this opinion allege such passages as 2 Pet. iii. 10, Rev. xx. 11. But as the tendency of all things in nature is to their own preservation, how could the creation be represented as earnestly expecting the manifestation of the sons of God, if that manifestation were to be accomplished with its final ruin and destruction? Besides, the Apostle promises not merely a future deliverance, but also a glorious future existence. The Scriptures, too, in various places, predict the continued subsistence of the heavens and the earth, as 2 Pet. iii. 13, Rev. xxi. 1. Respecting those passages, quoted above, as importing their annihilation, it ought to be observed, that the destruction of the substance of things differs from a change in their qualities. When metal of a certain shape is subjected to fire, it is destroyed as to its figure, but not as to its substance. Thus the heavens and the earth will pass through the fire, but only that they may be purified and come forth anew, more excellent than before. In Ps. cii. 26, it is said, "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be *changed*." That the Apostle Peter, when he says that the heavens shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent

heat, does not refer to the destruction of their substance, but to their purification, is evident from what he immediately adds. "Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." A little before he had said, "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished," although its substance remains as at the beginning. If, then, the punishment of sin has extended to the creatures, in bringing them under the bondage of corruption, so, according to the passage before us, that grace which reigns above sin, will also be extended to their deliverance. And as the punishment of the sin of man is so much the greater as its effects extend to the creatures, in like manner, so much the greater will be the glory that shall be revealed in them, that the creatures which were formed for their use shall be made to participate with them in the day of the restitution of all things. Through the goodness of God they shall follow the deliverance and final destination of the children of God, and not that of his enemies.

When God created the world, he "saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." When man transgressed, God viewed it a second time, and said, "cursed is the ground for thy sake." When the promise that the Deliverer should come into the world

to re-establish peace between God and man was given, the effect of this blessed reconciliation was to extend even to the inanimate and unintelligent creation; and God, it may be said, then viewed his work a third time, and held out the hope of a glorious restoration.

The creature, then, has been subjected to the indignity which it now suffers, *in hope** that it will one day be delivered from its present bondage. This hope was held out in the sentence pronounced on man, for, in the doom of our first parents, the divine purpose of providing a deliverer was revealed. We know not the circumstances of this change, how it will be effected, or in what form the creation—those new heavens and that new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, suited for the abode of the sons of God—shall then exist; but we are sure that it shall be worthy of the divine wisdom, although at present beyond our comprehension.

Manifestation of the sons of God.—Believers are even now the sons of God, but the world knows them not.—1 John, iii. 1. In this respect they are not seen. Their bodies, as well

* The 20th verse should be read in a parenthesis, and the two last words transferred to the 21st verse, and *that* substituted for *because*. *In hope that the creature itself also shall be delivered.*

as their spirits, have been purchased by Christ, and they are become his members. Their bodies have, however, no marks of this divine relation, but, like those of other men, are subject to disease, to death and corruption. And although they have been regenerated by the Spirit of God, there is still a law in their members warring against the law of their mind. But the period approaches when their souls shall be freed from every remainder of corruption, and their bodies shall be made like unto the glorious body of the Son of God. Then this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and then shall they shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. It is then that they shall be manifested in their true character, illustrious as the sons of God, seated upon thrones, and conspicuous in robes of light and glory.

V. 23.—And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

In the four preceding verses the Apostle had appealed to the state of nature, which, by a striking and beautiful figure, is personified and represented as groaning under the oppression of suffering, through the entrance of sin, and looking forward with ardent expectation, as with outstretched neck, to a future and better dispensation. He now proceeds to call the at-

tention of believers to their own feelings and experience, meaning to say that if the unintelligent creation is longing for the manifestation of the glory of the sons of God, how much more earnestly must they themselves long for it.

Christians who have received the foretastes of everlasting felicity, sympathize with the groans of nature. True, they enjoy even at present a blessed freedom. They are delivered from the guilt and dominion of sin, the curse of the law, and a servile spirit in their obedience to God. Still, however, they have much to suffer while in the world, but they wait for the redemption of their bodies, and the full manifestation of their character as the children of God. Their bodies, as well as their spirits, have been given to Christ. They are equally the fruit of his purchase, and are become his members. But it is not till his people shall have arisen from the grave, that they will enjoy all the privileges consequent on his redemption.

The first fruits of the Spirit.—These are love and joy in the Holy Ghost, peace of conscience and communion with God. They are the graces of the Spirit conferred on believers, called first fruits, because, as the first fruits of the field were offered to God under the law, so these graces redound to God's glory. And, as the first ears of corn were a pledge of an abundant harvest,

so these graces are a pledge to believers of their complete felicity, because God gives them for the confirmation of their hope. They are a pledge, because the same love and grace that moved their Heavenly Father to impart these beginnings of their salvation, will move him to perfect the good work. These first fruits, then, are the foretastes of heaven, or the earnest of the inheritance. This is the most invaluable privilege of the children of God in the present world. It is a joy that man cannot give or take away. The error which would represent these privileges as peculiar to the Apostles and the first Christians, and restrict the fruits of the Spirit to miraculous gifts, is not for a moment to be tolerated. The Apostle is speaking of all the children of God to the end of the world, without exception even of the weakest.

As the first fruits of the harvest were consecrated to God, so we should be careful not to abuse the gifts of the Spirit of God in us. As the first fruits were to be carried to the house of God, so, as God has communicated to us his grace, we should also go to his house making a public profession of his name. The children of Israel, in offering the first fruits, were commanded to confess their miserable original state, and to recount the goodness of God to them, Deut. xxvi. 5. In the same way we should

consider the graces of the Holy Spirit in us as the first fruits of the heavenly Canaan which God hath given us, and confess that we were by nature children of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins, and that the Lord having had compassion on us, has delivered us from the servitude of sin, and the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

Groan within ourselves.—Believers, with all their advantages, find it difficult to bear up under the pressure which in their present state weighs them down, while carrying about with them a body of sin and death. Of this groaning the Apostle, as we have seen, chap. vii. 24, presents himself as an example. “O wretched man that I am;” and again when he says, “We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.”—2 Cor. v. 4. In the same manner David groaned, when he complained that his iniquities were a burden too heavy for him. Believers groan on account of indwelling sin, of the temptations of Satan and the world, and of the evils that afflict their bodies and souls. They groan from feeling that something is always wanting to them in this world. There is nothing but that sovereign good which can only be found in God, fully able to satisfy their desires. Believers groan *within themselves*. Their groanings are not such as those of hypo-

crites, which are only outward; they are from within. They do not always meet the ear of man, but they reach the throne of God. "All my desire," says David, "is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee." Psalm xxxviii. 9. These groanings are sighs and prayers to God, which are spoken of in the 26th verse, where we learn their efficient cause, which is not flesh and blood. They are fruits of the Spirit, so that by them believers observe in themselves the spirit of regeneration.

Waiting for the adoption.—Believers have already been adopted into the family of God, and are his children; but they have not yet been openly declared to be so,* nor made in all respects suitable to this character. If they are the sons of God, they must be made glorious, both in soul and body; but till they arrive in heaven, their adoption will not be fully manifested. Adoption may be viewed at three periods. It may be considered in the election of his people, when God decrees their adoption before they are called or united to Jesus Christ; yet they are even then denominated the children of God. In the eleventh chapter of John, where Caiaphas, prophesying of the death of Jesus, says that he should die not for that nation

* Among the Romans there was a twofold adoption, the one private, the other public.

only, but for all the children of God that were scattered abroad, under the term children of God were comprehended those who had not yet been called.—Acts, xviii. 10. In their calling and regeneration they are adopted into God's family, being then united to Christ: but as their bodies do not partake in that regeneration, and are not yet conformed to the glorious body of Jesus Christ, they still wait for the entire accomplishment of their adoption, when at the resurrection they shall enter on the full possession of the inheritance. Accordingly, Jesus denominates that blessed resurrection “the regeneration;” because then not only the souls of believers, but also their bodies shall bear the heavenly image of the second Adam. Then they shall enter fully into the possession of their inheritance; for in that day Jesus Christ will say to his elect, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Heaven, into which they will then enter, is an inheritance suitable to the dignity of the sons of God, and for this they are waiting.

The children of God wait for the accomplishment of all that their adoption imports. They wait for it as Jacob did: “I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!”—Gen. xlix. 18. They wait as the believers at Corinth were waiting

for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. i. 7—and as all believers who through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.—Gal. v. 5. “Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ.”—Titus, ii. 13. And as the Thessalonians, who, having been turned from idols to serve the living and true God, waited for his Son from heaven, 1 Thess. i. 10; also as is recorded in Heb. ix. 28, James v. 7, 8, 2 Pet. iii. 12. In this manner Paul waited for his crown, 2 Tim. iv. 8. It was this waiting for, or expectation of deliverance from the Lord, that encouraged Noah to build the ark; and Abraham to leave his country; and Moses to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; and the elders who obtained a good report through faith, to seek a better, that is, a heavenly country. It was the expectation of eternal life that sustained those who shed their blood for the testimony of Jesus.

The redemption of our body.—That there might be no mistake respecting the meaning of the adoption in this unusual application, the Apostle himself subjoins an explanation—even the redemption of our body, because the body will then be delivered from the grave, as a prisoner when redeemed is delivered from his prison.

But why, it may be asked, does the Apostle

here employ the term redemption rather than that of resurrection, which is so common in the New Testament? To this it may be replied, that the Holy Scriptures often make use of this expression to represent a great deliverance, as in Ps. cvii. 2, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy!" And, as in Isaiah lxiii., where those who are redeemed of the Lord from the hand of the enemy are spoken of. It is evident that Paul made use of this expression, forcibly to express the greatest of all deliverances, the greatest object of our desires, which is to be the subject of our eternal gratitude. When this term is so used, it commonly denotes two things,—the one that the deliverance spoken of is effected in a manner glorious and conspicuous as the highest effort of power; the other, that it is a complete deliverance, which places us beyond all danger. On this ground, then, it is evident that no work is better entitled to the appellation of redemption than that of the re-establishment of our bodies, which will be so illustrious an effect of the infinite power of God. It is the work of the Lord of nature—of Him who holds in his hands the keys of life and death. His light alone can dispel the darkness of the tomb. It is only his hand that can break its seal and its silence. On this account the Apostle refers, with an accu-

mulation of terms, to the exceeding greatness of the power of God to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. Eph. ii. 10.

This last deliverance will be so perfect, that nothing can be conceived to be more complete, since "the children of the resurrection" shall not be restored to their first life, but to a state which will be one of surpassing glory and never-ending immortality. Death will be swallowed up in victory. Earthly warriors may obtain two sorts of victories over their enemies. One may be called a temporary or partial victory, which causes the enemy to fly; which deprives him of part of his force, but does not prevent him from re-establishing himself, returning to the field of battle, and placing the conqueror in the hazard of losing what he has gained. The other may be termed a complete and decisive victory, which so effectually subdues the hostile power, that it can never regain what it has lost. There are also two sorts of resurrections; one, like that of Lazarus, in which death was overcome but not destroyed, since Lazarus died a second time; the other is, that of believers at the last day, when death will not only be overcome, but cast out and for ever exterminated. Both of these may be properly called a resurrection; but to

speaking with greater force, the second is here called a *redemption*. Besides, the Apostle, in employing this term, has a reference to the redemption which Jesus Christ has effected at the infinite price of his blood; for though this price was fully paid on the day of his death, yet two things are certain; the one is, that our resurrection will only take place in virtue of the value and imperishable efficacy of his blood, which has acquired for us life and happiness; the other, that the redemption accomplished on the cross and the resurrection are not two different works. They are but one work, viewed under different aspects, and at different periods; the redemption on the cross being our redemption by right, and the resurrection our redemption by fact—a single salvation begun and terminated.

The day, then, of the redemption of our bodies will be the day of the entire accomplishment of our adoption, as then only we shall enter on the complete possession of the children of God. In Jesus Christ our redemption was fully accomplished when he said on the cross, “It is finished.” In us it is accomplished by different degrees. The first degree is in this life; the second, at death; the third, at the resurrection. In this life, the degree of redemption which we obtain is the remission of our sins, our sanctification, and freedom from the law

and the slavery of sin. At death, our souls are delivered from all sin, and their sanctification is complete ; for the soul at its departure from the body is received into the heavenly sanctuary, into which nothing can enter that defileth ; and as to the body, death prepares it for incorruption and immortality, for that which we sow is not quickened except it die. It must, therefore, return to dust to leave there its corruption, its weakness, its dishonour. Hence it follows that believers should not fear death, since death obtains for them the second degree of their redemption. But as our bodies remain in the dust till the day of our blessed resurrection, that day is called the day of the redemption of our body, as being the last and highest degree of our redemption. Then the body being reunited to the soul, death will be swallowed up in victory ; for the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, for till then death will reign over our bodies. But then the children of God shall sing that triumphant song, “ O death, where is thy sting ; O grave, where is thy victory ? ” “ I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death ; O death, I will be thy plagues ; O grave, I will be thy destruction.”

The elevation of his people to glory on the day of their redemption, will be the last act in

the economy of Jesus Christ as Mediator. He will then terminate his reign and the whole work of their salvation. For then he will present the whole church to the Father, saying, "Behold I and the children whom thou hast given me." Then he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, having nothing further to do in the work of redemption. This will be the rendering of the account by the Son to the Father of the charge that had been committed to him; and for this reason the Apostle says, "When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all;" because, as his economy commenced by an act of submission of the Son to the Father, as in entering into the world he said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," it will also terminate by a similar act, as the Son will then deliver up the kingdom to him from whom he received it.

Believers are here said to have received the first fruits of the Spirit, and to be waiting for the redemption of their bodies. In the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." As this last passage has so much similarity to the one before us, and as they

are calculated to throw light on each other, it may be proper, in this place, to consider its meaning.

The sealing of believers implies, that God has marked them by his Spirit to distinguish them from the rest of mankind. Marking his people in this manner as his peculiar property, imports that he loves them as his own; that they are his "jewels," or peculiar treasure, Mal. iii. 17. But the Apostle does not say that believers have been merely marked, but that they have been sealed, which implies much more; for although every seal is a mark, every mark is not a seal. Seals are marks which bear the arms of those to whom they belong, and often their image or resemblance, as the seals of princes. Thus the principal effect of the Holy Spirit is to impress on the hearts of his people the image of the Son of God. As the matter to which the seal is applied contributes nothing to the formation of the character it receives, and only yields to the impression made on it, so the heart is not active, but passive, under the application of this divine seal, by which we receive the image of God, the characters of which are traced by the Holy Spirit, and depend for their formation entirely on his efficiency. As seals confirm the covenants or promises to which they are affixed, in the same

manner this heavenly signet firmly establishes the declaration of the Divine mercy, and makes it irreversible. It confirms to our faith the mysteries of the Gospel, and renders certain to our hope the promises of the covenant. The seal of man makes no alteration on the matter to which it is applied, and possesses no virtue to render it proper for receiving the impression. But the seal of God changes the matter that receives it, and from being hard, as it naturally is, renders it impressible, converting a heart of stone into a heart of flesh. The seal of man is speedily withdrawn from the matter it impresses, and the impression gradually becomes faint, and is at length effaced. But the seal of the Holy Spirit remains in the heart, so that the image it forms can never be obliterated.

But the Apostle not only affirms that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God, but says that we are sealed *unto the day of redemption*; that is, this seal is given us in respect to our blessed resurrection, as the pledge of our complete transformation into the likeness of Christ. This divine seal is that by which the Lord our great Judge will distinguish the righteous from the wicked, raising the one to the resurrection of life, and the other to the resurrection of damnation. It is also the Holy Spirit which forms in us the hope of that future redemption, our

souls having no good desire whatever of which he is not the author. These things are certain; but it does not appear to be the principal design of the Apostle to enforce them here. It seems rather to be to teach that the Holy Spirit is to us a seal or assured pledge of the reality of our resurrection, or, as is said, "the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Besides this, the Holy Spirit confirms in our souls every thing on which the hope of our resurrection depends. It depends on the belief that Jesus Christ has died for our sins, of which the Holy Spirit bears record in our hearts by giving us the answer of a good conscience. It depends on knowing that Jesus Christ has in dying overcome death, and has gloriously risen again to restore to us life which we had forfeited. This is a truth which the Holy Spirit certifies to us, since he is the Spirit of Christ given in virtue of his resurrection. It depends on knowing that Jesus Christ is in heaven, reigning at the right hand of the Father, and that all power is given unto him, that he may give eternal life to all his people. The Holy Spirit testifies to us this glory, since his coming is its fruit and effect. "The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified;" and the Saviour himself says, that he will send the

Comforter, “even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father ;” concerning which the Apostle Peter declares, “Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.” As if he had said that this marvellous effusion of the Holy Spirit is an effect, and consequently an assured proof, of the heavenly glory of Jesus Christ. Since God gives his Holy Spirit to his children to seal them to the day of redemption, it is evident that his care of them must extend to the blessed consummation to which he purposes to conduct them. He will not withdraw his gracious hand from them, but will bring them to the possession and enjoyment of his glory. “The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.” “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

It may be remarked that the Apostle says, “unto the *day* of redemption,” and not simply to the redemption. This expression, the day of redemption, leads us to consider the advantage that grace has over nature, and the future world over that which we at present inhabit. When God created the universe, he made light and darkness, day and night; and our time

consists of their alternate successions. But it will not be so in the second creation, for "there shall be no night there." It will be one perpetual *day* of life without death, of holiness without sin, and of joy without grief.

The day here referred to may be viewed in contrast with two other solemn days, both of which are celebrated in the Scriptures. One is the day of Sinai, the other of Pentecost, this is the day of Redemption. The first was the day when *God* descended with awful majesty amidst blackness, and darkness, and tempest. The second was the day in which the *Holy Ghost* came as a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and under the symbol of cloven tongues of fire. The third will be the day when *Jesus Christ* will come seated on the throne of his glory, with his mighty angels, to judge the quick and the dead. Then calling his elect from the four winds, with the voice of the Archangel, he will raise them from the dust, and elevate them to the glory of his kingdom. The first of these days was the day of the publication of the *law*. The second was the day of the publication of *grace*; and the third will be the day of the publication of *glory*. This will be the day of the complete redemption of the children of God, unto which they have been sealed, and of their manifestation in their proper character. It will

be the day when their bodies shall come forth from the grave, made like unto the glorious body of the Son of God by the sovereign efficacy of the application of his blood, and by his infinite power. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Then they shall inherit the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, which they now expect according to the promise, for God will make all things new. Then they shall be with Jesus, where he is, and shall behold his glory which God hath given him. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

Let those rejoice who are waiting for the divine Redeemer. Their bodies indeed must be dissolved, and it doth not yet appear what they shall be. But at that great day they shall be raised up incorruptible, they shall be rendered immortal, and shall dwell in heavenly mansions. And that they may not doubt this, God has already marked them with his divine seal. They have been sealed by the Holy Spirit of God unto the day of the Redemption.

V. 24.—For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

For we are saved by hope.—According to the original, this phrase may either be translated *by*

hope, or *in* hope; but from the connexion it appears that it ought to be translated, as in the French versions, *in hope*. The word salvation, or *saved*, signifies all the benefits of our redemption—namely, remission of sins, sanctification, and glorification. “The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.” In this sense Jesus Christ is called the Saviour, because it is by him that we are justified, sanctified, and glorified. This word has in Scripture sometimes a more limited, and sometimes a more extended meaning. In particular places salvation is spoken of as already possessed, as where it is said, God has “saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Generally it signifies all the benefits of our redemption, when they shall be possessed by our final admission to glory, as when it is said, “he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” In this verse it is regarded as enjoyed only in hope; that is to say, in expectancy, since we have not yet been put in possession of the glory of the kingdom of heaven. In order to distinguish what believers possess of salvation at present, and what they have of it in hope, we must consider its gradations. The first of these is their eternal election, of which the Apostle speaks, Eph. i. 3, 4, according to which their names were written in heaven before the creation of the world. The second gradation is

their effectual calling, by which God has called them from darkness into the kingdom of his beloved Son, so that their souls are already partakers of grace, and their bodies habitations of God through the Spirit and members of Jesus Christ. Of these gradations of their salvation they are already in possession. But the third gradation, in which sin shall be entirely eradicated from their souls, and their bodies shall be made like to the glorious body of the Lord Jesus Christ, is as yet enjoyed by them only in hope.

The term *hope* is used in two different senses, the one proper, the other figurative. Properly, it means the virtue by which we look forward to what we desire and expect, as where it is said, "hope is the anchor of the soul." Figuratively, it signifies that which we hope for, as when God is called our hope—"Thou art my hope, O Lord God," Ps. lxxi. 5; or Jesus Christ our hope, 1st Tim. i. 1; and as when it is said, we give thanks to God "for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven," Col. i. 5. The word hope, then, either denotes, as in the verse before us, the grace of hope, in reference to the person hoping, or the object of hope, in reference to the thing hoped for.

Hope is so closely allied to faith that sometimes in Scripture it is taken for faith itself. They are, however, distinct, the one from the

other. By faith we believe the promises made to us by God ; by hope we expect to receive the good things which God has promised, so that faith hath properly for its object the promise, and hope for its object the thing promised, and the execution of the promise. Faith has its object as present to it, but hope regards it as future. Faith precedes hope and is its foundation. We hope for life eternal because we believe the promises which God has made respecting it ; and if we believe these promises we must expect their effect. Hope looks to eternal life as that which is future in regard to its remoteness ; but faith looks to it as a thing that is present in regard to its certainty. Faith and hope are virtues of this life which will have no place in the life which is to come. When our salvation shall be completed, there will be no more hope, since we shall have full possession and enjoyment of the good things we at present hope for. " Now abideth faith, hope, and love." Faith and hope will cease ; and in this respect love is greater, as love will abide for ever. Let believers renounce their vain hopes of happiness in this world. Here they are strangers and pilgrims, absent from the Lord. Let them hope for his presence and communion with him in glory.

Christian hope is a virtue produced by the

Holy Spirit, in which, through his power, we should abound, and by which, resting on the promises of God in Jesus Christ, we expect our complete salvation. This hope is a part of our spiritual armour against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness, with which we have to wrestle. We are commanded to put on "for an helmet the hope of salvation." 1 Thes. v. 8.

In the preceding verse the Apostle had said we wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Here he gives it as a reason of our waiting, that as yet we are saved only in hope. As far as the price of redemption is concerned we are already saved, but in respect to the power by which we shall be put in possession of that for which the price has been paid, namely, our deliverance from the remainder of sin under which we groan, the resurrection of our bodies, and the enjoyment of the eternal inheritance, we are saved only in hope. The hope of all this is present with us, but the enjoyment is future. *Hope that is seen is not hope.* That is, hope cannot respect any thing which we already enjoy. For it is impossible, as the Apostle subjoins, for a man to hope for that which he possesses. Hope and possession are ideas altogether incongruous and contradictory.

Believers, then, are as yet saved only in hope. They have received but the earnest and fore-

taste of their salvation. They groan under the weight which is borne by them, and their bodies are subject to the sentence of temporal death. If they were in the full possession of their salvation, faith would no longer be the conviction of things hoped for, as things hoped for are not things enjoyed. This corresponds with what the Apostle says elsewhere, when he exhorts believers to work out their salvation, and when he remarks that our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. When it is said we are saved in hope, as it supposes that our felicity is at a distance, so it implies that all the good we can for the present enjoy of that distant felicity is obtained by hoping for it, and, therefore, if we could not hope for it we should lose all the encouragement we have in the prospect. The good hope through grace tranquillizes the soul. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Ps. xlii. 5. Hope produces joy, and believers are commanded to abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, Rom. xv. 13. This hope softens the bitterness of affliction, supports the soul in adversity, and in prosperity raises the affections above the world. It promotes our sanctification, for he who hath this hope in him purifieth him-

self even as he is pure. 1 John, iii. 3. It reminds us that if Jesus died and rose again, that them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

V. 25.—*But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

Hope produces *patience* with respect to all the trials, and labours, and difficulties that must be encountered before we obtain its object. Since we hope for what we see not, that is, for what we possess not, there must consequently be a virtue by which being held firm we wait for it, and that is patience. For between hope and enjoyment of the thing hoped for a delay intervenes, and there are many temptations within and afflictions from without, by which hope would be turned into despair if it were not supported by patience. As long as hope prevails the combat will not be given up. In the 23d verse believers are said to be waiting for the adoption; here the inducement to their waiting, and patiently waiting, is stated; it is their hope supported by patience. Patiently bearing their present burden and waiting for heaven, implies their expectation that it is reserved for them. They have been begotten again to a lively hope of possessing it by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, which is a sure pledge of the redemption of their bodies from the grave.

This verse and the preceding teach the importance of hope to believers, and of their obeying the exhortation to give all diligence to the full assurance of hope. The hope of beholding Jesus as he is, and of obtaining "a better resurrection," is calculated to enable them patiently to sustain the sufferings of the present time. This hope is represented as encouraging the Lord himself, "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." Heb. xii. 2.

V. 26.—Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Believers have need of patience, that after they have done the will of God, they may receive the promise; but their patience is not perfect as it ought to be, and they are often ready to cast away their confidence, although it hath great recompense of reward. For their support, then, in their warfare, which is attended with so much difficulty, the Apostle presents a variety of considerations. He had reminded them in the 17th verse of their communion with Jesus Christ, and that if they suffer with him they shall with him also be glorified. In the 18th verse, he had told them that their sufferings bear no proportion to that glory of which they shall

be made partakers. He had next drawn an argument from the present state of creation, suffering, but waiting for, and expecting its deliverance, and the manifestation of the sons of God; and, reminding them of the pledges they had already received of that glorious manifestation, he had spoken of its certainty, although still future, and therefore as yet enjoyed only in hope. But as they might still object, how is it possible, even admitting the force of these encouragements, that we, who are so weak in ourselves, and so inferior in power to the enemies we have to encounter, can bear up under so many trials? the Apostle, in the verse before us, points out an additional and internal source of encouragement of the highest consideration, namely, that the Holy Spirit helps their infirmities, and also prays for them, which is sufficient to allay every desponding fear, and to communicate the strongest consolation.

At the close of the sacred canon, the church is represented as saying, "Come, Lord Jesus." Being a stranger on earth, and her felicity consisting in communion with her glorious Lord, she groans on account of his absence, and ardently desires his holy and blessed presence. In the mean-time, however, he vouchsafes his people great consolation to compensate for his absence. He assures them that he has ascended

to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God; that in his Father's house are many mansions; that he is gone to prepare a place for them; and that when he has prepared a place, he will return and receive them to himself, that where he is they may be also. They also know the way, he himself being the way and their guide. How encouraging is this doctrine, and how well calculated for the support of hope and patience in expecting the return of the bridegroom. If he is gone to their common Father, communion in his glory will not be long delayed. If there are many mansions in the house of their heavenly Father, they are prepared to receive not only the elder brother, but all his brethren, for were there only one abode it would be for him alone. If he is gone to prepare a place, and if he is soon to come again to receive them to himself, is it not calculated to fill them with joy in the midst of troubles and afflictions? But all these consolations would be insufficient unless Jesus had added, that he would not leave them orphans, but would give them another Comforter to abide with them for ever, even the Spirit of Truth. Without such support they would be overwhelmed by the weight of their afflictions, and overcome by their manifold temptations. But since they have not only an Almighty Surety, but also an Almighty Comforter,

even the Holy Spirit, who dwells in them, and abides with them, this is sufficient to confirm their joy, to establish their hope, and to give them the assurance that nothing shall separate them from the love of Christ. Such is the consolation, in addition to all the others, which, in the passage before us, the Apostle presents.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.—Likewise, or in like manner, as we are supported by hope, so the Spirit also helps our infirmities. The expression, *helpeth* our infirmities, is very significant. The Apostle intends to say that the Holy Spirit carries, or bears with us, our afflictions. If it be enquired why this help which we receive from the Holy Spirit is distinguished from the support we have from hope and patience, the answer is, that the Holy Spirit supports us, as being the efficient principle and first cause; and hope and patience support us as his instruments. On this account the Apostle speaks of this support of the Spirit, after having referred to the two former. And here we find the most abundant consolation in Him who is the promised Comforter, for the all-powerful God himself comes to help our infirmities.

Paul does not say infirmity, but *infirmities*; that we may remember how numerous they are, and may humble ourselves before God, renoun-

cing our pride and presumption, and imploring his support. He also says, *our* infirmities, thus recognising them as also his own, and reminding the strongest of their weakness. The burdens of believers are of two kinds; the one is sin, the other is suffering. Under both of these they are supported. As to sin, Jesus has charged himself with it, "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree;" and as to sufferings, they are helped by the Holy Spirit, but only in part, by imparting strength to bear them; for all Christians must bear their cross in following Jesus. But in the kingdom of heaven, where every tear shall be wiped from their eyes, they shall be completely freed from all suffering.

Christians have at present many infirmities; they are in themselves altogether weakness, but the Holy Spirit dwells in their hearts, and is their strong consolation. Without him they could not bear their trials, or perform what they are called to endure. But as he dwells in them, he gives them that aid of which they stand in need. Are we weak and our troubles great? here the Almighty God comes to support us. Are we bowed down under the weight of our afflictions? behold he who is all-powerful bears them with us. The care of shepherds over their flocks, and the care of mothers who carry their infants in their bosoms, are but feeble

images of the love of God, and the care he exercises over his people. A mother may forsake her sucking child, but the Lord will not forsake his children. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.—

So great is the infirmity and ignorance of the believer, that he does not even know what he ought to ask. He is not thoroughly acquainted either with his own dangers or his own wants. He needs not only to be supplied from on high, but he needs Divine guidance in showing him what he wants. When he knows not what to ask, the office of the Holy Spirit in the heart is to assist him in praying. Though, in a peculiar sense, Jesus is the believer's intercessor, yet the Holy Spirit intercedes for him, teaching him what to ask, and exciting in him those groanings that express his wants, though they cannot be uttered; that is, they cannot be expressed in words. Yet these wants are uttered in groans, and in this manner express what is meant most emphatically, while they indicate the energy of the operation of the Spirit. Here the Apostle goes farther than in the former clause of the verse, and shows that the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, by referring to a particular example

of this aid. In order to prove the extent of our weakness, and the importance of the help of the Holy Spirit, and the greatness of the assistance he gives, Paul declares that we know not what we should pray for as we ought. Our blindness and natural ignorance are such that we know not how to make a proper choice of the things for which we ought to pray. Sometimes we are ready to ask such things as are not expedient, as when Moses prayed to be allowed to enter Canaan, and Paul to be delivered from the thorn in his flesh, not understanding that it was proper that he should be thus afflicted, that he might not be exalted above measure. Sometimes, too, we ask even for things that would be hurtful were we to receive them; of which there are many examples in Scripture, as Matt. xx. 21, James, iv. 3.

There are two things in prayer; namely, the matter of prayer, that is, the things we ask for; and the act of prayer by which we address God respecting our desires and necessities. The people of God are often so much oppressed, and experience such anguish of mind, that their agitated spirits, borne down by affliction, can neither perfectly conceive nor properly express their complaints and requests to God. Shall they then remain without prayer? No; the Holy Spirit acts in their hearts, exciting in

them sighs and groans. Such appear to have been the groanings of Hezekiah, when he said, "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove, mine eyes fail with looking upward; O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me." Such also was the experience of David in the seventy-seventh Psalm, when he says, "I am so troubled that I cannot speak." No words of Peter in his repentance are recorded; his groanings are represented by his weeping bitterly; and in the same way we read of the woman who was a sinner, as only washing the feet of Jesus with her tears, which expressed the inward groanings of her heart.

Although these sighings or groanings of the children of God are here ascribed to the Holy Spirit, it is not to be supposed that the Divine Spirit can be subject to such emotions or perturbations of mind; but it is so represented, because he draws forth these groans from our hearts, and excites them there. Thus it is *our* hearts that groan, but the operation and emotion is from the Holy Spirit; for the subject of these, and he who produces them, must not be confounded. In this way the Apostle speaks in the fourth chapter to the Galatians. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." And in the fifteenth verse of the chapter before

us, he shows that it is we who cry, "Abba, Father," in order that we may observe that it is not the Spirit who cries, who prays, who groans, but that he causes us to cry, and pray, and groan. Such, then, is the work of the Holy Spirit here spoken of in the heart of believers, from which we learn that if there be any force in us to resist evil, and to overcome temptation, it is not of ourselves, but of our God. And hence it follows, that if we have borne up under any affliction or temptation, we ought to render thanks to God, seeing that by his power he has supported us, and to pray, as David did, "Uphold me with thy free Spirit."

The Holy Spirit often, in a peculiar manner, helpeth the infirmities of the children of God in the article of death, enabling them to sustain the pains and weaknesses of their bodies, and supporting their souls by his consolations in that trying hour. The body is then borne down with trouble, but the mind is sustained by the consolations of God. The eye of the body is dim, but the eye of faith is often at that season most unclouded. The outward man perisheth, but the inward man is renewed. Then, when Satan makes his last and greatest effort to subvert the soul, and comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him, exciting in the believer a more ardent faith, and con-

soling him, though unable to express it, with a stronger conviction of the Divine love and faithfulness. It is by this means that so many martyrs have triumphantly died, surmounting, by the power of the Spirit within them, the apprehension of the greatest bodily torture, and rejoicing in the midst of their sufferings.

V. 27.—And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

To that which had been said in the preceding verse, it might be objected, to what purpose are those groanings which we cannot understand? To this objection the Apostle very fully replies in this verse: 1. God knows what these prayers mean, for “he searcheth the hearts” of men. The believer sighs and groans, while, owing to his perplexity and distress, he cannot utter a word before God; nevertheless, these sighs and groanings are full of meaning. 2. God knoweth what is the “mind of the Spirit,” or what he is dictating in the heart, and therefore he must approve of it; for the Father and the Spirit are one. 3. Because, or rather, “that he maketh intercession.” We are not to understand his intercession as the reason why God knows the mind of the Spirit, but as the reason why he will hear and answer the groans which the Holy Spirit excites. A further reason is, that this

intercession is made for the saints; that is, for the children of God—those of whom he hath said, “Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.”—Ps. l. 5. Finally, it is added, that it is “according to God,” or to the will of God. These prayers, then, will be heard, because the Spirit intercedes for those who are the children of God, and because he excites no desires but what are agreeable to the will of God. From all this we see how certain it is that these groanings which cannot be uttered must be heard, and consequently answered. For “this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.” The best prayers are not those of human eloquence, but which spring from earnest desires of the heart.

This verse is replete with instruction as well as consolation. We are here reminded that the Lord is the searcher of hearts. “Hell and destruction are before the Lord; how much more then the hearts of the children of men.” The reasons of the perfect knowledge that God has of our hearts, are declared in the 139th Psalm: 1. The infinity, the omnipresence, and omniscience of God. 2. He forms the heart and knows his own work. 3. He preserves and maintains the heart in all its operations. 4. He

conducts and leads it, and therefore knows and sees it. The prayer of the heart, then, is attended to by God, as well as the prayer of the lips. Yet this does not prove that oral prayer is unnecessary—not even in secret prayer. This passage teaches us to look to God for an answer to the secret groanings of our heart; but it does not teach us to neglect communing with God with our lips, when we can express our thoughts. This is abundantly taught in the word of God, both by precept and example. Searching the heart is here given as a characteristic peculiar to God. As then it is ascribed, in other passages, to our Lord Jesus Christ, he must be God. This passage clearly establishes the personal distinction between the Father and the Holy Spirit.

The persons to whom the benefit of this intercession of the Spirit extends, are said to be *saints*. This proves that none can pray truly and effectually except the saints. It is the saints emphatically, and the saints exclusively, for whom the Spirit makes intercession. Such only are accepted of God, and fit subjects for the operation of the Spirit; and this is not the first work of the Spirit in them. He first sanctifies, and then intercedes. First he puts into us gracious dispositions, and then stirs up holy desires; and the latter supposes the former. In

those in whom the Spirit is a Spirit of intercession, in them he is a Spirit of regeneration. These are therefore joined together, in Zechariah, xii. 10, "The Spirit of grace and of supplications." None but saints have an interest in the blood of Christ, as applied unto them, and his intercession working for them. None are able to pray for themselves, for whom Christ does not likewise pray. We can only approach God by the Spirit. "We have access by one Spirit to the Father."—Eph. ii. 18. We can only pray under the influence of the Spirit with groanings that cannot be uttered; while the wicked may groan without prayer. "They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds."—Hosea, vii. 14.

The other reason which renders acceptable to God the prayers and sighs excited in the saints by the Holy Spirit, is, that they are according to the will of God. The Spirit himself being God, these requests must be agreeable to God. The carnal mind, it is said, in verse 7, is enmity against God; but the mind (the same word here employed) of the Spirit is agreeable to God. The intercession made by the Holy Spirit is according to the command and the revealed will of God, and in the name and in dependence on Christ the Mediator. The Holy Spirit, then, teaches the saints how to pray, and what to

pray for. What he teaches them to ask on earth, is in exact correspondence with what Jesus, their great High Priest, is interceding for them in heaven. The prayer taught by God the Holy Spirit in their hearts, is an echo to the intercession of Jesus before the throne. It is, therefore, not only in perfect unison with the intercession of Christ, and the inditing of the Holy Spirit, but it is in exact conformity to the will of God. Such, then, is the security to the saints that their prayer, although only expressed in groans, shall be heard by their Father in heaven. “The prayer of the upright is his delight.”—Prov. xv. 8. “He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him.”—Ps. cxlv. 19.

V. 28.—And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Nothing is more necessary for Christians than to be well persuaded of the happiness of their condition, and of the privileges belonging to them; that they may be able to serve God with greater cheerfulness and freedom of spirit, and to pass through the troubles and difficulties which they meet with in the world. Here, then, is further consolation: Christians are every day in sorrows, sufferings, and trials. This is not in itself joyous but grievous; but in another point of view it is a matter of joy. Though

afflictions in themselves are evil; yet, in their effects, as overruled and directed by God, they are useful. Yea, all things, of every kind, that happen to the Christian are overruled by God to work for his good!

Having previously spoken of the various sources of consolation, and, in the two preceding verses, of the Spirit helping our infirmities, and dictating those prayers which are heard of God, the Apostle now obviates another objection. If God hears our sighs and groanings, why are we not delivered from our afflictions and troubles? In answer, it is here shown that afflictions are salutary and profitable; so that, although they are not removed, God changes their natural tendency, and makes them work for our good. But in order that none should hereby be led into carnal security, the Apostle adds, that those for whom all things work together for good, are such as *love God*, and are the *called* according to his purpose. This is not only true in itself, but it is here asserted to be a truth known to believers.

The Apostle had proposed various considerations, to which he now says *we know* this is to be added. This does not mean that believers know it merely in a speculative manner; but that it is a knowledge which enters into their heart and affections, producing in them confidence in its truth. It is a knowledge of faith which implies certainty and self-application, by

which the believer not only knows but applies the promises of God, and is able to say—this promise is mine, it belongs to me. For otherwise, what advantage would there be in a general knowledge of this fact; what consolation would it bring to him, and what practical use could he make of it? “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant.” The experience, too, of the believer brings home to his mind the conviction of this encouraging truth. The Church of Rome accuses those of presumption who make such an application to themselves. They allow that the Christian should believe, in general, the promises of God; but that as to a particular self-application or appropriation of them, he should hold this in doubt, and be always uncertain as to his own salvation. This is to destroy the nature of those consolations, and to render them useless. For if, in order to console one who is afflicted, it be said to him, all things work together for good to them that love God, he will answer, True, but I must doubt whether this belongs to me. And thus the consolation is made of no effect. But if this error be not imbibed, and the duty of such appropriation be not desired, why is it that so many believers experience so little of this consolation in their afflictions? Is it not because they have little of that know-

ledge of which the Apostle speaks when he says, “we know that all things work together for good to them that love God?” Carnal affections, the love of the world, and indulgence of the flesh, prevent this consideration from being deeply impressed on their minds; they also darken their understandings, so as not to allow the light of the consolations of God to enter their hearts. But in proportion as their hearts are purified from these affections, in the same degree it is confirmed in their minds. The objection, why sufferings are not removed, should be answered by reminding believers that all things work together for their good.

All things work together for good.—All things, whatever they be; all things indefinitely, are here intended. The extent of this expression is by many limited to afflictions. ‘Paul, it must be remembered,’ says Calvin on this text, ‘is speaking only of adversity;’ and he adds, ‘Paul is here speaking of the Cross, and, on this account, the observation of Augustine, though true, does not bear on this passage,—that even the sins of believers are so ordered by the providence of God, as to serve rather to the advancement of their salvation than to their injury.’ It is true that the Apostle had been referring to the present sufferings of believers, and enumerating various special topics

of consolation ; but, approaching to the conclusion of his enumeration, it might be expected that the last of them would be no longer of a special, but of a most comprehensive description. That it is so, the terms he employs warrant us to conclude. *All things*, he says. If the context necessarily limited this expression, its universality ought not to be contended for ; but it does not. If it be, as Calvin admits, that what is here said is true even of the sins of believers (and if applicable to sins, what else can be accepted?) why should the sense be limited to sufferings ? It is much more consolatory, and consequently more to the Apostle's purpose, if literally all things be comprehended ; and in this view it would form the most complete summing up of his object. He had been pointing out to believers their high privileges as heirs of God, and partakers of glory with Christ. He had said that their sufferings in the present time are not worthy to be compared with that glory. He had suggested topics to induce them to wait for it with patience ; and had given them the highest encouragement, from the fact of the working of the Spirit of all grace within them, and of the acceptance of that work by God. Is it, then, more than was to be expected, that he should conclude the whole by saying that all things, without exception, were concurring for their

good? Is it too much to suppose that it must be so to them whom he had addressed as heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; who are therefore under the guidance of the good Shepherd, and honoured by the in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost? It is more than the Apostle says on another occasion, when he uses the very same expression, *all things*; and so far from intimating any exception, adds a most comprehensive catalogue. "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's!" 1 Cor. iii. 21. And again, 2 Cor. iv. 15, "*All things* are for your sakes." Finally, ought the expression here to be restricted, when it is impossible to believe that the same expression, occurring a few sentences afterwards, v. 32, can be restricted?

That *all things* are working together for the good of them that love God, is a truth affording the highest consolation. These words teach believers, that whatever may be the number and overwhelming character of adverse circumstances, they are all contributing to their obtaining possession of the inheritance provided for them in heaven. That they are thus working for the good of the children of God, is manifest from the consideration that God governs the world.

The first cause of all is God; second causes are all his creatures, whether angels, good or bad men, animals, or the inanimate creation. Second causes move only under his direction, and when God withdraws his hand, they cannot move at all; as it is written, "In him, we live and move, and have our being." As God, then, the first cause, moves all second causes against his enemies, so when he is favourable to us, he employs all to move and work for our good; as it is said, "In that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground, and will break the bow and the sword, and the battle, out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely." Hosea, ii. 18. And as of men, it is said, "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies be at peace with him." Prov. xvi. 7.

If all things work together for good, there is nothing within the compass of being that is not, in one way or other, advantageous to the children of God. All the attributes of God, all the offices of Christ, all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, are combined for their good. The creation of the world, the fall and the redemption of man, all the dispensations of Providence, whether prosperous or adverse, all occurrences and events, all things whatsoever they be, work for their

good. They work *together* in their efficacy, in their unity, and in their connexion. They do not work thus of themselves; it is God that turns all things to the good of his children. The afflictions of believers, in a peculiar manner, contribute to this end. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." "Tribulation worketh patience." "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." The Apostle himself was an example of this, when a thorn in his flesh was sent to him to prevent his being exalted above measure. We see how much the sufferings of those spoken of in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews were calculated to detach their affections from this present world, and lead them to seek a better, even a heavenly country. There is often a need be for their being in heaviness through manifold temptations.

Even the sins of believers work for their good, not from the nature of sin, but by the goodness and power of him who brings light out of darkness. Every where in Scripture we read of the great evil of sin. Every where we receive the most solemn warning against its commission,

and every where we hear also of the chastisements it brings, even upon those who are rescued from its finally condemning power. It is not sin, then, that works the good, but God who overrules its effects to his children, shows them by means of it what is in their hearts, as well as their entire dependence on himself, and the necessity of walking with him more closely. Their falls lead them to humiliation, to the acknowledgment of their weakness and depravity, to prayer for the guidance and overpowering influence of the Holy Spirit, to vigilance and caution against all carnal security, and to reliance on that righteousness provided for their appearance before God. It is evident that the sin of Adam, which is the source of all their sins, has wrought for their good in raising them to a higher degree of glory. Believers fall into sin, and on account of this, God hides his face from them, and they are troubled; and like Hezekiah, they go softly. God left Hezekiah to himself, but it was to do him good at his latter end.

But if our sins work together for our good, shall we sin that grace may abound? Far be the thought. This would be entirely to misunderstand the grace of God, and to turn it into an occasion of offending him. Against such an abuse of the doctrine of grace, the Apostle contends, in the sixth chapter of this Epistle: Sin

should be considered in its nature, not as to what it is adventitiously, or in respect to what is foreign to it. Sin as committed by us is only sin, and rebellion against God and the holiness of his nature. It ought therefore to be regarded with abhorrence, and merits eternal punishment. That it is turned to good, is the work of God, and not ours. We ought no more to conclude that, on this account, we may sin, than that wicked men do what is right, when they persecute the people of God, because persecutions are overruled by him for good. That all things work together for good to them who love God, establishes the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints; for if all things work together for their good, what or where is that which God will permit to lead them into condemnation?

That all things happen for the best is a common saying among people of the world. This is a fact, as to the final issue of the Divine administration, by which all things shall be made to contribute to the glory of God. But as to sinners individually the reverse is true. All things are indeed working together in one complex plan in the providence of God for the good of those who love him; but so far from working for good, or for the best to his enemies, every thing is working to their final ruin. Both of these effects are remarkably exemplified in the

lives of David and Saul. Even the aggravated sin of David led him to deep humiliation and godly sorrow, to a greater knowledge of his natural and original depravity, and the deceitfulness of his heart, and to his singing aloud of God's righteousness. The sins of Saul, as well as every thing that befel him in God's providence, led to his becoming more hardened, and at last to despair and suicide. The histories of many others, both believers and sinners, recorded in the Old Testament, abundantly confirm the words of the Psalmist, "The Lord preserveth all them that love him, but all the wicked will be destroyed." "The way of the wicked he turneth upside down."

There are two scriptures that should fill the people of God with joy and consolation. The one is, "The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that love him." Ps. lxxxviii. 11. The other is the passage before us, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose." If, then, God will withhold nothing that is good for us, and will order and dispose of all things for good to us, what can be wanting to our absolute and complete security? How admirable is the providence of God, not only as all things are ordered

by him, but as he overrules whatever is most disordered, and turns to good things that in themselves are most pernicious. We admire his providence in the regularity of the seasons, of the course of the sun and stars; but this is not so wonderful as his bringing good out of evil in all the complicated acts and occurrences in the lives of men, and making even the power and malice of Satan, and the naturally destructive tendency of his works, to minister to the good of his children.

That love God.—This is given as a peculiar characteristic of a Christian. It imports that all believers love God, and that none but believers love him. Those calling themselves philosophers, and men of various descriptions, may boast of loving God, but the decision of God himself is, that to love him is the peculiar characteristic of the Christian. No man can love God till he hath shined into his heart to give him the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, only through faith in the blood of Christ that we can love God. Until our faith gives us some assurance of reconciliation with God, we cannot have the confidence which is essential to loving God. Till then we dread God as our enemy, and fear that he will punish us on account of our sins.

To those who are the called according to his purpose.—This is a further description or characteristic of God's people. They are called not merely outwardly by the preaching of the Gospel, for this is common to them with unbelievers, but called also by the Spirit, with an internal and effectual calling, and made willing in the day of God's power. They are called according to God's eternal purpose, according to which he knew them, and prepared their calling before they were in existence, for all God's purposes are eternal. It imports that their calling is solely the effect of grace; for when it is said to be a calling according to God's purpose, it is distinguished from a calling according to works. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 9. It imports that it is an effectual and permanent calling, for God's purposes cannot be defeated. "The counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." "Their calling is according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will." Eph. i. 11. Here the Apostle connects our calling, which is a thing we know, with God's decree, which is concealed, to teach us that we must judge of our eternal election by

our calling. 2 Pet. i. 10. For as the Apostle says, they whom God hath predestinated, he hath called and justified, so we may say, those whom he hath called and justified, he hath elected and predestinated. If God hath called us, then, he hath elected us.

V. 29.—For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

The Apostle having exhibited to believers many grounds of consolation, to induce them patiently to endure the sufferings of this present time, now assures them of the certainty of their being glorified, by pointing out the source from which their future glory proceeds. The easy and natural transition to this branch of his subject should be particularly noticed. He had declared in the foregoing verse that *all things* work together for good to them that love God; but as it is always necessary to keep in mind that our love to God is not the cause of his love to us, nor consequently of the privileges with which we are favoured, but the effects of his loving us; the Apostle adds, “Who are the called according to his purpose.” This declaration leads at once to a full and most encouraging view of the progress of the Divine procedure originating with God, and carried, through all its connecting links, forward to the full pos-

session of that glory which shall be revealed in us.

For whom he did foreknow.—The word foreknow has three significations. One is general, importing simply a knowledge of things before they come into existence. In this general sense it is evident that it is not employed in this passage, since it is limited to those whom God predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. He foreknows all things before they come to pass; but here foreknowledge refers only to particular individuals. A second signification is a knowledge accompanied by a decree. In this sense it signifies ordinance and providence, as it is said, Acts, ii. 23, “Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” That is to say, by the ordinance and providence of God. The reason why this word is used to denote the divine determination, is because the foreknowledge of God necessarily implies his purpose or decree with respect to the thing foreknown. For God foreknows what will be, by determining what shall be. God’s foreknowledge cannot in itself be the cause of any event, but events must be produced by his decree and ordination. It is not because God foresees a thing that it is decreed, but he foresees it because it is ordained by him to happen in the order of his providence. Therefore, his

foreknowledge and decrees cannot be separated; for the one implies the other. Whatever he decrees that it *shall* be, he foresees that it *will* be. There is nothing known as a thing that it will be, which is not certainly to be; and there is nothing certainly to be, but it is ordained that it shall be. All the foreknowledge of future events, then, is founded on the decree of God; consequently he determined with himself from eternity every thing he executes in time; Acts, xv. 18. Nothing is contingent in the mind of God, who foresees and orders all events, according to his own eternal and unchangeable will. Jesus Christ was not delivered by God foreknowing it, but by his fixed counsel and ordination, or his providence. Thus believers are called elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father—1 Pet. i. 2; and in the same chapter, v. 19, 20, the Apostle Peter says, that Jesus Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world. Here foreknown signifies, as it is rendered, fore-ordained.

The third signification of this word is taken for a knowledge of love and approbation, and in this sense it signifies to choose and recognise as our own; as it is said, Rom. xi. 2, "God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew," that is, whom he had before loved and chosen; for the Apostle alleges this foreknowledge as

the reason why God had not rejected his people. In this manner the word "know" is often taken in Scripture in the sense of knowing with affection, loving, approving; as in the first Psalm, "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish." To know the way of the just, is to love, to approve, as appears by the antithesis. Paul says to the Corinthians, "If any man love God, the same is known of him," 1 Cor. viii. 3; and to the Galatians, "but now after ye have known God, or rather are known of him." In the same way God said by his prophet to Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Amos, iii. 2. At the day of judgment Jesus Christ will say to hypocrites, "I never knew you." Matt. vii. 23. That is to say, he never loved or acknowledged them, although he perfectly knew their characters and actions. In this last sense the word foreknow is employed in the passage before us. Those whom God foreknew, those whom he before loved, chose, acknowledged as his, he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. It is not a general anticipated knowledge that is here intended. The Apostle does not speak of all, but of some, whom in verse 33 he calls "God's elect," and not of any thing in their persons, or belonging to them; but of the persons them-

selves, whom it is said God foreknew. And he adds, that those whom he foreknew, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, and whom he predestinated, he called, and justified, and glorified.

By foreknowledge, then, is not here meant a foreknowledge of faith or good works, or of concurrence with the external call. Faith cannot be the cause of foreknowledge, because foreknowledge is before predestination, and faith is the effect of predestination. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts, xiii. 48. Neither can it be meant of the foreknowledge of good works, because these are the effects of predestination. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained (or before prepared), that we should walk in them." Eph. ii. 10. Neither can it be meant of foreknowledge of our concurrence with the external call, because our effectual calling depends not upon that concurrence, but upon God's purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. 2 Tim. i. 9. By this foreknowledge, then, is meant, as has been observed, the love of God towards those whom he predestinates to be saved through Jesus Christ. All the called of God are foreknown by him, that is, they are the objects of his eternal love, and their calling comes

from this free love. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn thee." Jer. xxxi. 3.

He also did predestinate.—Foreknowledge and predestination are distinguished. The one is the choice of persons, the other the destination of those persons to the blessings for which they are designed. To predestinate, signifies to appoint beforehand to some particular end. In Scripture it is taken sometimes generally for any decree of God, as in Acts, iv. 28, where the Apostles say, that the Jews were assembled to do whatsoever the hand and the counsel of God had determined (predestinated) before to be done. And 1 Cor. 2, 7, Paul says, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained (predestinated), before the world unto our glory." Sometimes this word is taken specially for the decree of the salvation of man, as Eph. i. 5. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace." "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." In the same way, in the passage before us, "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed

to the image of his Son.” As the term is here used, it respects not all men, but only those on whom God has placed his love from eternity, and on whom he purposes to bestow life through Jesus Christ. As, then, it is absolute and complete, so it is definite, and the number who are thus predestinated can neither be increased nor diminished.

In the passage above quoted, Eph. i. 5, the cause of predestination as being solely in God is declared. After saying that God had predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, it is added “to himself,” to show that God has no cause out of himself moving him to this grace. In order to enforce this, it is further added, “according to the good pleasure of his will;” and in the third place it is subjoined, “to the praise of the glory of his grace;” from which it follows that it must necessarily be by grace, that is, free, unmerited favour. Love to God, or conformity to the image of Christ, cannot in any respect have its origin in fallen man. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.” “We love him, because he first loved us.”

The *foundation* of predestination is Jesus Christ, by whom we receive the adoption of children. Its *object* is man, not invested with any quality which moves God to predestinate

him; but as corrupted and guilty in Adam, and dead in trespasses and sins until quickened by God. The *blessing* to which God hath predestinated those whom he foreknew is salvation, as it is said, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ;" or, as it is expressed in the verse before us, "to be conformed to the image of his Son." The *means* to all this, are our calling and justification: the *final end* of predestination is the glory of God—"to the glory of his grace;" and, "that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." On the consideration of their election, the Apostles urge believers to walk in holiness. "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." Col. iii. 12. "Ye are a chosen (elected) generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." 1 Peter, ii. 9.

In the election of some and the passing by of others, the wisdom of God is manifest; for by this means he displays both his justice and mercy, otherwise one of these virtues would not have appeared. If all had been withdrawn

from their state of corruption, the justice of God would not have manifested itself in their punishment. If none had been chosen, his mercy would not have been seen. In the salvation of these, God has displayed his grace; and in the punishment of sin in the others, he has discovered his justice and hatred of iniquity.

To be conformed to the image of his Son.— This implies that the children of God must all be made in some measure to resemble Christ, their head and elder brother. This likeness respects character and sufferings, as well as all things in which such similarity is found to exist. The Lord Jesus Christ, the first elect of God, is the model after which all the elect of God must be formed. Man was created in the image of God, but when sin entered he lost his image; and Adam “begat a son in his own likeness after his image,” Gen. v. 3; thus communicating to his posterity his corrupted nature. But as God had determined to save a part of the fallen race, it was “according to his good pleasure” to renew his image in those whom he had chosen to this salvation. This was to be accomplished by the incarnation of his Son, “who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person;” to whose image they were predestinated to be conformed.

This image of the Son of God, consisting in supernatural, spiritual, and celestial qualities, is stamped upon all the children of God when they are adopted into his family. By adoption they become the children of God, and the brethren of Jesus Christ. This adoption is accompanied by a regeneration, in which God imparts to them spiritual life. He renders them partakers of the divine nature; that is to say, of his image, being the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. They are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus, being born of the Spirit, and the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them; and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Thus the souls of believers are conformed to the image of Christ, as their bodies will also be at his second coming, when they shall be "fashioned like unto his glorious body." To this conformity to the image of his Son, all those whom God foreknew are predestinated. For as they have borne the image of the earthy, they shall also bear the image of the heavenly Adam.

Believers are conformed to the image of the Son of God in holiness and suffering in this life, and in glory in the life that is to come. They are conformed to him in holiness, for Christ is made unto them sanctification. Beholding as

in a glass the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image. They put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. In suffering they are conformed to him who was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." They must endure tribulation, and fill up what is behind of his afflictions. As the Captain of their Salvation was made perfect through sufferings, and through sufferings entered into his glory; so the sufferings of his people, while they promote their conformity to him in holiness, are also the way in which they follow him to that glory. "Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom." What the Apostle hath said in the seventeenth verse, that if believers suffer with Christ they shall also be glorified together, is here confirmed by his declaration that they are predestinated to be conformed to his image. This image, of which the outlines are in this world traced in them, is only perfected in heaven.

That he might be the first-born among many brethren.—Here is a reason for those whom God foreknew being conformed to the image of his Son; and a limitation of that conformity which they shall have with him. The reason is, that he might have many brethren. Next to the

glory of God, the object of his incarnation was the salvation of a multitude that no man can number of those whose nature he took, and this was the effect of his death. Referring to this he himself says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." Accordingly, in the everlasting covenant between the Father and the Son, when grace was given to his people in him before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9—and when God promised to him for them eternal life, Titus, i. 2—it was determined that when he should make his soul an offering for sin, he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, and that by the knowledge of him *many* should be justified. He was to bear the sins of *many*. "Glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as *many* as thou hast given him." By his obedience *many* were to be made righteous. As the Captain of their Salvation, he was to bring *many* sons unto glory. To him *many* shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. And as he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, he is not ashamed to call them *brethren*. But as in all things he must have the pre-eminence,

so this limitation is introduced, that among them all he must be the "first-born;" that is to say, the first, the principal, the most excellent, the governor, the Lord.

Under the law the first-born had authority over their brethren, and to them belonged a double portion, as well as the honour of acting as priests; the first-born in Israel being holy; that is to say, consecrated to the Lord. Reuben losing his right of primogeniture by his sin, the dominion belonging to it was transferred to Judah; and the double portion to Joseph, who made two tribes, and had two portions in Canaan by Ephraim and Manasseh; while the right of sacrifice was transferred to Levi. The word first-born also signifies what surpasses any thing else of the same kind, as "the first-born of the poor," Isaiah, xiv. 30; that is to say, the most miserable of all; and the first-born of death, Job, xviii. 13—signifying a very terrible death, surpassing in grief and violence. The term first-born is also used for those who were most beloved, as Ephraim is called the first-born of the Lord, Jer. xxxi. 9—that is, his "dear son." In all these respects, the appellation of first-born belongs to Jesus Christ, both as to the superiority of his nature, of his office, and of his glory.

Regarding his *nature*, he was, as to his Divi-

nity, truly the first-born, since he alone is the only begotten—the eternal Son of the Father. In this respect he is the Son of God by nature, while his brethren are sons of God by grace. In his humanity he was conceived without sin, beloved of God ; instead of which they are conceived in sin, and are by nature children of wrath. In that nature he possessed the Spirit without measure ; while they receive out of his fulness according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Regarding his *office*, he is their King, their Head, their Lord, their Priest, their Prophet, their Surety, their Advocate with the Father ; in one word, their Saviour. It is he who of God is made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. They are all his subjects, whom he leads and governs by his Spirit, for whose sins he has made atonement by his sufferings. They are his disciples, whom he has called from darkness into his marvellous light. Concerning his *glory*, “ God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth.” “ He is the head of the body, the church ; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.” He is the

first-born from the dead, as being raised the first, and being made the first fruits of them that slept, and by his power they shall be raised to a life glorious and eternal.

V. 30.—Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called.—Paul had spoken of God's predestinating his people to be conformed to the image of his Son. Here he shows us how this is effected. They are to be brought to this likeness to their elder brother by being *called* both by the word and Spirit of God. God calls them by his grace, Gal. i. 15—that is, as has been observed, without regard to any thing in themselves. Effectual calling is the first internal operation of grace on those who are elected. They are not merely called externally, as many who are not elected. The Scriptures speak of the universal call of the Gospel addressed to all men; but this is not inseparably connected with salvation, for, in this sense, the Lord has said, that “many are called but few are chosen.” At three periods all mankind were called. They were called through Adam, they were called by Noah, and finally by the Apostles, Col. i. 23. Yet how soon in each period was the external call forgotten by the

great body of the human race. “They did not like to retain God in their knowledge.”

In the passage before us, and in various other places, it is effectual calling that is spoken of. “Whom he did predestinate them he also called.” This calling, then, signifies more than the external calling of the word. It is accompanied with more than the partial and temporary effects which the word produces on some, and is always ascribed to the operation of God by the influence of the Holy Spirit. Even when the external means are employed to most advantage, it is God only who gives the increase.—1 Cor. iii. 6. It is he who opens the heart to receive the word, Acts, xvi. 14—who gives a new heart, Ezek. xxxvi. 26—who writes his law in it, and who saves his people, not by works of righteousness which they have done, but by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. iii. 5.

That which is meant, then, by the word *called* in this passage, and in many others, is the outward calling by the word, accompanied with the operation of God by his Spirit in the regeneration and conversion of sinners. When Jesus Christ thus calls, men instantly believe; Matt. iv. 19. Grace is communicated, and the sinner becomes a new creature. Regeneration is not a work which is accomplished gradually; it is

effected instantaneously. At first, indeed, faith is often weak; but as the new-born infant is as much in possession of life as the full grown man, so the spiritual life is as completely possessed in the moment of regeneration as ever it is afterwards, and previous to that moment it had no existence. There is no medium between life and death; a man is either dead in sin, or quickened by receiving the Holy Spirit. He is either in Christ or out of Christ. Either God has begun a good work in him, or he is in a state of spiritual death and corruption. By means of the word, accompanied by his Spirit, God enlightens the understanding with a heavenly light, moves the will and the affections to receive and embrace Christ, and forms in the heart his image and the new man, of which the Apostle says, that it is created in righteousness and true holiness. God says, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." He prophesies upon the dry bones, and the Spirit enters into them. Thus the same grace that is in operation in the election of the saints, is exercised in their calling and regeneration, without which they would remain dead in trespasses and sins. "No man," says Jesus, "can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

All who are elected are in due time effectually

called, and all who are effectually called have been from all eternity elected and ordained to eternal salvation. Effectual calling, then, is a proper and necessary consequence and effect of election, and the means to glorification. As those whom God hath predestinated he hath called, so he hath effectually called none besides. These words before us, therefore, are to be taken, not only as emphatical, but as exclusive. Consistently with this we read of the faith of God's elect, Tit. i. 1, as that which is peculiar to them. With this calling sanctification is indissolubly connected. It is denominated a holy calling; "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling." 2 Tim. i. 9. The author of it is holy, and it is a call to holiness. "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." 1 Pet. i. 15. It is a calling into the grace of Christ, Gal. i. 6. In this effectual calling the final perseverance of the saints is also secured, since it stands connected on the one hand with election and predestination, and on the other hand with sanctification and glorification. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Calling as the effect of predestination must be irresistible, or rather invincible, and also irreversible.

And whom he called, them he also justified.—

They whom the Holy Spirit effectually calls by the Gospel to the knowledge of God are also justified. They are "ungodly" (Rom. iv. 5) till the moment when they are called; but being then united to Christ, they are in that moment justified. They are instantly absolved from guilt, and pronounced righteous, as having perfectly answered all the demands of the law, for by Him it has been fulfilled in them. To justify signifies to pronounce or account righteous such as have transgressed, and forfeited the favour of God, as well as incurred a penalty, conveying to them deliverance from the penalty, and restoration to that favour. And they who are thus pronounced and accounted righteous by God, must be righteous, for God looks upon things as they really are; as being one with Christ, they are perfectly righteous. "Justification," says Luther, "takes place when, in the just judgment of God, our sins, and the eternal punishment due to them, are remitted, and when clothed with the righteousness of Christ, which is freely imputed to us, and reconciled to God, we are made his beloved children, and heirs of eternal life."* The connexion between calling and justification is manifest, for we must be united to Christ to enjoy the good derived from

* On the Doctrine of Justification, see vol. i. of this Exposition, ch. iii. iv. and v.

him. We must be members of Christ that his obedience may be ours, that in him we may have righteousness. Now, it is by our calling that we are brought into his communion, and by communion with him to the partaking of his grace and blessing, which cannot fail to belong to them who are with him one body, one flesh, and one spirit. Those who are called must, therefore, be justified. Those who are the members of Jesus Christ must be partakers in his righteousness, and of the Spirit of life that is in him. Whom he calls he justifies. This proves that there are none justified till they are called, which refutes the error of those who affirm that the elect are justified from eternity. We are justified then by faith, which we receive when we are effectually called.

Whom he justified, them he also glorified.—A man is justified the moment he believes in Christ, and here glorification is connected with justification. No believer, then, finally comes short of salvation. If he is justified, he must in due time be glorified. Glorification is complete conformity to the glorious image of Jesus Christ; when we shall see him as he is, and be made like unto him, enjoying that felicity which the Psalmist anticipated; “Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

The glorification of the Saints will have its consummation in the day of the blessed resurrection, when their bodies shall be made like to the glorious body of Jesus Christ; when that natural body which was sown in corruption, in dishonour, in weakness, shall be raised a spiritual body in incorruption, in glory, in power. Then death will be swallowed up in victory, all tears shall be wiped away, the Lamb will lead and feed them, and God shall be all in all.

In this verse glorification is spoken of as having already taken place, because what God has determined to do may be said to be already done. "He calls those things that be not as though they were." The Apostle does not say that those whom God predestinates he calls, and that those whom he justifies he glorifies; but speaking in the past time, he says, that them whom God hath predestinated he hath called, hath justified, and hath glorified. By this he expresses the certainty of the counsel of God. In the same way, in the Old Testament, things future were spoken of as already accomplished on account of the infallibility of the promises of God; so that before Jesus Christ came into the world it was said, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." And he himself speaks of what is future as already accomplished. "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

“ Now I am no more in the world.” John, xvii. 4, 11. In like manner the Apostle speaks here of glory as already come, to show how certain it is that they who are called and justified shall be glorified. And this is in accordance with the object he has in view, which is to console the believer amidst his afflictions. For when he thus suffers, and all things appear to conspire for his ruin, and to be opposed to his eternal salvation, he is represented as already glorified by God, and during the combat as having already received the crown of life.

The plan of salvation is here set before us in its commencement, in the intermediate steps of its progress, and in its consummation. Its commencement is laid in the eternal purpose of God, and its consummation in the eternal glory of the elect. He calls those whom he hath predestinated to faith in Christ, to repentance, and to a new life. He justifies by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ those whom he hath called, and finally, he will glorify those whom he hath justified. The opponents of the doctrine contained in this passage, distort the whole plan of salvation. They deny that there is any indissoluble connexion between those successive steps of grace, which are here united by the Apostle, and that these different expressions relate to the same individuals. They suppose that

God may have foreknown and predestinated to life some whom he does not call, that he effectually calls some whom he does not justify, and that he justifies others whom he does not glorify. This contradicts the express language of this passage, which declares that those *whom* he foreknew he predestinated, that those *whom* he predestinated *them* he also called, that those *whom* he called, *them* he also justified, and that those *whom* he justified, *them* he also glorified. It is impossible to find words which could more forcibly and precisely express the indissoluble connexion that subsists between all the parts of this series, or show that they are the same individuals that are spoken of throughout.

The same doctrine is in other places explicitly taught: “*Of him*” (by God, according to his sovereign election) “*are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God*” (by the appointment of God) “*is made unto us wisdom*” (in our calling), “*righteousness*” (by the imputation of his righteousness), “*sanctification*” (in making us conformed to his image)—and “*redemption*” (in giving us eternal glory). These truths are also declared in Thess. ii. 13. “*God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

It is indeed often objected to the doctrine of grace, that, according to it, men may live as they list; if they are certainly to be saved, they may indulge in sin with impunity. But according to Paul's statements in this chapter, all the doctrines respecting the salvation of the elect are undeniably connected, and a single link in the chain is never wanting. He who has ordained the end, has ordained the means. He who has chosen them in Christ, from before the foundation of the world, has chosen them through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. If they are predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, they are in due time called by the word and Spirit of God. If they are called, they are justified, so that there is no unrighteousness to stand in the way of their acceptance. If they are justified, they will also be glorified in the appointed season. How fatally erroneous, then, is the opinion of those who say that, if we are predestinated, we shall obtain eternal glory in whatever way we live. Such a conclusion breaks this heavenly chain. It is vain for human ingenuity to attempt to find an imperfection in the plans of Divine wisdom in arranging the things concerning the salvation of his people.

In the passage before us, then, we see that all the links of that chain by which man is drawn up to heaven, are inseparable. In the whole of

it, there is nothing but grace, whether we contemplate its beginning, its middle, or its end. Each of its parts furnishes the most important instruction. If we are elected, let us feel and experience in ourselves the effects of our election. If we are called, let us walk worthy of our vocation. If we are justified, let us, like Abraham, show our faith and our justification by our works. If we shall be glorified, let us live as fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God. Let our conversation be in heaven, and let us confess that we are pilgrims and strangers on the earth.

In looking back on this passage, we should observe, that, in all that is stated, man acts no part, but is passive, and all is done by God. He is elected, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified by God. The Apostle was here concluding all that he had said before in enumerating topics of consolation to believers, and is going on to show that God is "for us," or on the part of his people. Could any thing, then, be more consolatory to those who love God, than to be in this manner assured that the great concern of their eternal salvation is not left in their own keeping? God, even their covenant God, hath taken the whole upon himself. He hath undertaken for them. He will perfect that which concerneth them.

V. 31.—*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

Here the Apostle makes a sudden and solemn pause, and emphatically demands, *what shall we then say to these things?* Nothing can be said against them, and it is impossible to value them too highly. What use shall we make of these consoling truths? What consolations shall we draw from them? Can any thing detract from the comfort they afford? On the foundation that God is for them, the eternal interest of the Christian is secured, and though he wrestles not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and against the rulers of the darkness of this world; though of himself he can do nothing, yet, through Christ strengthening him, he can do all things. But what shall they say to these things who oppose the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints; who maintain that God allows some to perish whom he had justified; and that many things, instead of working for their good, contribute to their ruin? A conclusion entirely the reverse is to be deduced from all the consolations previously set forth by the Apostle, in reference to which he now exclaims, *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

The expression *if*, which Paul here uses, does not denote doubt, but is a conclusion, or consequence, or affirmation, signifying *since*. As if

he had said, since we see by all these things that God is for us, who shall be against us? For is it not evident that God is for us, since he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father; since the Spirit helps our infirmities; since all things work together for our good; since we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son? When we were alienated from him he called us; when we were sinners he justified us; and finally translating us from a scene of troubles and afflictions, he will confer on us a crown of immortal glory. Since, then, God thus favours us, who shall be against us?

Many, however, in all ages, speak of these things very blasphemously. They are far from being pleasing to man's wisdom. But they excite a different feeling in the breast of every Christian. They give a security to God's people which supports them under a sense of their own weakness. If they had no strength but their own, if there were no security for their perseverance but their own resolutions, they might indeed despond; they never would arrive at heaven. But as this passage shows that all things are secured by God, and that all the links of the chain in the hand of God that unites them with heaven, are indissolubly united together, they have no language in which they

can adequately express their wonder, gratitude, and joy. No truth can be more evident than this—that if God be for us, although we have innumerable enemies, and are ourselves utter weakness, nothing can be so against us as finally to injure us. As the Angel said to Gideon, “the Lord is with thee,” so the same is said in this passage to every Christian. “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.” “All men forsook me,” said Paul, “but the Lord stood by me.” As God had said to Israel, and Moses, and Joshua, so he said, “Fear not, Paul, for I am with thee.” When Christians, surrounded with difficulties and enemies, are disposed to say, with the servant of Elisha, “Alas, what shall we do?” the passage before us speaks the same language as did the Prophet, “Fear not, for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them:” and likewise that of Hezekiah, “There be more with us than with them. With them is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles.” It is added, “And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah, King of Judah.”

In the verse before us we have two propositions. One is, that God is for us; the other, that nothing can be—that is, can prevail—against us. From this we may consider who are against,

and who is for believers. There is arrayed against them a formidable host composed of many enemies. There are Satan and all wicked spirits; the world, and in-dwelling sin; all sufferings; and death itself. How could they themselves withstand the power of such antagonists? But, on the other hand, the Apostle shows in one word who is for them. God, says he, is for us! God is the shield of his people: He holds them in his hand, and none can pluck them out of it. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms!"

V. 32.—He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

In the preceding verse, the Apostle had comforted believers from the consideration that, if God, with all his glorious attributes, were engaged for their defence, they might look without dismay upon an opposing universe. Here, in order to confirm their confidence in God, he presents an argument to prove that God is with them of a truth, and also to assure them that they shall receive from him every blessing.

There are two circumstances calculated to inspire distrust in the mind of the believer. The one is the afflictions which press upon him in this world; and these of two kinds, namely, such as are common to all men, and such as are peculiar to the followers of Christ. The other

circumstance calculated to cloud the hopes of the Christian, is the sins of which he is guilty. When suffering so many troubles, he has difficulty in persuading himself that he is favoured by God, and is ready, with Gideon, to exclaim to the Angel, "Oh, my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" And, on the other hand, as he is by nature a child of wrath and sins daily, how can he be sure that God is with him, and not rather against him? To these objections the Apostle here opposes the declaration that God hath not spared his own Son, but delivered him up to the death for his people. No stronger argument could be offered in proof of his favour to them than the gift of his own Son. He has given him to redeem them from all their sins and all their troubles. A further proof is taken from the dignity and excellency of Christ; thus arguing, from the greater to the less, that he will refuse them nothing after such a gift as that of his own Son,—nothing consistent with the glory of God and the salvation of their souls. He thus assures them of freedom from the evils they might dread from sin and suffering.

Paul does not say here that the *Father* has given his Son, but that *God* has given him. This is calculated to establish the confidence of believers more firmly, since, by referring to

God, he brings into view all his perfections as infinitely good, powerful, wise, and able to render them supremely blessed in holiness and eternal glory. Another effect is to draw their attention to the greatness of the love of God; for one to whom we are in some respects equal may confer on us his favours, but here we are reminded that He who bestows them is infinitely above us, to whom we are indebted even for our existence. His goodness, then, is so much the more wonderful, that though he is the infinite Jehovah, dwelling in light that is inaccessible, of whom it is said “that he humbleth himself to behold the things that are in Heaven”—Ps. cxiii. 6—still he draws near to us, and condescends to raise us up, who are as nothing before him, and who, being the Creator of all things, has set his love on those who are sinful, and poor, and miserable.

What God hath given is his *own Son*.—This imports that he is his Son in the sense of that relation among men. It is sonship in this sense only that shows the immensity of the love of God in this gift. This proves that it was greater than if he had given the whole creation. If his Son were related to him in merely a figurative sonship, it could not be a proof of his ineffable love. God *did not spare him*. Not sparing him may either mean that he spared him not in a way of justice—2 Peter, ii. 4—that is, exacted the

utmost farthing of the debt he had taken upon him, or that he spared him not in a way of bounty—that is, withheld him not. God spared Abraham's son, but he spared not his own Son. This passage shows that Christ was given over by the Father to the sufferings which he bore, and that these sufferings were all necessary for the salvation of his people. Had they not been necessary, he would not have exposed his Son to them. “It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Delivered him up for us all.—When the Jews seized and crucified our Lord Jesus Christ, he was delivered up by the Father's decree, and by the direction of his Providence, though it was through the guilty criminality of the Jews that he was put to death. It took place when his appointed hour arrived, for till then they could not accomplish their purpose. “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” As the Father delivered him up, the great end of his suffering was satisfaction to the justice of God; and as he bore the whole curse of the broken law, his people are never, on that account, to bear any portion of vindictive wrath. “It

was exacted and he answered.”—Isa. liii. 7. “Then,” says the Son himself, “I restored that which I took not away.”—Ps. lxix. 4. Thus the Father delivered up his Son to humiliation, involving an assumption of our nature and our transgressions. He delivered him up to sorrows unparalleled, and to death, implying not merely the dissolution of the soul and body, but the weight of the sins of men, and the wrath of God against sin. God thus delivered up his Son, that he might rescue us from that misery which he might have justly inflicted upon us, and might take us, who were children of wrath, into his heavenly presence, and there rejoice over us for ever, as the trophies of his redeeming love.

For us all.—That is, for all to whom the Apostle is writing, whom he had addressed as beloved of God, called, saints, Rom. i. 7, among whom he ranks himself. But as these epistles to the Churches equally apply to all believers to the end of time, so this expression includes all the elect of God—all who have been given to Jesus—all in whose behalf he addressed the Father in his intercessory prayer. “I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.”—John, xvii. 9, 20.

How shall he not also with him freely give us all things?—This is the most conclusive reason-

ing. If he has given us the greatest gift, he will not refuse the lesser. His Son is the greatest gift that could be given; plainly, then, nothing will be withheld from those for whom he has given his Son. This also assumes the fact as granted, that Jesus is the Son of God in the literal sense; for in no other sense is the inference just. If Jesus were only figuratively a son, there is no room to infer, from the gift to us, that the Father will give us "all things." These all things are what eye hath not seen nor ear heard. He will give his Spirit and eternal life. His children are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, whom he hath appointed heir of all things. The Apostle does not here speak of himself alone, as if this were a privilege peculiar to himself to receive freely all things with Christ, but of all believers. He will freely give *us*. And the expression, *How*, with which he commences, imports the absolute certainty that on all such they shall be bestowed.

V. 33.—Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Among the temptations to which the believer is exposed in this life, some are from without, others are within him. Within are the alarms of conscience, fearing the wrath of God; without are adversity and tribulations. Unless he overcomes the first of these, he cannot prevail

against the last. It is impossible that he can possess true patience and confidence in God in his afflictions, while his conscience labours under the apprehension of the wrath of God. On this account the Apostle, in the fifth chapter of this Epistle, in setting forth the accompaniments of justification by faith, first speaks of peace with God, and afterwards of glorying in tribulations. In the chapter before us he observes the same order; for, in this last part of it, in which he speaks of the triumph of the believer, he first fortifies the conscience against its fears from guilt, and next secures against external temptations from afflictions. As to the first he says, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? it is God that justifieth, it is Christ that died, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” And as to the last, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors.” He does not mean to say that nothing shall occur to trouble believers, but that nothing shall prevail against them. In assuring them of this, he ascends to their election as to the source of all their blessings.

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?—The Apostle speaks here of God’s elect.

This reminds believers that their election is not to be ascribed to any thing in themselves, but is to be traced solely to the grace and mercy of God, by which they were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.—Eph. i. 4. Their election demonstrates the vanity of all accusations that can be brought against them, either by their own conscience, by the world, or by Satan. Thus, while the Apostle removes every ground of boasting and vain glory, and all presumptuous thoughts of themselves, of their free-will and self-righteousness, he lays the sure foundation of solid peace and of joy in believing. He leads us to the election of God as the source of all the good we enjoy or hope for, in order to set aside every ground for vain glory, and all presumption as to any worthiness in ourselves of our own will or righteousness, so that we may fully recognise the grace and mercy of God to us, who, even when we did not exist, chose us in himself, according to his own good pleasure. Eph. i. 4, 5. He likewise does so that we may have a sure foundation to rest on, even God's eternal and unchangeable purpose, instead of any fallacious hope from reliance on any thing in ourselves. When it is said here, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" it does not refer to men generally, but to believers as the elect of God. The word *elect* must be

taken, in this place, in its connexion with *called*, as in the preceding verses, since it is here found in connexion with justification. For a man might be elected, and yet not be for the present justified, as Paul, when he persecuted the church, who was not justified till he actually believed, though even then elected, and, according to God's purpose and counsel, ordained to salvation.

It is God that justifieth.—There is none that justifies besides God. None can absolve and acquit a sinner from guilt, and constitute and pronounce him righteous, but God alone. “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake,” Is. xliii. 25 ; for it is God alone against whom sin is committed, in reference to future condemnation. “Against thee, thee only have I sinned.”—Ps. li. 5. It is God alone that condemns, and therefore it is God alone that justifies. If, then, God has made believers just or righteous, who is he that will bring them in guilty? There are here two grounds upon which the Apostle founds the justification of believers. One is taken from its author—it is God that justifies; the other is taken from the subjects of this privilege—they are the elect. And thus the freedom of justification, and its permanency, are both certified.

It is here established that the elect are saved

in such a way that nothing can be laid to their charge. All their debt, then, must be paid, and all their sins must be atoned for. If full compensation has not been made, something might be laid to their charge. This shows that salvation is by justice, as well as by mercy, and gives a view of salvation, that never would have entered into the heart of man. Nay, it is so far from human view, that even after it is revealed, it still lies hid from all the world, except from those who are taught of God. And some even of them being slow of heart to believe, are but partially enlightened in this glorious view of the salvation of the guilty.

V. 34.—Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Who is he that condemneth?—In the preceding verse, it is asked who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect; here it is demanded who shall condemn them? They who cannot be accused, cannot be condemned. God himself is pleased to justify the elect, to deliver them from condemnation, and views them as possessing perfect righteousness. And being in this justified state by the judicial sentence of God, who is he that condemneth? There is none that can discover a single sin of which to accuse them as still subjecting them to the curse of the

law, and to bring them into condemnation, from which they have been delivered by what God himself hath done for them. It is here supposed that their condemnation is impossible, because it would be unjust. In similar language, the Lord Jesus, the first elect of God, speaking by the Prophet Isaiah, l. 8, says, "He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me?" These words relate to his confidence in his heavenly Father, who would uphold him as his righteous servant, and it is on his righteousness and work that the acquittal of all those whom the Father hath given him, and who are elected in him, is rested. Four grounds of their freedom from condemnation are here stated,—Christ's death, his resurrection, his sitting at the right hand of God, and his intercession.

It is Christ that died.—By his death, the penalty of the Holy law, on account of its violation by his people, was executed, and satisfaction made to Divine justice. In answer to the question, who is he that condemneth, the Apostle says that Christ died. By this he intimates the impossibility of our being absolved from sin, without a satisfaction being made for the injury done to the rights of God's justice, and the sacred majesty of his eternal laws which had been violated. He shows that it was impossible that we could be justified, without satisfaction being

made to the justice of God. For God could not set aside his justice by his mercy, and justify sinners without an atonement. It is on this account that God had instituted the sacrifices under the law, to hold forth the necessity of a satisfaction, and that without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. There is, then, a manifest necessity of repairing the outrage against the perfections of God, which are the original and fundamental rule of the duty of the creature. This reparation could only be made by a satisfaction that should correspond with the august majesty of the holiness of God; and consequently it must be of infinite value, which could only be found in a person of infinite dignity.

To the death of Jesus Christ as the atonement for sin, our eyes are constantly directed throughout the Scriptures, whether by types, by prophecies, or by historical descriptions of the event. Death was the punishment threatened in the Covenant of works against sin, and as Jesus Christ had neither transgressed that covenant, nor could have the sin of Adam imputed to him, because he sprang not from him by the way of natural generation, he being without sin, the penalty of death could not be incurred. Death, then, which is the wages of sin, must have been suffered by him for sinners. Their

iniquities were laid upon him, and by his stripes they are healed. His death, therefore, utterly forbids condemnation to the elect of God, who had been given to him, and were one with him, of whom only the context speaks. It must be a just compensation for their sins. It is evidently implied that none for whom he died can be condemned. For if condemnation be forbidden by his death, then that condemnation must be prohibited with respect to all for whom he died. His death made satisfaction to justice for them, and, therefore, in their case both accusation and condemnation are rendered impossible.

Yea rather, that is risen again.—This is the second ground affirmed by the Apostle against the possibility of the condemnation of God's elect. What purpose would the death of Christ have served if he had been overcome and swallowed up by it? "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." If he be not risen, it must be because he had not expiated those sins for which he died, and was therefore retained a prisoner by death. But since the Surety has been released from the grave, complete satisfaction must have been made. His resurrection, then, is the proof of his victory, and of the entire expiation of his people's sins. It is, therefore, opposed to their condemnation, as being their absolution and ac-

quittal, for as the death of Jesus Christ was his condemnation, and that of all united to him, so his resurrection is his absolution and also theirs. As the Father, by delivering him to death, condemned their sins in him, so, in raising him from the dead, he pronounced their acquittal from all the sins that had been laid upon him. This is what the Apostle teaches respecting the justification of Jesus Christ. He was justified by the Spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 16; that is, declared and recognised to be righteous; and with regard to his people's justification in him, that as he had died for their sins, so he was raised for their justification. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a manifestation of his Godhead and Divine power. He was declared to be the Son of God, and consequently possessing over all things absolute power and dominion. "For to this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

Who is ever at the right hand of God.—This is the third ground on which the security of God's elect is rested. Jesus Christ sits at God's right hand. This is a figurative expression, taken from the custom of earthly monarchs, to express special favour, and denotes with respect to Christ both dignity and power. "When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Ha-

ving finished the work of redemption, this was the result of his labours, and the testimony of its consummation. His thus *sitting down* indicates an essential difference between our Lord Jesus Christ and the Levitical priests. "Every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering often times the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin for ever sat down on the right hand of God." The Levitical priests had never finished their work; it was still imperfect. They *stood*, therefore, ministering daily in token of continued service. But Christ having offered one sacrifice for sins, by which he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, for ever *sat down* on the right hand of God.—Heb. x. 12.

Jesus Christ, then, is not only raised from the dead, but has also ascended into heaven, and is possessed 'of all power and glory, and is there to defend his people. His seat at the right hand of God signifies his permanent exaltation as Mediator, and his communion with God in sovereign power and authority, reigning as the Head and King of his Church. The amount, then, of the Apostle's reasoning is, that such being the condition of him who was dead and is risen again, possessed of the keys of hell and of death, who shall dare to appear before him

to bring an accusation against his members, or to condemn the elect of God?

Who also maketh intercession for us.—This is the fourth and last ground of the security of God's elect. The intercession of Jesus Christ is the second act of his priesthood, and is a necessary consequence of his sacrifice, which is the first act, and precedes the third, namely, his coming forth from the heavenly sanctuary to *bless* those whom he has redeemed to God by his blood. His intercession consists in that perpetual application which he makes to his Father in the name of his Church, of the blood which he shed on the cross for the salvation of his people, in order to obtain for them the fruits of that oblation. It was necessary that his sacrifice should be offered upon earth, because it was an act of his humiliation; but his intercession, which supposes the establishment of righteousness and peace, is made in heaven, being an act of his exaltation. This intercession was figuratively represented by the high priest in Israel, when, after having offered in his linen garments the sacrifice outside of the holy place, he took the blood of the victim, and clothed in his sacerdotal golden robes, entered alone into the most holy place, and sprinkled the blood on and before the mercy-seat. Jesus Christ, then, in accomplishing the truth of this figure, first

offered upon earth his sacrifice, and afterwards entered in his glory into heaven, to present to his Father the infinite price of his oblation by the mystical sprinkling of his blood. This is not to be understood as being any bodily humiliation, as bowing the knee before God, but it is the presenting of his blood of perpetual efficacy. It is the voice of that blood which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. The blood of Jesus Christ being the blood of the everlasting covenant—that blood which was to reunite men with God, and God with men—it was necessary, after its being shed on the cross, that it should be thus sprinkled in heaven. “I go,” says he to his disciples, “to prepare a place for you.” It was necessary that this blood should be sprinkled there, and also upon them before they could be admitted. But by its means they were prepared to enter into heaven, and heaven itself was prepared for their reception, which, without that sprinkling, would have been defiled by their presence. “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.” Jesus Christ is not only seated at the right hand of God, but he is there for the very purpose of interceding for his people. By the perpetual efficacy of his blood their sins are removed, and

consequently every ground of their condemnation. This never-ceasing intercession of him, who ever lives to advocate the cause of his people, not only procures the remission of their sins, but also all the graces of the Holy Spirit. And by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit an internal aspersion is made upon their hearts when they are actually converted to God, and when by faith they receive the sprinkling of the blood of their Redeemer. For them he died, he rose, he ascended to heaven, and there intercedes. How then can they be condemned? How can they come short of eternal glory?

V. 35.— Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

In the contemplation of those glorious truths and divine consolations which the Apostle had been unfolding, he had demanded who shall *accuse*, who shall *condemn* the elect of God? he now triumphantly asks, who shall *separate* them from the love of Christ? Having pointed out the grounds on which the fears of believers from within are relieved, he now proceeds to fortify them against fears from without. This order is the more proper, since their internal fears and misgivings are more formidable than their outward trials and the hatred and opposition of the world; and until the believer, as has been ob-

served, has overcome the former, by having the answer of a good conscience towards God, he is not prepared to withstand the latter. Although the people of God are exposed to all the evils here enumerated, these shall not prevail to separate him from the love of Christ.

The term *the love of Christ* in itself may signify either our love to Christ, or Christ's love to us. But that it is Christ's love to us in this place there can be no question. A person could not be said to be separated from his own feelings. Besides, the object of the Apostle is to assure us not so immediately of our love to God, as of his love to us, by directing our attention to his predestinating, calling, justifying, and glorifying us, and not sparing his own Son, but delivering him up for us. In addition to this, it contributes more to our consolation to have our minds fixed upon God's love to us, than upon our love to him. For as our love is subject to many failings and infirmities; and as we are liable to change, to endeavour to impart consolation from the firmness of our love, would be less efficacious than holding forth to us the love of God, in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of change. The language, too, employed favours this sense, for the Apostle does not say who shall separate Christ from our love, but who shall separate us from the love of Christ;

and in the 37th verse, the meaning is determined by the expression, “we are more than conquerors *through him that loved us.*” God, however, in loving his children, makes them love him, and believers are enabled to love Christ, because he loves them. It is he who loved us first, and in loving us, has changed our hearts, and produced in them love to him.

To have a just idea of the love of Christ, we must look to its duration. It was from before the foundation of the world—from all eternity. We must consider that it is he who has loved us who dwells in light inaccessible, before whom the inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers, and the nations as a drop of a bucket. We must remember, too, who we are, who are the objects of his love, not only creatures who are but dust and ashes, dwelling in houses of clay, but who were his enemies, and by nature children of wrath. We must also reflect on the greatness of his love, that it is his will that we should be one with him, and that he guards us as the apple of his eye.

The love which is here spoken of as the security of believers being the love of Christ, Christ must be God. Were Christ not God, we might come short of Heaven without being separated from his love. He might love, and not be able to save us.

It is also to be remarked that the confidence of believers, that they shall not be separated from the love of Christ, is not founded on their high opinion of themselves, or on their own ability to remain firm against all temptations, but is grounded on Christ's love to them, and his ability to preserve and uphold them. As nothing can be laid to their charge, as none can condemn them, as all things that happen to them, instead of proving injurious, work together for their good, it is impossible that they can be finally lost. If Christ have such love to them, what shall separate them from that love?

In specifying those evils which it might be apprehended were calculated to separate the believer from the love of Christ, the Apostle points out the sufferings of the people of God; the *time* of these—all the day long; the *manner*—as sheep for the slaughter; the *cause*—for thy sake. He distinguishes the seven evils that follow, 1st, *Tribulation*.—This is placed first, as being a general term which comprehends all particulars which he afterwards enumerates. It means affliction in general. It refers not only to the general state of suffering which, when man had sinned, it was pronounced should be his lot, “In sorrow shalt thou eat of it (of the produce of the ground) all the days of thy life,” but also more particularly to the tribulation

which the disciples of Christ shall all more or less experience. “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” John xvi. The tribulation of unbelievers is the effect of the wrath of God; but the afflictions of his people are salutary corrections, which, so far from separating them from his love, yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and are for their profit, that they might not be condemned with the world, but be partakers of his holiness. “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.”

To tribulation is added, 2d, *Distress*, which signifies straits, difficulties, critical situations; it means the perplexity in which we are when under pressure or trouble; no way of deliverance seems to present itself, and we know not how to escape. The word denotes a narrow place, in which we are so much pressed or straitened that we know not where to go or to turn; which expresses the condition of the believer when he is not only oppressed, but reduced to extremity. “Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress.” Ps. iv. 1.

3d, *Persecution* is affliction for the profession of the Gospel. The persecuted have often been pursued and constrained to fly from place to place, as the Lord Jesus was carried into Egypt when Herod sought to kill him. “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”

But so far is persecution from separating believers from the love of Christ, that “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”

4th, *Famine*.—To this the persecuted are often subjected, though they may have been rich and powerful.

5th, *Nakedness*.—The disciples have often been stripped by their enemies, and obliged to wander naked in deserts, and to hide themselves like wild beasts, in caves of the earth. Heb. xi. 38. Paul himself was frequently exercised with hunger, and thirst, and fastings, and cold, and nakedness.

6th, *Peril*.—This refers to the dangers to which the Lord’s people are exposed. These, at some times, and in some countries, are exceedingly many and great, and at all times, and in all countries, are more or less numerous and trying. If God were not their protector, even in this land of freedom, the followers of the Lamb would be cut off or injured. It is the Lord’s providence that averts persecution, or overrules events, for the protection of his people. This is too little considered, even by themselves, and would be thought a most unfounded calumny or fanatical idea by the world. But let the Christian habitually consider his safety and protection as secured by the Lord, rather than by the libe-

rality of the times. That time never yet was when the Lord's people could be safe, if circumstances removed restraint from the wicked. Those who boast of their unbounded liberality would, if in situations calculated to develope their natural hatred of the truth, prove, after all, bitter persecutors.

7th, *Sword*.—This means violence carried to the utmost extremity. It is persecution which stops not with smaller injuries, but inflicts even death.

V. 36.—As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

As it is written.—The Lord and his Apostles frequently appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures, by which they testify to them as the Word of God, and also show the agreement between the Old Testament and the New. The reference then is not intended to state a similar fact in similar language, by way of what is called accommodation, according to the interpretation of Mr Stuart, Mr Tholuck, and others.* A greater indignity to the Scriptures, and the Spirit of God, by whom they were dictated, cannot be offered, than to assert that passages of the Old Testament, which are quoted by the Apostles as predictions, are only a silly accom-

* On this subject, see vol. i. 104-9, 2d Edit.

modation of words. They would not merely be silly, but heinously criminal. It is not only irreverent to suppose that the Apostles, in order to enforce the truth of what they were teaching, would quote the language of the Spirit in a meaning which the Holy Spirit did not intend to convey, but there is a charge of palpable falsehood and dishonesty against the writers of the New Testament, as calling that a fulfilment which is not a fulfilment, and appealing to the Old Testament declarations as confirmatory of their own doctrine, when they were aware that it was merely a fanciful accommodation of words, and that they were deluding their readers. Are practices to be admitted in explanation of the Word of God which are never tolerated on other subjects, and which, if they were detected, would cover their authors with disgrace? *

* Mr Tholuck, in vindicating the practice of quoting the Scriptures in the way of accommodation, says, "The pious Jew loved to use Bible phrases, in speaking of the things of common life." Such a practice is unworthy of piety, and of reverence for the Scriptures. If the Scriptures might lawfully be used in this manner, their true meaning would soon be overwhelmed with a chaos of absurdities. Mr Tholuck continues— "as this seemed to connect in a manner his personal observations and the events of his own history, with those of Holy writ." What a bond of connexion is this! "Thus, the Talmud," he subjoins, "contains numerous quotations, intro-

The quotation here shows, that this passage in the Psalms to which the reference is made was, in its fullest sense, a prediction, and this regards the fulfilment. It was indeed an historical fact, and verified with respect to the Jews. But this fact, instead of proving it not to be prophetic and typical, is the very circumstance that fits it for that purpose. "The quotation here," says Professor Stuart, "comes from Ps. xlv. 22 (Sept. xliii. 22), and is applied to the state of Christians in the Apostle's times, as it was originally to those whom the Psalmist describes; in other words, the Apostle describes the state of suffering Christians, by the terms which were employed in ancient days to describe the suffering people of God." What could be more degrading to the book of God than the supposition that the Apostles ever quoted the Scriptures, by way of accommodation? How does

duced by such forms. . . This practice was also followed by the Apostles." There is not one instance in which the Apostles, appealing to the Old Testament Scriptures, followed such a practice. It is the unfounded allegation of persons who are not aware, as they ought to be, of the character of a revelation from God in his own words. Is the Word of God to be treated in this manner? Is it to become the sport of the ingenuity of learned men, of which Mr Tholuck has given so flagrant an example in his exposition of the 25th verse of the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans?

this hide the glory of the perfection of the Old Testament, as it exhibits Christ and his Church in figure !

For thy sake.—It was for God's sake that the Jews were hated and persecuted by the other nations, because, according to the commandment of God, they separated themselves from them in all their worship. They could have no religious fellowship with them, and on that account they were looked upon to be enemies to the rest of mankind. In like manner, when Christianity appeared, bringing a solemn charge of falsehood against all other religions in the world, Christians were accused of hating all mankind. This was the great charge against them in primitive times by the heathens, and even by such historians as the so-called philosophic Tacitus. Christians, in the same way, are still hated by the world, because they profess that salvation is only through the blood of Christ. As this implies that all who do not hold that doctrine are in error and ignorance, and under condemnation, it excites in the strongest manner the enmity of the world. But the reason of this hatred must be traced to a principle still deeper, even the enmity of the carnal mind against God, and against his image in man wherever it is seen. It is the working

of that enmity which God put at the beginning between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

The afflictions and trials of the people of God are here referred to, to induce believers to exercise patience, and to teach them not to promise themselves an exemption from that treatment which those who formerly lived under the covenant of God experienced, and to remember, that if they are sometimes spared, it is owing to the forbearance and mercy of God. They are quoted to lead them to consider the goodness of God in former times, in the issues of the afflictions with which he visited his people, which was not to separate them from his love, but to do them good in the latter end. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." How much consolation and joy should Christians experience in suffering affliction of any description whatever, when they can appeal to their Lord and Saviour, and say it is for thy sake. Matt. v. 11. So far from being separated from the love of Christ by such sufferings, they are by them made more conformable to his image. In suffering for evil, men are conformable to the image of the first Adam.

We are killed all the day long.—In speaking

of those sufferings, which shall not separate believers from God, the Apostle here refers to death, the highest point to which they can be carried. As to the time, he speaks of it as "all the day;" that is, they are constantly exposed to the greatest measure of suffering in this life, and are frequently exercised with it. *We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*—The enemies of the people of God have often given them up to death with as little reluctance as sheep are driven to the slaughter. There is pity even for the murderer on the scaffold, but for Christ and his people there is none. The cry still is against the servants, as it was against the Master, crucify, crucify. Even in death they find no sympathy. This is attested by history in every age and country. When there is a respite from persecution, it is through the kind providence of God, when he restrains the malice of him who was a murderer from the beginning, and the evil passions of men who are the willing instruments of Satan.

V. 37.—Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

The sufferings of believers above enumerated, which, as the Apostle had just shown, verify the truth of the ancient predictions of the word of God, shall not separate them from the love of Christ; but, on the contrary, are to them the

sources of the greatest benefits. Through them they are *more than conquerors*.—This is a strong expression, but in its fullest import it is strictly true. The Christian not only overcomes in the worst of his trials, but does more than overcome his adversaries, and all those things which seem to be against him. It is possible to overcome, and yet obtain no advantage from the contest, nay, to find the victory a loss. But the Christian not only obtains the victory, but he is also a gainer by the assault of his enemy. It is better for him than if he had not been called to suffer. He is a gainer and a conqueror, both in the immediate fruits of his sufferings, as God overrules them for his good, bringing him forth from the furnace as gold refined, and also in their final issue; for “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

Through him that loved us.—The Apostle says that we are more than conquerors, not through him that loves us, but through him that loved us, using the past time, thus directing our attention to Christ dying for us. His love to us is the character by which Christ is often described, as if it were that by which he should be best known to us, and as if in comparison there was none but he alone who loved us. “Who loved me,” says the Apostle, “and gave himself

for me.” “ Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” “ Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” This expression shows that the confidence spoken of in this place, is a confidence that is wholly grounded on Christ’s love and power, and not on our own firmness. It is not by our own loyalty and resolution, but through him that loved us, that we are more than conquerors. In the Apostle Peter we see the weakness of all human affection and resolutions.

V. 38.—For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come.

In the preceding verses, Paul had proclaimed the triumph of believers over every thing within and without them, that seemed to endanger their security. He had spoken of tribulation, and distress, and persecutions, and famine, and nakedness, and peril, and sword, over all of which he had pronounced them to be more than conquerors. He now proceeds, in the same triumphant language, to defy enemies still more formidable ; asserting that all the conceivable powers of the universe shall not be able to separate them from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ.

For I am persuaded.—Here Paul introduces his own persuasion of the love of God to his

people, that others may imitate him in this, as appears in the next verse, by his making the constancy of God's love a privilege not peculiar to himself, but common to all his people. He sets before believers this persuasion to confirm them in the conviction, that they need not fear the want of God's support to enable them to overcome all trials, and surmount all dangers. For this persuasion is not conjectural, but an assured confidence, such as he expresses when he says, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2 Tim. i. 12. It is the love of God in Christ, and therefore must be constant.

That neither death.—Death itself shall not separate believers from the love of God, nor should they question his love because he has appointed that once they should die. Death, with all its accompaniments, which are always solemn, and sometimes terrible, may wear the semblance of God's displeasure. But notwithstanding the pains and sufferings by which it is usually preceded, especially when inflicted by persecution, to which there may be here a particular allusion, notwithstanding the humiliating dissolution of the body into dust, yet God is with his children when they walk through this dark valley, and "precious in the sight of

the Lord is the death of his saints." In their death they have fellowship with him who has disarmed it of its sting, and destroyed him that had the power of death. So far from separating them from God, it is his messenger to bring them home to himself. If its aspect be terrible, it is still like the brazen serpent in the wilderness, which has but the form of a serpent, without its deadly poison. It dissolves the earthly house of their tabernacle, but introduces them into their house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It discharges the soul from the burden of sin, that it may be clothed with perfect holiness; for death, although the effect of sin, is the occasion of slaying and destroying it in the believer.

Nor life.—This is the next thing that the Apostle enumerates as threatening to separate believers from the love of God. It includes all the dangers and difficulties they have to encounter while passing through this world, and carrying about with them a body of sin and death amidst the various temptations from prosperity or adversity to which they are exposed. Yet God is their shepherd, and the Holy Spirit their leader. So far from separating them from the love of God, life as well as death is included among the privileges which belong to the children of God.—1 Cor. iii. 22.

Nor Angels.—Some restrict this to good Angels, and some to evil Angels. There is no reason why it should not include both. Mr Stuart asks, how can the *good Angels*, ‘ who ‘ are sent forth to minister to such as are heirs ‘ of salvation (Heb. i. 14), be well supposed ‘ to be *opposers* and *enemies* of Christians ? ’ But why did Mr Stuart pronounce such a judgment in the face of the Apostle himself on another occasion ? If “ an Angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” Could an Angel from heaven be supposed a false preacher rather than a persecutor ? But such suppositions are common in Scripture, and do not imply the possibility of the thing supposed. It fully justifies them if they would follow from the supposition, were it realized. By the expression, “ Nor height, nor depth,” Mr Stuart understands is meant neither heaven nor hell ; did he not observe then that this is inconsistent with his objection to explaining the term, *principalities* and *powers*, as referring to heavenly Angels ? If height means heaven, surely it is the inhabitants of the place who are meant, not the place itself.

Nor principalities, nor powers.—This is also variously interpreted. Some confine it to Angels, and some to civil rulers. There is no rea-

son that it should not extend to the words in their widest meaning. It is true of civil powers; it is equally true of all angelic powers. It is as true with respect to principalities in heaven, as it is with respect to those in hell. Were all the principalities through all creation to use all their power against Christians, it would not succeed. They have Christ on their side, who, then, can prevail against them? This justifies strong expressions in the exhibition of Divine truth. We are warranted by this to illustrate Scripture doctrine from the supposition of things impossible, in order the more deeply to impress the human mind with the truth inculcated. This fact is of great importance as to the explanation of Scripture.

Nor things present, nor things to come.—Neither the trials nor afflictions in which the children of God are at any time involved, nor with which they may at any future period be exercised, will avail to separate them from Christ. There is nothing that can happen against which the Providence of God does not secure them. What dangers should they dread when he says, “Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they

shall not overflow thee : When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Nothing does happen, nothing can happen, which from eternity he hath not appointed and foreseen, and over which he hath not complete control.

V. 39.—Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nor height, nor depth.—These expressions appear to comprise all that had been said of Angels, principalities, and powers, including them all together to give greater force to the declaration concerning them. Wherever they were, or whatever other power might inhabit heaven above, or hell beneath, if either a part of them, or the whole in combination, were to assail those whom Jesus loves, it would be of no avail. A reference may also be made to the highest state of prosperity to which a man may be elevated, or the lowest degree of adversity to which he may be depressed. Neither the situation of Solomon the King, nor that of Lazarus the beggar, although both dangerous in the extreme, shall separate the believer from the love of God.

Nor any other creature.—The Apostle here,

in the conclusion of his discourse, after his long enumeration, intending to accumulate into one word all possible created existence in the whole universe, adds this expression, which completes the climax. Any other creature, that is, any creature which is already, or hereafter should be made, all being created by, and for Jesus Christ, and subordinate to his power,—no such creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in him.

The Love of God.—Here what was before called the love of Christ, is called the love of God. Could such a variety of expressions be used if Christ were not God as well as the Father? Among all the uncertainties of this life, that which is certain and can never fail, is the love of God to his children. On this ground, Job, when deprived of all his earthly possessions, exclaims, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”—Job, xiii. 15. “My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.”—Ps. lxxiii. 26.

In Christ Jesus our Lord.—The love of God is here declared to be in Christ Jesus, to show that it is not God’s love in general that is here referred to, but that covenant love with which God loves us as his children, his heirs, and joint heirs, with his only begotten and well beloved

Son. If it were simply said that God loves us, we might say, in reflecting on our sins, how can God love such sinful creatures as we are; and how can we assure ourselves of the continuance of his love, since we are daily sinning, and provoking him to anger? The Apostle, therefore, sets forth to us Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, as the medium of this love, in order that while we see that we are sinners and worthy of condemnation, we may regard ourselves as in Jesus Christ in whom we are reconciled, and washed from our sins in his blood. It is this medium to which the Apostle refers, when he says, "he hath made us accepted in the Beloved," and God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;" he "hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Eph. i. 4. As, then, Jesus Christ is the true object of the love of the Father, as he testified by the voice from heaven, so in him he loves his people with an everlasting love. To him he had given them from eternity, and has united them to him in time, that he might love them in him, and by him. Thus the Father loves no man out of the Son. As the sins of men had rendered them enemies to God, his justice could never have permitted them to be the objects of his love, if he had not expiated their sins, and washed them

in the blood of his Son. Whoever is not in Christ, is not loved by the Father. As the Apostle John testifies that God hath given us life, and this life is in his Son, so the Apostle Paul here declares that God hath given us his love, but that this love is in Jesus Christ. Consequently, we should not look for its cause in our works, or in any thing in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ alone. Its incomprehensible extent and eternal duration are seen in his own words when, addressing his Father, he says, "and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me;" and again, "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John, xvii. 23.

The love of God, then, to his people flows entirely through Jesus Christ. Men in general are fond of contemplating God as a God of benevolence. They attempt to flatter him by praising his beneficence. But God's love to man is exercised only through the atonement made to his justice by the sacrifice of his Son. Those, therefore, who reject Christ and hope to partake of God's love through any other means than Christ's all-powerful mediation, must fail of success. There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby a sinner can be saved. As there was no protection in Egypt from death by the hand of the destroying angel except in those houses that were sprinkled with

the blood of the Paschal Lamb, so none will be saved in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, except those who are sprinkled with the blood of atonement.

The order followed by the Apostle in all this discourse is very remarkable. First, he challenges our enemies in general, and defies them all, saying, "if God be for us, who can be against us?" Next, he shows in detail that neither the want of any thing good, nor the occurrence of any evil, ought to trouble us. Not the want of any good, for "God hath not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how then shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Not the occurrence of any evil, for that would be either within us or without us. Not within us, for the evil that is within us is sin. Not as to sin, "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is ever at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Not any thing without us, for it would be either in the creatures, or in God. Not in the creatures, for that would be "tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword." But "In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us." Not in God, for then there must be variableness and

change in his love. "Now," says the Apostle, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." On this he rests the believer's peace and assurance, and with these words he concludes his rapturous song of the victory and triumph of faith.

Well, indeed, may the Gospel be called the wisdom of God. It harmonizes things in themselves the most opposite. Is it not astonishing to find the man, who before had declared that there was no good thing in him, here challenging the whole universe to bring a charge against any of the elect of God? With respect to every Christian, in one point of view, it may be asserted that there is nothing good in him; and in another, it may be as confidently asserted that there is in him nothing evil. How could Paul say of himself, that after he was a partaker of the holiness of the Spirit of the truth there was nothing good in him? It was as concerned his own corrupt human nature. On what principle could he say, who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is as they are in Christ Jesus. This is beautifully exhibited, 1 Cor. i. 30. God hath united us to Christ Jesus in such

an intimate manner that his obedience is our obedience. His sufferings are our sufferings. His righteousness is our righteousness, for he is made unto us righteousness. This fully explains the ground on which we stand righteous before God; we stand in Christ. He has taken away all our sins. He was made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. It is of the highest importance fully to understand our oneness with Christ. This will give the utmost confidence before God, while we entertain the most lowly opinion of ourselves.

Besides all the other strong grounds of consolation contained in this chapter, it incontrovertibly establishes the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, which, though clearly exhibited in so many other parts of Scripture, is opposed by the Church of Rome, which teaches that believers may finally fall from the love of God, thus representing that love as variable and inconstant. They make the grace of God to depend on the will of man for its effect; and as the will of man is mutable, so they believe that the grace of God is likewise mutable; and having ascribed to their free-will the glory of perseverance, they have, like many who call themselves Protestants, lost altogether the doctrine of the perseverance of believers unto eternal life. Closely con-

nected with this doctrine of perseverance, is the believer's knowledge of his acceptance with God, without which that of his final perseverance, or more properly speaking, the certainty of his preservation by God, could impart to him no comfort. When one of these doctrines is mentioned in Scripture, the other is generally referred to. Both of them are intimately connected with the Christian's love to God, his joy and peace, and with his being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God.

It was one great object of the Apostles to hold out strong consolation to all who had fled for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before them, and to urge them to give all diligence to the full assurance of hope. In exhorting to the duties of the Christian life, they proceeded on the ground that those to whom they wrote had the knowledge of their interest in the mediation of Christ, of the forgiveness of their sins through his love, and of the enjoyment of the love of God, to whom, by that Spirit of adoption, which they had received, they cried Abba, Father. Paul accordingly exhorts the believers at Ephesus not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby *they were sealed unto the day of redemption*, and immediately after enjoins on them the duty of forgiving one another, even as God, *for Christ's*

sake, had forgiven them. “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light.” The Apostle Peter exhorts those to whom he wrote to love one another fervently, *seeing they had purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit*. And the Apostle John enjoins on the little children, the young men, and the fathers, not to love the world, because their sins were forgiven, because they had known him that is from the beginning, and because *they had known the Father*. The exhortations of the Apostles are in this manner grounded on the knowledge that those to whom they were addressed were supposed to have of their interest in the Saviour. Without this the motives on which they are pressed to obedience would be unavailing.

The whole strain of the Apostolic Epistles is calculated to confirm this knowledge which is referred to as the spring of that joy unspeakable and full of glory with which those who were addressed rejoiced. 1 Pet. i. 8. Their faith, then, must have been an appropriating faith, taking home to themselves individually, according to its measure, the promises of mercy, and enabling them to say each for himself, with the Apostle, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live

by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." No believer, without this persuasion that Christ gave himself for him, and that he is "dead unto sin," and "alive unto God," should rest satisfied. If, in opposition to this, it be said that assurance of our interest in Christ is a gift of God, which he bestows as he sees good, it should be recollected that so also are all spiritual blessings; and if of these it is our duty diligently to seek for a continual supply and increase, it is our duty to seek for this personal assurance among the rest. It is glorifying to Christ, our Saviour, and highly important to ourselves. This assurance is what we are commanded to aim at, and to give all diligence to attain, and full provision is made for it in the Gospel. Heb. vi. 11, 20; 2 Pet. i. 11. We enjoy this assurance of our salvation, when we are walking with God, and in proportion as we walk with him.

The full assurance of faith, in which believers are commanded to draw near to God, stands inseparably connected with having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. An evil conscience accuses a man as guilty, as deserving and liable to punishment, and keeps him at a distance from God. It causes him to regard the Almighty as an enemy and avenger, so that the natural enmity of the mind against God is excited and strength-

ened. On the contrary, a good conscience is a conscience discharged from guilt, by the blood of Christ. Conscience tells a man that the wages of sin is death, and that he has incurred the penalty; but when the atonement made by Christ is believed in, it is seen that the punishment due for sin, which is death, has been inflicted on him; the demands of the law have been fulfilled, and its penalty suffered. On this the believer rests, and his conscience is satisfied. It is thus purged from dead works, and this is what is called the answer of a good conscience toward God. 1 Pet. iii. 21. This answer of a good conscience cannot be disjoined from assurance of our acceptance with him to whom we draw near, and the degree in which both this assurance, and a good conscience are enjoyed, will be equal. As far, then, as the duty of a Christian's possessing this assurance is denied, so far the duty of keeping a good conscience is not admitted. The same also is true respecting the grace of hope. Hope is the anchor of the soul, to the attainment of the full assurance of which believers are commanded to give all diligence, and they are encouraged to hold fast the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. It is when they have the hope of beholding Jesus as he is that they purify themselves even as he is pure. 1 John, iii. 3. Hope covers their heads in the

combat in which they are engaged, which they are therefore commanded to put on, and to wear as an helmet, 1 Thess. v. 8. In writing to the Thessalonians, the Apostle ascribes to God and the Lord Jesus Christ the everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, which had been given to them. And he prays for the believers at Rome that the God of hope may fill them with all joy and peace in believing, that they might abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

This good hope through grace, then, as well as a conscience purged from dead works,—the duty of possessing which no Christian will deny—stand inseparably connected with the personal assurance of an interest in the Saviour, and all of them lie at the foundation of love to God, and consequently of acceptable obedience to him. We love him when we see that he hath loved us, and that his Son is the propitiation for our sins. “Thy loving kindness is before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth.” Ps. xxvii. 3. “Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.” Ps. cxix. 166. In this manner was David led to serve God. When, according to the precious promise of our blessed Lord, the Spirit takes of the things that are his—the glory of his person, and the perfection of his work—and discovers them to us, we then

know whom we have believed, the conscience is discharged from guilt, and thus hoping in God, and having our hearts enlarged, we run the way of his commandments, Ps. cxix. 32,—and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, and peace. But how can there be love without a sense of reconciliation with God; and how can the fruits of joy and peace be brought forth till the conscience is discharged from guilt?

“ The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” 1 Tim. i. 5. Love flows from a pure heart, a pure heart from a good conscience, and a good conscience from true faith. The necessity of a good conscience, in order to acceptable obedience to God, is forcibly pointed out, Heb. ix. 14. “ How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” Till this takes place, all a man’s doings are *dead works*, or, as the Apostle expresses it in the seventh chapter of this Epistle, “ fruit unto death.” An evil or guilty conscience leads a man to keep at a distance from God, like Adam, who, conscious of his guilt, hid himself among the trees of the garden. But when the conscience is made good the heart is purified, and love is produced. Then,

and not till then, when ascribing praise to the Lamb who has washed us from our sins in his own blood, and having a sense of reconciliation with God, and of the enjoyment of his favour, we serve him in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter—not from servile fear, but with gratitude and filial affection. Thus having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an High Priest over the House of God, we draw near with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. We enjoy the persuasion that, by his mercy, we are saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

The Spirit of God being holy, will not produce Christian assurance without, at the same time, producing sanctification, and by this sanctification the persuasion is confirmed of our communion with God; for although our sanctification be imperfect, it is a certain mark of our election. When we feel a holy sadness for having offended God, we enjoy the blessedness of those who mourn, and are assured that we shall be comforted. When we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we have the promise that we shall

be filled. This mourning for sin, and thirsting after righteousness, on which the Saviour pronounces his blessing, can only proceed from the Spirit of God, and not from the desire of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. The fruits of the Spirit are first produced by believing in Christ, trusting in him, and regarding what he has done without us, and are increased and confirmed by what he is doing within us. Abounding in the fruits of righteousness, we make our calling and election sure. Keeping his commandments, we prove our love to our Saviour, and he manifests himself to us as he doeth not unto the world.

Personal application, or the appropriation, of faith is often signalized in Scripture. Moses says, "The Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation, he is my God." Ex. xv. 2. Job says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job, xix. 25. "I know," says David, "that God is for me." Ps. lvi. 5. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Ps. xxiii. 1. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup." Ps. xvi. 4. "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength,

in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." Ps. xviii. 1. "I know," says Paul, "whom I have believed." John says, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." Peter, classing himself with those to whom he wrote, blesses God that they were begotten again to a lively hope of an inheritance reserved in Heaven; and referring to their final perseverance he adds, that they were kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. In the hope of that salvation, those who received the doctrine of the Apostles rejoiced as soon as it was announced to them. Acts, ii. 41, viii. 39, xvi. 34. Their joy, then, had not its source in reflection on, or consciousness of their faith, although afterwards so confirmed, but arose in the first instance from the view they had of the glory and all-sufficiency of the Saviour, and his perfect righteousness made theirs by faith, resting on the divine warrant and promise. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." Eph. iii. 12.

Although the assurance of sense be confirmatory of the assurance of faith, it is not so strong as the latter. "Sanctification," says Rutherford, "does not evidence justification as faith doth evidence it, with such a sort of clearness, as light evidences colours, though it be no sign

or evident mark of them; but as smoke evidences fire, and as the morning star in the east evidenceth the sun will shortly rise; or as the streams prove there is a head spring whence they issue; though none of these make what they evidence visible to the eye; so doth sanctification give evidence of justification, only as marks, signs, effects, give evidence of the cause. But the light of faith, the testimony of the Spirit by the operation of free grace, will cause us, as it were with our eyes, see justification and faith, not by report, but as we see the sun's light."

If it be objected that a man cannot know that he has faith without seeing its effects, it is replied that this is contrary to fact. When a thing is testified, or a promise is made to us, we know whether or not we believe it, or trust in it. According to this objection, when Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest," the Eunuch should have replied, you ask me to tell you a thing I cannot know; but instead of this he answers, "I believe." When the Lord asked the blind man "Believest thou in the Son of God?" he did not ask a question which it was impossible to answer. Does the Spirit of God cry in the hearts of believers, Abba, Father, and witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, without their being able to know it? If, however, the flesh

raises doubts in the believer from the weakness of his faith, he should consider that the weakness of his faith does not prevent it from being true faith; that God accepts not the perfection but the reality of faith; that Jesus recognised the faith of him who said, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief," and that these doubts are not in his faith, but opposed to it. They are in the flesh which the believer resists, and says with Paul, "Now, if I do what I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

"In the first act of believing," says Mr Bell, on the Covenants, "sinners have no evidence of grace in themselves; they feel nothing within but sin, they see a word without them as the sole foundation of faith, and on that alone they build for eternity; this is a point of no small importance to saints and sinners. Many of the modern builders are at great pains to keep their hearers from all confidence, till they first discern the evidences of grace in their hearts, and having got evidence, then, and not till then, can they have any just, lawful, or well-grounded confidence, nay, they seem pretty plainly to intimate that a sinner's right to Christ turns on something wrought in him, or done by him, and till he have evidence of this he can claim no interest in Christ, nor assure himself of salvation by him; according to this, Christ, the tree of

life, is forbidden fruit, which the sinner must not touch till he has seen inward evidence. I confess I have not so learned Christ; the sinner's right to Christ turns not at all upon any inward gracious qualifications, but purely on the divine warrant revealed in the word; faith is not a qualification in order to come to Christ, but the coming itself; it is not our right to Christ, but our taking and receiving him to ourselves on the footing of the right conveyed by the Gospel offer."

"'Tis a thing of huge difficulty," says Archbishop Leighton, "to bring men to a sense of their natural misery, to see that they have need of a Saviour, and to look out for one; but then being brought to that, 'tis no less, if not more difficult, to persuade them that Christ is he; that as they have need of him, so they need no more, he being able and sufficient for them. All the waverings and fears of misbelieving minds do spring from dark and narrow apprehensions of Jesus Christ. All the doubt is not of their interest, as they imagine; they who say so, and think it is so, do not perceive the bottom and root of their own malady: They say, they do no whit doubt but that he is able enough, and his righteousness large enough; but all the doubt is, *if he belong to me*. Now, I say, this doubt arises from a defect and doubt of the former,

wherein you suspect it not. Why doubtest thou that he belongs to thee? Dost thou fly to him, as lost and undone in thyself? Dost thou renounce all that can be called thine, and seek thy life in him? Then he is *thine*. *He came to seek and to save that which was lost*. Oh! but I find so much, not only former, but still daily renewed and increasing guiltiness. Why? Is he a sufficient Saviour? Or, is he not? If thou dost say, he is not, then it is manifest, that here lies the defect and mistake. If thou say'st he is, then hast thou answered all thy objections of that kind; much guiltiness, much or little, old or new, neither helps nor hinders, as to thy interest in him, and salvation by him. And for dispelling of these mists, nothing can be more effectual than the letting in of those Gospel beams, the clear expressions of his riches and fulness in the Scriptures, and eminently this, *made of God, wisdom, and righteousness.*"

The religion of the Church of Rome leaves a man nothing but doubts respecting his salvation. It teaches that a Christian should believe in general the promises of God, while the personal application of these promises, and the assurance of God's love, it calls presumption. This subject was one of the grand points of discussion between that Church and the Reformers. But how many Protestants have for-

saken the ground which their predecessors here occupied, and have gone over to that of their opponents. The doctrine of the duty of our personal assurance of salvation, and the persuasion of our interest in Christ, is denied by many, and even doubts concerning this are converted into evidences of faith, although they are directly opposed to it. Doubts of a personal interest in Christ are evidences either of little faith or of no faith. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" If this assurance were built on any thing except on the foundation that God himself hath laid, it would indeed be eminently presumptuous. But in opposition to such opinions, the Apostle John has written a whole Epistle to lead Christians to this assurance. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath a witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

In opposition to the believer's personal assu-

rance of salvation, Satan will represent to him the number and enormity of his sins, and the strictness of God's justice which has often fallen on those whom he hardens. But believers will answer, we know that to God belongeth righteousness, and unto us confusion of faces, but mercy and pardon belong to the Lord our God. If our sins ascend to heaven, his mercy is above the heavens. It is true that sin abounds in us, but where sin abounded grace and mercy have more abounded, and the greater our misery, the greater is the glory of the mercy of God towards us. In entering into Paradise, our Lord Jesus Christ has not taken with him angels, but the spirit of a malefactor, that we might know that the greatest sinners are objects of his compassion. He came into the world to save sinners, and he calls to himself those who are heavy laden with sin. He came to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. The more, then, that we feel the power of sin, the closer we cleave to him. If Peter, affrighted, exclaimed, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," let us, on the contrary, say, Lord Jesus, we come to thee, and the more so because we are sinners, for thou hast been made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in

thee. We have sinned seventy times, and seventy times have fallen again into sin, but God, who commands us to forgive offences even seventy times seven, how many more times will he pardon? In comparison of his love the love of man is not as a drop to the ocean.

The foundation on which believers repel doubts concerning their salvation, rests on the excellence of their Mediator, his love and compassion for them, the merit of his obedience, and their communion with him. As to the excellence of their Mediator, he is the eternal Son of God, the beloved of the Father, for whom they are beloved in him, and his intercession for them is acceptable to God and efficacious. "We have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." It rests on the love and compassion of Jesus. "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." His love to us has been stronger than death, and he himself saith, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Having thus given himself for us, will he reject us? Having ascended to heaven, will he

forget us for whom he descended to earth, and for whom, as the forerunner, he hath again entered heaven to intercede for us, to prepare a place and to receive us to himself?

Believers rest their assurance of salvation on the merit of their Redeemer's obedience; for when their sins are red as crimson, they shall be made white as snow. Our robes have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, whose blood cleanseth us from all sin. It is impossible that sin can be more powerful to destroy us than the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ to save us. We are condemned by the law, but in answer to the law, we plead the blood of Jesus Christ, who hath borne the curse of the law, and who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. We have been condemned by the justice of God, but to this justice we present the righteousness of Christ, who is "Jehovah our righteousness." God hath been angry with us, but in Jesus Christ he hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.

To the temptations of Satan, believers also oppose their communion with Jesus Christ; for Jesus Christ and they are one. We are his members, bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh; his obedience is our obedience; for as we are one body with him, we appear before

our God in him. We are found in him, not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. By communion with him we are already seated together in heavenly places in Christ.

From the 28th verse to the conclusion of the chapter, the greatest encouragement is held out to repose all our confidence on the love of God in Christ Jesus, with the assured conviction that receiving him, we shall be enabled to persevere unto the end. The impossibility of plucking his people out of the Saviour's hand, is here established in the most triumphant manner. Whatever objection is raised against it, is contrary to the power of Jesus Christ, contrary to his love, to the virtue of his sacrifice, and to the prevalence of his intercession ; contrary to the operation of the whole Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in every part of the plan of salvation. If we look upwards or downwards, to heaven above, or the earth, or hell beneath, to all places, to all creatures, neither any nor all of them together shall prevail against us. Were heaven and earth to combine, and all the powers of hell to rise up, they would avail nothing against the outstretched arm of him who makes us more than conquerors. The power of Jesus who is our head, ascends above the heavens, and

descends beneath the depths; and in his love there is a breadth, and length, and depth, and height, which passeth knowledge. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, thy judgments are a great depth."—Ps. xxxv. 5. Can any thing prevail to pluck out of the hands of Jesus Christ those who have fled to him as their Surety, those who are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones; those whom he hath purchased with his precious blood?

The feelings of the believer described in the close of this chapter as viewed in Christ, form a striking contrast with what is said in the end of the former chapter, where he is viewed in himself. In the contemplation of himself as a sinner he mournfully exclaims, "O wretched man that I am." In the contemplation of himself as justified in Christ, he boldly demands, who shall lay any thing to my charge? Who is he that condemneth? Well may the man who loves God defy universal nature to separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord. Although at present the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, although even he himself groaneth within himself, yet in the mean time, all things are working together for his good. The Holy Spirit is interceding

for him in his heart. Jesus Christ is interceding for him before the throne. God the Father hath chosen him from eternity, hath called him, hath justified him, and will finally crown him with glory. The Apostle had begun this chapter by declaring that there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, he concludes it with the triumphant assurance that there is no separation from his love. The salvation of believers is complete in Christ, and their union with him indissoluble.

CHAPTER IX.

IN the preceding chapter, the Apostle had declared the absolute security of the people of God. This leads him to consider the present situation of the great body of the Jewish nation, who, having rejected the Messiah, were now rejected of God. As they were the types of the true Israel, their rejection might seem not to correspond with what he had just been affirming of the security of God's people. It was therefore necessary to enter fully upon this subject. It was, however, one which was sure to be highly offensive to the Jews, and therefore he introduces it in a manner calculated to allay, as far as possible, their prejudices against him; while at the same time, he does not in this matter shun to declare the whole counsel of God, for the instruction of those to whom he was writing.

After expressing his grief on account of the state of his countrymen, without specifying its cause, he enumerates the distinguished privileges of their nation. And then, adverting to their being rejected of God, though still not directly

mentioning it, he begins with observing, that it could not be said that the word of God had taken none effect among them. God had promised to be a God to Abraham, and to his seed, and although the greater part of Israel was now cast off, that promise had not failed. When God said to Abraham, in Isaac shall thy seed be called, he intimated that the promise did not refer to all his children, but to a select number. God gave Isaac to Abraham by a special promise; and farther, in the case of Rebecca, one of her children was a child of promise, the other was not, and this was intimated before they were born. In order to silence all objections that might here arise, as if this proceeding of the Almighty could be charged with injustice, Paul at once appeals to the sovereignty of God, who disposeth of his creatures as to him seemeth good. Especially he refers to what God had said to Moses, as recorded in the Scriptures, when he made all his goodness pass before him, that he would have mercy on whom he would have mercy; thus intimating that his favours were his own, and that, in bestowing, or withholding them, there was no room for injustice.

This view of God's sovereignty being so important, against which the pride of man, until subdued by grace, rises with such rebellious violence, Paul dwells upon it in both its aspects,

as exhibited in the exercise of mercy on whom he will, and hardening whom he will. In acting both in the one way and the other, he declares that God contemplates his own glory. This leads the Apostle immediately to the subject of the election by God of those whom he had prepared to be vessels of mercy, both from among the Jews and the Gentiles. These in reality were the only children of promise of whom Isaac was a type.—Gal. iv. 28. On the other hand, the rejection of the great body of Israel was so far from being contrary to the purpose of God, that it had been distinctly predicted by their own prophets. He closes the chapter by showing, that while this rejection had taken place according to the counsel of God, its immediate occasion was the culpable ignorance and prejudice of the Jews themselves in seeking acceptance with God by their own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God brought in by the Messiah, but on the contrary, opposing him when he appeared.

The manner in which Paul has treated the subject of this chapter furnishes him an opportunity of illustrating the doctrine of election to eternal life, to which, in the one preceding, he had traced up, as to their origin, all the privileges of believers in Christ. It likewise gives occasion to exhibit the sovereignty of God, as

displayed all along respecting the nation of Israel. In this manner the astonishing fact is at the same time accounted for, that so great a portion of the Jewish nation had rejected the promised Messiah, while a remnant among them at that time, as in every preceding age, acknowledged him as their Lord. Mr Stuart says, that 'with the eighth chapter concludes what may 'appropriately be termed the *doctrinal* part of 'our epistle.' But if the sovereignty of God be a doctrine of divine revelation, this assertion is evidently erroneous. Without the development of this important doctrine, which accounts for the fact of the election of some, and the rejection of others, the Epistle would not be complete.

V. 1.—I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.

I say the truth.—What the Apostle was about to declare concerning his great sorrow on account of the present state of his countrymen, would not easily procure credit from them, since they looked upon him as their most determined enemy. Yet it was a truth which he could affirm without hypocrisy, and with the greatest sincerity. *In Christ.*—Paul was speaking as one united to, and belonging to Christ—acting as in his service. This is a most solemn asseve-

ration, and implies, that what he was affirming was as true as if Christ himself had spoken it. In thus referring to Christ, it appears that it was rather his object to impress the truth of what he was declaring on the minds of those whom he addressed, and to prove that what he was about to say respecting the rejection of the Jewish nation did not arise, as might be supposed, from prejudice, or dislike to them, than to place it directly before the Jews themselves, with whom such a reference would have no weight. *I lie not.*—This is a repetition, but not properly tautology. In certain situations an assertion may be frequently in substance repeated, as indicating the earnestness of the speaker. The Apostle dwells on the statement, and is not willing to leave it without producing the effect. *My conscience also bearing me witness.*—For the sincerity of his love for the Jewish nation, the Apostle appeals to his conscience. His countrymen and others might deem him their enemy; they might consider all his conduct towards them as influenced by hatred; but he had the testimony of his conscience to the contrary. *In the Holy Ghost.*—He not only had the testimony of his conscience, but what precluded the possibility of his deceiving, he spoke in the Holy Ghost—he spoke by inspiration.

V. 2.—*That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.*

V. 3.—*For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*

Many interpretations have been given of this passage. Calvin supposes that Paul, actually in “a state of ecstasy,” wished himself condemned in the place of his countrymen. ‘The additional sentence,’ he says, ‘proves the Apostle to be speaking, not of temporal, but eternal death; and when he says *from Christ*, an allusion is made to the Greek word *anathema*, which means *a separation from any thing*. Does not separation from Christ mean, being excluded from all hopes of salvation?’ Such a thing is impossible, and would be highly improper. This would do more than fulfil the demands of the law, it would utterly go beyond the law, and would therefore be sinful; for all our affections ought to be regulated by the law of God. Some understand it of excommunication. But the Apostle could not be excommunicated by Christ, except for a cause which would exclude him from Heaven, as well as from the Church on earth. He could not be excommunicated without being guilty of some sin that manifested him to be an unbeliever. It is not possible that he could wish to be in such a state. Paul’s affection for his countrymen is here indeed expressed in very

strong terms, but the meaning often ascribed to it is not for a moment to be admitted. That any one should desire to be eternally separated from Christ, and consequently punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, is impossible. The law commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves, but not *more* than ourselves, which would be the case, if to promote his temporal or spiritual benefit we desired to be eternally miserable. It should also be recollected, that it is not only everlasting misery, but desperate and final enmity against God, that is comprised in Paul's wish as it is generally understood. It represents him as loving the creature more than the Creator. But who could ever imagine that the desire of being eternally wicked, and of indulging everlasting hatred to God, could proceed from love to him, and be a proper manner of expressing zeal for his glory? It would be strange indeed if Paul, who had just been affirming, in a tone so triumphant, the impossibility that the united efforts of creation could separate him from the love of Christ, should the moment after solemnly desire that this separation should take place, for the sake of any creature, however beloved.

To understand the meaning of this passage, there are three observations to which it is of importance to attend. In the first place, it is

the *past*, and not the present tense, which is employed in the original. What is rendered "I could wish," should be read in the past tense, "I was wishing, or did wish," referring to the Apostle's state before his conversion. The second observation is, that the verb which, in our version, is translated "wish," would have been more correctly rendered, in this place, *boast*; "for I myself boasted, or made it my boast, to be separated from Christ." For this translation, which makes the Apostle's meaning far more explicit, there is the most unquestionable authority.* The third observation is, that the first part of the third verse should be read in a parenthesis, as follows: "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart (for I myself made it my boast to be separated from Christ) for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." By the usual interpretation the Apostle is understood to say, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart," and without stating for whom, or for what, to add, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren." But it appears evident that these words, *for my brethren*, form the conclusion of the above expression, *I have*

* See in the Sixth Book of the Iliad, where the same word occurs, in the dialogue between Diomed and Glaucus, and could not be rendered otherwise.

great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. Paul had himself formerly made it his boast to be separated from Christ, rejecting him as the Messiah; and to prove how much he sympathized with the situation of his countrymen, he appeals, in the bosom of his lamentation for them, to his former experience, when, before his conversion, he had been in the same situation in which they now were, so that he personally knew how deplorable it was. He also intimates his sorrow in such a manner, as to show that he is far from glorying over them, having been himself as deeply guilty as they were; while, according to the doctrine he was inculcating, it was in no respect to be ascribed to himself, that he was happily delivered from that awful condition in which, with grief, he beheld them as now standing.

Paul's sorrow was for those whom he calls his *brethren*. This does not respect a spiritual relationship, as the term brethren so generally denotes in the New Testament, but natural relationship, as Paul here explains it, when he adds, *my kinsmen according to the flesh*. His sorrow for them is the subject of his testimony, which, in a manner so solemn, he had confirmed in the preceding verse. Instead of being gratified with their calamities and rejection, their unbelief occasioned him inexpressible affliction.

In this we may see a characteristic of a Christian. He who has no sorrow for the perishing state of sinners, and especially of his kindred, is not a Christian. No man can be a Christian who is unconcerned for the salvation of others.

V. 4.—Who are Israelites ; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.

Paul here recognises and enumerates the great external privileges belonging to the Jews which aggravated his profound sorrow, on account of their rejection of the Messiah, and their consequent deplorable condition. *Who are Israelites*—That is, the most honourable people on earth ; the descendants of him who as a Prince had power with God. They had the name, because that of Israel was given to Jacob their father by God, when vouchsafing so striking a pre-intimation of his future manifestation in the flesh. *Adoption*—That is, the nation of Israel was a nation adopted by God as a type of the adoption of his children in Christ Jesus. *Glory*.—This most probably refers to the manifestation of the glory of God over the mercy-seat in the Sanctuary. God too set his tabernacle among the Israelites, and walked among them ; which was their peculiar glory, by which they were distinguished from all other nations. The

glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud that went before them in the wilderness. It often filled the Tabernacle and the Temple. His house was the place of his glory. *Covenants.*—The covenant with Abraham, and the covenant at Sinai; in both of which they were interested. *Giving of the law.*—To them the law was given at Mount Sinai; and they were the only people on earth that were so distinguished by God. *The service of God.*—This refers to the Tabernacle and Temple service, or Mosaic institutions of worship. All other nations were left to their own superstitious inventions; the Jews alone had ordinances of worship from God. *Promises.*—The Jews had the promises with respect to the Messiah.

V. 5.—*Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

Whose are the fathers.—The Jews numbered among their progenitors those illustrious men, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and others to whom God had been pleased to manifest himself in a manner so remarkable. *Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.*—This was the completion of all the privileges which the Apostle here enumerates. It was a signal honour to the Jewish nation, that the Messiah was descended from them. *Concerning the flesh.*—This declares that he was really a man having truly the

human nature, and as a man descended from the Jews. At the same time it imports that he had another nature. *Who is over all, God blessed for ever.*—This is a most clear and unequivocal attestation of the Divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every engine of false criticism has been employed by those who are desirous to evade the obvious meaning of this decisive testimony to the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ; but they have never even plausibly succeeded.

The awful blindness and obstinacy of Arians and Socinians in their explanations, or rather perversions of the word of God, are in nothing more obvious than in their attempts to evade the meaning of this celebrated testimony to the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ. They often shelter themselves under various readings; but here they have no tenable ground for an evasion of this kind. Yet, strange to say, some of them have, without the authority of manuscripts, altered the original, in order that it may suit their purpose. There is no difficulty in the words—no intricacy in the construction; yet they have by a forced construction and an unnatural punctuation endeavoured to turn away this testimony from its obvious import. Contrary to the authority of the practice of the language, as has often been incontrovertibly

shown, they substitute God be blessed, for God blessed for ever; or God, who is over all, be blessed, instead of who is over all, God blessed for ever. Such tortuous explanations are not only rejected by a sound interpretation of the original, but manifest themselves to be unnatural, even to the most illiterate who exercise an unprejudiced judgment. The Scriptures have many real difficulties which are calculated to try or to increase the faith and patience of the Christian, and are evidently designed to enlarge his acquaintance with the word of God, by obliging him more diligently to search them and to place his dependence on the Spirit of all truth. But when language so clear as in the present passage is perverted to avoid recognising the obvious truth contained in the Divine testimony, it manifests the depravity of human nature, and the rooted enmity of the carnal mind against God, more clearly than the grossest works of the flesh.

After speaking of the Messiah's coming by the nation of Israel, in respect to his human nature, the Apostle, in order to enhance the greatness of this extraordinary distinction conferred upon it, here refers to his Divine nature, to union with which in one person his human nature was exalted. The declaration of his coming in the flesh clearly imports, as has been

observed, that Christ had another nature. When it is said, 1 John, iv. 3, that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh—which could not be said of a mere man, who could come in no other way—it shows that he might have come in another way, and therefore implies his pre-existence, which is asserted in a variety of passages of Scripture. Of such passages there are four orders. The first order consists of those where his incarnation is ascribed to himself. “Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple.”—Mal. iii. 1. These words manifestly prove that his incarnation, and the preparation for it, such as the mission of John the Baptist, was a work of the Messiah himself, and consequently that he existed before his incarnation. The same truth is declared, when it is said, “For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same;—for verily he took not on him the nature of Angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”—Heb. ii. 14, 16. Here his taking upon him flesh and blood is represented to be by an act of his own will. The same truth is taught where he is introduced as addressing the Father in these terms, “Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt-

offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure : then said I, lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God," — Heb. x. 5, 7 ; and again, " Jesus Christ, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." — Phil. ii. 6. Here we are taught that Jesus Christ himself took this form, and consequently that he existed before he took it.

The second order of passages, asserting the pre-existence of our Lord, are those which expressly declare that Jesus Christ was in heaven before he came into the world. " No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven." And a little after, " He that cometh from above is above all : he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth : he that cometh from heaven is above all." — John, iii. 13, 31. " The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven." — John, vi. 33, 41, 50, 51, 58. " For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." — John, vi. 38. " What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before." — John, vi. 62. " And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self,

with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”—John, xvii. 5.

A third order of passages ascribes actions to Jesus Christ before his birth. “By whom,” says the Apostle, God “made the worlds”—Heb. i. 2, which signifies the creation of the universe; and verse 3, “upholding all things by the word of his power,” which signifies his providence; and verse 10, “And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.” This is part of the response of the Father in the 25th verse of the hundred and second Psalm to his Son, complaining that he had weakened his strength in the way, and praying not to be taken away in the midst of his days; to which the Father immediately answers, “Thy years are throughout all generations,” and continues his reply to the end of the Psalm. “This man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.”—Heb. iii. 3. Here the Apostle teaches that Jesus Christ is the builder of the church, over which Moses only acted as a servant. “One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things,”—1 Cor. viii. 6, which implies both creation and preservation. “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature;

for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”—Col. i. 15, 16. Here Jesus Christ is declared to be the creator of all things. This is also affirmed concerning him before his incarnation.—John, i. 3. “Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.”—1 Peter, iii. 19. The Son of God preached by his Spirit to the inhabitants of the earth before the flood, who are now in the prison of Hell, which supposes his existence before he was born.

A fourth order of passages clearly proves the pre-existence of our Lord Jesus Christ. “This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man, which is preferred before me; for he was before me.”—John, i. 15, 30. He could not be before John unless he had existed prior to his birth, since John was born before him. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.”—John, viii. 58. “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from

everlasting.”—Micah, v. 2. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.” “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”—Rev. i. 8, 11; xxii. 13.

To all these passages must be added that of Proverbs, viii. (compared with 1 Cor. i. 24), where wisdom is declared to have existed when God formed the universe; and also John, i. 1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Than this last passage, nothing could more explicitly declare the pre-existence and Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are few of the predictions concerning the Messiah in which his two natures are not marked. In the first of them, The seed of the woman, denotes his humanity; while the words, “He shall bruise thy head,” declare his divinity. In the promise to Abraham, his humanity is marked by the words “In thy seed;” while in what follows, “shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,” we read his divinity. “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth”—this is his divinity. “Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold”—this is his

humanity. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son"—this is his humanity; "and shall call his name Immanuel"—this is his divinity. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." This marks his humanity. "The government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father." These words denote his Godhead. There are multitudes of other passages in the Prophets to the same purpose.

In the same way, the two natures of Jesus Christ are spoken of in numerous passages in the New Testament. "The Word was God," and "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." "Made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness." "God was manifest in the flesh." The same distinction appeared in his actions, and almost all his miracles. Finally, this truth discovers itself in all the most remarkable parts of his economy. In his birth he is laid in a manger as a man, but an Angel announces his birth, and the "wise men" come to adore him as God. He is baptized in water, but the Heavens open to him, and the Father proclaims from Heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In his temptation in the desert he

suffers hunger and thirst, but Angels come and minister unto him. In his death he hangs upon the cross, but he bestows Paradise.

The reason is obvious why the Apostle, in completing his enumeration of the signal honours conferred on the nation of Israel, after having declared that of them the Messiah, as concerning the flesh, came, immediately referred to his divine nature. Had he spoken only of his coming in the flesh, it would not have enhanced as he intended the high and unparalleled privileges by which his countrymen had been distinguished. It was necessary, both for this end, and to exhibit the complete character of him of whom he spoke, to subjoin, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever." This addition, then, is not superfluous, or that might have been omitted. It is indispensable, being essential to the Apostle's argument.

To this great truth respecting the coming of God manifest in the flesh, as the foundation on which the whole work of redemption rests, the Apostle subjoins *Amen*. In the same way he adds *Amen* to the expression, "Who is blessed for ever," Rom. i. 25, applying it to the Creator. *Amen* signifies truth, stability, or is an affirmation, or expresses consent. In the New Testament Jesus Christ alone makes use of this term at the beginning of sentences, as a word of affir-

mation. In this sense it appears to be employed at the end of the four evangelists. In the Gospel of John only have we any record of the Lord using this word more than once in the same sentence, Amen, Amen, or verily, verily. The Lord employs it again and again, in his sermon on the Mount, the purpose of which, it would seem, was to impress on the minds of his hearers both the truth of what he said, and its importance. Luke, who records this term less frequently than the other evangelists, sometimes substitutes, in place of it, a simple affirmation, Luke, ix. 27, Matth. xvi. 28. Jesus calls himself "Amen," Rev. iii. 14, and God is called the God Amen, Is. lxxv. 16. The Apostle John, in his ascription of praise to the Redeemer, adds Amen, as he does in the contemplation of his second coming in glory to judge the world, Rev. i. 6, 7; and also in closing the canon of Scripture, when he repeats the declaration of Jesus, that he will come quickly, and after his prayer that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with all the churches to which he writes, Rev. xxii. 20, 21. The Lord himself makes use of this term when he declares that he liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore. Rev. i. 18.

V. 6.—Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel :

Not as though — That is, my grief for the state of the Jewish nation, and their rejection by God, does not imply that any thing said in the word of God has failed with regard to them. *For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.* Here is the explanation of the mystery that the Jews, as a nation, had rejected the Messiah; they are not all true Israelites in the spiritual sense of the promise who are Israelites after the flesh, by being descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Through the remaining part of this chapter the Apostle shows that the rejection of the Messiah by the great body of the Jewish nation was neither contrary to the promises nor the purpose of God; but had been predetermined, and also typified in his dealings towards individuals among their progenitors as recorded in the Scriptures, and also there predicted. This gives an opportunity of more fully illustrating the doctrine of God's sovereignty in choosing some to everlasting life, which had been spoken of in the 29th and 30th verses of the preceding chapter, and of his rejection of others.

V. 7.—Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham. This was the error of the Jews. They thought that they were the children of God by being the children of Abraham. But this the Apostle

declares was not the case. As the children of Abraham, they were indeed in one sense the children of God. He says to Pharaoh, with respect to them, "Let my son go." But the natural sonship was only a figure of the spiritual sonship of all believers of every nation. None but such were the spiritual seed of Abraham, whether among Jews or Gentiles.

But in Isaac shall thy seed be called.—Reckoned, or chosen, or called into existence, as it is said respecting the birth of Isaac, in the fourth chapter, "God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." The Messiah, who was emphatically the seed of Abraham, says, "The Lord hath called me from the womb."—Isaiah, xlix. 1. He was called into existence in his human nature, and to his office of Mediator in the line of Isaac. And Israel was called or chosen as God's people, Isaiah, xlviii. 12. In this sense the expression is used in the end of the eleventh verse. The meaning of the declaration here is, that as all Abraham's posterity were not to be the peculiar people whom God was nationally to adopt as his children, but only such as should descend from Isaac, so not all the Jews are the true sons of God, but only such of them as are, like Isaac, children of the promise.

V. 8.—That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not children of God: but the children of the promise, are counted for the seed.

That is, or this explains, the declaration, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” It is intended to show that not carnal descent, but being included in the promise, constituted the true spiritual seed. This clearly establishes the difference between the sonship of Israel after the flesh, and the sonship of Israel after the Spirit.

V. 9.—For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

The birth of Isaac was by promise, and without a miracle it would never have taken place. But the birth of Ishmael was not by promise, but in the ordinary course of nature. Thus, the children of God who were specially promised to Abraham, were those who, according to the election of God (who had chosen Isaac in preference to Ishmael), would be brought into a spiritual relation with Christ, who is emphatically the promised seed in the line of Isaac.—Gal. iii. 16.

V. 10.—And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

Not only was the election confined to Isaac, the son of promise, but also in a still more remarkable instance was it verified in the case of the two sons of Isaac. Rebecca conceived these

two sons by the same husband, yet God chose the one and rejected the other. An original difference between Isaac and Ishmael might be alleged, since the one was born of the lawful wife of Abraham, the free woman, and the other was the son of the bond woman; but in the case now brought forward, there existed no original difference. Both were the sons of the same man and woman, born at the same time. The great distinction, then, made between the two brothers could only be the effect of the sovereign will of God, who by this means indicated, long before it took place, the difference he was to make among the people of Israel.

V. 11.—(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

Here, in a parenthesis, the Apostle shows that the preference was given to Jacob independently of all ground of merit, because it was made before the children were capable of doing either good or evil. This was done for the very purpose of taking away all pretence for merit as a ground of the preference. Had the preference been given to Jacob when he had grown up to maturity, there would have been no more real ground for ascribing it to his merit; but the perverse ingenuity of man would have made that

use of it. But God made the preference before the children were born.

That the purpose of God according to election might stand.—This was the very end and intention of the early indication of the will of God to Rebecca, the mother of the two children. It was hereby clearly established that in choosing Jacob and rejecting Esau, God had respect to nothing but his own purpose. Nothing can more strongly declare that his own eternal purpose is the ground of all his favour to man.

Not of works, but of Him that calleth.—Expressions indicating God's sovereignty in this matter are heaped upon one another, because it is a thing so offensive to the human mind. Yet after all the Apostle's precaution, the perverseness of men still finds ground of boasting on account of works. Though the children had done neither good or evil, yet God, it is supposed, might foresee that Jacob would be a godly man, and Esau wicked. But had not God made a difference between Jacob and Esau, Jacob would have been no better than his brother. Were not men blinded by opposition to this part of the will of God, would they not see that a preference on account of foreseen good works is *a preference on account of works*, and therefore expressly contrary to the assertion of the Apostle—*Not of works, but of him that*

calleth? The whole ground of preference is in him that calleth, or chooseth, not in him that is called.

V. 12.—It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger.

This was a figure of the spiritual election, for in no other point of view is it here to the Apostle's purpose. Not only did God choose one of these sons, who were equal as to their parentage, but chose that one who was inferior in priority of birth, the only point in which there was a difference. He chose the younger son, contrary to what is usual among men, and contrary to what God himself generally established respecting inheritances in the family of Jacob. How much instruction do these words, "the elder shall serve the younger," contain, as standing in the connexion in which they are here placed, as well as in that part of Scripture from which they are quoted. They practically teach the great fundamental doctrines of the pre-science, the providence, the sovereignty of God; of his predestination, election, and reprobation.

V. 13.—As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

The words here quoted from Malachi, expressly relate to Jacob and Esau. The prophet likewise declares the dealing of God towards their posterity, but the part here referred to applies to the progenitors themselves; and in God's

dealings towards them is found the reason of the difference of the treatment of their posterities. That the Apostle quotes these words in reference to Jacob and Esau personally, is clear, since he speaks of the children before they were born. Jacob was loved before he was born, consequently before he was capable of doing good ; and Esau was hated before he was born, consequently before he was capable of doing evil. It may be asked why God hated him before he sinned personally ; and human wisdom has proved its folly, by endeavouring to soften the word hated into something less than hatred ; but the man who submits like a little child to the word of God, will find no difficulty in seeing in what sense Esau was worthy of the hatred of God before he was born. He sinned in Adam, and consequently was worthy of God's hatred as well as Adam. There is no other view that will ever account for this language and this treatment of Esau. By nature he was a wicked creature, conceived in sin, although his faculties were not expanded, nor his innate depravity developed, which God, who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and hardeneth whom he will, and who giveth no account of his matters, did not see good to counteract by his grace, as in the case of Jacob, who originally

was equally wicked, and by nature like Esau a child of wrath and a fit object of hatred.

It is not unusual to take part with Esau who was rejected, against Jacob who was the object of Divine favour. Every thing that can be made to appear either amiable or virtuous in the character of Esau is eagerly grasped at, and exhibited in the most advantageous light. We are told of his disinterestedness, frankness, and generosity; while we are reminded that Jacob was a cool, selfish, designing man, who was always watching to take advantage of his brother's simplicity, and who ungenerously and unjustly robbed his elder brother of the blessing and the birthright.

This way of reasoning, however, shows more zeal for the interest of a cause than discretion in its support. Instead of invalidating the truth it opposes, it only serves to confirm it. While it is evident that Jacob possessed the fear of God, which was not the case with respect to Esau, and, therefore, that the one was born of God, and the other was a child of nature; yet there is so much palpable imperfection and evil in Jacob, as to make it manifest that God did not choose him for the sake of the excellence of his foreseen works. In maintaining, then, the doctrine of the sovereignty of God, it is by no

means necessary to vindicate the conduct of Jacob towards his brother. Both he and his mother were undoubtedly to blame, much to blame, as to the way in which he obtained, to the prejudice of Esau, his father's blessing; while the revealed purpose of God formed no apology for their conduct. That sin is an evil thing and a bitter, Jacob fully experienced. His conduct in that transaction led him into troubles from which through life he was never disentangled. While Jacob was a man of God, and Esau a man of the world, there is enough to show us that the inheritance was bestowed on the former, not of works but of grace.

Nothing can more clearly manifest the strong opposition of the human mind to the doctrine of the Divine sovereignty, than the violence which human ingenuity has employed to wrest the expression, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*. By many this has been explained, Esau have I loved less. But Esau was not the object of any degree of the Divine love, and the word *hate* never signifies *to love less*. The occurrence of the word in that expression, "hate father and mother," Luke, xiv. 26, has been alleged in vindication of this explanation; but the word in the last phrase is used figuratively, and in a manner that cannot be mistaken. Although hatred is not meant to be asserted, yet

hatred is the thing that is literally expressed. By a strong figure of speech, *that* is called hatred which resembles it in its effects. We will not obey those whom we hate, if we can avoid it. Just so if our parents command us to disobey Jesus Christ, we will not obey them; and this is called hatred, figuratively, from the resemblance of its effects. But in this passage, in which the expression "Esau have I hated" occurs, every thing is literal. The Apostle is reasoning from premises to a conclusion. Besides, the contrast of loving Jacob with hating Esau, shows that the last phrase is literal and proper hatred. If God's love to Jacob was real literal love, God's hatred to Esau must be real literal hatred. It might as well be said, that the phrase, "Jacob have I loved," does not signify that God really loved Jacob, but that to love here signifies only to hate less, and that all that is meant by the expression, is that God hated Jacob less than he hated Esau. If every man's own mind is a sufficient security against concluding the meaning to be, "Jacob have I hated less," his judgment ought to be a security against the equally unwarrantable meaning, "Esau have I loved less."

Others translate the word in the original by the term *slighted*. But if God had no just ground to hate Esau, he could have as little

ground for slighting him. Why should Esau be unjustly slighted before he was born, more than unjustly hated? However, those who have a proper sense of man's guilt by nature, will be at no loss to discern the ground of God's hatred of Esau. Both Jacob and Esau were, like David, conceived in sin, and were in themselves sinners. Esau was justly the object of hatred before he was born, because he was viewed in Adam as a sinner. Jacob was justly the object of God's love before he was born, because he was viewed in Christ as righteous. That the terms, love and hatred, are here to be understood in their full and proper import, is evident from the question put in the 14th verse, and answered in the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses, with the conclusion drawn in the 18th. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." Compassion is a sign of love, and hardening a proof of hatred. And besides this, the expression, "Esau have I hated," is not stronger than what the Apostle applies to all men, when he says, that by nature they are the *children of wrath*, and *dead in trespasses and sins*, and consequently objects of the hatred of the Holy and Just God. All of them are so in their natural state, as considered in themselves, and all of them continue to be so, unless delivered from that state

by the distinguishing grace of God. Nothing, then, is said of Esau here, that might not be said of every man who shall finally perish.

The passage in Malachi, from which these words, "Esau have I hated," are quoted by the Apostle, proves what is meant by the expression before us. "I have loved you, saith the Lord; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, we are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places: thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever." Here the prophet first speaks of Esau personally, as Jacob's brother, which clearly indicates the meaning that the Apostle attaches to its quotation. It implies, too, that Jacob had no claim to be preferred to his brother. Afterwards in the denunciation, Esau's descendants are spoken of under the name of Edom, when the singular is changed for the plural, and the past time for the future and the present. The denunciation of *indignation for ever* upon the Edomites, and the call of God to Israel to observe the difference of his

dealings towards them, shows what is meant by God's love of Jacob, and his hatred of Esau.

The declarations of God by the prophet in the above quoted passage are fully substantiated throughout the Scriptures, both in regard to his loving Jacob and hating Esau personally; and likewise in regard to the indignation which he manifested against Esau's descendants. Jacob is every where spoken of as the servant of God, highly honoured by many divine communications. Jacob wrestled with God, had power over him, and prevailed, Hosea, xii. 4, 5. With his dying breath, when he declared that he had waited for the salvation of the Lord, he was honoured to announce as a prophet the future destinies of his sons, and above all, to utter a most remarkable prediction concerning the advent of the Messiah. Jacob during his life was the object of many special blessings. He died in faith—Heb. xi. 13, 21; and of him the Redeemer himself has testified that, with Abraham and Isaac, he is now in the kingdom of heaven. Matt. viii. 11. Such is the decisive testimony, concerning Jacob, of the Scriptures which cannot be broken.

In the life of Esau, nothing is recorded indicating that he had the fear of God before his eyes; but every thing to prove the reverse. The most important transaction recorded con-

cerning Esau, is his profane contempt for God's blessing in selling his birth-right, manifesting his unbelief and indifference respecting the promise to Abraham. We see him also taking women of Canaan as his wives, although he had the example before him of Abraham's concern that Isaac should not marry any of the daughters of that country. In this, we observe, that he held as lightly the curse denounced against Canaan, as he did the blessing promised to Abraham. We next see him deliberately resolving to murder his brother. "The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob." And long after he goes out to meet him with a large force, although restrained from injuring him. At last he departs for ever from the land of promise.

Towards the conclusion of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where Jacob is referred to among the number of those who both lived and died in faith, Esau is characterised as "a profane person," Heb. xii. 16. The same word, translated profane, is employed by Paul in his enumeration to Timothy of the most horrible vices, when speaking of the "ungodly, of sinners, and of unholy persons."—1 Tim. i. 9. The selling of his birth-right proved Esau to be an ungodly man, and the Apostle warns believers not to act according to his example. The birth-right conferred a double

inheritance among the Hebrew Patriarchs, and likewise pre-eminence, because it was connected with the descent from them of the Messiah, and they to whom this right belonged were also types of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. Despising the birth-right, then, was a proof of despising the high distinction respecting the coming of the Messiah, and also the eternal inheritance of which the land of Canaan and the double portion of the first-born were typical. Here the question of Esau's character as an ungodly man is decided by the pen of inspiration long after his death. And is this "profane person," who not only despised the birth-right fraught with such unspeakable privileges, but who had deliberately made up his mind revengefully to murder his brother in cold blood, to be viewed as he has been represented, as amiable, disinterested, and virtuous, in defiance of every moral principle, and in direct opposition to the testimony of the word of God?

Such is the account which the Scriptures give of Esau personally, and how fully the denunciations above quoted from the Prophet respecting his descendants were accomplished, we learn from numerous passages throughout the Scriptures, as Ezekiel, xxv. 12, 14; Joel, iii. 19; Amos, i. 11, and elsewhere; and from the whole of the prophecy of Obadiah, where the destruc-

tion of Edom, and the victories of the house of Jacob, are contrasted. "But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau: for the Lord hath spoken it." Do these awful denunciations respecting Esau personally, who was a profane person, and respecting his descendants—"the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever," and the declarations respecting Jacob throughout the scriptures, import that God loved Esau only in a less degree than he loved Jacob? When men by such methods as are resorted to on this subject, pervert the obvious meaning of the word of God to maintain their preconceived systems, it manifests deplorable disaffection to the truth of God, and most culpable inattention to his plainest declarations.

Several commentators deny that the declaration, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated, has any reference to their spiritual and eternal state. But the whole of the context throughout this ninth chapter, as well as the concluding part of the eighth, proves the contrary. At the 29th verse of the preceding chapter, the Apostle,

after exhibiting to believers various topics of the richest consolation, had traced up all their high privileges to the eternal purpose of God, and had dwelt in the sequel on their perfect security as his elect. He had now turned his eye, with deep lamentation, to the very different state of his countrymen, who, notwithstanding all their distinguished advantages, had rejected the Messiah. This gives occasion for enlarging on the sovereignty of God in the opposite aspect from that in which he had treated it in respect to believers. In reference to believers, he had spoken of God's sovereignty as displaying itself in their election, and now, in reference to the Jews, as manifested in their rejection. By this arrangement, an opportunity was afforded to exhibit that doctrine in the most striking manner, by personal application in both cases.

From the whole of this chapter it is evident that Paul refers not to the external condition of the Jews, which was indeed involved in their rejection of Christ, but to their spiritual state, as rejecting the righteousness which is of faith, and stumbling at that stumbling-stone, verse 32. He observes, that not only at that time, but in former ages, according to the testimony of their own prophets, a remnant only should be saved. And besides its being obvious, from the whole tenor of his discourse, that he is treating of their

spiritual and eternal condition, this is conclusively evident from what he says in the 22d and 23d verses, where he speaks, on the one hand, of the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and, on the other, of the vessels of mercy prepared unto glory. These two verses, were there no other proof, evince, beyond all doubt, what is his object. His lamentation for his countrymen was not called forth on account of the loss of their external privileges, with the impending destruction of Jerusalem, and their expulsion from their own land. Had it been so, he must have included himself, and also those Jews whom, in the 24th verse, he says God had called. But so far is he from representing these to be in a lamentable state, that he describes them, along with himself, as vessels on whom the riches of the glory of God was made known; while, by the contrast, it is evident, that by the wrath and destruction of which the others were vessels, he means something very different from temporal calamities. The vessels of the one description were the "remnant" which should be saved, the "seed" which the Lord of Sabaoth had left, verses 27, 29. The vessels of the other description were those who were as "Sodoma, and had been made like unto Gomorrha," which suffered the vengeance of eternal fire. What trifling, then, what wresting of this im-

portant portion of the word of God, what turning of it away entirely from its true meaning is it to represent this chapter, as so many do, as treating of the outward state of the Jews, or to deny, with others, that the spiritual and everlasting condition of Jacob and Esau are here referred to! If the eternal condition of Abraham and of Judas be determined in the Scriptures, so also is that of Jacob and Esau; and no meaning, which, from whatever motive, any man may affix to the whole tenor of Scripture respecting them, will alter their condition. It is better for us to submit to the word of God on this and every other subject, taking it in its obvious import, than to be deterred from doing so on account of consequences to the admission of which we may be averse. All Scripture will thus be profitable to us for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, while we are sure that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

On the whole, we see with what propriety the Apostle here introduces the different states of Jacob and Esau, the one beloved of God, the other hated. They illustrate by particular examples both sides of the important doctrine of God's sovereignty in the election or rejection of men, of which he is treating. What is said of these two individuals in the Old Testament,

in the place to which he refers, is both historical and typical. It relates, in the first view, to themselves, the elder being made subservient to the younger by the selling of his birth-right. In consequence of that act, the declaration, the elder shall serve the younger, was verified from the time when it took place. All the rights of the first-born were thus transferred to Jacob, and the inheritance of Canaan devolved on him.

At length, Esau was compelled to leave that land, and to yield to his brother. When the riches of both of them were "more than that they might dwell together," Esau went out "from the face of his brother Jacob."—Gen. xxxvi. 6-7. Whatever, therefore, might have previously been the opposition of their interests, in this the most important act of his life relating to Jacob, Esau was finally made subservient to his younger brother. And this subserviency in yielding up the inheritance which naturally belonged to him continued during the remainder of their lives; so that the declaration, "the elder shall serve the younger," was, after various struggles between them, personally and literally fulfilled. In the second view, as being typical, what is said of them relates on the one hand to the state of Israel after the flesh—trampling on and forfeiting their high privileges, hated of God,

and vessels fitted to destruction ; and on the other hand, to the vessels of mercy which God had afore prepared unto glory.

In loving Jacob, God showed him unmerited favour, and acted towards him in mercy ; and in hating Esau, he showed him no favour who was entitled to none, and acted according to justice. Had God acted also in justice without mercy towards Jacob, he would have hated both ; for both in their origin were wicked and deserved hatred. The Apostle unveils the reason why this was not the case, when he says that God has mercy on whom he will have mercy. The justice of God in hating Esau was made fully manifest in the sequel by his abuse of the high privileges in the course of providence bestowed upon him. Notwithstanding all the advantages of instruction and example with which, beyond all others of the human race (with the exception of the rest of his family), he was distinguished, Esau despised his birth-right fraught with so many blessings, the natural right to which had been conferred on him in preference to his brother Jacob, and lived an ungodly life. If Jacob, who was placed in the same situation, proved himself to be a godly man, it was entirely owing to the operation of the grace of God in his heart. If it be objected, why was not this grace also vouchsafed to Esau ?

it may as well be asked, why are not the whole of mankind saved? That this will not be the case, even those who oppose the sovereignty of God in the election of grace cannot deny. Besides, will they, who affirm that God chooses men to eternal life because he foresees that they will do good works, deny that, at least, God foresaw the wickedness of Esau's life? Even on their own principles, then, it was just to hate Esau before he was born; and, on the same ground of foreseeing his good works, it would have been just to love Jacob. Or will they say that this hatred should not have taken place till after Esau had acted such a part? This would prove that there is a variableness with God, and that he does not hate to-day what he will hate to-morrow. Where, then, is the necessity for any one, whatever may be his sentiments, to resort to the vain attempt to show that, when it is said God loved Jacob and hated Esau, it only means that he loved Esau less than Jacob? As well may it be affirmed that when, in the prophecy of Amos, v. 15, it is said, "Hate the evil, and love the good," the meaning is, that we ought to love evil only in a less degree than good. But the truth is, that all opposition to the plain and obvious meaning of this passage proceeds from ignorance of the state of death and ruin in which all men by nature

lie, and from which no man can be recovered by any outward means alone, however powerful in themselves. This cannot be effected by any thing short of the unmerited and invincibly efficacious grace of God, operating in the heart of those on whom he will have mercy according to his sovereign good pleasure. Undoubtedly God was under no obligation to save any of the human race more than of the fallen angels. If he save any man, it is because he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, or as seemeth good to him. According to those who oppose this manner of acting, God was under an obligation to send his Son into the world to save sinners.

V. 14.—What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

The Apostle anticipated the objection of the carnal mind to his doctrine. Does not this imply that there is injustice in God? This objection clearly shows that the view taken of the preceding passage is correct. For it is this view which suggests the objection. Is it just in God to love one who has done no good, and to hate one who has done no evil? If the assertion respecting loving Jacob, and hating Esau, admitted of being explained away in the manner that so many do, there could be no place for such an objection. And what does the Apostle reply to this? Nothing but a decided rejection

of the supposition that God's treatment of Jacob and Esau implied injustice. By asking the question if there be unrighteousness with God, he strongly denies that in God there is here any injustice; and this denial is sufficient. According to the doctrine which he every where inculcates, consistently with that of the whole Scriptures, God is represented to be infinitely just, as well as wise, holy, good, and faithful. In the exercise of his sovereignty, therefore, all that God wills to do must be in strict conformity with the perfection of his character. He cannot deny himself; He cannot act in a manner inconsistent with any of his divine attributes.

V. 15.—For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

What is the ground on which the Apostle here rests his denial that there is unrighteousness with God? He enters into no defence of God, attempts no metaphysical distinctions, but rests solely on the authority of Scripture. He produces the testimony of God to Moses, declaring the same truth that he himself affirms. This is quite enough for Christians. It is not wise in them, as is often the case, to adopt a mode of vindicating God's procedure, so very different from what he himself employs. How many go about to justify God, and thereby bring God to

the bar of man. From the defences of Scripture doctrine, often resorted to, it might be supposed that God was on his trial before men, rather than that all shall stand before him, and that the will of God is supreme justice. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.* That is, I will have mercy on whom I please—I will bestow my favours, or withhold them, as seemeth to me good. The answer, then, of the Apostle amounts to this, that what is recorded concerning God's loving Jacob and hating Esau, is in nothing different from his usual mode of procedure towards men, being entirely consistent with the whole plan of his government. All men are lost and guilty in Adam; it is of mercy that any are saved; and God declares that he will have mercy or not upon men according to his own good pleasure. It is only of this attribute that such language, as is contained in this passage, can be employed. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." The exercise of every other attribute is at all times essential, and never can be suspended.*

* Of the mercy of God, the late Dr Thomson, in his valuable Sermons, p. 11, observes—"It cannot be that his mercy should be exerted at the expense or to the disparagement, in any the least degree, of one excellence which beautifies his nature, or

V. 16.—So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

This is the conclusion from the whole. Salvation is not from the will of man, nor from his efforts in striving for it; but is entirely of God's

upholds his government, or speaks his praise. His mercy is sovereign and gratuitous; and therefore it can only be displayed, when every other quality that belongs to him is fully maintained, and there is no sacrifice of the honour that is due to each, and of the consistency which pervades the whole. Whenever his mercy cannot be exercised without refusing the demands of his justice, or without bringing into question the immutability of his faithfulness, or without denying the irresistible energy of his power, or without impeaching the infallibility of his wisdom, or without throwing suspicion on the absolute purity of his nature—in these cases his mercy cannot be exercised at all, for the exercise of it would involve some shortcoming in his perfection, which is necessarily unqualified and unlimited. It is only of this attribute that it can be said, 'He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy.' Of every other attribute, it is requisite that we predicate positive and peremptory operation. He *must* be holy; he *must* be wise; he *must* be powerful; he *must* be just; he *must* be true; he *must* be each and all of these whatever betide his universe; and if we, his apostate creatures, cannot be the objects of his mercy except by some surrender of the homage due to them, or some violation of the harmony that reigns among them, his mercy cannot save, and cannot reach us."

On the love of God Dr Thomson remarks (p. 306), "I cannot help reverting to what I formerly observed respecting the necessity of attributing love to God no farther than his own word has warranted, and no farther than is consistent with that revelation of his character which he himself has given us. A

mercy vouchsafed to whom he pleases. What foundation, then, can be discovered in the word of God for those schemes of self-righteousness that, in a greater or less degree, make salvation depend on man's own exertions? There may be an allusion here to Jacob's desiring the bless-

greater snare cannot be laid for your piety and your judgment, than that which consists in making love his paramount or his only perfection. For whenever there is a consciousness of guilt, and a dread of responsibility, it must be comfortable to have a God who is divested of all that is frowning and indignant towards transgressors, and clothed with all that is compassionate and kind. And whenever there is a soft or a sentimental temperament at work, that representation of the Divine nature must be peculiarly pleasing and acceptable. And whenever men wish to have a religion which will be without any rigorous exactions of self-denial and of duty, and without any tendency to excite apprehension and alarm, the same predilection must exist for a supreme Ruler, in whose benevolence all other qualities are absorbed and lost. And, accordingly, not only is this partial and unscriptural view of the character of God adopted as the leading principle of certain systems of theology, but it is held, and cherished, and acted upon by multitudes, whose sole concern in matters of faith is to have, not what is true, but what is agreeable, and who find in the tenet we are speaking of, the most soothing and satisfying of all persuasions,—that God loves every one of his creatures with such an affection as is depicted in the gospel. I warn you against the delusion—so dishonourable to the Holy One, the everlasting Father—so ruinous to all who have surrendered themselves to its influence—so inconsistent with what you read in the book of inspiration—so destructive of that mystery of godliness and of grace which has been made known to us in Jesus Christ.”

ing of the birthright, and his running to provide the venison by which he deceived his father ; but his obtaining the blessing was solely the consequence of God's good pleasure ; for the means he employed for the purpose merited punishment rather than success. In like manner, the salvation of any man is not to be ascribed to his own good-will and diligent endeavours to arrive at it, but solely to the purpose of God according to election, which is "not of works, but of him that calleth." It is true, indeed, that believers do both will and run, but this is the *effect*, not the *cause* of the grace of God being vouchsafed to them. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." To whom is this addressed ? To "the saints in Christ Jesus," in whom *God had begun* a good work, which *he will perform* until the day of Jesus Christ—to them who had always obeyed, Phil. i. 1, 6, 29 ; ii. 12. But besides this, what is the motive or encouragement to work out their salvation ? "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Here all the willing and doing of men in the service of God is ascribed to his operation in causing them to will and to do. The whole of the new covenant is a promise of God that he himself will act efficaciously for the salvation of those whom he will save. "I

will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." "I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever." "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."—Jer. xxxi. xxxiii.; Ezek. xxxvi. In this way, the means by which God's elect are brought to him, their calling, their justification, their sanctification, their perseverance, and their glorification, are all of God, and not of themselves, as was shown in the preceding chapter.

If any shall oppose the declaration of the Apostle, that it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy, and assert that the salvation of man depends on conditions which he is obliged to fulfil, then it may be asked, what is the condition? Is it faith? Faith is the *gift* of God. Is it repentance? Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to *give* repentance. Is it love? God promises to circumcise the heart in order to love him. Are they good works? His people are the workmanship of God created unto good works. Is

it perseverance to the end? They are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. It is true that all these things are commanded and enforced by the most powerful motives, consequently they are duties which require the exercise of our faculties. But they are assured by the decree of election, and are granted to the elect of God in the proper season; so that, in this view, they are the objects of promise, and the effects of supernatural and Divine influence. "Thy people," saith Jehovah to the Messiah, "shall be willing in the day of thy power." Thus the believer, in running his race, and working out his salvation, is actuated by God, and animated by the consideration of the all-powerful operation of God in the beginning of his course; of the continuation of his support in the middle of it; and by the assurance that it shall be effectual in enabling him to overcome all obstacles, and to arrive in safety at its termination.

V. 17.—For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

This verse stands connected, not with the 15th and 16th, which immediately precede it, but with the 13th and 14th. In the 13th verse God's love to Jacob and his hatred to Esau are declared. In

respect to both, it is demanded in the 14th verse, if there be therefore injustice with God. In the 15th and 16th verses following, the answer is given, regarding the preference and love of God to Jacob. In this 17th verse the Apostle replies to the question, as it refers to God's hatred of Esau. And the answer here is precisely similar to that given respecting Jacob. God's loving Jacob before he had done any good was according to his usual plan of procedure; and his hating Esau before he had done any evil is here vindicated on the same ground. The Apostle proves this from the example of one to whom, in Divine sovereignty, God acted according to justice without mercy. The Scripture saith that God raised up Pharaoh for the very purpose of manifesting his own glory in his punishment.

For the Scripture saith.—By the manner in which the Apostle begins this verse, we are taught that whatever the Scriptures declare on any subject is to be considered as decisive on the point. “What saith the Scripture?” This is the proof to which the Apostle appeals. It should further be observed, that Paul ascribes to the Scriptures what was said by God himself. Exod. ix. 16. This expressly teaches us that the words of Scripture are the words of God. In the same manner, in the Epistle to the Gala-

tians, it is said, the Scripture, "foreseeing that God would justify the heathen;" and, "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin," Gal. iii. 8. 22. Here the word of God is so much identified with himself, that the Scripture is represented as possessing and exercising the peculiar prerogatives of God. What is done by God, and what belongs only to him, is ascribed to the Scriptures,—proving that they contain the very words of God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. iii. 16. The word Scripture is here taken in its appropriated meaning—being confined to the book of God. All that is written in it is divinely inspired; and what does writing consist of but of words? If any of these are not inspired, then all Scripture is not inspired. Every word, then, in the book referred to is the word of God, dictated by him of whom the writers were the instruments he employed, who spoke or wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Why are so many unwilling to admit this view of the inspiration of Scripture so much insisted on in the Scriptures themselves? Is it on account of the difficulty of conceiving how words should thus be communicated? And, is it easier to understand how ideas could be communicated? Do they believe that the Lord "opened the mouth of the ass" of Balaam, and communicated the words which

she spake? Is it, then, more difficult to communicate words to men than to a dumb animal? To speak of difficulties where omnipotence is concerned is palpably absurd. Besides, all allow that in the parts of Scripture to which (making vain distinctions respecting inspiration, without the least foundation from any expression the Scriptures contain) they ascribe the inspiration of "suggestion," the very words were communicated to the writers. Those who deny the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures; who introduce various modifications of the manner in which they have been written, neither can have, nor ought to have the same profound veneration for them as those who believe that, without any exception, from beginning to end they are dictated by God himself.

The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh—That is, the Scripture showeth how Moses was commanded to say unto Pharaoh, Exod. ix. 16, "For this same purpose have I raised thee up." Here is the destination of Pharaoh to his destruction—"That I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." This is the end and design intended by it. It was not, then, by any concurrence of fortuitous circumstances that Pharaoh was seated on the throne of Egypt, and invested with the power he possessed when Moses was

appointed to conduct Israel out of Egypt. He was raised up, or made to stand in that place, in order that, by his opposition, from the perversity of his heart, God might show his power in him and exalt his name. It is not merely alleged that God had not shown mercy to this king of Egypt, or that he had suffered him to go on in his wicked ways; but, in language that the unrenewed heart of man will never relish, it is declared, "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." For this very end the birth, the life, and the situation of Pharaoh were all of Divine appointment. This is language so clear that it cannot be guiltlessly misinterpreted. The unbelieving heart of man will revolt, and his ingenuity may invent expedients to soften this explicit declaration; but it never can be evaded with success. All the expedients of sophistry will never be able fairly, or even plausibly, to explain this language in a sense that will not testify the sovereignty of God.

The above truth respecting Pharaoh is what the Scriptures declare; and we ought never to pretend to go farther in the deep things of God than they go before us, but submissively to bow to whatever God says. We know that all sin

will be found with man ; but here we are taught that even the sin of man will turn out for the glory of God, and for this very purpose the wicked are raised up by him. If we cannot fathom this depth of the Divine councils, still let us be certain that what God says is true, and must be received by us. We are assured that the judge of all the earth will in all things act righteously, although we may not be able to comprehend his ways. Nor are we required to comprehend them. We are required to believe his word, and to believe that it is consistent with the eternal righteousness of his character.

On the ground of difficulties, and of reconciling with what is called philosophy the truth affirmed in the chapter before us, the whole subject of it might be rejected equally with that of the verbal inspiration of the Bible: and on this very ground, what is said in this chapter is rejected and has been perverted by many who have undertaken to explain it in such a way as to remove all the difficulties which they find in it. Our Lord in one short sentence has declared the true reason why so many find such difficulty in understanding this chapter. "Why do ye not understand my speech?—even because ye cannot hear my word." It is also written for our warning, "Many, therefore, of his disciples,

when they had heard this, said, this is an hard saying; who can hear it?" There is no part of Scripture the meaning of which is more obvious than that of this chapter. But if men will yield to the natural opposition of their minds to the truth it declares, and wresting the plainest expressions, affirm that hatred signifies love, is it surprising that they are bewildered in following their own devices?*

V. 18.—Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Here the general conclusion is drawn from all the Apostle had said in the three preceding verses, in denying that God was unrighteous in loving Jacob and hating Esau. It exhibits the ground of God's dealings, both with the elect and the reprobate. It concludes that his own sovereign will is the rule both with respect to those whom he receives, and those whom he rejects. He pardons one, and hardens another, without reference to any thing but his own sovereign will. "Even so, Father," said our blessed Lord, "for so it seemed good in thy sight."

* Mr Tholuck, in his Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, has most fearfully perverted the meaning of this ninth chapter, as well as many other parts of the Epistle. See Considerations, &c. quoted page 151.

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy.—Paul here repeats it for the third time, that God has mercy on whom he will have mercy, without intimating the least regard to any thing in man as deserving mercy. The smallest degree of right in the creature would furnish reason for displaying justice, not mercy. Mercy is that adorable perfection of God by which he pities and relieves the miserable. Under the good and righteous government of God, no one is miserable, who does not deserve to be so. The objects of mercy are those who are miserable, because they are guilty, and therefore justly deserving of punishment. The exercise of mercy is a particular display of the grace or free favour of God. In no case can it be due to a guilty creature; it is the effect of the sovereign good pleasure of God. God, it is said, “delighteth in mercy,” Micah, vii. 18; and in the proclamation of his name to Moses, this attribute is particularly signalized. “The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious.”—Exod. xxxiv. 6. He is “rich” and “plenteous” in mercy, and “his tender mercies are over all his works.”

Mercy, however, is an attribute, the constant exercise of which is not essential to God, like that of justice, which can never, in any instance, be suspended for a moment. Mercy is dispensed

according to his sovereign pleasure in regard to persons or times, as to him seemeth good. Towards the fallen children of men it was gloriously displayed when God sent his Son into the world, which was purely a work of mercy, and not demanded by justice. But to the fallen angels mercy was not vouchsafed. And is this any impeachment of the mercy of God? If not, is it a just ground for complaint, that in order to manifest his hatred of sin, his mercy is not extended to a certain portion of the human race, who we know for certain shall perish? Thus God has mercy on whom he will have mercy. It is one of the fundamental errors of Socinians, and of many besides, to hold that the mercy of God must be necessarily and constantly exercised; while, reversing the order of Scripture, and all its representations of the character of God, they deny this necessity regarding his justice. The same act, however, may be both an act of justice and an act of mercy in reference to different objects. The punishment of the enemies of God, the slaying of the first-born in Egypt, the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host, the smiting of kings, and transferring their lands for an heritage to Israel, while they were acts of justice towards the enemies of his people, are all ascribed to the mercy of God to them.—Ps. cxxxvi. 15. “ But overthrew Pharaoh and his

host in the Red Sea; for his mercy endureth for ever.”*

And whom he will he hardeneth.—If God hath mercy on whom he will, he hardeneth whom he will. In hardening men, God does no injustice, nor does he act in any degree contrary to the perfection of his character. He does not communicate hardness or perversity to the hearts of men by any positive internal act, as when he communicates his grace. “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.” Wicked men are not restrain-

* In the Appendix to the first volume of this work, I have pointed out the perfect coincidence of Mr Stuart's views of the doctrine of justification with those of Arminius and Socinus. Since the publication of his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, he has inserted a paper in the American Biblical Repository of July 1836, in which his system, so directly opposed to the Word of God, is very fully developed. He there explicitly denies that, in the execution of the plan of salvation the claims of justice are maintained. ‘The law,’ he says, ‘enjoins fully and simply our own *personal* obedience, and pronounces a curse on us solely when we disobey it. But in every government, in heaven and on earth, there is reserved to the supreme power which made the law, a right of *dispensing* with its demands, when the general good admits of such a dispensation.’ ‘Of what real use, then,’ he adds, ‘can it be, to retain a mere fiction of law in the process of our final justification and acceptance? Salvation by *pure grace*, is salvation purely gratuitous and of mere mercy, and not at

ed by the holy influences of grace, but by the different restraints under which they are placed by Providence. They are hardened when these restraints are removed, and when they are left free to act according to the depraved inclinations of their own hearts. Or they are hardened by the communication of qualities which are neither good nor bad in themselves, but which may become either good or bad, according to the use made of them, such as courage, perseverance, or other dispositions which may be employed for bad purposes. Men are also hardened when they are abandoned to the suggestions of Satan,

‘ all on any *legal* ground. The very fact of its bestowment, is ‘ a superseding of the claims of law and acting on grounds of a ‘ different nature.’ Here is an open avowal of that part of the Socinian heresy which denies that justice is an essential attribute of God, since its exercise may be suspended. Thus Mr Stuart misrepresents the character of God—“ as a just God, and a Saviour,”—and makes void the law. He overturns the gospel, the glory of which is, that grace reigns through righteousness, while he sets aside the necessity of the sacrifice for sin. If God can consistently with his character remit the claims of law and justice, to what purpose, beyond what Socinians admit, were the incarnation and death of Christ? According to Mr Stuart, the imputation of his righteousness is ‘ a mere fiction of ‘ law in the process of our final justification and acceptance.’ What an awful sentiment is this! All this explains the reason why Mr Stuart so often substitutes the word justification for righteousness, in his translation and Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. See Rom. i. 17, v. 21, and elsewhere.

of whom they are the willing slaves. Thus Judas was hardened by Satan, who had taken possession of him, and to whom he submitted himself, although warned in the most solemn manner of his danger. When a man is entirely left to himself, the commands, the warnings, the judgments, the deliverances, and all the truths of Scripture become causes of hardness, of insensibility, of pride, and presumption. Even the delay of merited punishment, and the deliverances from the plagues that fell on his country, were, in respect to Pharaoh, the means of hardening his heart. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." In these ways men's hearts are hardened, through means that in themselves are calculated to produce the opposite effect.

But by whatever means the heart of men is hardened, they are regulated by God, who also determines that these means shall succeed. We see this remarkably verified in the case of Ahab. "And the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail. Go out and do even so. Now therefore, behold the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil against thee."—2 Chron. xviii. 21. "If the prophet

be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet; and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.”—Ez. xiv. 9. “Truly the son of man goeth, as it was determined; but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed.”—Luke, xxii. 22. “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”—Acts, ii. 23. “Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”—Acts, iv. 27. “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed.” 1 Peter ii. 7. “There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation.”—Jude, 4. “Therefore they could not believe, because Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and I should heal them.”—John, xii. 39. “According as it is written, God hath given them a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not

see, and ears that they should not hear unto this day." Rom. xi. 8. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."—2 Thess. ii. 11.

In all the above acts relating to men, God proceeds in conformity to his justice. He is the just God in hating, hardening, and condemning men, and in adjudging them to punishment for their sins and wickedness, and in placing them in situations in which, in the free exercise of their wicked dispositions, they will do what the Lord has appointed for his own glory. Thus God orders events in such a manner that as in the passages above quoted, the sin will certainly be committed, while he is not the author of evil, but, on the contrary, of good. He displays his holiness in the events and in their consequences. Men may employ all their art in wresting the above and similar passages, but they are recorded in the Scriptures, which is the word of God, and which cannot be broken. "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked, for the day of evil."—Prov. xvi. 4. "Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of his matters"—or answereth not. Job, xxxiii. 13. That God does not harden any

man in such a way as to be the author of sin is most certain. But there must be a sense in which he hardens sinners, or the thing would not be asserted. From his conduct with respect to Pharaoh, it is obvious that sinners are hardened by the Providence of God bringing them into situations that manifest and excite their corruptions.

In the history of Pharaoh in the book of Exodus, it is repeated *ten times* that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Pharaoh is also said to have hardened his own heart. This shows that there is a certain connexion between God's hardening the hearts of men, and their voluntary hardening their own hearts, so that when the one takes place the other does so likewise. It does not follow from this, that God's hardening the heart of Pharaoh, and Pharaoh's hardening his own heart, are one and the same thing. This supposition, although adopted by many, is contrary to the representations and the express words of Scripture. On this subject, Mr Carson, in his book lately published, entitled, "Examination of the Principles of Biblical Interpretation of Ernesti, Ammon, Stuart, and other philologists," observes, "It is said that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh; it is said also that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. What then is the lawful way to reconcile these two

statements? The statements must both be true. There must be a sense in which God hardened Pharaoh's heart, for this is as expressly asserted as that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. That this is not a sense implying that God is the author of Pharaoh's sin, there cannot be a moment's question. I may be asked how God could in any sense harden a man's heart without being the author of sin? But the most assured belief of the fact does not require that an answer should be given to the question. A thing may be true, yet utterly inexplicable. God's declaration is perfectly sufficient for the belief of any thing which he testifies. Our reception of it does not imply that we know the grounds or nature of its truth. We receive it, not because we can explain *how* it is true; but because we know that God cannot lie. The Scriptures testify the fact; the fact then must be received as truth; the Scriptures do not testify the *manner* in which the thing is true of God, the *manner* then is not a thing to be believed; and consequently not a thing to be explained by man. . . Many tell us that such assertions mean merely that God *permits* the thing which he is said to do. But is permission sufficient to secure accomplishment? God sent Joseph to Egypt, that is, it is said, *he permitted his brethren to sell him*. Nay, but it was God's

will, purpose, and plan, that Joseph should go down to Egypt, and his Providence secured the event. ‘Now, therefore,’ says Joseph, ‘be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.’ His brethren did it wickedly; God did it in mercy and in wisdom. We know that he did it entirely in consistency with man’s accountability; but the *manner of this consistency* is not a matter of revelation, and therefore it is impossible to attempt explanation.

“ ‘Romans, ix. 18,’ says Ammon, ‘appears ‘to be an obscure passage relating to the absolute decrees of God. Light may be thrown ‘upon this, by 1 Sam. vi. 6, where Pharaoh is ‘said to have hardened his own heart.’ How does Sam. vi. 6, throw light upon Rom. ix. 18? We might have expected rather that Ammon would have found a contradiction, as the one passage ascribes to God what the other ascribes to man. The passages indeed are consistent; but their consistency must be made out, not by obliging one of them to silence the other, but by the principle that they assert the same thing in a different view. Ammon’s plan, I presume, is to make Rom. ix. 18 recant, in order to harmonize with 1 Sam. vi. 6. But the honour of Scripture, and of God’s character, require that

they should be reconciled in a way that renders both true."

Calvin, in his commentary on Exodus, represents those as perverting the Scriptures who insist that no more is meant than a bare permission when God is said to harden the hearts of men. He speaks of such as *frigidi speculatores, diluti moderatores*, to whose delicate ears such Scripture expressions seem harsh and offensive. They, therefore, he observes, "soften them down by 'turning an action into a permission, as if there 'were no difference between acting and suffer-'ing, *i. e.* suffering others to act." Such, he says, who will admit of permission only, suspend this counsel and determination of God, wholly on the will of man; but that he is not ashamed or afraid to speak as the Holy Spirit does, and does not hesitate to approve and embrace what the Scripture so often declares, viz., that God blinds the minds of wicked men, and hardens their hearts. In his commentary on the passage before us, Rom. ix. 18, to the same purpose he observes, "The word *hardening*, when 'attributed to God in Scripture, not only means 'permission (as some trifling theologians deter-'mine), but the action of divine wrath; for all 'external circumstances, which contribute to 'blind the reprobates, are instruments of the 'divine indignation. Satan, also, himself the

‘ internal efficacious agent, is so completely the
 ‘ servant of the Most High, as to act only by
 ‘ his command. The frivolous attempt of the
 ‘ schoolmen to avoid the difficulty by foreknow-
 ‘ ledge, is completely subverted; for Paul does
 ‘ not say that the ruin of the wicked is foreseen
 ‘ by the Lord, but ordained by his counsel, de-
 ‘ cree, and will. Solomon, also, teaches that
 ‘ the destruction of the wicked was not only
 ‘ foreknown, but they were made on purpose
 ‘ for the day of evil.—(Prov. xvi. 4).”*

* Many call themselves moderate Calvinists, a denomina-
 tion to which it is not easy to affix a precise idea. To the sys-
 tem called Calvinism, there may be nearer or more distant
 approaches, but those who deny any of the peculiar doctrines
 of that system cannot, in any sense, be called Calvinists. To
 affix the term Calvinism to any system, from which the doctrine
 of predestination is excluded, or in which it is even modified,
 is entirely a misnomer.

Some profess Calvinism, but affect to hold it in a more
 unexceptionable manner than it is held in the system in
 general. They seem to think that in the defence of that system,
 Calvin was extravagant, and that he gave unnecessary offence
 by exaggerated statements, and by language not warranted by
 the Scriptures. Such persons, it is presumed, are strangers to
 the writings of Calvin. Calvin himself is remarkable for keep-
 ing on Scripture ground, and avoiding any thing that may justly
 be termed extravagant. No writer has ever indulged less in
 metaphysical speculation on the deep things of God than this
 writer. To support his system it was necessary only to exhibit
 Scripture testimony, and he seems quite contented to rest the
 matter on this foundation.

What is called moderate Calvinism is in reality refined Ar-

God hardened Pharaoh's heart, as he declared from the beginning of the history he would do; but did not put evil into his mind. There was no need for this, for he was previously wicked, like all mankind; and while God punished his wickedness no more than his iniquity deserved, he displayed to his people Israel, in his treatment of him, their security under his protection. God has no occasion to put evil into the heart of any, in order to their destruction, for in consequence of the curse of the broken law (from which God's people alone are delivered), there

minianism. It is impossible to modify the former without sliding into the latter. If the doctrine of God's sovereignty and of unconditional election be denied, regeneration and redemption must undergo a corresponding modification, and all the doctrines of grace will be more or less affected. While it is admitted that many of the people of God, through imperfect views of Divine truth, falter on the subject of election, it is a truth essential to the plan of salvation, and a truth most explicitly revealed. No truth in the Scriptures is more easily defended. The reason why many find it difficult to defend this doctrine is, that they suppose it necessary to account for it by human wisdom, and to justify the conduct of God. We have nothing to do with the grounds of it in the Divine procedure, we have to do only with the Divine testimony, that testimony which Mr Tholuck so fearfully perverts. There are many who in words fully admit the doctrine of election, and at the same time neutralize it by dwelling exclusively upon God's being love, and laying the blame of the whole world not being saved on the sloth of Christians.

is in no natural man any thing good towards God.—Rom. viii. 7.

V. 19.—Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

The Apostle here brings forward the objection that would naturally occur. If God thus shows mercy, or hardens according to his sovereign pleasure, why, then, it may be asked, does he yet find fault with transgressors? This is the only objection that can be made to what the Apostle was stating. *Thou wilt say, then, who hath resisted his will?* If God wills sin, and if he is all-powerful, must he not be the author of sin? The objection is in substance the same that is still urged, and it never can be put more strongly than here by the Apostle. What then does he answer? This we learn in the following verses.

V. 20.—Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

To the preceding objection the Apostle gives three distinct answers. His first answer in this verse, similar to Is. xlv. 9, is directed against the proud reasonings of man, who though he be born like the wild ass's colt, and being of yesterday, knows nothing, Job, viii. 9, presumes to scan the deep things of God, and to find fault

with the plan of his government and providence, into which angels desire to look, while they find it incomprehensible. We are here taught that it is perfectly sufficient to silence all objections to prove that any thing is the will of God. No man after this is done has a right to hesitate or to doubt. The rectitude of God's will is not to be questioned. What men have to do is to learn what God says, and then to receive it as unquestionably true and right. *Nay but, O man, who art thou?* And what is man that he should take upon him to object to any thing that God says? The reason and discernment between right and wrong which he possesses is the gift of God. And it is the greatest abuse of these faculties to employ them to question the conduct of him who gave them. The question of the Apostle imports that it is a thing most preposterous for such a creature as man to question the procedure of God.

Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou formed me thus?—Can any thing be more presumptuous than for the creature to pretend to more wisdom than the Creator? Any wisdom the creature possesses must have been received from the Creator; and if the Creator has the power of forming rational beings, must he not himself be infinite in wisdom? And does it not insult the Creator to pretend

to find imperfection in his proceedings? Why, as thou art all-powerful, hast thou formed me in such a manner that I am capable of sin and misery? The rebellious heart of man is never satisfied with the Apostle's answer, and still the question is, Why did he make men to be condemned? Let the Lord's people be satisfied with the Apostle's answer, and let it be sufficient for them to know that God has willed both the salvation of the elect, and the destruction of the wicked, although they are not able to comprehend the depth of the ways of God. The Apostle tells us the fact, and shows us that it must be received on God's testimony, and not on our ability to justify it. That God does all things right there is no question, but the grounds of his conduct he does not condescend to explain to us. Much less would it be consistent with his sovereignty to justify his conduct by explaining the grounds of it to his enemies. No man has a right to bring God to trial. What he tells us of himself, or of ourselves, let us receive as unquestionably right. "Paul," says Calvin, "would not have neglected
' refuting the objection, that God reprobates or
' elects, according to his own will, those whom
' he does not honour with his favour, or love
' gratuitously, had he considered it to be false.
' The impious object, that men are exempted

‘ from guilt if the will of God has the chief part
 ‘ in the salvation of the elect, or destruction of
 ‘ the reprobate. Does Paul deny it? Nay ;
 ‘ his answer confirms this truth—that God de-
 ‘ termines to do with mankind what he pleases,
 ‘ and that men rise up with unavailing fury to
 ‘ contest it, since the Maker of the world assigns
 ‘ to his creatures, by his own right, whatever
 ‘ lot he chooses.”

V. 21.—*Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour ?*

This is the Apostle’s second answer to the objection contained in the 19th verse, in which, by another reference to Scripture, he asserts that the thing formed ought not to contend with him that formed it, who has a right to dispose of it as he pleases. The words in the original, translated “ power ” in this verse and the following, are different. The word here employed is variously applied as signifying authority, license, liberty, right, but in its application to God, there can be no question that it denotes *power justly exercised*. The mere power or ability of doing what God pleases, cannot be the meaning, for this is not the thing that is questioned. It is the justice of the procedure that is disputed, and it is consequently the justice of this exercise of power that must be asserted. With respect to all other beings, the license, liberty, or right referred

to, may be, as it is, derived from a superior, but in this sense it cannot refer to God. When, therefore, it is said here that God has "power," it must mean that he may, in the instance referred to, use his power in conformity to justice. The right has not a reference to a superior as conferring it, but a reference to his own character, to which all the actions of his sovereignty must be conformable.

Power, then, in this place, signifies right or power which is consistent with justice. It is this right or power according to justice that is here asserted. When the potter forms the clay in what manner he pleases, he does nothing contrary to justice; neither does God do injustice in the exercise of absolute power, respecting his creatures. Out of the same original lump or mass he forms, in his holy sovereignty, one man unto honour and another unto dishonour without in any respect violating justice. That we are all in the hand of God, as the clay in the potter's hand, is humbling to the pride of man, yet nothing can be more self-evidently true. If so, God has the same right over us, that a potter has over the clay of which he forms his vessels for his own purposes and interest. The same figure as is employed by the Prophet Isaiah, in declaring the right that God had over him, and all the people of Israel, God likewise employs, Jer. xviii. 6. "O house of Israel, cannot I do

with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." A potter forms his vessels for himself, and not for them. This determines the question with respect to God's end in the creation of man. Philosophers cannot see any higher end in creating man than that of making him happy. But the chief end of the potter in making his vessels has a reference to himself, and God's chief end in making man is his own glory. This is plainly held forth in a multitude of passages in Scripture. Let man strive with his Maker as he will, still he is nothing but the clay in the hand of the potter. There cannot, indeed, be a question, but that God will act justly with all his creatures; but the security for this is in his own character, and we can have no stronger security against God's power than his own attributes. God will do his creatures no injustice; but this is because justice is a part of his own character. Our security for being treated justly by God is in himself.

One vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour.—Some endeavour to explain this as implying, that some vessels may be made for a less honourable use, while they are still vessels for the master's service. But it is not said that they are made for a less honourable use, but that they

are made to *dishonour* is the Apostle's assertion. It is true, indeed, that even vessels employed for dishonourable purposes are useful, and it is equally true that the destruction of the wicked will be for the glory of God. If any are condemned at all, and on any ground whatever, it is certain that it must be for the glory of God, else he would not permit the thing to take place.

On the verse before us, and the preceding, it is to be observed that the Apostle does not say that his meaning in what he had previously affirmed had been mistaken, and that he had not said that it was agreeable to the will of God that the hardness of men's hearts should take place as it does; he implicitly grants this as a truth, and that he had asserted it. And so far from palliating or softening down the expression to which the objection is made, if possible, he heightens and strengthens it. All mankind are here represented as originally lying in the same lump or mass; a great difference afterwards appears among them. Whence does this difference arise? The Apostle explicitly answers; it is God who makes the difference. As the potter makes one vessel as readily as he makes another, and each vessel takes its form from his hand, so God makes one man to honour and another to dishonour. And God's sovereign right to do this is here asserted; and he who objects to this

the Apostle says speaks against God. Shall the thing *formed* say to him that *formed* it, why hast thou *made* me thus? And this representation is entirely consistent with all that the Scriptures elsewhere teach. In the fundamental doctrine of regeneration, and the new creation in Christ Jesus, it is expressly inculcated; and is entirely coincident with the question, "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" 1 Cor. iv. 7.

V. 22.—What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction;

In this and the following verse, the Apostle gives his third and final answer to the objection stated in the 19th verse. The sum of it is, that the grand object that God has in view, both in the election and the reprobation of men, is that which is paramount to all things else in the creation of the universe, namely, his own glory. With the assertion of this doctrine, however offensive to the natural man, which must always appear to him foolishness, Paul winds up in the last verse of the eleventh chapter the whole of his previous discussion in this Epistle.

*What if God, willing to show his wrath.—*Here the purpose of God in enduring the wicked in this world, is expressly stated to arise from his willing to show his wrath against sin. We see,

then, that the entrance of sin into the world was necessary to manifest the divine character in his justice and hatred of sin. Had sin never entered into the creation of God, his character would never have been developed. Let wicked men hear what God says in this place. They flatter themselves that in some way through mercy, or because great severity would not be just, they will finally escape. But God here declares by the Apostle that he has endured sin in the world for the very purpose of glorifying himself in its punishment. How, then, shall they escape? *And to make his power known.*—The entrance of sin was also an occasion of manifesting God's power and wisdom in overruling it for his glory. The power or ability of God, according to the original word used here, is different from the power (another word in the original) in the preceding verse, as is strikingly seen in this place. The twenty-first verse asserts the right of God to act in the supposed manner; this verse shows that his doing so was to manifest his wrath against sin, and his power to make even sin to glorify his name. Sin is in its own nature to God's dishonour. He has overruled it so that he has turned it to his glory. This is the most wonderful display of power.

Endured with much long-suffering.—How often do men wonder that God endures so much sin as

appears in the world. Why does not God immediately cut off transgressors? Why does he not make an end of them at once? The answer is, he endures them for his own glory, and in their condemnation he will be glorified. To short-sighted mortals, it would appear preferable if God would cut off in childhood all whom he foresaw should continue in wickedness. But God endures them to old age, and to the utmost bounds of wickedness, for the glory of his own name. *Vessels of wrath*—vessels “full of the fury of the Lord,” Isaiah, li. 20. Here Paul calls the wicked vessels, in allusion to the figure which he had just before used. *Fitted to destruction*.—They are vessels indeed, but they are vessels of wrath, and, by their sins, they are fitted for destruction; and it is in the council of Jehovah that this shall be so.

V. 23.—And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

Here it is implied that the awful ruin of the wicked is necessary, for the full display of the riches of divine mercy, in saving the elect. Both the righteous and the wicked are by nature equally exposed to wrath; and the deliverance of the elect from that situation, to be made heirs of glory, wonderfully illustrates the infinitude of mercy. The salvation of the elect is mercy, pure mercy; and it is wonderful mercy, when we

consider what was the fate they deserved, and would have experienced, had they not been delivered by God through Jesus Christ. These vessels of mercy were previously prepared for their happy lot by God himself. *Which he had afore prepared unto glory.*—In the preceding verse it is said that the vessels of wrath are *fitted* for destruction, and in this verse that the vessels of mercy are *prepared* unto glory. The wicked are fitted for destruction by their sins, and the elect prepared before by God for glory. No particular stress is to be laid on the word *fitted*, as if it could not apply to the righteous, for they also are fitted for glory. It is usual to say that the wicked were fitted by Satan and their own folly for destruction. No doubt, Satan is concerned in it, but as no agent is asserted, it is not necessary to determine this. They also may be said to fit themselves, yet it appears that it is not the agent, but the means that the Apostle has in view. It is their sins which fit them for destruction. On the other hand, the elect are *afore prepared* unto glory. This cannot be by themselves, but must be by God as the agent. This is expressly stated, “Whom he hath prepared.” The elect are not only afore prepared unto glory, but it is God who prepares them.

It is suggested by what is said in this and the preceding verse, that God does not harden

sinner or punish them for the sake of hardening or making them miserable, or because he has any delight or pleasure in their sin or punishment considered in themselves, and unconnected with the end to be answered by them, but he does this to answer a wise and important end. This great end is the manifestation and display of his own perfections; to show his wrath, and to make his power known, and to make known the riches of his glory. That is, he does it for himself, for his own glory. It is also suggested that what God does in hardening sinners, and making them vessels unto dishonour, and enduring with much long-suffering these vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, is consistent with their being blamable for their hardness, and for every thing which renders them dishonourable. Consequently it is also consistent with his high displeasure at their conduct, and proves that he may justly destroy them for ever for their hardness and obstinacy in sin. This is supposed and asserted in the words, otherwise sinners could not be vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. To allege that these Scriptures import no more than that God *permits* sin, and orders every thing respecting the event, so that if God permits, it will certainly take place, does not obviate any difficulty which has been supposed here to present itself. For this is still representing God

as willing that sin should take place, or on the whole choosing that it should exist rather than not.

Many who admit the doctrine of predestination object to the use of the term reprobation, so often employed by the first reformers, and the old and most esteemed Christian writers. In its place they would substitute the word rejection. This last word, however, does not convey the full import of what is intended by the term reprobation ; and whether this term be used or not, all that is comprehended under it is strictly according to Scripture. Reprobation includes two acts ; the one is negative, which consists in what is called preterition, or the passing by of those who are not elected ; that is, leaving them in their natural state of alienation or enmity against God ; the other is positive, and is called condemnation, the act of condemning on account of sin those who have been passed by. In electing men, or in passing them by, God acts as a sovereign dispensing or withholding his favours, which are his own, as to him seemeth good. In condemning he exercises his justice in the punishment of the sinner. He may impart his grace to whomsoever he pleases, without any one having a right to find fault, since in regard to those whom he destines to salvation, he has provided means to satisfy his justice. On the other hand,

those who are guilty have no right to complain if he hath appointed them to wrath; 1 Thes. v. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 8; Jude, 4; for God was under no obligation to exercise mercy towards them.

The term reprobation has been used, then, because it expresses the idea intended, which the term rejection does not; if any are offended at it, it is to be feared that the offence taken is not at the word but at its import. Unless men reject the Bible, they must admit that all were condemned in Adam; and if they were justly condemned, there can be no injustice in leaving them in that state of condemnation, and punishing them as sinners. It is only from the sovereign good pleasure and love of God that any of the human race are saved. He had no such love to the fallen angels, and they all perished; nor has he such love to those of the human race that shall perish, for he says, Depart from me, ye cursed, "*I never knew you.*" Men had no more claim upon God for mercy than the angels. Whatever may be thought of these things at present, God informs us that there is a day coming when his righteous judgment shall be revealed. Then he will be clear when he speaketh, and just when he is judged. No one shall feel that he has been treated unjustly. Happy they whose high imaginations are cast down by the proclamation of mercy in the gospel, and

who receive the kingdom as little children, becoming fools that they may be wise. The high imaginations of all will be east down at last, but with very many it will be too late, except to make them feel that their condemnation is just.

In strict conformity with the truths contained in the above verses, it is said, in the Westminster Confession of Faith, which contains so scriptural a summary of Christian doctrine:—

“ The Almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of Angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.”

“ The decrees of God, are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence. God’s works of providence are, his

‘ most holy, wise, and powerful preserving, and
 ‘ governing all his creatures and all their ac-
 ‘ tions.” And again, “ God the great Creator
 ‘ of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and
 ‘ govern all creatures, actions, and things, from
 ‘ the greatest even to the least, by his most wise
 ‘ and holy providence, according to his infallible
 ‘ foreknowledge, and the free and immutable
 ‘ counsel of his own will, to the praise of the
 ‘ glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness,
 ‘ and mercy.” “ By the decree of God, for
 ‘ the manifestation of his glory, some men and
 ‘ angels are predestinated unto everlasting life,
 ‘ and others fore-ordained to everlasting death.”
 In these articles it is asserted that God fore-
 ordained, decreed, and willed the existence of
 all the moral evil which has “ *come to pass.*”
 It is also said that God brings his decrees or
 his will into effect by creation and his govern-
 ing providence, by which, in the exercise of his
 wisdom and holiness, he powerfully governs his
 creatures, and superintends and directs, disposes
 and orders all their actions.

According to the above truths, so well ex-
 pressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith,
 to which so many profess to adhere as containing
 their creed, every thing without exception, great
 or small, that has ever taken place, or shall
 ever take place in heaven, or on earth, or in

hell, has from all eternity been ordained by God, and yet so that the accountableness of the creature is not in the smallest degree removed. This is declared, in the clearest manner, respecting the greatest sin that ever was committed, even the crucifying of the Lord of Glory. It took place according to the express ordination of God, yet the wickedness of those by whom it was perpetrated is explicitly asserted. "Truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!" Luke, xxii. 22. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Acts, ii. 23; iv. 25. The crucifixion, then, of the Messiah was ordained by God, "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," Eph. iii. 11, and

was carried into execution by the wickedness of men, while God was not the author or actor of the sin.*

V. 24.—Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Here the Apostle shows who these vessels of mercy are; not only Jews, but also Gentiles, and none of either Jews or Gentiles, but those who are called by the Spirit and word of God. After expressing his unfeigned sorrow on account of the rejection of the Messiah by his countrymen in general, Paul had intimated at the 6th verse, that, notwithstanding this, the word of God had not been altogether without effect among them. He had next shown the reason why this effect had not been produced on the whole of them. The reason was, that all who belonged to that nation were not the true Israel of God, nor because they were descended from Abraham were they all his spiritual seed. This he had proved by the declarations of God to Abraham, and also by his dealings in regard to him, and especially respecting Isaac. In Isaac's family God had in a remarkable manner typically intimated the same truth, and displayed his sovereignty in rejecting the elder of

* Whoever wishes to see this matter fully examined and explained, may consult Edwards on the Will, London, edition 1790, p. 354-368.

his sons, and choosing the younger. Paul had further proved that this was according to God's usual manner of proceeding, in showing mercy to some, and hardening others. God had, notwithstanding, endured with much long-suffering that great multitude of the people of Israel who proved themselves to be vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; and, on the other hand, had displayed the abundance of his free grace in preparing vessels of mercy both among Jews and Gentiles. The word of God had thus had an effect by his sovereign disposal among the people of Israel, corresponding with the examples which Paul had produced from their history; and in the exercise of the same sovereignty God had also prepared others among the Gentiles on whom he displayed his mercy. None of the Jews or Gentiles were vessels of mercy, except those whom he had effectually called to himself. This verse incontestably proves, contrary to the erroneous glosses of many, that the Apostle is here speaking of the election of individuals, and not of nations.

V. 25.—As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

In the preceding verse, the Apostle had spoken of those who were called among the Jews and the Gentiles, whom God had prepared unto glory. In this verse and the one that follows,

he shows that the calling of the Gentiles was not an unforeseen event, but that it was expressly foretold by the prophets. God, by the prophet Hosea, ii. 23, alluding to the calling of the Gentiles by the Gospel, says, *I will call them my people, which were not my people*; that is, the Lord, at the period alluded to, would call to the knowledge of himself, as his people, persons who were formerly living in heathenism, not having even the name of the people of God. *And her beloved, that was not beloved.* The Jewish nation was typically the spouse of God. The Lord had betrothed Israel. But when Christ should come, he was to betroth Gentiles also, and to call her beloved that was not beloved. Paul, therefore, shows by this quotation, that the calling of these Gentiles, as vessels of mercy, was according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will—according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus.

V. 26.—And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

Among the nations which formerly served idols, and of whom it was usually and truly said that they were not God's people, there will be those of whom it shall be said that they are the children of the living God.—Hosea, i. 10. They

shall be the children of the living God, in opposition to the dead idols or gods of their own imagination, which they formerly worshipped. This proves that, in their former state, they were without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12, iv. 18; and consequently that the Scriptures afford no hope for those Gentiles who are left uncalled by the Gospel. This awful truth, though so many are unwilling to receive it, is every where testified in the Scriptures. It is held forth in what is said of the empire of Satan, the god of this world; and also in the character every where given in Scripture to heathens, who are declared not to have liked to retain God in their knowledge, and to have been "haters of God." It is also held forth in all the passages that affirm the final doom of idolaters; as likewise in all that is taught respecting access to God by him who is the way, the truth, and the life; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.* Men may devise schemes to extend

* All the distinguished men among the heathens, without a single exception, conformed to the idolatry of their countrymen. It is asserted by many that we have nothing to do with the state of the heathens. But we have much to do with whatever is declared in the Scriptures, for all Scripture is profitable, &c. See enquiry into the state of the Heathen world destitute of the Gospel, in the author's book of Evidences, vol. ii. chap. xv.; and vol. i. of this Exposition on chap. ii. 12.

the blessings of salvation to those who never heard of Christ, but they are opposed to the plain declarations of his word. How thankful ought we then to be that we have lived not in the days of our heathen fathers, when God suffered them to walk in their own ways, but in the times when the Gospel has visited the Gentiles. How thankful, above all, if we have been made indeed the children of the living God. The nations of Europe are in general called Christians; but it is only in name that the great body of them bear that title. God will not recognise any as his children who are not born again of his Spirit, and conformed to the image of his Son.

V. 27.—Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved :

Having spoken in the 24th verse of those whom God had called, both among Jews and the Gentiles; and having referred in the two preceding verses to what had been foretold of the latter, the Apostle, in the verse before us and the two that follow, introduces what relates to the Jews. Here he quotes the prophet Isaiah, as loudly testifying the doctrine which he is declaring. Hosea testifies with respect to God's purpose of calling the Gentiles; and Isaiah in the passage here quoted, x. 20-22,

testifies of the rejection of the great body of the Jews, and of the election of a number among them comparatively small. The Israelites looked on themselves as all being the people of God, and on the Gentiles as shut out from this relation. The prophet here shows that out of all those vast multitudes which composed their nation only a remnant were to be among the number of the true Israel of God. Whatever fulfilment the prophecy had in the times of the Old Testament, this is its full and proper meaning according to the Apostle.

At first sight it might seem that the prophet speaks only of the return of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon; but in regard to this, two things must be remarked. One is, that all the great events that happened to the Jews were figures and types representing beforehand the great work of redemption by Jesus Christ. Thus the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, their passing through the Red Sea and through the wilderness, the passage of Jordan, and their entering into Canaan, were representations of what was to take place under the Gospel, as is declared, 1 Cor. x. 11, "Now, all these things happened unto them for examples (types), and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Hence it follows that the deliverance from the captivity

of Babylon, and consequently the predictions respecting it in Scripture, are typical of the future condition of the Church of Christ. This prophecy, then, has two meanings; the first literal, the second mystical. The other thing to be remarked is, that in the work of God in regard to his church, there being several gradations which follow each other, it often happens that the prophets, who viewed from a distance those future events, join together many of them as if they related only to one and the same thing,—which is a characteristic of the spirit of prophecy. The prophet, then, in this place joins the temporal re-establishment of the Jews with the spiritual building up of the Church of Christ, although these two things are quite distinct and separate.

These words in this prophecy, “They shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel in truth,” can only have their full accomplishment in believers in Jesus Christ. The same is the case respecting the words, “The remnant shall return;” for this returning or conversion denotes much more than that of the return of the Jews from Babylon—even that glorious turning to God which takes place by the Gospel. And when the prophet says, *though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return*, it is clear that this is an allusion to

the promise made to Abraham that his posterity should be as the sand of the sea, and that he means to say that whatever confidence the Jews might place in that promise, taking it in a carnal and literal sense, yet that those who were saved should be a small remnant, whom God would take to himself in abandoning all the rest to his avenging justice. As one event, then, in Scripture prophecy is often made to shadow forth and typify another, so the events of the Jewish history are made to illustrate the spiritual things of the kingdom of God. In this way the prophecies quoted in the New Testament from the Old are to be viewed, and not to be explained in a manner that ascribes to the Apostles of Christ that false and deceitful mode of quotation called accommodation,—so disparaging to their character as stewards of the mysteries of God, and so degrading to the Holy Scriptures.

V. 28.—For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

This refers to God's judgments poured out upon the Jews for their rejecting the Messiah. They were then cut off manifestly from being his people. He cut short the work in righteous judgment. The destruction determined, denotes the ruin and desolation of the whole house of

Israel, with the exception of a small remnant. It was to overflow in righteous judgment, which gives the idea of an inundation. But this not having place in the re-establishment of the Jews after the Babylonish captivity, must necessarily be understood of the times of the gospel. It was then that the consumption decreed took place; for the whole house of Israel was rejected from the covenant of God, and consumed or dispersed by the fire of his vengeance, and by the Roman armies, with the exception of a small remnant. Formerly God had borne with them in their sins, but now when they had heard the gospel and rejected it, they were destroyed or carried away into captivity as with a flood. The Lord made a short work with them at the destruction of Jerusalem. This verse and the preceding confirm what is said in the 22d verse, that although God endures the wicked for a time, he determines to punish them at last without any unnecessary delay.

V. 29.—And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

This again verifies another prediction of Isa. i. 9. It was no doubt fulfilled in the events of the Jewish history; but in its proper and full sense, it extended to the times of the Messiah, and predicted the small number of Jews who

were left, and the purpose for which they were left. The Jews who escaped destruction at the overthrow of their city by the Romans, were spared merely as a "seed" from whence was to spring all the multitudes who will yet arise to Jesus Christ out of the seed of Abraham. Had it not been for this circumstance, not one individual at that time would have been spared. They would have been all cut off as Sodom and Gomorrah. "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."—Matth. xxiv. 22. The Apostle, instead of remnant, the word employed by the Prophet, substitutes the term *seed*, from the Septuagint translation, which, though the expression is varied, has a similar meaning, implying that after the whole heap besides was consumed, the remainder was reserved for sowing with a view to a future crop.

By this quotation from Isaiah, the Apostle proves that the doctrine of the unconditional election of individuals to eternal life—that doctrine against which such objections are raised by many—far from being contrary to the ideas we ought to entertain of the goodness of God, is so entirely consistent with it, that except for this election, not one of the nation of Israel would have been saved. Thus the doctrine of

election, very far from being in any degree harsh or cruel, as many who misunderstand it affirm, is, as we see here, a glorious demonstration of divine goodness and love. Had it not been for this election, through which God had afore prepared vessels of mercy unto glory, neither Jew nor Gentile would have escaped, but all would have remained vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. In the case of the angels who sinned there was no election, and the whole were cast down to hell. Had there been no election among men, the whole must in like manner have perished.

V. 30.—What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith:

*What shall we say then?—*What is the result of all this discussion? The conclusion from the whole is, that those Gentiles who were called by God, of whom the Apostle had spoken in the 24th verse, who were not following righteousness, but were abandoned to every kind of wickedness, obtained true righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. This is an astonishing instance of mercy. Men who were guilty of all abominations, as Paul had shown in the first chapter of this Epistle, were thus made partakers of that righteousness

which is commensurate to all the demands of the law.

V. 31.—But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

Whatever objection might be made against the doctrine which the Apostle was here inculcating, a clear proof was offered in the case of the Gentiles which he had adduced, of the truth he had advanced and illustrated by the examples of Jacob and Esau, namely, that the purpose of God according to election is unchangeable, and that salvation is not of works, but of him that calleth. And here was a wonderful instance of divine sovereignty. The nation of Israel were following after righteousness, yet God, instead of giving it to them, bestowed it on those who were not even looking for it. How different is this from the ways of men! How does the proud heart of the self-righteous legalist revolt at such a view of the divine conduct! Man's wisdom cannot endure that God should in this sovereign way bestow his favours. But this is God's way, and whoever will not submit to it, resists the will of God. Nay, whoever finds fault with it attempts to undeify God. The whole plan of salvation is so ordered, "That, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."—1 Cor. i. 31.

V. 32.—Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone;

The Apostle here asks, why the people of Israel did not attain to the righteousness they were seeking. The word "wherefore" has no reference to election, or a supposed objection from it, as some understand. The question is asked to excite more attention to the answer; and the answer is, because they sought it in a way in which it is not to be found. The righteousness that answers the demands of the law, is the righteousness of God, which is to be obtained only by faith. The Jews, then, did not attain to it, because they sought it not by faith, but as of works of law. Some commentators lay stress on the phrase, "as it were by the works of the law," assigning as its meaning, that the Jews did not suppose they kept the law perfectly, but expected to make up for their deficiencies in one respect by abounding in others. But this is not well founded. The Jews sought righteousness "as of works of law;" that is, as if righteousness was to be obtained by doing the works of the law. By the works of the law they could not obtain it, unless they perfectly obeyed the law. To this they could never attain. As, therefore, they would not submit to Christ, who

alone has fulfilled the law, they failed in obtaining righteousness.

For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone— That is, they stumbled at Jesus Christ. Instead of choosing him as the elect, precious foundation-stone, on which to rest their hope, they rejected him altogether. They looked for a Messiah of a different character, and, therefore, they rejected the Christ of God. The Apostle thus charges it upon the Jews as their own fault, that they did not attain to righteousness. They mistook the character of that law under which they were placed, by which, according to the testimony of their own prophets, no man could be justified; and also the character of the Messiah who was promised, and so perverted that law, and rejected him by whom alone they could be saved. They thus verified the words of the Apostle:—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Of this Paul exhibits himself as an example. In the seventh chapter of this Epistle, he shows how entirely he once mistook the extent of the law; and in the beginning of the chapter before us, that he once made it his boast that he had nothing to do with Christ as the Messiah.

V. 33.—As it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

As it is written.—The Apostle here confirms what he had just said concerning the stone of stumbling by quoting from two places of Scripture—Isa. viii. 14; xxviii. 16. The stumbling, then, of the Jews at Christ, the rock of offence, was predicted by the prophets. It should not, therefore, appear strange to those who lived in the times when it was accomplished.

A stumbling-stone and rock of offence.—This language of the prophet applied by the Apostle to our Lord Jesus Christ, ought to be particularly observed: “Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel.” As here the prophet speaks directly of God, and the Apostle applies what he says to Jesus Christ, it is a conclusive proof that Jesus Christ is God, and that he is declared to be so both in the Old Testament and the New. The designations of a stone, and a rock, are given to Jesus Christ, both of them presenting the idea that the great work of redemption depends solely on him. He is its author, the centre in which all its lines meet, and their origin from which they proceed. He is to that work

what the foundation-stones and the rock on which it is erected are to the building, sustaining it, and giving it form and stability. In another sense, he is a stone of stumbling, occasioning his rejection by those who, not believing in him, are cut off from communion with God.

Behold, I lay in Sion.—This stone, or rock—this “sure foundation,” is laid by God, according to the Apostle’s reference. Isa. xxviii. 16. “Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.” This stone was laid in Zion the Church of God. It was laid by God himself. That it was “a sure foundation” which could not fail, is evident from all the promises of God concerning the Messiah of upholding him as his elect, and insuring to him success, dominion and glory in his character of Mediator. Isa. xlii. 1, 8; xlix. 7, 9.

All the promises to the Church of old, of the Messiah as a future Saviour, from the declaration made to our first parents in Paradise, to the last prediction concerning him delivered by the prophet Malachi, demonstrate the impossibility that Christ, the foundation which God has laid, should fail. Those promises were often renewed with great solemnity, and confirmed by the oath of God, as in Genesis xxii. 16-18. And in Ps.

lxxxix. 3, 4, it is said, " I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant ; thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." Nothing is more abundantly set forth in Scripture as sure and irreversible than this promise and oath to David. The Scriptures expressly speak of it as utterly impossible that the everlasting dominion of the Messiah should fail. " In those days, and at that time, I will cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, for thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Jacob." " If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season ; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne." Jer. xxxiii. 15. 20. David securely rested on this covenant concerning the future glorious work and kingdom of the Messiah, as all his salvation, and all his desire, and comforted himself, that it was an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure.

As being that foundation laid by himself, which therefore could not fail, God proceeded to save men in virtue of the work of the Messiah before he appeared, as if it had been already accomplished. On this stone and rock, the saints

of old rested, and built their comfort. Abraham saw Christ's day and rejoiced, and all the others died in the faith of his advent. What a view does this give us of the faithfulness of God, and the truth of the Scriptures; and what an inducement to rely securely upon the rock of ages! "Its solidity is assured to us by him whose voice shakes the heavens and the earth—by the revelation of the eternal purpose of God, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eph. iii. 11.

Rock of offence.—While the Messiah was indeed the sure foundation which God had laid, he was notwithstanding, as it was written, rejected by the great body of the Jewish nation. Had they understood the language of their own Scriptures, they would have seen that, instead of receiving their Messiah when he came, the prophets had declared that they would stumble at the lowliness of his appearance, and would generally reject him.

And whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.—But they did not all reject him. Some of them, referred to in verse 24th, who were called of God, acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, sent of God, and were comforted by him. They were not ashamed to own him before the unbelieving part of their brethren, and they shall not be put to shame before him at his second coming. It might be supposed that the

followers of the Messiah would be honoured in every country ; on the contrary, they are hated and held in contempt. But when all other refuges fail, when Christ comes to judge the world, they shall not be ashamed.

A free salvation becomes an offence to men on account of their pride. They cannot bear the idea of being indebted for it to sovereign grace, which implies that in themselves they are guilty and ruined by sin. They desire to do something, were it ever so little, to merit salvation, at least in part. Salvation by a crucified Saviour was in one way opposed to the pride of the Jews, and in another to that of the Greeks. The Jews expected a mighty conqueror who should deliver them from a foreign yoke, and render them so powerful as to triumph over all the other nations of the earth ; and in order to reconcile with those ideas what the Scriptures said of his humiliation, some among them supposed that there would be two Messiahs. The Greeks expected, in a revelation from heaven, something resembling the systems of their vain philosophy, which might exalt their false notions of the dignity of man, and enlarge their boasted powers of understanding. All who are unconverted reason in the same way. Those among them who call themselves Christians suppose, that, not being perfect, they have need of Christ

as a Saviour to compensate for their deficiencies, and to give weight to their good works. They do not believe that they obey the law perfectly ; but suppose that what is wanting will be supplied by Jesus Christ. Thus, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. The doctrine of the cross is, in one way or other, misunderstood by him, and Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling.

Many by their forced criticisms have in various ways perverted the meaning of this chapter. Among their other misrepresentations they affirm that the Apostle does not speak of individual election to eternal life, but of the national election of the Jews. On the contrary, it is evident that in regard to the Jews he refers to their national rejection. The rejection of the Jewish nation, excepting a small remnant, according to the election of grace, which is again plainly declared in the beginning of the eleventh chapter, is the important subject which the Apostle illustrates by the examples and predictions he refers to, and the reasonings with which he follows them up.

The fact of a remnant of Israel being reserved by God for himself, while the great body of the nation was abandoned to merited punishment, demonstrates that the election here spoken of is individual and not national. The prophets every

where speak of this small remnant chosen by God to display his mercy and goodness. “I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.” Zeph. iii. 12.

CHAPTER X.

PAUL was fully aware that his doctrine of the sovereignty of God in the rejection of the Jews and the preaching of salvation to the Gentiles, would greatly offend his countrymen. He accordingly begins this chapter with an acknowledgment of their sincerity as having a zeal of God, and before prosecuting the subject of God's sovereignty further, he more particularly adverts to their unbelief, to which in the preceding chapter he had already alluded. This leads him to show the difference between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith. He next insists on the free invitations of the Gospel, which proclaims salvation to all of every nation who believe; and from this takes occasion to point out the necessity of preaching it to the Gentiles. The Gentiles, as he had before proved, were among the children of the promise made to Abraham, and it was only by means of the Gospel that they could be brought to the knowledge of Christ; through which alone the promise could be fulfilled to them. This duty, notwithstanding the objections made to it by the Jews, he therefore urges, and en-

forces it by referring to the Scriptures, while he answers the objection, that the Gospel had not been generally received. In the last place, he proves, by the testimony of the prophets, that the rejection of Israel, and the ingathering of the Gentiles, had been long before predicted, and concludes the chapter by showing, that the Jews had both heard and rejected the gracious and long-continued invitations to reconciliation with God. In the whole of this chapter, Paul treats in a practical way what in the preceding one he had chiefly referred to, the sovereignty of God, to which he afterwards reverts.

We see in this chapter a beautiful example in Paul of the meekness and gentleness of the Lord Jesus Christ, who prayed for his murderers. The Jews considered Paul as one of their greatest enemies. They had persecuted him from city to city, had attempted to kill him, and had succeeded in depriving him of his liberty, yet his affection for them was not diminished. He prayed for them, he accommodated himself to their prejudices as far as his obedience to God permitted, and thus he laboured by all means to save some. He here assures those to whom he writes, of his cordial good-will towards Israel, and of his prayers to God that they might be saved.

V. 1.—Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

Brethren.—Those here addressed are the brethren in Christ to whom Paul wrote, and not the Jews in general, who were his brethren in the flesh. There is no doubt but by apostrophe he might address the unbelieving Jews, but there is nothing like an apostrophe here, nor is there any need of such a supposition. Whoever was addressed, the sentiment would be equally well understood by the unbelieving Jews who should read or hear the Epistle.

My heart's desire and prayer to God.—It is of great importance to remove prejudices as far as possible, and to show good-will to those whom we wish to benefit by the publication of divine truth. We see here the love of a Christian to his bitterest enemies. Paul was abused, reviled, and persecuted by his countrymen, yet he not only forgave them, but constantly prayed for their conversion. Unbelievers often accuse Christians, though very falsely, as haters of mankind, because they faithfully declare that there is no salvation but through faith in Christ.

Here we should especially remark, that while the salvation of his countrymen was the desire of Paul's heart, and while he was endeavouring in every way possible to call their attention to the Gospel, he did not neglect to offer up prayer for them to God. Other means, as we have opportunity, should not be left untried; but this is at all times in our power, and should be per-

severed in. When we are shut up from access to man, we have always access to God, and with him is the residue of the Spirit. In this duty, we learn from his epistles that Paul was ever much engaged for his brethren in Christ, and here we see that he did not neglect it in behalf of those by whom he was hated and persecuted. He thus obeyed the injunctions, and imitated the example of our blessed Lord. In this verse, too, standing in connexion with what immediately precedes it, we learn that Paul's faithful annunciation of these doctrines, which by so many are most erroneously considered to be harsh towards men, and to give an unfavourable view of the character of God, so far from being opposed to feelings of the warmest affection for others, is closely and intimately conjoined with them.

We should never cease to pray for, and to use all proper means for the conversion of, those who either oppose the Gospel with violence, or from some preconceived opinion. Secret things belong to God, and none can tell whether or not they are among the number of the elect. No one among the Jews was more opposed to the Gospel than Paul himself had been ; and every Christian who knows his own heart, and who recollects the state of his mind before his conversion, should consider the repugnance he felt

to the doctrine of grace. We ought not, indeed, to treat those as Christians who do not appear to be such. This would be directly opposed to the dictates of charity, and would tend to lull them into a false security. But assuredly none can have such powerful inducements to exercise patience towards any who reject the Gospel, as they who know who it is that has made them to differ from others, and that by the grace of God they are what they are. These considerations have a direct tendency to make them humble and gentle. Those who are elected shall indeed be finally saved, but this will take place through the means which God has appointed. It is on this ground that Paul says, "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

V. 2.—For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

Paul acknowledged that the Jews had a zeal of God, and so far he approved of them, and was on that account the more interested in their behalf. But their zeal and the sincerity of their attachment to their system was no excuse for their unbelief. The Apostle had sorrow for their condemnation, not hope of their salvation on account of their sincerity and zeal. This is an important lesson to thousands who profess

Christianity. How often it is said that if a man be sincere in his belief, his creed is of no great importance. His salvation, it is supposed, is not endangered by his ignorance or error. How different on this head is the Apostle Paul from those who thus judge. Yet his love to mankind cannot be doubted. His love to his countrymen was quite beyond any thing to which the persons alluded to can pretend. Yet he bewails the Jews, as under condemnation, on account of their ignorance. We see here that men may attend to religion, and be much occupied on the subject, without being acceptable to God; and that sincerity in error is neither a means of salvation nor an excuse for any man. Nothing but the natural alienation of their minds from God prevents those who possess the Scriptures from understanding the way of salvation.

V. 3.—For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

The ground of the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews, was their ignorance of God's righteousness. Had they understood this, they would have ceased to go about to establish their own righteousness; but not understanding that righteousness which God has provided in his Son, they rejected the salvation of the Gospel. Mr Stuart translates the word, rendered righteous-

ness throughout this passage, by the word *justification*, which is warranted by no authority. Dr Macknight, who, like Mr Stuart, denies the imputation of Christ's righteousness, says, that the righteousness here spoken of is 'the righteousness which God appointed at the fall, as 'the righteousness of sinners,' which he explains elsewhere to mean faith; saying, that God 'hath declared that he will accept and reward it as 'righteousness.' Dr Campbell, of Aberdeen, as has been formerly noticed, explains the righteousness here spoken of as that 'purer scheme of 'morality which was truly of God,' opposed to the 'system of morality or righteousness fabricated by the Jews.' In this manner do these writers (see vol. i. 270-4, 2d ed.) make void, though each in a different way, all that is said throughout this Epistle and elsewhere in the Scriptures, on that most important expression, "the righteousness of God," through the revelation of which the Apostle declares that the Gospel "*is the power of God unto Salvation,*" Rom. i. 17.

The righteousness of God.—That perfect fulfilment of the law by Jesus Christ, by which men are saved, is received by faith; and he who does not submit to this righteousness, and humbly receive it, but supposes that he can do something to give him a right to obtain or to merit

it, or who attempts to add to it any thing of his own, or to substitute in its place his own obedience, more or less, is equally ignorant of the corruption of his own heart—of the holiness of God—and of the perfection of the obedience which the law requires. In this verse the fatal error is clearly expressed, of those who expect to be saved by any works of their own, even when, like the Pharisee who prayed in the Temple, they ascribe to God all that they suppose to be good in them.

V. 4.—For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

The Apostle here declares what he means by the righteousness of God, to which the Jews would not submit, namely, the fulfilment of the law by our Lord Jesus Christ. *The end of the law.* What the end of the law is, Paul shows, Rom. vii. 10, when he says, *It was ordained to life*, namely, that the man who doeth all that it commands, should live by it. And what is it that, in the present state of human nature, the law cannot do? It cannot justify, and so give life, because it has been broken. What then did God do? He sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and condemned sin in the flesh. And why has he done this? The answer is given, Ch. viii. 4, “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,”

who are in him. Thus it is, that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. By him is accomplished for all such the whole purpose of the law. Christ redeems his people from its curse, and procures for them the blessing of life which, under the righteous government of God, he confers on all his creatures who are conformed to his holy law. The fallen angels possessed this life while they obeyed it, and Adam, while he continued in his integrity; but this was not the full end of the law, for they apostatized. In them, therefore, the law fell short of attaining its end. But the righteousness imputed to those who believe in Christ is "everlasting righteousness," Daniel, ix. 24, and therefore to them belongs eternal life. Their life is comprised in his life, and he is "that eternal life;" and "when he who is their life shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory." Accordingly, Jesus says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

"I have *finished*," said our blessed Lord in his intercessory prayer to his Father, "the work which thou gavest me to do;" and on the cross, just before he expired, he said, it is *finished*. In each of these passages the word rendered finished is the same as that which is here translated *end*, signifying accomplished, consum-

mated, or perfected. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, vi. 1, the original word is rendered "perfection." The Apostle there says, "Let us go on to perfection"—to the end or finishing, meaning the consummation or completion of all that the law required, which he shows was found in the sacrifice and work of Jesus Christ. This *perfection*—this end was not attained by the Levitical Priesthood, for if "*perfection* were by the Levitical Priesthood, what further need was there that another priest should rise?" Heb. vii. 11. Nor was it attained by the legal dispensation, which "made nothing *perfect*," v. 19, brought nothing to its *end* or consummation. This was found only in Christ, "for by one offering he hath *perfected* for ever (still the same word in the original, in all these places) them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14.

To prove that Christ was the *perfection* or the *end* of the law, is the great object of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which furnishes a complete commentary on the passage before us. It opens with declaring Jesus Christ to be the *Son of God*. To prove and to establish this grand truth, as the foundation of all that the Apostle was afterwards to advance, was essential to his purpose. For by no one in the whole universe, excepting him who is eternal, could the eternal or everlasting righteousness predicted by Daniel,

which is the “perfection” or end of the law, have been brought in. It was, then, this important truth that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, which Paul labours in that Epistle to impress on the minds of the Jewish converts, in order to confirm their faith. And it was the ignorance of this same important truth in the great body of the nation, which in the chapter before us he laments.

The unbelieving Jews vainly went about to establish their own righteousness by their obedience to the law, instead of viewing it as a schoolmaster to lead them unto, or until Christ, by whom alone it could be, and was fulfilled, Matth. v. 18. This verifies what the Apostle says, 2 Cor. iii. 13, that “the children of Israel could not look steadfastly to the *end*” (the same word as in the verse before us) “of that which is abolished.” Christ, then, as is declared in this verse, is the end of the law *for righteousness to every one that believeth*. For the moment that a man believes in him, the end of the law is attained in that man; that is, it is fulfilled in him, and he is in possession of the righteousness which the law requires, and consequently he *hath eternal life*—John vi. 54, to which the law was ordained, Rom. vii. 10. Christ, then, by his obedience has fulfilled the

law of God, in every form in which it has been given to men, that his obedience or righteousness might be imputed as their righteousness to all that believe. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21.* "Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness," Isaiah, xlv. 24. "He shall be called the Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. This is the only righteousness in which a man can stand before God, and which shall be acknowledged in the great day. They and they only who by their works proceeding from that faith

* The accuracy with which the Scriptures are written, is very observable in the passage above quoted, 2 Cor. v. 21, and in the verse preceding it. The supplement *you*, twice repeated in verse 20, is erroneous. Those whom the Apostle was addressing had been reconciled to God, therefore he could not beseech them to be what they were already. Dr Macknight has remarked this, but he has not noticed the change from *men*, the proper supplement in verse 20, to *us* and *we* in the following verse. This change was necessary, for though Paul could declare that Christ had been made sin for him and for those to whom he wrote, he could not affirm this of any man till, like the Corinthians, there was evidence of his having received the grace of God given him in Christ Jesus. 1 Cor. i. 4. Dr Macknight, like Mr Stuart, by his translation, changing sin into sin-offering, takes away the contrast between sin and righteousness, and obscures, as has been remarked in vol. i. of this work, one of the strongest expressions of the vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings that is to be found in the Bible.

which unites the soul to Christ, and which receives this righteousness, are proved to possess it, shall then be pronounced "righteous," Matt. xxv. 37, 46. This righteousness is imputed to every one that believeth, and to such only. This makes it clear that Jesus Christ has not fulfilled the law for mankind in general, but for those in particular who should believe in his name, John, xvii. 9, 20. His atonement and intercession are of the same extent, and are presented for the same individuals. "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me."

Mr Stuart, in his explanation of this fourth verse, introduces the following quotation from Flatt:—"Christ is the τέλος νόμου (end of the law) in respect to δικαιοσύνη (righteousness), he has brought it about, that we should not be judged after the strictness of the law. He has removed the sentence of condemnation, from all those who receive the Gospel." To this Mr Stuart adds—"Well and truly." That the sentence of condemnation is removed from all who receive the Gospel, although in a very different way from what Mr Stuart supposes, is most certain. But no sentiment can be more unscriptural than that we shall not be judged after the strictness of the law. For what saith the Scripture? "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness." In that

day, instead of men not being judged *after the strictness of the law*, judgment will be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and all those in whom the righteousness of the law has not been fulfilled in all its demands, without wanting one jot or tittle, will be found under its curse; and that awful sentence will be pronounced upon them, “Depart from me, ye cursed.” The judgment, in accordance with every representation of it contained in Scripture, and with the whole plan of salvation, will be conducted in all respects both as to those who shall be saved, and those who shall be condemned, after the strictness of both law and justice. Under the righteous government of God, never was one sin committed which will not be punished either in the person of him who committed it, or in that of the Divine Surety of the new covenant.

V. 5.—For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

This illustrates what the Apostle had just before said, that Christ, and Christ alone, has fulfilled the demands of the law, and therefore it is vain for any one to seek to obtain life by personal obedience to its commandments. To live by the law, requires that the law be perfectly obeyed. But this to fallen man is impossible. The law knows no mercy; it knows no mitiga-

tion, it overlooks not even the smallest breach, or the smallest deficiency. One guilty thought would condemn for ever. Whoever then looks for life by the law, must keep the whole law in thought, word, and deed, and not be chargeable with the smallest transgression.

V. 6.—But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

V. 7.—Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

V. 8.—But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach:

We should rather expect contrast than coincidence between the law given by Moses and the gospel of Christ. Can there be any illustration of the receiving of righteousness by faith, which is here the Apostle's subject, and the precepts that were given to the Israelites as a shadow of the gospel? Doubtless, with all the difference between the law and the gospel, there must be a point of view in which they are coincident, for in such a view it is that the Apostle makes his quotation. Paul alleges the passage to which he refers, Deut. xxx. 11, 14, as speaking the language of the righteousness of faith. *But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven?* This language, as used by Moses,

was the language that described the clearness of the manner of giving the knowledge of the divine requirements to the people of Israel. But though this was its original object, yet it had a further reference to the clearness of the manner of revealing the Gospel. For the Apostle explains it, "*That is, to bring Christ down from above.*" The language, then, that describes the clearness of the revelation of the precepts of God to Israel, was a figure of the clearness of the revelation of the Gospel.

Moses gave the Israelites a law which was to abide with them for their constant instruction. They were not obliged to send a messenger to heaven to learn how they were to serve God, nor to search out wisdom by their own understanding. Nor had they to send over the sea to distant countries, like the heathens, for instruction. God by Moses taught them every thing with respect to his worship and service in the most full, clear, and practical manner. This was a shadow of the clearness of the revelation of the righteousness received by faith, which we are not left to search for by means through which it never can be obtained. Salvation is brought nigh to us, being proclaimed in the Gospel by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The word is in our mouth. We receive the righteousness he has brought, not by any

efforts of our own in seeking salvation, and labouring to keep the law of God, but by the belief of that word which was published at Jerusalem announcing salvation to the guiltiest of mankind.

The gospel is contained in figure in every part of the law. The very manner of giving the law was a shadow of the gospel, and typified salvation through a great Mediator. And though the New Testament often distinguishes and even contrasts the demands of the law with the voice of mercy speaking in the gospel, yet here the gospel speaks through the law. The reference to what Moses observed with respect to the precepts which he delivered from God to the people of Israel, instead of finding an opposition to the plan of salvation through Christ, finds an illustration that divine wisdom had prepared to shadow it in the mission of the Mediator under the law.

Wonderful is the wisdom of God manifested in the harmony of the Old and New Testaments.

They who do not understand it, have laboured to show a coincidence merely by accommodation. But the Spirit of God every where explains the language of the Old Testament as in its design appointed by God to be a shadow of the things of Christ's kingdom.

While the language of the law is, Do and Live, that righteousness which it demands, and

which man is unable to perform, is, according to the gospel, gratuitously communicated through faith. This righteousness is in Christ, and he is not at a distance, so that we must scale the heavens, or descend below the earth,—in one word, attempt what is impracticable, to come to him, and derive from him this benefit. He and his righteousness are brought near unto us, as was long before predicted. “Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry.”—Is. xlvi. 12. All men, till enlightened by the Spirit of God, seek salvation by doing something of which they imagine God will approve. If it is not complete, his mercy, they suppose, will incline him to take it for value; but without something of his own to present to God, man in his natural state never thinks of approaching him. Nothing can be more self-evidently false than that man can merit from God. Yet, notwithstanding the folly of this supposition, it is only the energy of the Spirit through the truth of the Gospel that will convince him of the fallacy. Even the very Gospel of the grace of God is seen through this false medium; and while men exclaim grace, grace, they continue to introduce a species of merit by putting Christ at a distance, and making access to him a matter of

time and difficulty. How different is the Gospel as here exhibited by Paul!

We must not attempt to do any thing to merit Christ, however little, or to bring any thing like an equivalent in our hand. The language of Scripture is, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.” “He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich”—they who are worthy in their own esteem, who bring something of their own—“he hath sent empty away.” “Say not,” observes Archbishop Leighton, “unless I find some measure of sanctification, what right have I to apply him (Christ) as my righteousness? This inverts the order, and prejudges thee of both. Thou must first, without finding, yea, or seeking any thing in thyself, but misery and guiltiness, lay hold on him as thy righteousness; or else thou shalt never find sanctification by any other endeavour or pursuit.”

V. 9.—That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth.—*The confession of Christ is salvation. But that confession which is salvation, is a confession which implies that the truth confessed with the

mouth is known and received in the heart. The belief of the heart is, therefore, joined with the confession of the lips. Neither is genuine without the other, though it may be said that either the one or the other is salvation, because they who believe with the heart will confess with the tongue. If a man says I believe in Christ, yet denies him when put to trial, or confesses him with the lips, yet denies him in his proper character, he neither confesses nor believes Christ. It should always be remembered, that if any one believes something different from the testimony of God, relating to the person and work of the Saviour, he does not believe the Gospel, but something, whatever it may be, which cannot sanctify or save. The Gospel alone is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes it. *Hath raised him from the dead.*—Why is so much stress laid on the resurrection? Was not the work of Christ in this world finished by his death? Most certainly it was. But his resurrection was the evidence that it was finished; and, therefore, the belief of his resurrection is put for that of the whole of his work.

The emphasis of the second person throughout this verse should be remarked. The Apostle does not speak indefinitely, but he says emphatically, if *thou* shalt confess with *thy* mouth, and shalt believe in *thine* heart, *thou* shalt be saved.

He speaks of every one, so that every one may early search himself, for to every one believing and confessing, salvation is promised; thus teaching each one to apply the promise of salvation to himself by faith and confession. Thus the Apostle shows that every believer has as much certain assurance of his salvation as he certainly confesses Christ with his mouth, and as he believes in his heart, that the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead. Our assurance of salvation corresponds with the measure of our faith, and the boldness of our confession of Christ.

V. 10.—For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Believeth unto righteousness.—That is, unto the receiving of righteousness; namely, the righteousness of Christ. This righteousness is called “the righteousness of faith,” Rom. iv. 13—not that it is in the faith, but it is so called as being received by faith, as it is said, Rom. iii. 21, “the righteousness which is by faith,” and Phil. iii. 9, “the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Faith, then, is only the appointed medium, or bond of our union with Christ, through which we receive this righteousness, and not the righteousness itself. “Faith,” says the Westminster Confession, “justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it; nor as if the grace of faith, or any

act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification; but only as it is an instrument, by which he receiveth and applieth Christ's righteousness." The expression, "faith is counted to him for righteousness," Rom. iv. 4, is often supposed to mean, is counted to him instead of righteousness; but, as has been remarked on that text, vol. i., the literal rendering is not for righteousness, but *unto* righteousness, in conformity with the proper translation as in the verse before us.

The faith of the Gospel is not a speculation, it is not such a knowledge of religion as may be acquired like human science. This may often have the appearance of true faith; but it is not "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Many things connected with the Gospel may be believed by the natural man, and each of the doctrines taken separately may be in some way received by him, as notions of lights and colours are received by the blind. But the Gospel is never understood and believed, except by those who, according to the promise, are "taught of the Lord," Isaiah, liv. 13; who, therefore, know the Father and him whom he hath sent, which is eternal life.—John, xvii. 3. In the parable of the sower, where only the fourth description of persons are represented as having truly and abidingly received the word, they are characterised as

understanding it, and they only bear fruit. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 Cor. ii. 14. It is impossible that a man can believe that to be the word of God which he regards as foolishness. "No man can say" (understanding and believing what he says) "that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."—1 Cor. xii. 3. When Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" "Blessed," said Jesus, "art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."—Matt. xvi. 17.

Justifying faith is the belief of the testimony of Christ, and trust in him who is the subject of that testimony. It is believing *with the heart*. Concerning those who received a good report through faith, it is declared that they saw or understood the promises; they were persuaded of their truth, and they embraced them, taking them home personally, and resting upon them. On the passage before us, Calvin remarks, 'The seat of faith, it deserves to be observed, 'is not in the brain, but the heart; not that I 'wish to enter into any dispute concerning the 'part of the body which is the seat of faith,

‘ but since the word *heart* generally means a
‘ serious, sincere, ardent affection, I am desirous
‘ to show the confidence of faith to be a firm,
‘ efficacious, and operative principle in all the
‘ emotions and feelings of the soul, not a mere
‘ naked notion of the head.’

And with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.—A man becomes righteous, perfectly righteous, through believing God’s record concerning his Son. But the evidence that this faith is genuine is found in the open confession of the Lord with the mouth in every thing in which his will is known. Confession of Christ is as necessary as faith in him ; but necessary for a different purpose. Faith is necessary to obtain the gift of righteousness. Confession is necessary to prove that this gift is received. If a man does not confess Christ at the hazard of life, character, property, liberty, and every thing dear to him, he has not the faith of Christ. In saying, then, that confession is made unto salvation, the Apostle does not mean that it is the cause of salvation, or that without it the title to salvation is not complete. When a man believes in his heart, he is justified. But confession of Christ is the effect of faith, and will be evidence of it at the last day. Faith which interests the sinner in the righteousness of Christ,

is manifested by the confession of his name in the midst of enemies, or in the face of danger.

V. 11.—For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

For the Scripture saith.—Here Paul shows that the Scriptures of the Prophets taught the same doctrine that he was teaching. This he did not need to do, in order to add authority to his own doctrine, for he was equally inspired with the Prophets; but in order to show that the Jews who denied that the Gentiles were to be fellow heirs with them, were wrong, even on their own principles. *Whosoever believeth on him.*—This language of the Prophet extended mercy to the Gentiles, if they believed. *Shall not be ashamed.*—That is, their faith will not be disappointed. Almost all men have some hope with respect to the bar of God. But many have hopes founded on falsehood. There is a vast variety in the opinions of men with respect to the ground of hope; and, besides the common ground, namely, a mixture of mercy and merit, every unbeliever has something peculiar to himself, which he deems an alleviation of guilt, or singularly meritorious. But in the great day all shall be ashamed of their hope, except those who have believed in Christ for salvation. Believers alone shall not be ashamed before him at his coming.

V. 12.—For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek : for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

For there is no difference.—So far from the Gentiles being excluded from mercy altogether, there is not, in this respect, the smallest difference between them and the Jews. *Is rich.*—That is, rich to bestow on both Jews and Gentiles all they need. Calvin is not to be praised in explaining the word rich here, as meaning “kind and beneficent.” This would sanction any abuse of words that the wildest imagination could invent. Nor is there any need of such an expedient. The meaning is quite obvious. *Unto all that call upon him.*—God is able to supply the wants of all that call upon him, and he will supply them. All of them receive out of the fulness of Jesus Christ. Here it is imported that to call on the name of the Lord is to be a believer. Let it then be understood, that to call on the Lord implies to call on him in faith as he is revealed in the Gospel. There must be the knowledge of God as a just God, and a Saviour, before any one can call on him. To call on the Lord in this sense, amounts to the same thing as to believe in Christ for salvation, and it implies that every believer is one who calls on God. If any man professes to be a believer, and

does not habitually call on God, he is not what he pretends.

V. 13.—For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

‘The context in Joel,’ says Calvin, ‘will fully satisfy us, that his prediction applies to this passage of Paul.’ But why should we need any thing to convince us of this, but the authority of the Apostle himself? It is a most pernicious method of interpreting the applications of the Old Testament in the New, to make our perception of their justness the ground of acknowledging the Apostle’s conclusion. It may be proper to show how far or how clearly the words of the prophecy establish the particular reference made by the Apostle. But, whether we can explain the application or not, the interpretation of the Apostle is as infallible as the prophecy itself. If one will undertake to vindicate the justness of the Apostle’s conclusion, another may be inclined to question it, and to allege that the prophecy has not the meaning assigned to it by the Apostle.

Here, as in other places of Scripture, the name of the Lord signifies the Lord himself. By calling on the name of the Lord, all the parts of religious worship which we render to God are intended. It denotes a full and entire com-

munion with God. He who calls on the name of the Lord, profoundly humbles himself before God, recognises his power, adores his majesty, believes his promises, confides in his goodness, hopes in his mercy, honours him as his God, and loves him as his Saviour. It supposes that this invocation is inseparable from all the other parts of religion. To call on the name of the Lord, is to place ourselves under his protection, and to have recourse to him for his aid.

But why does the prophet ascribe deliverance or salvation to calling on the name of the Lord, and not merely say, whoever calls on God shall be heard, shall be protected, shall receive his blessing? The reason is that he was treating of the new covenant, which clearly, without a veil and without a figure, announces salvation, in opposition to the former covenant, which held forth temporal blessings. The Gospel speaks plainly of salvation, that is to say, of eternal happiness which we should expect after death. He uses the term salvation, in order to remind us of the unhappy condition in which we were by nature, and to show the difference between our state and that of angels, for the angels live, but are not saved. The life of which Jesus Christ is the fountain, finds us plunged in death, lost in ourselves, children of wrath, and is given us under the title of salvation. No one ever

called upon the Lord in the Scripture sense of this phrase, without being saved. It is here as expressly said, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, as it is, "Whoever believeth shall be saved." It appears that Paul, when here he speaks of calling upon the Lord, refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he had named in the 9th verse. In the same way he addresses the Church at Corinth, "With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."

In thus calling upon the Lord, a believer walks with God, as Enoch did. It is not only that he prays to God at stated seasons; his life is a life of prayer. He prays to God "every where," and "always." He remembers that Jesus hath said, Henceforth I call you not servants; but I have called you friends. He serves God, therefore, in newness of spirit, and goes to him on all occasions as his covenant God, his Father, and his friend, to whom he pours out his heart, makes known all his wants and desires, and consults him on every occasion in matters great and small. From this holy and constant communion he is not at any time or in any circumstances precluded. In Nehemiah we have beautiful and encouraging examples, both of stated prayer, and of ejaculatory prayer in unforeseen circumstances, ch. ii. 4; in short, of

a continual appeal to God, ch. xiii. 29. Paul commands us to “pray without ceasing.” To the exercise of this duty, so frequently enforced by the Lord in his last discourse to his disciples, believers have the highest encouragement. “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.” “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” We see, in the sequel, the effect of David’s short prayer, “O Lord, I pray thee turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.” Although the Lord shows himself at all times so ready to answer the prayers of his people, yet in the transaction with the Gibeonites, Joshua and the elders of Israel “asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord,” and what was the consequence? We are ready to be astonished at their conduct in this instance, yet how often is similar negligence or unbelief exemplified in the life of every Christian; even after he has received, in innumerable instances, gracious answers to his petitions, so often reproving his little faith when he presented them; and after he has experienced so many distressing proofs of the evil of being left to his own counsels when he has neglected this duty.—Joshua ix. 14.

V. 14.—How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

This and the following verse are not the objections of a Jew, as alleged by Dr Macknight. It is all the language of the Apostle in his own character. He had said in the preceding verse, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. From this he urges the necessity of preaching the Gospel to all men; for when it is said that whosoever calls on him shall be saved, it is implied that none shall be saved who do not call upon him. What then is the consequence that should be drawn from this? Is it not that the Gospel should with all speed be published over the whole world? If the Gentiles are to be partakers of divine mercy, it is by seeking it from Jesus Christ, who has died that mercy might be extended to Jew and Gentile. It is not by the Holy Ghost speaking to the heart of the Gentiles, without the instrumentality of the word, that they are to be converted and saved. They must hear the word and call on the Lord. Whoever is saved by Jesus Christ must call upon him.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?—If it be necessary to call on Christ, how can the Gentiles call on him when they do not believe in him? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? This is impossible. In this state were the Gentile nations before the Gospel reached them.

Hence the great importance of communicating to them the glad tidings of salvation. — *And how shall they hear without a preacher?* The Gospel was not to be immediately declared by the voice of God from heaven, nor by the Holy Ghost speaking without a medium of communication, nor by angels sent from heaven; it was to be carried over the world by men. How, then, according to this divine constitution, could the nations of the earth hear the Gospel without a preacher? It is hardly necessary to refute the opinion of those who hold that the Gospel cannot speak to men savingly in the Scriptures, and that it is never effectual without the living voice of a preacher. This is not the meaning of the Apostle. His doctrine is, that the Gospel must be communicated to the minds of men through the external instrumentality of the word, as well as by the internal agency of the Spirit. Men are not only saved through Christ, but they are saved through the knowledge of Christ, communicated through the Gospel.

V. 15.—And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

If the Gentiles could not believe in the Lord without hearing of him, and if they could not hear of him unless he was declared to them, then it follows, from the prophecy above quoted, that

preachers must be sent to them. Notwithstanding, then, the violent opposition made to it by the Jews, the necessity was manifest for the Apostles, according to their divine commission, to go forth to preach the Gospel to every creature. The accordance of this with the Old Testament Scriptures, Paul had been showing, and he now supports it by further quotation.

As it is written, &c.—This prophecy, Is. lii. 7, which may literally respect good news of deliverance to the Jews from temporal judgments, typically refers, as the Apostle's application of it here shows, to the messengers of mercy sent forth under the Gospel. In the beginning of that chapter, Sion, or Jerusalem, is called to arise from her degraded condition, for the Lord has prepared for her deliverance. Then follow the words here quoted. The tidings to be told here are subjoined. "Thy God reigneth." That the Gentiles also should partake in the blessings of his reign is immediately intimated. "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Thus, beginning at Jerusalem, those commissioned by the Lord were to preach salvation in his name among all nations. In the conclusion of the chapter, the blessed effects under the reign of

the Messiah are declared. "So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not been told them, shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider." This quotation then made by the Apostle was calculated to produce the strongest conviction of the truth he was establishing, namely, the duty of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles.

V. 16.—But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

It is here admitted by Paul, that though the Gospel was to be preached both to Jews and Gentiles, with the assurance that whosoever believeth shall be saved; yet, as a matter of fact, all who heard did not believe it. This might seem unaccountable; or it might even appear to be an argument against the Gospel, that notwithstanding all the blessings with which it was said to be fraught to those who should receive it, it was still rejected by many to whom it was preached. But this should not seem strange to any acquainted with prophecy: it is the very testimony of Isaiah. Instead, then, of being an objection to the Gospel, that it was not received by the bulk of those who heard it, it was the very thing that the Scriptures predicted. The prophecy of Isaiah, liii. 1, is applied to this fact, in which a plain intimation is given of the

small number who should receive the Gospel when first preached. If, then, the Jews objected to the preaching of the Gospel from this fact, they must object to the prophet Isaiah on the same ground.

V. 17.—So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

According, then, to this complaint of the Prophet, it is evident that faith comes by hearing, which the Apostle is asserting; and this is the consequence that may be deduced from it. The word in the preceding verse, quoted from Isaiah, and rendered “report,” is the same which in this verse is rendered hearing. Faith, then, never comes but by hearing, that is, from the word of God. The Apostles communicated their testimony by the living voice, and by their writings. Both are comprehended in what is called hearing. All this showed the necessity of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, on which Paul had been insisting, according to which there is no such thing as saving faith among heathens who have not heard of Christ. *Hearing by the word of God.*—This makes the last observation still stronger. This hearing cannot extend to Dr Macknight’s scheme of salvation to the heathens, who supposes that they may have faith without the knowledge of the Gospel; for, consistently with this passage,

faith must come not from the revelation of the works of God, but from that of his word.

V. 18.—But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

The Gospel had now been every where preached, Col. i. 23. The Apostle applies to this fact what is said in the 19th Psalm. That Psalm literally refers to the preaching of the great luminaries of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars; but typically it refers to the preaching of the word of God. The Sun of the creation preaches to all nations the existence, the unity, the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God. He speaks in a language all nations may understand. All nations, indeed, have departed from the doctrine thus preached; but this results from disaffection to the doctrine, and not from the obscurity of the language of the preacher. The Apostle tells us that all nations, even the most barbarous, are without excuse in their idolatry. God is revealed in his character as Creator in the works of his hands, and all men should know him as such. The sun carries the intelligence of God's perfections and existence to every nation under heaven, which are successively informed that there is an almighty, all-wise, and beneficent being, the author of all things. In like manner, the Gospel of Christ

preaches to all nations, and informs them of the glorious character of God, as manifested in the incarnation and death of his Son, Jesus Christ.

Dr Macknight supposes the question here asked, "have they not heard?" to be answered by the preaching of the works of creation, according to the words of the Psalm in their literal meaning. This is contrary to the whole train of the Apostle's reasoning, who is speaking of the preaching of the Gospel. Even Calvin makes the preaching spoken of in that Psalm to refer to the "silent works of God" in ancient times, and not in any sense to the preaching of the Apostles. But it is evident that the Apostle is not referring to the former, but to the present state of the Gentile nations. The words of the Psalmist are thus spiritually, as they always have been literally, fulfilled in the preaching of the silent works of God. The description in the 19th Psalm of the sun in the firmament has, as above noticed, a strict literal and primary meaning, but it is also typical of him who is called the sun of righteousness, who by his word is the spiritual light of the world. Paul, therefore, quotes this description in the last sense, thus taking the spiritual meaning which was ultimately intended. This suits his object, while he drops the literal, although also a just

and acknowledged sense. It is not then as setting aside the literal application of such passages, that the Apostles quote them in their spiritual import, nor in the way of accommodation, as is so often asserted to the great disparagement both of the Apostles and the Scriptures, but as their ultimate and most extensive signification.

V. 19.—But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

Did not Israel know, that the Jews were to be cut off as a nation, and the Gentiles called into the divine favour? That this was communicated in their Scriptures is most clear. In the quotation here adduced, Deut. xxxii. 21, this event was foretold by Moses, who commences that prediction in a way that marks the importance of what he was about to say: “Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.” In verse 5th, he declares the ingratitude and unbelief of Israel. “They have corrupted themselves; their spot is not the spot of his children; they are a perverse and crooked generation.” He continues this complaint to the 20th verse, when he pronounces the decree of God of their rejection. “I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be; for they are a very forward

generation, children in whom is no faith." And then immediately he adds the words from which the verse before us is taken. In these words the calling of the Gentiles is clearly predicted. The Gentiles are marked by these expressions. 1st, "I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." 2d, Their calling is pointed out by the provocation to jealousy, with which God threatens the Jews, which intimates that he will bestow his love and his covenant on those who were formerly foolish, and will withdraw them from Israel. 3d, This same calling is marked by the comparison drawn between that provocation to jealousy with which he threatens Israel, with that with which the Israelites have provoked him. "They have moved me to jealousy;" that is, as they had given their love and their heart to others besides God, in the same way God would give his love and his heart to others beside them. This prediction, then, could only find its accomplishment in the conversion of the Gentiles by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The word "nation" is here a figurative expression in reference to God's dealings with Israel. The Gentiles are called as individuals. The righteous nation, Is. xxvi. 2, is composed of believers.

V. 20.—But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

V. 21.—But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

If Moses predicted, somewhat obscurely, the calling of the Gentiles, Isaiah had foretold it very plainly, and placed it in a light that would be most offensive to the Jews. In this prophecy the bringing in of the Gentiles, and the ready reception which they would give to the Gospel, and at the same time the obstinate unbelief of the Jews, notwithstanding the earnest and constant entreaties of the servants of God, are plainly indicated. Nothing could more clearly describe the conduct of the Jews and the reception that they gave to the message of salvation, than this prophecy of Isaiah. In this and the preceding chapter, the Apostle has fully shown that the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the great body of the Jewish nation had been the purpose of God during the whole of that economy which separated the Jews from the rest of the world, and under which they had enjoyed such distinguished and peculiar privileges.

While in the ninth chapter the sovereignty of God in the rejection of the great body of the Jewish nation is prominently brought into view,

in the chapter before us their rejection is shown to have been the immediate effect of their own unbelief. No truth is more manifest in every part of the Old Testament Scriptures than that contained in the declaration just quoted from, Isa. lxxv. 2. "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." What outward means did not God employ to induce the Israelites to love and honour him, and to lead them to submission to his authority! "I have hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth."—Hosea, vi. 5. "I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, 'Obey my voice.'"—Jer. xi. 7. "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"—Isaiah, v. 3. Here, then, is the stretching forth of the hands of God to that people all the day long; that is, during the whole period of their dispensation, and here the complaint is verified of their continuing, notwithstanding, disobedient and gainsaying. The fault, then, was their own, and the awful sentence

that followed, Isaiah, v. 5, 6, was merited and just.

In this we see what is the result, when God employs only outward means to lead men to obedience, and does not accompany them with the influence of his efficacious grace. Without this the Apostle shows in the preceding chapter that the whole nation of Israel, without exception, would have been as Sodom and Gomorrah. Here, then, is the condition to which many in their wisdom would reduce all mankind, if they could establish their unscriptural doctrines in opposition to the divine election and efficacious grace. They are displeased at the idea that all the heathen nations were left to themselves, while so much favour was shown to Israel; yet we see in the case of Israel, in whom so full a display is made of the character of man, what would have been the result as to the other nations of a similar dispensation of outward means. But according to the system of such cavillers at the clear doctrine of the Scriptures, there still remains something good in man which may lead him, without a change of heart, to embrace the glad tidings of salvation. They also affirm that man has power to resist and make void the internal operation of grace.

In support of this last opinion many refer to such texts as that in Genesis, vi. 3, where God

says—" My spirit shall not always strive with man ;" and to the words of Stephen, when he charges the Jews as stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, who, as their fathers did, always resisted the Holy Ghost, Acts, vii. 51. But the answer is easy when we attend to the different aspects in which the grace of God is presented in Scripture. Besides its existence in the mind of God, it is spoken of either in its *manifestation* in his word, or in its *operation* in the heart. In its manifestation it may, and unless accompanied by its internal operation, always will be resisted. To such resistance the above passages refer, and give their attestation ; and for the truth of this we can appeal not only to the example of the nation of Israel, but also to what we see passing before us every day. Multitudes, in the enjoyment of the full light of the revelation of grace, continually discover their resistance to its manifestation in the word. But not so with respect to grace, in its internal operation in the heart. This cannot be effectually resisted. On the contrary, so far as it proceeds, it takes away all inclination to resist, creating a new heart, and making those who are the subjects of it willing in the day of God's power; Psalm, cx. 3. Here, then, there must be an election by God of those who shall thus be favoured, without which not one individual

would be saved. If the doctrine of the fall in its proper extent be admitted, the doctrines of election and efficacious grace must be embraced by those who do not believe that all men are to be left to perish.

In this chapter we see how highly God values his law. Though the Jews had a zeal of God, yet they were rejected because they attempted to substitute their own obedience, which fell short of the demands of the law, as a substitute for the perfection it requires. In order that any of the human race might be saved, it was necessary that the Son of God should fulfil the law. He alone is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. On this law of everlasting obligation, under which all mankind were placed, it may be proper to make a few general remarks, as well as on the covenant with Israel, to which there is also reference in this chapter.

God is the Legislator as well as the Creator of the world, and his law is necessarily founded on the relation in which he stands to his creatures. The law is a transcript of his character, proclaiming his holiness, his justice, and his goodness; in one word, his love, for God is love. The sum of it is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself. Thus love is the fulfilling of the law; the end of the commandment is love.

The love demanded from the creature is primarily for God his Creator, the great object of love. The second part of the summary of the law, far from opposing, coincides with and flows from the first, commanding us to love our neighbour as the creature of God. The love it thus requires of us is measured by that we bear to ourselves; and consequently teaches that self-love is not to be condemned, unless it be excessive or exclusive. It is proper and necessary as a part of the law of our creation, which imposes on us the duty of attending to and providing for our own wants.

This law must necessarily be the law of the whole intelligent creation. According to its holiness, justice, and goodness, nothing *more* and nothing *less* can be required of any creature. "The law of the Lord is perfect." In nothing is it deficient; in nothing does it exceed. It requires perfect obedience, which is essential to the nature of every law; for no law can dispense with the smallest part of the obedience it demands. Any work of supererogation, then, is impossible. No creature in the universe can do more than love God with all his heart and strength.

This law is enforced by sanctions. These are indispensable in order to carry it into execution, and to maintain the dignity of the Lawgiver.

Both the reward of obedience and the punishment of transgression proceed from the character of God. God loves himself and his creatures. He is love for himself above all, being the supreme object of love, and infinitely worthy of being loved. He is also love for his creatures, as appears by the original situation in which all of them were placed. The Angels at their creation were the inhabitants of heaven, where God manifests his glory. When man was created, the world was provided for him, and adapted to his nature; he enjoyed communion with God, and every thing around him was pronounced to be "very good."

From their happy original situation, a part of the Angels and all mankind have fallen by disobedience. They broke the perfect bond of love, and consequently the unhappiness which proceeds from their rebellion against God can only be attributed to themselves. God, who is infinite in every perfection, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, must necessarily punish sin; for sin is the violation of the law of love. It separates the creature from God, who is the source of happiness; it is rebellion against his just government; and its tendency is to produce universal confusion and misery. The love, therefore, of God for himself and for all that is good; his holiness, which places him in infinite

opposition to sin ; his regard for the honour of his law ; and his justice, which requires the giving to all what is due ; demand that sin should be punished.

The evil of violating the law of God may be estimated by the punishment inflicted on the human race on account of one transgression. That one transgression caused the entrance of death, spiritual, temporal, and eternal ; but by the goodness of God men were immediately placed under a dispensation of mercy. Human governments, being imperfect, dispense with justice when they extend pardon to a criminal ; but this cannot be so with God, who, when he shows mercy, does so consistently with justice. He remains faithful ; he cannot deny himself. He proclaims himself to be “ a just God, and a Saviour.” In the plan, then, of mercy and salvation, the law is maintained in all its authority, and with all its sanctions. Sin is punished while sinners are saved.

The authority, the majesty, and the sovereignty of God are evidently interested in carrying into effect his threatenings and denunciations of punishment. If human laws were not executed it would introduce confusion and disorder into families and states ; but if the law of God were left unexecuted, there would be absolute confusion and disorder throughout the

universe. The object, therefore, of the law is an object of unspeakable importance; infinitely above that of the laws of men. Its immediate end is the manifestation of the holiness and glory of God.

Besides the law of universal and eternal obligation, the observance of other laws was enjoined on the people of Israel, in subserviency to the advent of the Messiah, to prefigure that great event, and in order to keep them separate from the other nations till he should appear. The covenant made with Israel consisted of three parts. The first was the moral law; the second, the ceremonial; and the third, the judicial or political law. The moral law was such as has been already described. The ceremonial law consisted of a body of worship and of services, which God commanded the Israelites to render to him; and to this belonged all the various ordinances, purifications, sacrifices, oblations, observances of days, and celebrations of solemn feasts. The judicial law comprehended all the regulations enjoined for their social and political conduct.

Along with these laws, there was vouchsafed a manifestation of the mercy of God through the Messiah. This comprehended all the promises of grace and salvation, and of the remission of sins, which God gave to the Israelites,

proclaiming himself to them as the Lord God merciful and gracious, together with all the exhortations to repent, and have recourse to his Fatherly goodness. It likewise included all those prophecies which foretold the Messiah, and required men to believe and place in him their confidence.

Although this manifestation of grace and of mercy did not properly belong to the legal, but to the evangelical covenant, yet as it was connected under the same ministry with the moral, the ceremonial, and the judicial laws, the Scripture includes the whole under the term *law*; the denomination of the ministry being taken from the part that predominated. The reason why this revelation of the Gospel was joined with the law is obvious. God purposed to save many among the Israelites, and to conduct them, as his elect and true children, to life and salvation. But this could not be effected by the legal covenant alone; for the law made nothing perfect; it was weak through the flesh, and could not justify. It was necessary, then, to connect with it a measure of the dispensation of the Spirit; and without this the state of the Israelites would have been worse than that of the other nations.

The economy of Moses was not, however, to be permanent. The object of the ceremonial

law was accomplished, when that came which is called, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, vi. 1, "perfection," which was the grand consummation of all the typical ordinances by the sacrifice of Christ. From that period its use was superseded, and itself abolished. On the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, where alone the sacrifices could be offered, and on the expulsion of the Jews from their own land, the observance both of the ceremonial and judicial laws became impossible. The whole Mosaic economy, which had been glorious in itself, was done away, and ceased to have any glory by reason of the glory that excelleth.

The moral law, however, could never be superseded. Although it formed a part of the Mosaic economy, to that economy it did not exclusively belong. Under the moral law, as a covenant, man at the beginning had been placed, and under it as broken, and pronouncing its curse, all unbelievers remain as one with the first man. But from this covenant, they who are united to him, by whom it has been fulfilled, are for ever freed. According to the energetic language of the Apostle, in the seventh chapter of this Epistle, they are "dead to the law." While dead to it, however, as a covenant, either to its blessing or its curse—justification by it or condemnation—it remains their rule of duty,

and must for ever continue in force. And that its authority should continue, while the other parts of that first covenant were done away, as it had existed before that covenant was made, was clearly indicated at its first promulgation from Mount Sinai. On that occasion it was strikingly distinguished from the other parts of the law. These were delivered to Moses, and by him to the people. But the moral law was promulgated by the voice of God, and it is said "he added no more;" and while the other laws were written in a book by Moses, this law of everlasting obligation was written on tables of stone, by the finger of God, and it alone was deposited in the Ark. "There was nothing in the Ark save the two tables of stone."—1 Kings, viii. 9. There, as inscribed on these tables, the law was placed under the mercy-seat, which was an eminent type of him by whom it was to be fulfilled. To minister and prepare the way for his appearance was the great object in view, in the calling of Abraham, in the setting apart his descendants as a people from among whom he was to spring, and of the public proclamation of this law which has been transgressed.

In the third chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, a contrast is drawn between the ministration of Moses, and that of the Apostles, in order to demonstrate the superiority

of the latter. The ministration committed to Moses is there denominated the "letter," and that committed to the Apostles the "spirit"—the one written and engraven on stones, the other on the fleshy tables of the heart. On the ministration of the letter or outward form, in which spiritual blessings were veiled under sensible images and carnal ordinances, a degree of obscurity remained, called the veil on Moses' face, so that Israel after the flesh, could not steadfastly look to the end, or final object, of that which is to be abolished. They rested in the observance of the ordinances, regarding only the temporal deliverances commemorated, without attending to the spiritual redemption which these prefigured. In the same way, what was external to the senses in the priesthood and the sacrifices, was all that they regarded. Their services were therefore that of the *letter*, with no discernment of the *spirit*, apart from which these services were a body without a soul. The nation of Israel, in general, thus verified the declaration that the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Not aware of the extent of the law which is spiritual, and of the perfect conformity required to all its precepts, and relying on the sacrifices they offered for the pardon of their transgressions, they

sought acceptance by their own righteousness. But neither by their obedience could they fulfil the demands of the law, nor could the sacrifices remove their guilt, while by them they could not obtain peace of conscience, or assure themselves of reconciliation with God. The covenant, then, of which Moses was the mediator, gendered to bondage. It was the ministration of "condemnation" and "death," for "the letter killeth." The spirit only, which that letter veiled, "giveth life."—2 Cor. iii. 6. Paul denominates the ministration committed to him the ministration of righteousness—the righteousness of the Messiah—and his lamentation in the chapter before us is, that Israel being ignorant of this righteousness, went about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting themselves unto the righteousness of God.

The distinction, however, between the letter and the spirit, did not refer exclusively to the nation of Israel. It related formerly, and has done so at every period, to all who, professing to worship God, are still in the flesh. The moral law, as has been observed, had been in force from the beginning, as is declared in this Epistle, chap. v. 13; although more fully promulgated in the covenant with Israel. But as soon as Adam had committed the act of sin by which it was broken, and all men had thus been

brought under its condemnation,* in pronouncing sentence on him, a proclamation of mercy was made, and sacrifices were instituted which indicated the *spirit*, equally with those afterwards enjoined on Israel in the ceremonial law. Among the nations, therefore, the true worshippers of God—such as Abel; who offered his sacrifice in faith, and Enoch, who prophesied of the coming of the Lord, and Noah, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord, with Melchisedec, of whom it is particularly recorded, Heb. vii. 2, that he was *first* the king of righteousness, and then, or *after* that, also king of peace;† and Abraham, who saw the day of Christ, with many more, worshipped God in the spirit. The service of all others who were ignorant of the true intent and end of the sacrifices, and of that righteousness which the Messiah was to bring in, which Noah had preached, 2 Pet. ii. 5, was the service of the letter that “killeth.” From this the

* The malignant nature of sin, and its fatal consequences, are not only manifest in the effect of the first transgression which brought ruin on the whole human race, but likewise in the sin committed at the renewal of the world after the flood. The bitter effects of that sin are experienced to the present day by one of the branches of the descendants of Noah, on whom the curse he pronounced still rests. “Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.”

† No man ever enjoyed peace till *after* he possessed that righteousness.

necessity of preaching the Gospel to the nations, on which the Apostle so much insists in this chapter, is manifest. The heathens have generally retained the form of sacrifice, but having entirely lost sight of the end of that institution, like Israel after the flesh, they know nothing beyond the letter which *killeth*. Such also is the service of all professed Christians, of whatever name, who go about to establish their own righteousness which is of the law. To all men, of every description, who are labouring under the burden of sin, our Lord by his Gospel, wherever it reaches, proclaims, as formerly to Israel, *Come unto me, and I will give you rest*; thus extending to them the ministration, not of condemnation, but of righteousness, not of the letter that killeth, but of the spirit that giveth life. He himself is that spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, 2 Cor. iii. 17. “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” “If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

The glory of God is the grand object of every thing that has taken place in any part of creation. To this the entrance of sin among angels

and men is no exception. However dishonourable sin in its own nature is to God, there can be no doubt but ultimately it shall be constrained to enhance the glory of the Divine character. It was necessary, in order to show God to be what he is. Had sin never existed, there would have been no opportunity of manifesting the righteous displeasure of God against it, and his justice in punishing it; nor of displaying his wonderful power, in turning to his glory that which, in itself, is a dishonour to him. This is the very reason given by the Apostle for God's suffering the vessels of wrath. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction."

That God not only permitted, but willed the entrance of sin among men, is clear from the very creation of the world, and its adaptation to illustrate the work of redemption. From the 19th Psalm, there can be no doubt that the Sun in the firmament was, from his first dawn, a glorious type of the Sun of Righteousness; and in his manner of enlightening the earth, a figure of Him who is the light of the world, as well as of the course and progress of the Gospel. The resting from the work of creation, and the first Sabbath, were calculated to shadow the rest of the Lord Jesus from the more important work

of redemption, and the glorious and everlasting rest which remaineth for the people of God. The very formation of Adam and Eve, and the relation of marriage, most evidently were regulated with reference to the future relation of Christ and his church, Eph. v. 32. Redemption, then, was in the view of God in the very creation of man. From all eternity it was purposed by Him "who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by (means of) the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eph. iii. 9. Grace was given to his people in Christ Jesus, and eternal life was promised by God that cannot lie, before the world began. 2 Tim. i. 9; Titus, i. 2.

It is not possible that God would have purposed the entrance of sin, had he not been able to turn it to his glory. No man would act in the way in which many consider God in this matter to have acted. Could any man foresee that what he was about to do would turn to his dishonour and injury, and would he not avoid it? And shall God will and foresee that sin should enter, and shall he permit its entrance, if it is ultimately to prove dishonourable to his character? To suppose that there were innu-

merable plans of creation present to the mind of the Creator, that each of them had advantages and disadvantages, and that God chose that which upon the whole was best, is nothing but disguised atheism. This supposes that the Creator is neither all-wise nor all-powerful.

The universal apostasy of the nations of the earth from the worship of God, and the present apostasy of the Jews, are things apparently dishonourable to God, and which man with God's power would not have permitted. But both are according to the counsel of God, and will redound to his glory. We cannot understand how this can be so. It is to us a depth unfathomable. The Apostle wonders at it, but does not pretend to explain it. His language in closing this subject is a recognition that the ways of Jehovah are beyond the grasp of the human intellect. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" What a contrast does this afford to the vain and presumptuous speculations of many interpreters of Scripture! Many receive the testimony of God only as far as they can satisfactorily account for all the reasons and grounds of his conduct. How unbecoming in such a creature as man! Shall man, who is but of yesterday and knows nothing, pretend to fathom the counsels of the Omniscient?

In what prominence and strength of expression is the sovereignty of God exhibited in the ninth chapter of this Epistle! Is the Apostle ashamed of this view of God? Does he cover it with a veil in treating of the rejection of the Jews? No, in the strongest terms that could be selected, he represents, both there and in the eleventh chapter, the glory of God as the principal object in all things that exist, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." The wisdom of this world finds the chief end of the existence of all created beings to be the benevolent design of communicating happiness. But the Apostle gives another view of the subject. He declares the glory of God to be the end of creation. Let Christians, then, not be ashamed of this display of the divine character. Let them rather be ashamed of modifying their views of God, by the systems of human science. Let them return to the strong and Scriptural statements of the Reformers on the subject, and as little children believe God's account of himself.

The attentive reader of the preceding part of this Epistle, who is willing to submit to receive in all things the true and obvious meaning of Scripture, cannot fail to perceive that all the doctrines which are there brought before us give the whole glory of every thing to God. Jeho-

vah is seen to be glorified in his judgments as well as in his grace, in his wrath as well as in his mercy, in those who are lost as well as in those who are saved. However disagreeable this may be to the natural mind of man, it is truly reasonable. Can there be a higher end than the glory of the divine character? And can man, who is a fallen and lost creature, share with his offended sovereign in the glory of his recovery? Such a thought is as incongruous as it is palpably unscriptural. If there be hope for the guilty, if there be recovery to any from the ruins of the fall, it is the voice of reason properly exercised, as well as of the divine word, that it must come from God himself.

How astonishing, then, is it that men should be so averse to the doctrines of the Scripture which hold forth this view. So offensive are they to the mind of man that every effort of ingenuity has been employed by those who understand not the Gospel to eject them from the Scriptures, and many even of the people of God themselves labour to modify and bring them to a nearer conformity to the wisdom of the world, or, at least, to make them less offensive to human prejudices. This wisdom is foolishness, and is highly dishonourable to God, as well as pernicious to themselves. When God has brought salvation nigh as entirely his gift, and has ex-

hibited Christ as a Saviour, through faith, to the Chief of Sinners, how injurious is it to the honour of his truth, and to the interests of sinners, to put the salvation of the Gospel at a distance, and as it were in defiance of the Apostle to send men to heaven to bring Christ down from above, or to the deep to bring him up from the grave! What folly appears in that wisdom that sees greater security for the believer's final happiness in making him the author of his own destiny, than in resting the security of his salvation on the power and love of his Almighty Saviour! How vain is that wisdom which considers the performance of good works to be better secured by resting them on the resolutions and faithfulness of the believer himself, than on the fact of his oneness with Christ in his death and resurrection.

All who acknowledge regeneration by the Spirit of God virtually concede the things which they are unwilling to confess in plain and direct statement. If men are by nature dead in sin, surely their new life is not in any sense produced by themselves. If their change from sin to holiness be a new birth, how contradictory to suppose that they have any share in this great change. Yet how many will acknowledge that every thing good in us is of God, who will yet labour to show that still there is some remaining

moral ability in man to turn himself to God. Is not this to sacrifice to their own wisdom? Will they proudly refuse submission to the declarations of God's word till they are able to fathom the depths of the divine counsels?

Many Christians, who admit the truth of all those doctrines which are most offensive to the world, act on the principle, that it is wise to conceal their views on these points, or at least to keep them as much as possible in the background. They think in this way to be more useful to the world. But is it wisdom, is it duty, is it consistent with our allegiance to Christ, to keep in abeyance doctrines which so much glorify God, and are so prominently held forth in the Scriptures? Christians should recollect, that although the avoiding of certain offensive doctrines may lessen the prejudice of the world against the professors of Christianity, yet that to turn a sinner to God is, in all cases, the work of God himself. How can we then expect a blessing on our efforts, if we seek to conceal what he exhibits in a blaze of light? Better, much better in all things, to exhibit the truths of the Divine word just as that word itself exhibits them, and leave the success of our efforts to him who alone can make them effectual. We cannot by all we can do bring one soul to Christ. We cannot make one sinner alive by the Gos-

pel, more than we can raise the dead out of their graves. Let us then renounce our own wisdom, and our own plans, and let us teach Divine truth as it is taught in the Scriptures.

All religions, but that of the Bible, divide the glory of recovering men to happiness between God and the sinner. All false views of the Gospel do the same. The Bible alone makes the salvation of guilty men terminate in the glory of God as its chief end. This doctrine is peculiar to right views of the Christian religion. Can there, then, be a more convincing evidence that the Bible is from God? If such a feature is peculiar to the Christian religion, yet offensive to most of them that bear the Christian name, it is the most demonstrative evidence that this revelation is not from man. How solid, then, are the foundations of the Christian religion, when the very things in it that are most offensive to the world afford the most satisfactory evidence that it is from God!

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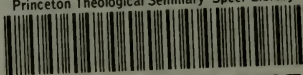
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