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

VOLUME X.

THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR:
CONTAINING
A PARAPHRASE ON THE SECOND EPISTLE
OF
ST. PAUL TO TIMOTHY,

TITUS,
PHILEMON,
HEBREWS,
The EPISTLE of JAMES,
I. PETER,
II. PETER,

WITH A COPIOUS INDEX; ALSO, AN INDEX TO THE GREEK WORDS.

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THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR, A

PARAPHRASE

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TIMOTHY.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

Vol. V.
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY.

It is uncertain where Timothy was when he received this epistle. Some have supposed he must have been at Ephesus; but their arguments in support of that opinion seem inconclusive (as Mr. Boyle has well observed.) And indeed it does not seem very easy to reconcile this supposition with the apostle's charge, chap. iv. 13,) to bring with him the books and parchments he had left at Troas; that city lying so far out of his way from Ephesus to Rome, especially as he had expressed a desire of seeing him as soon as possible. And if it should be pleaded, that the things he sent for might not then be at Troas, but at some other place that might lie in his way, it is sufficient to answer, that it would in that case, have been more to Paul's purpose, to have directed Timothy where to have found them, than to inform him where they were first left. To which may be added, that if Timothy had been at Ephesus, when this epistle was written, the apostle would hardly have said, "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus," (chap. iv. 12,) but rather, "Tychicus have I sent to you."

That this epistle was written while Paul was under confinement at Rome, is universally agreed; but whether it was during his first or second imprisonment, has been matter of debate. Several learned writers, among whom are Hammond, Lightfoot, and Cave, have maintained the former opinion; while others have argued in favour of the latter, from chap. i. 18, where Paul speaking of Onesiphorus, says, "he sought him diligently at Rome;" which they apprehend implies, that the apostle was kept under so close a confinement at this time, that few knew where he was to he found: whereas in that imprisonment, of which Luke gives an account in the conclusion of his history, we are told, "He dwell in a hired house, receiving all that came to him," (Acts xxviii. 30.) A 2

But
But the strongest argument in support of this opinion is drawn from chap. iv. 6: \textit{I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.} From whence it has been referred, that Paul, when he wrote this, was in immediate expectation of death, in consequence of Nero's menaces, or of some express revelation from Christ; (which some have thought Peter also had a little before his martyrdom, 2 Pet. i. 14.) Yet the directions he afterwards gives plainly shew he had some expectation of living a while longer. Else it is difficult to say why he should so much urge Timothy to give diligence to come to him, ver. 21, or press his care of the cloak, books, and parchments, mentioned ver. 13. Though, after all, these words must, I think, express an apprehension that his life and ministry were drawing towards a close; which is yet farther confirmed by observing, that whereas in his former imprisonment the apostle had often expressed his persuasion of being released and seeing his Christian friends again, he gives no hint in this epistle of any such expectation, but seems to intimate the contrary, ver. 18. by expressing his confidence, not that he should be again rescued from his enemy as he had been upon making his first apology, but that God would deliver him from every evil work, and preserve him to his heavenly kingdom.—Upon the whole, therefore, I conclude that this epistle was written some time towards the close of Paul's second imprisonment, and consequently about the year of our Lord 66 or 67; and in the 14th of the emperor Nero. (See Family Expositor, Vol. VIII. sect. 60, note p. 305.)

The apostle seems to have intended in this epistle to prepare Timothy for those sufferings to which he foresaw he would be exposed; to forewarn him of the fatal apostacy and declension that was beginning to appear in the church; and at the same time to animate him, from his own example and the great motives of Christianity, to the most vigorous and resolute discharge of every part of the ministerial office.

In pursuance of this general design, the apostle, after his usual salutation, begins with assuring Timothy of his most affectionate remembrance, and his earnest desire to see him, expressing his satisfaction in those marks of sincere faith which appeared in him as well as in his pious ancestors. He then takes occasion, from his own suffering, to excite him to a becoming fortitude and resolution in the Christian cause: and represents in a strong light the excellence of that gospel which he was appointed to preach, and on which he placed an entire dependence, chap. i. 1—12. The apostle, being firmly persuaded of the truth and importance of those doctrines which he had so often inculcated upon his beloved pupil, exhorts him strenuously to retain them in the midst of all discouragements and opposition, and to go through the duties of his ministerial work with the utmost diligence and constancy, in dependence on the grace of God: mentioning at the same time the treachery of several Asiatics, and acknowledging with the warmest gratitude the extraordinary fidelity and zeal of Onesiphors, ver. 15, 16. Chap. ii. 1—7. And in order yet more effectually to fortify Timothy
Timothy against the difficulties he might be called to encounter, he lays open the motives and hopes by which he himself was supported under the sufferings he bore in defence of the gospel; assuring him, that those who suffered with Christ should also be glorified with him. To this he adds some directions in relation to his ministry; advising him in particular to avoid and discourage all those empty harangues and idle controversies which only served to confound the mind, and by which some had been seduced from the purity of the Christian faith, ver. 8—18. The apostle then takes occasion, from a general view of the great design and tendency of the gospel, to urge the necessity of holiness in all Christians, and especially in ministers; and recommends to the latter the utmost gentleness and meekness in their attempts to recover sinners from the miserable condition into which they were fallen, ver. 19, to the end.—And, to make him more sensible of the importance of exerting himself in order to maintain the purity and honour of religion, he assures him that a great declension and apostacy was to prevail in the Christian world; and that false teachers were rising up in it, by whose wicked artifices many weak persons were deceived and led astray; reminding him at the same time of that patience and fortitude which he had seen him discover amidst the severest persecutions; chap. iii. 1—13. To guard Timothy against these seducers, and to preserve the church from their fatal influence, Paul recommends to him the study of the scriptures as of the utmost importance to all the purposes of Christian edification; and charges him in a solemn manner to use the utmost diligence in all the parts of his ministerial work; declaring at the same time, for his encouragement, the satisfaction with which he reflected on his own fidelity in the nearest views of martyrdom for the truth, ver. 14. Chap. iv. 1—8. The apostle concludes this epistle with requesting Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, in order to assist and comfort him under the unworthy treatment he had met with from some of his Christian brethren; giving him an account of the manner in which he had, in his late appearance before the heathen magistrate at Rome, been deserted by men, but supported by Christ; and, having expressed his cheerful confidence that he should be safely conducted to the presence of his Lord, he adds some particular salutations, and closes with his usual benediction, ver. 9, to the end of the epistle.

Whoever reads over this epistle with that attention it deserves, and considers the circumstances in which it was written, will be sensible that it affords a very strong argument in favour of Christianity.—The apostle had been for some time under close confinement at Rome, at the mercy of a cruel and capricious tyrant. He had seen himself deserted by his friends in his greatest extremity; and had nothing before him but the certain prospect of being called to suffer death in the same cause to which he had devoted his life.—In this situation how does he behave? Does he seem to look back with concern on his past conduct, or to regret the sacrifice he had made of all his worldly interests? Can we discover any thing that
that betrays a secret consciousness of guilt, or even a suspicion of the weakness of his cause? Nay, does he drop a single expression that can be interpreted as a mark of fear, or discomposure of mind, in the apprehension of those gloomy scenes that lay before him?—Surely if he had been an impostor, or had entertained the least doubt of the doctrines he taught, something of this kind must have escaped him when writing to so intimate a friend, with whom he could intrust all the secrets of his breast.—On the contrary, upon the most calm and deliberate survey, he expresses an entire satisfaction in reflecting on the part he had acted, and earnestly recommends it to his beloved pupil to follow his example in maintaining the glorious cause, even at the hazard of his life. He appears throughout this epistle to have felt a strong inward conviction of the truth of those principles he had embraced, and glories in the sufferings he endured in support of them; triumphing in the full assurance of being approved by his great Master, and of receiving at his hands a crown of distinguished lustre. A behaviour like this, in one who had so considerable a share in establishing the Christian religion, and expected in a short time to seal his testimony to it with his blood, must be allowed a strong confirmation of the truth of those facts on which our faith depends. It is at least a convincing proof that the apostle was himself sincere in what he professed to believe: and when the several circumstances of his history are considered and impartially weighed, it will appear as evident that he could not possibly be deceived, and consequently that his testimony is to be admitted in its full force.
The Apostle begins his epistle, after proper salutations, with expressions of his affection to Timothy, and general acknowledgments of his joy in, and dependence upon, the grace of that gospel which he was employed to preach. 2 Tim. 1. 1—12.

2 Timothy 1. 1.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God (whose eternal counsels, with reference to me, were manifested in that wonderful manner in which I was set apart for the service of the gospel, agreeably to the promise of eternal life, which is given us in Christ Jesus, and by which I am animated in all my labours and sufferings), send this second epistle to Timothy, my dearly beloved son: grace, mercy, and peace be with you.
Paul thanks God for the faith of Timothy and his ancestors.

1 I give thanks unto this blessed God, whom I serve, after the example of my pious progenitors, with a pure conscience, that through his goodness, laying the case upon my heart, I am incessantly mindful of thee in my prayers night and day; so that I scarce ever rise up in the morning, or lie down in the evening, without allowing thee a share in my devout remembrance;

2 Desiring earnestly to see thee, as I am mindful of thy tears, which flowed so plentifully at our last separation, that I might be filled with joy, in an interview with so dear and amiable a friend.

3 And indeed thou hast, as it were, an hereditary title to my regard, as I also keep in remembrance the undissolved faith which is in thee, and which first dwell in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, who believed in Christ before thee, and have been happily instrumental in communicating to thy heart those good impressions which they felt on their own; and I am persuaded that [it is] in thee too, and that thou still retainest in the midst of all opposition:

4 For which cause I am the more encouraged to remind thee of stirring up the gift of God, which is in thee by the imposition of my hands, whereby those miraculous communications of the Spirit were imparted to thee, which it will be thy duty to cherish, by frequently engaging in those devotional exercises and active services for which they are intended to qualify thee. Exert thyself therefore with cheerfulness and boldness, without dreading any opposition that may arise; for the Spirit hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

5 I thank God whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance of this: that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.
And recommends to him courage in defence of the gospel.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God;

9 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,

10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel:

d Given to us in Christ Jesus from eternal ages.] I see no reason for rendering it, as Dr. Whitby would do, according to his purpose before all ages, and the grace given us in Christ Jesus. The grace might be said to be given us in Christ, as the Father stipulated with him, through his hand, as well as for his sake, to give us that grace which we do actually receive.

e Thrown a light upon life and immortality.] Life and immortality is put by a usual Hebraism for immortal life, as Archbishop Tillotson well observes, Vol. III. p. 112.) in his discourse on these words; in which he has shewn, how uncertain the heathens were as to the doctrines of a future state of retribution, and the comparative obscurity of that light in which it was placed under the Old Testament. The former article is much illustrated by Dr. Whitby's learned and excellent note. But what Mr. Warburton has written up-

11 of the testimony an the which the descent of his Spirit; nor of me, who am now his prisoner; but resolutely own thy regard to me, and take thy share in the afflictions which may lie in the way, while bearing a courageous testimony to the truth of the gospel, according to the evidence derived to it from the miraculous power of God; Who hath saved us from that ruin into which the world hath fallen by its fatal apostacy, and hath called [us] out from the rest of mankind by an holy calling, not according to any distinguished merit of our own works, but according to his own purpose, and those rich overflowings of grace given to us in Christ Jesus from eternal ages, as he was appointed, in the everlasting and immutable counsels of God, to be a Redeemer and a Saviour unto us. But this long concealed grace is now made manifest by the illustrious appearance of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by what he has done and suffered in human flesh for the salvation of his faithful servants, hath in effect abolished death, has deposed it from its tyrannical empire, and thrown a light on the important doctrine of life and immortality by the gospel; which

on this subject, in his Divine Legation, Vol. 1. and what is said upon it, in the last edition of the critical enquiry into the opinions of the ancient philosophers, has done abundantly more than any thing else to vindicate the propriety of this expression; and I must refer to these learned and ingenious writers for the most satisfactory commentary on these words of the apostle.—But the learned and pious Dr. Hodges (who, so far as I can judge, has given us a greater variety of new and plausible interpretations of scripture than any other divine in the Hutchinonian scheme) contends, that the word ἀποκάλυπτω ought to be rendered incorruption, and that Christ himself is to be understood both by life and incorruption; so that the text must refer to his throwing light on Ps. xvi. 10, 11, and on other scriptures, where it was foretold that the Messiah should be the light of the world, and bestow incorruptible life upon others.
which gives us a more express assurance and more lively view of it than any former dispensation had ever done, or could possibly do. This is that important message of God to men, for the proclamation and confirmation of which I was appointed a herald and apostle, and particularly had it in my charge, while other were immediately sent to the circumcision, to be myself a teacher of the Gentiles: For which cause I also suffer these hard things, which press me in this state of confinement; but, though my condition may seem infamous, I am not ashamed of these bonds, or any of the reproaches and insults with which they are attended: for I know to a man I have treated all my most important concerns, and am fully persuaded that he is well able to keep that precious immortal soul which I have deposited with him, even unto that great and important day when the promised salvation shall be completed.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Who, that attentively considers the holy calling with which we are called, according to the grace given us in Christ Jesus, can endure the thought of being ashamed of Christ's gospel, or any of his servants, to whatever difficulties they may be exposed, with whatever infamy they may be loaded? For ever adored be that Prince of life, who hath depoined death, from his throne; who hath enlightened, by rays reflected from his own beautiful and resplendent countenance, the regions of the invisible world, over which so dark a veil had before been spread? Let our eyes be fixed more and more on this illustrious Object, and confiding in the

others, he raising himself from the same before he was arrested there. But it may appear still that this expression refers to the future day, to which Dr. HINTON apprehends it has an respect, as would have been contrary if so applicable to the Gentiles only; on which account he supposes the apostle purposely after speaking of having opposed them teachers, ver. 11. This violent interpretation the text on the whole, it appears to me, is intended to obviate the objection which arises from the text against several new expressions, by which this eminent writer would find references to a future state and the resurrection, in passages of the Old Testament, in which they were never before the use of. See Dr. FRYER's Bib., p. 251, 155.

(That which I have spoken unto you.) Paul and Josephus have many passages (several of them quoted by Dr. Whitby in his notes on this text) in which both the dead and the angels are referred to as objects of God. The dead, as the angels, are returned into the hands of God, and committed to his care at death, and this they tell us, may be more properly so applied to the angels in which there has been taken to maintain the doctrine of an after-life with the fullest. There is in these more a similarity of sentiment with regard to the gospel, but Paul might have used the expression, without borrowing the hint from any Jewish writer whatever.
Of immortality by the gospel.

the power and grace of Christ, let us all immediately and daily commit to him that invaluable jewel of an immortal soul, which God hath given us. We may surely survey it with a mixture of delight and terror, till we have thus provided for its safety; and then may that terror be allowed to disappear, and give place to a rational delight, and we may justly congratulate ourselves while we adore our Saviour.

Let the proclamation of this gospel be most welcome to us, and let us call up all the strength and vigour of our souls to assert and advance it; for God hath given us the Spirit, not of fear, but of courage, sobriety, and charity. Whatever gifts we have received, let us stir them up to their proper use, and let one generation of Christians deliver down to another, a sense of the excellency of their holy religion. Pious women may take encouragement from the success of Lois and Eunice on Timothy, who proved so excellent and useful a minister; as perhaps some of the worthiest and most valuable ministers the church of Christ has ever been able to boast of, have had reason to bless God for those early impressions which were made upon their mind by the religious instructions of persons in the same relations.

To conclude, let us learn, by the repeated example of the apostle, to be earnest in prayer for our Christian friends; and if we find our hearts excited to remember them in our prayers day and night, let us with him, return our thanks to God, that he puts such benevolent affections into our hearts; for every good disposition that springs up there is implanted and cherished by him.

SECT. II.

The Apostle exhorts Timothy strenuously to retain the gospel in the midst of all discouragements and oppositions, and go through the duties of his ministerial office, in dependence upon the grace of God; mentioning the treachery of several Asiatics, and the extraordinary fidelity and zeal of Onesiphorus. 2 Tim. I. 13—Chap. II. 7.

2 Tim. I. 13. ENCOURAGED by that confidence which I have been expressing in the power and fidelity of my Lord, to whom I have entrusted the care of my immortal interests and concerns, be thou, O Timothy, engaged resolutely to retain, and
and exactly to adhere to the form of sound words that system of divine and everlasting truths which thou hast heard of me; keep it, not merely in thy memory, but in thine heart, with cordial faith, and that sincere, fervent love, which is the great badge of our being in Christ Jesus, and which will finally secure our being owned by him as his true disciples. And as thou deservest to have the same cheerful confidence, let it be thy care to keep that good thing which is deposited with thee, even the gospel of Christ lodged in thine hands: assert its honours, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, which dwelleth in us, and which will, I trust, enable thee to act with that integrity and zeal which so arduous and important a service requires.

15 Then knowest thou, that all those of Asia, who are at Rome, and were known to me by a profession of Christianity, are turned from me, and have proved treacherous friends, after all their forward pretences; of which number are Phygellus and Hermogenes, whom it is with great concern that I am obliged particularly to point out on such an occasion. But it is with proportionable pleasure that I mention another person, of a very different character, whose affection and zeal was illustrated by their benignity and disingenuity. May the Lord grant his mercy to his family! I mean to the household of Onesiphorus, for he hath often refreshed me, both by his visits and liberalties, and hath not been ashamed of my chain, Eph. vi. 19; but hath rather esteemed it his honour to own me, while I was under disgrace and persecution in so good a cause.

16 But being here in Rome, he sought me out so much the more diligently on that very account, and when

Paul complains that all the Asiatics had left him.

14 That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

15 Then knowest thou, that all those who are in Asia, both of the first and second call, have turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

16 But when he was in Rome, he sought me in Paul, who had been a prisoner, chapter vi. 15; to which Timothy might have been informed by travellers. But Dr. Whitby refers this to those of Ephesus who had deserted the apostle, giving ear, as he supposes, to the seduction of Corbanthus and the Ebionites, by whom he had been represented as a desorcerer of the Mosaic law. Nevertheless, I prefer the former interpretation as evidently more natural.

17 That good thing which is deposited. See the note on ver. 15.

a Form of sound words. B Archibp. Tindal explains this, of that profession of faith which was made by Christians at their baptism, 1 Pet. ii. 11. p. 179, and the author of Macrobeans Sacra observes, that it is not said that Timothy received this form by immediate inspiration, but heard it of Paul, as according to him, the word of vocation, was given only to the apostles. Chap. ii. 2; ill. 14; 1 Tim. iv. 16.

b That good thing which is deposited. See the note on ver. 15.

c Those in Asia. See 1 The Asiatics were infamous for their cowardice and effeminacy. Paul probably alludes to their

treatment at Rome, chapter vi. 15; to which Timothy might have been informed by travellers. But Dr. Whitby refers this to those of Ephesus who had deserted the apostle, giving ear, as he supposes, to the seduction of Corbanthus and the Ebionites, by whom he had been represented as a desorcerer of the Mosaic law. Nevertheless, I prefer the former interpretation as evidently more natural.

d Phygellus and Hermogenes. Probably he mentions these two persons as known to Timothy, or as having distinguished themselves by their profession, so that there was particular reason to expect a different conduct from them.

e Commit
me out very diligently and found me.

18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

II. 1. Thou therefore, my dearly beloved son Timothy, animated by such an example of fidelity and courage, be strong, in humble and continual dependence upon the grace which is in Christ Jesus, and resolve never to be ashamed of any of his faithful servants under disgrace and difficulties, while adhering to his cause. And the things which thou hast heard from me, and which I have solemnly testified again and again, before many witnesses, in one place and another, these commit thou with all diligence and care to faithful men, who may be able also to teach others also.

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

c Commit to faithful men.] This is quoted by many, as an argument that the people were not left to chuse their own ministers. But if they did chuse them, or propose them to Timothy, it might yet be his appropriate office to admit them to the ministry, and solemnly to commit the gospel to them. Compare the note on Tit. i. 5.
as possible disengaged from worldly business, and from every thing which might tend to take off thy thoughts from thy great work, and render thee less active in thy sacred warfare. And thou also knowest, that if any one wrestles, or contends in any other of those games for which Greece is so celebrated, if he do gain an advantage over his antagonist, he is not crowned, unless he wrestle, or perform any other athletic exercise, according to the law of the respective contention. So let us take care to learn the rules which Christ has laid down to direct us in our attempts, and act according to them.

And be not impatient, though the expected and promised reward should be long delayed; for thou well knowest, that the husbandman must first labour, and wait while the harvest is growing, through succeeding weeks and months, [and then] partake of the fruits produced by his toil.

Consider the things which I say as matters of high importance, in which thou art intimately concerned; and may the Lord give thee a good understanding in all things, and enable thee to act in a manner suitable to the instructions thou hast received.

LET US ALL BE EXHORTED TO BE STRONG IN THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS, AND IN HUMBLE DEPENDENCE UPON IT, LET US GO FORTH CHEERFULLY TO OUR WORK AND WARFARE AS CHRISTIANS. THIS IS A STRENGTH SO GREAT, AND COMMUNICATED WITH SO RICH A FREEDOM, THAT THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER, UNDER HIS PECULIAR DIFFICULTIES, WILL FIND IT ADEQUATE TO THEM ALL. LET SUCH PARTICULARLY APPLY TO THEMSELVES THE EXHORTATIONS AND CONSOLATIONS WHICH ARE HERE GIVEN OR SUGGESTED. LET THEM STRENUEOUSLY RETAIN THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS, WHICH THE INSPIRED APOSTLES HAVE DELIVERED, WITH FAITH AND LOVE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS. TO THIS ARTISTRY OF PRINCIPLE, WHICH A DUE REGARD TO THIS GREAT AND ONLY STANDARD WILL TEACH THEM, LET THEM ADD ARTISIETY OF TEMPER. AND, AS THEY DESIRE THAT CHRIST MAY KEEP WHAT THEY PROFESS TO HAVE IMPARTED WITH HIM, LET THEM FAITHFULLY KEEP WHAT HE HAS LAIDED IN THEIR HANDS. AND MAY THE HOLY

1. [Note first column] It was entirely to the point in question. We must therefore dispose in the present, and the like be necessary in several other places. See Heb. iv. 7, or original. 2. Remember
Holy Spirit dwell in them, to make them faithful in all, and direct them in their efforts to defend the gospel, to spread its influence on the hearts of men, and transmit it from one generation to another; lodging it with faithful men, who may teach others, when their teachers and fathers in Christ rest from their labours. Such a succession may God continue in his churches; and may he prosper the work of those who are employed in humble and faithful attempts to promote so good a cause, by forming for this important charge those who, like Timothy, have early known the scripture, and felt its power on their hearts.

Let such as are setting out in this holy warfare remember the caution which the apostle gives. May they not unnecessarily encumber themselves with secular cares, which would render them less fit to please the great General under whose banner they are enlisted. Let them strive lawfully, if they hope for the crown, and cultivating the ground with diligence, let them wait with patience, if they desire at length to reap that blessed harvest. Nor let that general apostacy from the power of religion, which is the shame of the present day, deter them; but rather let it whet their pious zeal to own, with more strenuous attachment, the cause of Christ and of his faithful servants. And when they have done all, may they ever retain an humble sense of their dependence on the Divine mercy: and the Lord grant to us all, ministers and people, that we may find it in that great day!

SECT. III.

Paul further animates Timothy to fidelity, by laying open the motives and hopes which supported him under the difficulties he bore in the defence of the gospel; interspersing several addresses relating to that purity, prudence, and meekness, with which he should endeavour to conduct himself in the ministry. 2 Tim.

II. 8—13.

2 Tim. II. 8.

Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to the scriptures. Our translators render it, Remember Christ who was raised from the dead. A

2 Tim. II. 8.

To animate thee, O Timothy, to all the labours and all the sufferings of the Christian and ministerial life, remember Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah of the seed of David, the great Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, who, after having spent and laid down his life in the prosecution of his great work, was raised from the dead, and at length exalted to the right hand

a Remember Christ who was raised from the dead. J Our translators render it, Remember that he was raised: as if he had said, Adhere to this as the great foundation
Those who suffer with Christ shall reign with him.

hand of God, there to receive the reward of all his labours and sufferings, according to the tenor of my gospel, which, as thou well knowest, I every where preach and attest. In the service of which I suffer evil, [even] to bonds; the chief magistrates of my country sentencing me to confinement, after the many insults which have been offered me by the dregs of the people, as if I were a malefactor worthy of some heavy punishment; but my great comfort is, that the word of God is not bound. I rejoice, that many of my brethren are at liberty to preach it publicly, and am thankful for every opportunity of bearing my testimony to so good a cause, in such a private manner as my present circumstances may admit; well knowing, that God can bless even these limited attempts, to what degree he shall in his infinite wisdom see fit. (Compare

10 Phil. i. 12.) On this account, I cheerfully endure all these things, and whatever else Providence may appoint, for the sake of the elect, that the gracious purposes of God for their happiness may be effected, and they may obtain that complete salvation which is in Christ Jesus, and which shall be attended with eternal, as well as illustrious and exalted, glory.

11 [It is] a faithful word which I have often insisted upon, and it shall undoubtedly be verified; that if we have the resolution to die with him, even with that blessed Saviour, according to the obligation of our baptismal vow, we shall also live with him, in that everlasting happiness which he hath prepared for all his people. If we patiently endure our part in his afflictions, we shall also share his triumph, and reign with him in his celestial kingdom. But on the other hand, if we are intimidated with these transitory evils, so as to desert his cause, and deny [him] before

 ion of the gospel. But though this be undoubtedly true, the apostle's thought seems rather more lively; remember him who was thus raised from the dead, and that will be instead of a thousand arguments to bear them through all thy difficulties.

b In the service of which.] Dr. Whitby has shown, in his note on this clause, that is sometimes signifies in which cause, or for the sake of which.

c It is a faithful word.] Some refer this to the concluding clause of the former

verse; but it seems much more reasonable to connect it with what follows, as, generally speaking, this phrase is introductory to the weighty sentence it is intended to confirm. See 1 Tim. i. 15; iv. 3, 9. Though Tit. iii. 8. seems an exception. Dr. Telotson thinks this was a celebrated saying among Christians, which was either derived by tradition from Christ or some of the apostles, and it had so powerful: a tendency to keep them steady to their religion, that it is no wonder it was in frequent use. Thol. Vol 11. p. 175, 176.

10 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.

11 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him;

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him;
Timothy is exhorted to be faithful and prudent in his work.

He: if we deny him, he will also deny us:

14 If we believe not, he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

15 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words; to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

16 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

If we are unfaithful.] So I think a should be rendered, as it stands opposed to πρέπει, and so the words will farther imply, that whatever we lose by our unfaithfulness, in whatever degree it appears; it is no argument of any unfaithfulness in him; as his promises are made to faithful servants, and fair warning is given topersons of a different character.

b Testify as before the Lord, and as in his presence.] There is a most awful solemnity in this charge which plainly shews the great folly and mischief of striving aboutLittle controversies; and I pray God to affect the heart of his ministers with a deeper sense of this; before the interests of vital religion among us be utterly undone by our severe contentions; or, as the excellent Archbishops Leighton expresses it in his lively manner; "What we profess to hold so sacred, he itself torn in pieces, while we are struggling about its fringes."

J Rightly dividing the word of truth.] Some think here is an allusion to what the Jewish priest or Levite did in dissecting the victim, and separating the parts in a proper manner; as some were to be laid on God's altar, and others to be given to those who were to share in the sacrifice. Others think it refers to guiding a plough aright, in order to divide the clods in the most proper and effectual manner, and make straight furrows. But, perhaps, the metaphor may be taken from the distribution made by a steward, in delivering out to each person under his care such things as his office and their necessities required.

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serving with prudence, as well as fidelity, to each his proper share. But avoid, and stand at a distance from, those profane and empty declamations, with which some who affect to be thought of importance in the Christian church are ready to amuse themselves: for though the evil of some of them may not immediately appear, and they may seem trivial rather than mischievous, they will at length advance unto more impiety; and when Satan has prevailed upon men once to quit the right way, he will be continually gaining greater advantages over them. And their discourse will eat like a gangrene, spreading itself farther and farther, till the whole body is infected, and even destroyed by it. Such teachers there are now in the church; of which [number] in particular are called Hymenas and Phileatus, Who have erred with respect to the truth, so as to be wile of the mark. For they have, by their allegorical interpretations, explained away one of the most fundamental doctrines of our religion, asserting that the resurrection, of which it so largely speaks, consists only in a conversion from vice to virtue, and consequently is already past, with regard to all true Christians; and so they subject the faith of some, who are less established in the doctrines of the gospel, and endanger their salvation. It will therefore become thee, amidst all the candour which I have so often inculcated, to guard against such tenets, and the authors of them.

IMPROVEMENT.

There is not perhaps a single precept in the whole sacred volume, which would be more extensively useful to ministers, or to private Christians, than this of the apostle, taken in all its extent. Remember Jesus Christ. Many a sweet memorial hath he left us of himself. Often, very often, have we been called so-

16 But shun profane and vain workings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker, of whom is Hy- menas and Phileatus:

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and receiveth the faith of soon.

2 Asserting that the resurrection is past.] Vice, as my learned friend Mr. Warburton, with great propriety observes, in reference to the text, was in the philosophical schools called death. And upon the same principle, a recovery to a virtuous course and temper might be called a kind of resurrection from the dead. But nothing can be more evident than that this was by no means the resurrection which Christianity taught. Yet, as there is nothing too absurd for some who pride themselves in their philosophy to believe, this foolish refinement found its followers among some pretended Christians of this stamp. Warb. Div. Leg. Vol. 1. p. 435.
lernly to survey them, and yet how ready are we to forget him, and by a natural consequence to forget ourselves, our duty and interest on the one hand, and our danger on the other! "Blessed Jesus! may we daily and hourly remember thee! that thou hast died, that thou art raised from the dead, and that thou art ever near thy people, to protect, to comfort, and to bless them. If, for thy cause, we should be called to suffer evil, as evil doers, whether in our persons, or reputations, may we not be discouraged, but rather rejoice in the honour thou dost us in appointing for us such a conformity to thyself! The enemies of thy gospel may indeed oppose it, they may bind its most faithful preachers, but their opposition, their persecution, is vain." The word of God is not bound; and Divine grace, operating by it, will sooner or later give it the intended, the promised triumph; that his elect may obtain salvation by Jesus Christ, and may not only escape the condemnation and ruin of the impenitent world, but may finally be crowned with eternal glory.

May we ever be mindful of this faithful word, that if we suffer, with Christ we shall reign with him too; and may we endure the greatest hardships to which we can be called out, as considering that our sufferings are momentary, but our reign will be eternal. Never may we, for any allurement or terror, deny him, as we would not finally be denied by him; when no other honour will remain but that which he confers, no other happiness but that which he bestows.

In the mean time, as we desire the prosperity of his kingdom, let us earnestly pray that he will raise up to his church a multitude of faithful ministers, who may govern themselves by these truly apostolical canons; ministers who may not contend about words in a manner unprofitable and vain, who may not amuse their hearers with empty harangues about insignificant curiosities or perplexing subtilties; but may, in the integrity of their hearts, endeavour to approve themselves to God, as workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. And may divine grace preserve the church from those seducing teachers, whose doctrine, like a secret gangrene, might spread itself to the destruction of the body, so that the faith of many might be overthrown.
Christians are obliged to depart from iniquity.

SECT. IV.

The Apostle urges the necessity of holiness in all Christians, but especially in ministers; and of meekness in their endeavours to recover sinners from the miserable condition into which they were fallen. 2 Tim. II. 19, to the end.

2 Timothy II. 19.

In order to excite thee, O Timothy, to contend earnestly for the great doctrines of the gospel, I have taken notice of the manner in which some have revolted from them. And it is matter of mournful reflection, that there should be such instances of apostacy in this early age of the church. Nevertheless, we recollect with pleasure that, whatever defections there may be in particular persons, the great foundation Stone, which the mercy and faithfulness of God has laid for the support and comfort of his people, standeth firm and steadfast, having, as it were, this double seal or inscription: on the one hand, The Lord knoweth them that are his own, and as he surely distinguishes them in every circumstance, so he bears a steady and constant favour to them, nor can any alienate them from his gracious regards; and, on the other side, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, every one that professes his religion, and pretends the least regard to him, depart from iniquity, let him stand off, and keep at the greatest distance from every kind and degree of immorality, from every appearance and occasion of sin. But, though our obligations to such a conduct be so many and so great, we cannot flatter ourselves that all professing Christians will be sensible of them. Nor in a great house there are vessels, not only of gold and silver, but also of wood.

\*Inscript.\] Many critics have justly observed, that the word επαγαγω, often signifies an inscription, or the mark made by a seal, as well as the seal itself. See Rev. ix. 4. And the expression is here used with peculiar propriety, in allusion to the custom of engraving upon some stones laid in the foundation of buildings the name of the persons by whom, and the purpose for which, the structure is raised. And nothing can have a greater tendency to encourage the hope, and at the same time to engage the obedience of Christians, than this double inscription. Dr. Whitby supposes that clause, the Lord knoweth them that are his own, has a peculiar reference to the former, in opposition to certain teachers, and that it alludes to Num. xxvi. 5. Sept. That to know often signifies to regard with favour, as well as to disapprove; hath been shown elsewhere. Rom. iii. 27.

b Ephasian,
whether, and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto wood, and of earth, the former being intended for honourable, the other for meaner and dishonourable uses: and accordingly there will be, in the church of God, persons of different characters, who will meet with very different treatment. If therefore any one cleanse himself from these, if he be careful to avoid the society of persons who have revolted from true religion, and made themselves instruments of impurity and iniquity, he shall be a vessel of honour, sanctified and useful to the immediate and personal service of his great Lord and Master; and such an one will be constantly ready, as the nobler vessels of a house, to every good work, which will be the surest test of our real goodness. But flee from all occasions of exciting or gratifying the passions of youth, whether, on the one hand, the love of sensual pleasure, or, on the other, rashness, contention, pride, and vain-glory, to which young persons are peculiarly obnoxious: for these will render thee unfit for the honour of being used by the Lord for the purposes of his glory and the edification of his church. And therefore, instead of making provision for these, pursue, with the greatest ardour and intenseness of mind, righteousness and fidelity, love and peace; cultivate an upright, benevolent, candid temper towards all, and especially towards those that invoke the name of the Lord Jesus Christ out of a pure heart, so far as the conduct can discover the inward temper. But avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that, how curious soever they appear, they only tend to beget strifes and contentions in the church, and I reckon it a most important part of the learning of a Christian minister to guard against such occasions of offence and mischief. Let the bigotted Jews, and the vain-glorious heathens, on each side, split into ever so many different sects and parties, and dispute as eagerly about such things as they will; but the servant of the Lord, the Christian, and especially the minister, must not strive in an angry and hostile manner, but be mild and gentle towards all, yet it is plain, from the opposition between this and the latter part of the verse, they were particularly in Paul's mind when he gave this caution.
Reflections on the captivity of the sinner.

sect. 11.
2 Tim. 11. 23.

ready to teach the ignorant, and instead of hurting [and] injuring any, be willing to endure evil from those who, instead of receiving his doctrine, repay his kindness with outrage. In meekness instructing opposers, if by any means God may perhaps, in his own due time, conquer their savage prejudices, and give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth; of which, through the riches of Divine grace, we see some instances, even where there had been a long and inveterate struggle against it. And surely it will be worth while to try every method on such unhappy souls, that they may awaken and recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who have lain sleeping, and as it were intoxicat ed in it, having been taken by that subtle fowler, and like a living prey, detained captive by him at his cruel pleasure; while perhaps they have been dreaming of liberty and happiness, in the midst of the most shameful bondage and the extremest danger.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. How affecting a representation is here made of the wretched state of sinners! they are described as sleeping in Satan’s snare, like birds in a net, taken alive, and at the fowler’s mercy; while they imagine they can spring up whenever they please, and range at full liberty. Alas! they will soon perceive their fatal captivity: but they will perceive it too late, if Divine grace do not quickly awaken them. Who would not wish to do something for their recovery? Let the ministers of the gospel pity them. Let us pray that God, whose work it is, would give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth. Let us try every gentle method which the sincerest compassion can dictate toward effecting so happy a design, and not suffer ourselves to be transported to undue severities of language, or of sentiments, even though we should receive

unto all men, apt to teach, patient;

23 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

That they may recover, &c. In order to understand this beautiful image, it is proper to observe, that the word awake do properly signify, to awake from a deep sleep, or from a fit of insensibility (see Eton, Oct. Sac. in loc.), and refers to an artifice of hooded, to scatter seeds impregnated with some drugs intended to lye birds asleep, that they might draw the net over them with the greater security. The interpretation which a late writer has given of these words, who would render them, Being taken asleep by him, that is, the Christian minister, for the purpose of the Divine will, is so unnatural, that merely to compare it with the former is to confute it. (Taylor on Orig. Sin. p. 152.) Nor can any thing be more evidently wrong than to maintain that necessity necessarily implies a purpose of preserving, whereas it only imports taking a captive, without determining whether it be for servitude or death. Compare 2 Chron. xxv. 12, Sept. 

24

25
receive the greatest injuries where we intend the most important kindness.

Let those that have the honour to bear the most holy character, Ver. which any office can devolve on mortal man, avoid with the greatest care, every thing that would bring a stain, or even a suspicion, upon it. Let them revere the voice of the great apostle, while it animates him to pursue righteousness and faith, love and peace, with all their fellow-Christians of every denomination, with all that invoke Christ and that trust in him. So shall they be vessels of honour, so may they humbly hope that their Lord will condescend to make some special use of them, for the purposes of his own glory, and salvation of their fellow-creatures.

To conclude, let ministers and people be daily reading, with all possible care, this double inscription on the foundation of God; and while we rejoice in the one, let us be admonished by the other. For what is it to us, that the Lord knows, distinguishes, and favours his own, that his almighty power protects them, and that his infinite mercy will for ever save them, if we are ourselves found among the wicked, with whom he is angry every day, among the workers of iniquity, whom he will publicly disown, and to whom he will say, I know not whence you are. To name the name of Christ with dispositions like these will be to injure and profane it; and our profession itself will be interpreted as an act of hostility against him, whom we have presumed so vainly to call the Foundation of our hopes, and the Sovereign of our souls.  

SECT. V.

Paul cautions Timothy against that great declension and apostacy which was to prevail in the Christian world, and against those false teachers who were rising up in it; reminding him of the example he had seen in him, in the midst of such persecutions as were still to be expected. 2 Tim. III. 1—13,

2 Tim. III. 1.

It is the more necessary thus to urge thee to every precaution, and every effort, which may preserve the purity and honour of the Christian church, as, after all we can do for this purpose, such sad scenes are to open in it. We are indeed acquainted with our duty, and we shall find our own highest account in attending to it. But this know, O Timothy, that in the last days, under the evangelical dispensation, which is to wind up the economy of Providence, and is to remain in full force even to the end of the world, difficult
When men shall sink into the utmost degeneracy:

difficult times and circumstances shall arise, in which it will be hard to discharge our consciences, and at the same time to maintain our safety. For men shall be liers of themselves, in the most absurd and excessive degree; liers of money, so as to be impelled to the basest practices by the hopes of obtaining it; liers of what they have, and proud pretenders to what they have not; blasphemers of God, and revilers of their fellow-creatures; disobedient to parents, notwithstanding all the obligations they are under to their care and tenderness; unholy, though they profess themselves devoted to God, and consecrated to his service by the most solemn rites: They will be destitute of natural affection, even to their own children, as well as of piety toward their parents; implacable where enmities have been commenced, and treacherous in their mutual engagements, when there has been a pretence of making them up; false accusers, in which they will imitate that diabolical malignity which renders the great enemy of mankind so justly odious; intemperate in their pleasures, fierce in their resentments, cruel in their revenge; destitute of all love to goodness, though it so naturally extorts a tribute of veneration and affection from every human heart which is not sunk into the last degeneracy. They will be liers of those that please the greatest confidence in them, such base liers, as even to give up their

1 Thus Dr. Whitehead has said in his Remark, No. 6. [He says, that the word chosen by the present-day orthodox interpreters, "implacable," is one which is not only professedly Christian, but peculiar to the Christian church.]

2 For men shall be liers of their own souls, covetous, liers of money, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unholy, without affection, treacherous.

3 Without natural affection, treacherous, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despoilers of those that are good.

4 Treacherous, Lastly, logicians.
having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly woman laden with sins, led way with divers lusts;

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

c Insinuate themselves, &c.] This character, as we hinted above, seems rather to suit disaffected and seducing Christian teachers than infidel Jews, who no doubt carried it with an high hand, and would scorn to think of crouching to the leaders of so contemptible a sect as they called that of the Nazarenes.
But Timothy knew Paul's doctrine, conduct, and sufferings.

I have been speaking, seize on such as their proper prey, and just as Jannes and Jambres\(^c\), the Egyptian magicians, withstood Moses when he came to Pharaoh with a message from God, so do these men also withstand the truth of the gospel. I speak of persons whose minds are utterly corrupted, who with respect to the faith are disapproved, and worthy of being rejected as enemies to it, and unworthy to know it, though they pretend so much zeal in its defence. But I foresee, that they shall not proceed much farther in these arts, for their folly shall be manifested to all, as theirs also was, when God sent upon the Egyptians plagues, which far from being able to remove, or mitigate, they could not, as in former instances, so much as imitate.

But thou hast exactly trode, and been accurately acquainted with my doctrine, and my conversation, the steadiness of my aim, purpose, and resolution in the cause of God; that firm and uniform fidelity which I have always strenuously maintained, without yielding up any the least article of it; my long-suffering, when I had been treated in the most injurious manner; my love to all, however different in opinion, not excepting even mine enemies and persecutors; and my patience under such pressing trials. Particularly under the persecutions [and] sufferings which befell me in the Pisidian Antioch, Acts xiii. 45. in Iconium (xvi. 2) in Lystra (xvi. 19) where thou hast not only heard, but seen, what persecutions I endured; but the Lord Jesus, whom I serve, was still with me, and rescued me out of them all. Yes, and all whom are resolutely determined upon it, that they will live guiltily in Christ Jesus\(^d\), that they will conduct themselves by their several ways, ver. 11, and of their voice and name, ver. 11, and of their word only as a go-between. Dissolute indeed explains them and the last verse of different persons; that, of some who had already appeared; that, of others who were now to arise. But there cannot not the least need of having recourse to such a solution.

I Cor. 15:33, 42, &c. This, as Dr. Linsley justly observes, may import something quarre in the godliness to be exercised by Christians, as being agreeable to the revelation of Christ, animated by his example, dependent on his Spirit for assistance.

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\(^{a}\) See 2 Thess. iii. 5.

\(^{b}\) See Acts xxvi. 11.

\(^{c}\) Shall not proceed much farther.] Translating it thus, will easily reconcile this with what is afterwards said of their great

\(^{d}\) Jannes and Jambres. It is remarkable that the former of these is mentioned together with Moses, by Heng, and both of them by Numenius the philosopher, quoted in Eunapius, as celebrated magicians. See Phil. Nat. Hist. lib. 20, cap. 1, and Euseb lib. 9, cap. 8. It is of no importance to enquire, by what tradition their names came down to so distant an age.

\(^{e}\) See Acts xxvi. 7.
Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

by the strict rules of piety, which he has prescribed, not turning aside to the right hand or the left, shall suffer persecution, or opposition of one kind or another; for Christ has decreed to lead all his people to glory, through a variety of difficulties and hardships. But wicked men and impostors, by whatever artifices they may decline persecution, are in a yet more wretched state; for they provoke God to give them up to the lusts of their own heart, and so will grow continually worse and worse, more obstinate in their opposition to the gospel and its faithful ministers; deceiving others indeed by false and treacherous pretences, but being themselves much more fatally deceived by their own corruptions, which delude them with the visionary hope of some temporal advantage, while they are plunging into irrecoverable and everlasting ruin.

IMPROVEMENT.

Must we not, on the survey of this scripture, in comparison with what we every day behold in life, cry out, “Verily these are the last days?” They are assuredly times of difficulty and peril. Self-love, pride, ingratitude, treachery, intemperance, insolvency, and contempt of all authority, human and divine, each, all of these characters may too plainly declare it. But none with more striking evidence than the excessive love of pleasure, on which so many are doting to destruction, while every consideration, both of religion and of prudence, falls at the shrine of this favourite idol. Men are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, more than lovers of their families, yea, though self-interest be in many instances so scandalously pursued, yet more than lovers of themselves; and when they have sacrificed every thing else to their gain, they sacrifice even that gain to luxury. And would to God there was none such, even among those that retain the form of Godliness, which so many indeed have scornfully cast off! But O! how vain the form, where the power of it is thus denied! And how peculiarly scandalous are these characters in those who call themselves teachers of religion! Yet to such they are here originally applied; and their race is not yet extinct.

assistance, and his atonement for accept ance with God. Important topics, which all who desire to obtain and promote godliness, ought to dwell much upon. See Evans’s Christian Temper, Vol. I. p. 192. A From
Blessed be God, there are those yet remaining who are the happy reverse of these; ministers, who can appeal to the consciences of men, as to their doctrine, their conversation, their resolution, their fidelity, their gentleness, their charity, and their patience. Happy are they, how ill soever they may be treated in the world. Happy would they be, though exposed to all the terrors of persecution which the apostles and their first followers endured! But we are all warned to prepare for some degree of it; and indeed who can wonder, if amidst so many evils, they who will not go on with the multitude should sometimes be rudely pressed by them; and it may be in some instances, cast down and trampled under foot. But be it so; though cast down, they shall not be destroyed. (2 Cor. iv. 9.) A little time will balance all. An hour of eternity will more than balance it. Let us guard against the deceits by which so many suffer. Let us guard, above all, against those deceits which men practise upon themselves, and whereby they hurt themselves infinitely more than all their fraud or violence can hurt any, who are not accessory to their own undoing.

Sect. VI.

To guard Timothy against those seducing teachers, and to preserve the church from their evil influence, Paul recommends to him the study of the scriptures, and great diligence in all the parts of his ministerial work; reflecting with pleasure on his own fidelity in the nearest views of martyrdom for the truth. 2 Tim. III. 14, to the end. IV. 1—8.

2 Timothy III. 14.

I HAVE mentioned the case of these wretched men, who grow worse and worse, deceiving others, and themselves most of all. But that thou, O Timothy, mayest effectually avoid them, continue thou, steadfast in the things which thou hast learnt from me, and hast believed upon the authority of God speaking in and by me; knowing from whom thou hast learnt [them] and what convincing proofs I have given thee, both of my general integrity, and of that extraordinary inspiration by which I teach. And knowing also, that the oracles of the Old Testament confirm the system of doctrines which I have taught; of which thou must be very sensible, because from thine infancy thou hast known the

a From thine infancy. Hence it appears that children may learn some useful lessons from scripture, and that they ought to be earlyinitiated into the study of:
all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

IV. 1. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at the sacred scriptures, in which the grand learning of our Jewish nation consists; and which are indeed most worthy of being studied by all, as they are able to make thee, and all that faithfully admit and follow their guidance, wise unto eternal salvation: a science infinitely nobler and more important than human literature in its greatest refinements can pretend to teach, and which is to be learned only through that faith which is in Christ Jesus. For the whole scripture, received by the Jewish church, [is] divinely inspired, and therefore, as may well be imagined, is profitable to the highest purposes. It is fitted for doctrine, as it lays down the most fundamental principles of religion, in the view it gives us of the Divine nature and perfections, and for conviction of those opposite errors, which the licentious and perverse wit of man has invented in so great abundance, and set off with so many plausible arguments. It is also useful for the reproof of irregularities in practice, which how speciously soever they may be defended by the sophistry of these that think it their interest to plead for them, quickly fall before the authority of the Divine word. And when men have submitted to it, they will also find it effectual for instruction in righteousness, and will be led on from one degree of virtue and piety to another, with a progress which will continually advance, in proportion to the regard they pay to that Divine book. To this therefore, I hope thou, O Timothy, and every minister of the gospel, will diligently apply, that the furniture of the man of God may be complete, and that he may be thoroughly fitted for every good work which his holy calling may require. IV 1. charge [thee] therefore, considering what I have urged in the former part of this epistle, in the most awful manner, before the great and blessed God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, who shall judge the living and the dead, and pronounce on them all their final and everlasting doom, at his last public glorious appearance of the sacred letters; directly contrary to what the church of Rome teaches. 

b 'The whole scripture [is] divinely inspired.' Grotius translates the words, the whole divinely inspired scripture is profitable, &c. which they will undoubtedly bear; and as we may be sure that, by scripture, the apostle means the books which the Jews received as canonical, that version, gives a true sense; but I take this, which is our own, to be more literal.
To watch in all things, and make full proof of his ministry.

2 Tim. IV. 3.

ance, when the extent and majesty of his kingdom shall appear in full display: I charge thee to execute the important trust committed to thee with the strictest fidelity. For this purpose, preach the word of God with all possible seriousness and earnestness; be instant in the prosecution of that good work, in the stated season of religious assemblies, [and] out of that season, when occasional providences may give thee an opportunity; yea, carry it into thy private conversation, in the intervals of thy public labours. Endeavour to convince the consciences of men, and to reclaim them from their erroneous principles; rebuke them for their irregularities and vices, without fearing the face of any; and exhort them to diligence and zeal in the performance of their duty, with all long suffering, though thou mayest not immediately see the desired success; and enforce these exhortations with all those well-known and important motives which the doctrine of the gospel may suggest. Seize the present opportunity with all eagerness, for I see that the time will quickly come, when they will not endure good and wholesome doctrine, but, thinking themselves above the plainness of moral and practical instructions, shall wantonly heap up to themselves seducing teachers, whose harangues shall be just according to the prejudices of their own lusts, having nothing else to recommend them, unless it be perhaps a glare of false and affected eloquence, which may gratify the vain curiosity and itching ears of their hearers. And so unhappily will their minds be disposed, that they shall turn away [their attention] from simple truth, of the greatest certainty, on which nothing less than their salvation depends, and shall be turned aside to idle fables, which they eagerly drink in, under a fond semblance of mystery and obscure science, which they pretend to be veiled in these abstruse and enigmatical forms.

But

c. They shall heap up to themselves teachers.] Mr. Slater, in his Original Drought, &c. p. 126, urges this text, as an argument against allowing to the people the choice of their own ministers; but that right is by no means in question here. The danger there was of men's hearkening to erroneous and seducing teachers, would upon every imaginable hypothesis, be a solid argument for Timothy's exerting himself to the utmost, in preaching the word, and endeavouring to guard the churches against errors which might otherwise have become fatally prevalent. I must add, that the expression, heaping up to themselves, implies, that they should be desirous of such, and that they should meet with many such a character.

d. Accomplish
St. Paul's joyful prospects at death.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

But be thou, O Timothy, diligent and watchful in all things that may tend to the security of thy charge; and prepare thyself resolutely to endure adversity, and to perform the full work of an evangelist, and fully to accomplish all the branches of thy ministry. And the rather, considering how soon the world will lose whatever advantage it may now receive from my personal labours; for I may well conclude, from my age and circumstances, that I am now, as it were, just ready to be offered, to be poured out as a libation upon God's altar, and the time of my departure is near at hand; the time when I shall be dismissed from this state of confinement, when I shall weigh anchor from these mortal shores, and launch into the ocean of eternity.

And, while I stand on the borders of that awful state, it is with unspاكable pleasure I reflect, that I have maintained the good combat against the sharpest opposition, that I have finished my race, though it has been so arduous, that I have kept the holy faith committed to my trust, and, with the strictest fidelity, endeavoured to preserve it free from human additions and corruptions. It remaineth [that] a crown of righteousness and glory is laid up in sure reserve for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, who presides in this great exercise, shall, with distinguished honour, before the assembled world, render and award to me, in that illustrious day, upon which our hopes and hearts are set: and it is the joy of my soul to think, that he shall not assign it to me alone, but to all them also who love the thoughts of his final appearance to the universal judgment, and are, or shall be, making a wise and pious preparation for it.

IMPROVE-

A. Accomplish thy ministry.] It must surely have been owing to a strong prepossession in favour of Diocesan Episcopacy, that the worthy person I mentioned above could imagine these words contained an argument for it. He explains the words πληγηθηκας την Μακαδονίαν as an exhortation to take upon him the complete office of a bishop, because Paul himself was ready to quit it; not considering how ill this interpretation agrees with his own supposition, of Timothy's being in the episcopal office when Paul wrote his first epistle to him. Whatever Timothy's office were, the argument which Paul suggests, of the satisfaction he found in the reflection on his own fidelity, would be very conclusive.

E. In that day.] This text will certainly prove, that the great and most glorious reward of faithful Christians, is referred to the day of general judgment. But it would be very precarious to argue from hence, that there shall be no prelibation and anticipation of this happiness in a separate state. And when the many texts, which have been so often urged in proof of that intermediate happiness, are considered, it is surprising that any stress can be laid on the objection which has been drawn from such passages as this.
BEHOLD this blessed man, *this prisoner,* this *martyr of Christ* appearing in his chains, and in the near views of a violent death, more truly majestic and happy, than *Cesar on his imperial throne!* Blessed man indeed; who could look upon the pouring forth of his blood, as the *libation* of a sacrifice of thanksgiving, on which he could call for the *congratulations* of his friends, rather than their *condolence*; who could *loosen* from these mortal shores, and set sail for eternity with a shout! O may we all be excited by his example to *fight the good fight,* to *finish our course,* to keep *the faith,* in the view of that *crown of righteousness,* which is not reserved only for Paul, or for ministers and Christians of the *first* rank, who have been eminent for the most distinguished services, but for *all who love Christ’s appearance,* and whose hearts are thoroughly reconciled to his government!

May we therefore be *watchful in all things.* May we *endure* every *affliction* which God shall lay in our way, and fill up with proper services every station in which we are fixed. Let the *ministers of Christ* attend to this solemn charge, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge both the quick and the dead, at his appearance and in his kingdom. They are as much concerned in this judgment as *Timothy or Paul;* their own eternal state is in question, and none can have greater reason than themselves to be impressed with it. Let as *many therefore as are called to it* by Divine Providence and grace, *preach the word* with zeal and *fervency,* as well as *fidelity;* let them be *instant in season,* and *out of season,* with a resolution tempered with *gentleness,* and supported by firm faith in him, who entrusts them with the message. And let the petulency of men, which indisposes them to *endure sound doctrine,* yet makes them need it so much the more, be considered by them as an *engagement to greater zeal,* rather than an *excuse for remissness.*

That they may be animated to it, and furnished for it, *thoroughly furnished for every good work* incumbent upon them, as *men of God,* a becoming reverence is to be maintained for the *divinely inspired scriptures,* apparently *profitable for doctrine and reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness.* Let us  

15 all esteem it our great happiness, if from children we have been *acquainted* with them; let us study them diligently, and take *faithful care to deliver* them down to those that arise after us, as the *oracles of that eternal wisdom* by which we and they may be *made wise to salvation.*

Sect
Paul urges Timothy to come to him, and bring Mark with him.

**SECT. VII.**

The Apostle concludes with requesting Timothy to come to him, giving him an account of the manner in which he had, in his late appearance before the heathen magistrate at Rome, been deserted by men, but supported by Christ; and adding some particular salutations and directions. 2 Tim. IV. 9, to the end.

2 Tim. IV. 9.

**DO** thy diligence to come shortly unto me.

10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

**2 Timothy IV. 9.**

I MIGHT add much more on this occasion, but the hope I have of seeing thee ere long, makes me the easier in omitting it. I cannot but be very desirous of such an interview. Endeavour therefore by all means to come to me here at Rome as quickly as possible. For I need the assistance and company of such a faithful friend, as I have met with very unworthy treatment from some who ought to have acted in a very different manner. And I must particularly inform thee that Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world, and followed another way, as his secular views invited him. In pursuit of these, he is gone to Thessalonica, as Crescens is to Galatia, and Titus, for whom thou knowest I have a very high regard, is gone to Dalmatia. Luke alone, whose faithful friendship I have long experienced, is still with me. I desire thou wouldst take the first opportunity of engaging the company of Mark, [and] bring him along with thee, for he is useful to the advancement of my ministry among the Gentiles, having often attended both Barnabas and me in our progress amongst them. Thou wilt perceive, by what I have just been saying, what reason I have to wish for the society of an approved Christian friend and brother, at a time when I am left thus destitute: yet preferring the edification of the church of Christ to any personal consideration of my own, I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus, where I some years ago left thee,

*Demas hath forsaken me.* I think we can neither be certain, that Demas was ever a good man, from Paul's speaking of him, as one whom in the judgment of charity he hoped to be so, nor can we certainly infer from his dishonourable conduct on this occasion, that he totally apostatized from Christianity, and much less that he never returned to a sense of it more. John Mark had once acted a part very like this, yet was evidently restored to the esteem of our apostle. Compare Acts xv. 38, with the next verse of this chapter.
The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee and the books, but especially the parchments.

Alexander the copper-smith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works.

At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be charged to my account.

b Being with thee that cloke.] If we here signifiue that cloke, or even, it is, as Grotius justly observes, a proof of Paul's poverty, that he had occasion to need so far for such a garment, which probably was not quite a new one. But some understand by it, either a paroetta; or something like a portamento, the contents of which might be more important than the thing itself.

c At Troas.] See the Introduction to this epistle, p. 3.

d The parchments.] Bishop Hull thinks these parchments might be a kind of common piece-book, in which the apostle inserted hints and extracts of what seemed most remarkable in the authors he read.

e Alexander the braizer.] The name of Alexander was so common, that we cannot certainly say, whether this were the person mentioned, Acts xix. 22, or 1 Tim. 1. 31; but what is here said of this braizer agrees so well with the last passage, that I think it probable it refers to the same man. What we know of Paul's character must lead us to conclude, that if he meant not the following words as a mere prediction, he did not however with evil to him, or evil, but only that he might be admonished upon, as to prevent the contagion of his bad example from spreading in the church, and bring him to repentance and reformation, that so he might be preserved from final destruction.

f All men forsook me.] Many circumstances make it astonishing, that Paul should have been deserted by the Christians at Rome, in this extremity. When he wrote his epistle to the church there, which must have been ten years before this, he speaks of their faith, as celebrated,
to their account, as an instance of unfaithfulness to our common Master! Yet I was not left entirely destitute, but can say it with great pleasure, that the Lord Jesus Christ stood by me, and strengthened me with that inward fortitude of soul which no human support could have inspired; that by me the preaching [of his gospel] might be carried on with confidence, and [that] all the nations might hear; for I made my defence in a manner that will, I doubt not, be taken notice of, and reported abroad, much to the advantage of that sacred cause, which is dearer to me than my life. And though this plain and faithful testimony did indeed expose me to great danger, yet I was for the present rescued, like Daniel, out of the mouth of the lion; so that fierce as he was, God did not suffer him to devour me, when he seemed to have me at his mercy. And I am confident, that the Lord, whose power and faithfulness are always the same, will rescue me from what I fear much more than any thing this body can suffer, even from every evil work; will strengthen me against the most pressing and violent temptations, so that I shall do nothing unbecoming my Christian

He salutes a vast number of illustrious persons by name, and mentions many of them as his particular friends, (xvi. 3—15;) and we may assure ourselves, that, during the two years he spent there in his hired house; when access was granted to all that desired it, the number, and probably the zeal of Christian converts would be greatly increased; as indeed he expressly assures the Philipians that it was, and that some of Caesar's palace was added to them. (Phil. i. 12—14; iv. 21.) We are ready to say, How then was it possible he should be thus forsaken? But there is a material circumstance, seldom taken notice of in this connection, which accounts in a great measure for what might otherwise appear so strange. Clement, the companion of Paul, informs us, that he suffered martyrdom under the governors, (as Bishop Pearson and L'Enfant explain μαρτυρείται των μνημονευται that is, as they understand it, when Nero was gone into Greece, and had left the government of the city to Tigellinus and Sabinus, prefects of the praetorian guard, and that monster Helius. If this be allowed, it fixes the death of Paul to A.D. 66, to 67. But the cruel persecution, which Nero had raised against the Christians at Rome, in which they were worried in the skins of wild beasts, and burnt alive for a kind of public illumination,) was, according to Tacitus, at least two years before this. It is possible, therefore, that many of the excellent persons mentioned above might have suffered death for their religion, or according to our Lord's advice, (Mat. x. 23,) have retired to a distance from Rome. The Asiatic Christians, who came with Paul, as it seems, to rally the broken remains of this once celebrated church, acted a mean part in deserting Paul, as the other Christians of the place did. But it is less surprising upon the supposition above, than it would otherwise have appeared; and it might be among the first-fruits of that sad apostasy which Vitringa (as was elsewhere observed,) supposes to have begun in the time of Nero, and continued to that of Trajan. See note, on 2 Tim. iii. 1. 7. Carried on with confidence.] So the original παραδοθέω, here signifies. Calvin truly observes, that it was a glorious testimony to the honour of Christianity, that the apostle could thus courageously maintain it when all his friends forsook him, and his enemies were so fiercely raging against him.

b Priscilla

C 2
He desires Timothy to salute his friends.

19 I must conclude with desiring thee to salute Priscilla and Aquila, those dear friends, with whom I have had so agreeable an acquaintance and intercourse these many years; and also the family of good Onesiphorus. In my last journey through Asia and Greece I had the affliction to part with some of our common friends, whose conversation and company would have been very desirable, had Providence permitted it. Erastus in particular abode at Corinth, and Trophimus I left sick at Miletus; nor did the Lord, who hath made me an instrument of miraculous healing to so many strangers, permit me at that time to be so to him. Endeavour therefore as I am deprived of these agreeable friends, and surrounded with so many dangers and enemies which threaten my life, to come to me before winter. Several Christians here at Rome desire I would send their commendations to thee: and in particular Eubulus salutes thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and indeed, all the brethren in general. My heart is as at all times full of the tenderest affection for thee; which to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

20 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter, Bentobus great in the service of God and many and Cephas, and Erastus, and Trophimus, and the brethren.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.
which I cannot express better than by praying, as I most sincerely do, that the Lord Jesus Christ, himself may be ever present with thy spirit, and shed abroad those sanctifying, quickening, and comforting influences of Divine grace, which may fit thee for all thou hast to do and bear under thy Christian and ministerial character. And wherever this finds thee, I desire thou wouldst assure my fellow-Christians that I wish them well. May grace be with you all, as your circumstances require, to render you more eminently useful in the present state, and prepare you for complete and everlasting happiness in the next. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Be this our prayer for ourselves and our friends, that the grace of Ver. 22 may be with their spirits and ours; that though we have not seen him here, neither can see him, we may ever feel his vital presence, and may live and act as ever near him, and as conscious that he is ever with us. Then may we promise ourselves that while he stands by us, we shall be strengthened, how weak soever we are in ourselves; that we shall be comforted, whoever may desert us; that we shall be rescued from the extremest dangers, delivered out of the mouth of the infernal lion, and safely preserved to his heavenly kingdom.

That such a confessor as the holy apostle St. Paul should have been deserted, at the time of his apology, when there must have been so large a number of Christians at Rome, may justly appear one of the most surprising circumstances recorded in the sacred history. It teaches us to cease from man, and to repose ourselves with some caution upon the friendship of the very best. It teaches us to watch over ourselves, lest the fear of man should bring a snare upon us, (Prov. xxix, 25,) and lead us to be ashamed of Christ in his members. It concurs with the apostacy of Demas, to warn us that we beware of loving this present world, and keep our eyes more steadily fixed on a better, in which our highest interest lies, and by regarding which, our souls will acquire a certain uniform tenor, that will prove their honour and their safety.

The readiness of Paul, amidst such a dearth of true and faithful friends, to part with those that yet remained, when he thought the service of Christianity required it, is an amiable and instructive part of his character. They know not the heart of a man, and the duty of a Christian aright, who know not that even the tender 

C 3
and friendly passions are to be guarded against, and admitted no farther than reason and religion will warrant; and that such society as is far dearer to us than any animal delight, or secular accommodation, is often to be given up, that our fidelity to God may be approved.

13 Once more, it is obvious to remark, that Paul, though favoured with such extraordinary degrees of Divine inspiration, sets a proper value upon books, and expresses a great concern about their being safely conveyed to him. Let us therefore pity the ignorance, rather than imitate the enthusiasm and madness, of those that set learning at defiance, especially in the ministers of the gospel. Let us thankfully acknowledge the Divine goodness, in having furnished us with so many excellent writings of wise and pious men in all ages; and let us endeavour, by frequent converse with them, to improve our furniture, that our profiting may appear unto all men. Yet let us all remember, that how large and well-chosen soever our library may be, the sacred volume is of infinitely greater importance than all that Greece, or Rome, or Britain has produced, or the united labours of all the best of men who have written since it was concluded. And let the Christian minister remember, that the two epistles, through which we have now passed, and that which we are next to survey, are to be esteemed by him amongst the most edifying and important parts even of that incomparable and Divine book.
THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR, A

PARAPHRASE

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TITUS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PARAPHRASE AND NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TITUS.

Titus, to whom this epistle is addressed, was a Greek, (Gal. ii. 3;) and was probably converted to Christianity by St. Paul, as we may conclude from the title he gives him of his own son after the common faith, (Tit. i. 4.) though the particular time of his conversion cannot be ascertained.—The earliest account of him we meet with (for Luke does not once mention his name in the Acts) is in Gal. ii. 1, where the apostle says, he took him with him from Antioch to Jerusalem, fourteen years after his conversion, to attend the grand council that was held there, in the year 49; and, as Titus was of Gentile parents, and consequently uncircumcised, St. Paul would not suffer him to submit to that rite, that he might not seem to abridge the liberty of the Christian Gentiles, (ver. 3.) Some years after this, we find the apostle had sent him to Corinth, (2 Cor. xii. 18,) to inquire into the state of things in that church, and particularly to learn what effect his former letter had produced. The intelligence Titus brought St. Paul at his return, gave him the highest satisfaction, as it far exceeded all his expectations, (chap. vii. 6—13;) and, as Titus had expressed a particular regard for the Corinthians, he thought proper to send him back again, with some others to hasten the collection for the poor Christians in Judea; (chap. viii. 6.) After this, we hear no more mention of him, till he is spoken of in this epistle, as having been with St. Paul in Crete.—It appears, that the apostle had a very great regard for him, not only from his appointing him to take care of the church he had planted in Crete, but from the manner in which he speaks of his discharging the commission he gave him to the Corinthians, and the honourable terms in which he recommends him to them as his partner and fellow-helper; (chap. viii. 23.)
This epistle was most probably written in some part of St. Paul’s last progress through the Asiatic churches, between his first and second imprisonment at Rome; and consequently the last of his epistles, except the second to Timothy: but nothing can be certainly determined, either as to its date, or the place from which it was sent; for though the spurious postscript supposes it to have been written from Nicopolis, yet the contrary seems to be plainly intimated, chap. iii. 12; as the apostle says not, I propose to winter here, (which would have been most natural, if he had resided there when he was writing) but there; which shews he was at that time in some other place—However, it is plain Titus was at Crete when he received it, where St. Paul had left him, to settle the church he had established there, and carry on the work he had begun. Accordingly the greatest part of the epistle is taken up in giving him directions for the more successful discharge of his ministry amongst them; and particularly for his behaviour towards those corrupt Judaizing teachers who endeavoured to pervert the faith and disturb the peace of the Christian churches.

The apostle, after a short introduction, in which (agreeably to the design of the epistle) he intimates that he was commissioned by Christ to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, reminds Titus of the special reasons for which he left him at Crete, and directs him on what principles he was to act in the ordination of those Christian ministers who were to take the oversight of particular churches; representing them as persons not only of a blameless, but exemplary character, who should be eminent for their piety; and for every social and personal virtue, as well as thoroughly established in the Christian faith; chap. i. 1—9. And to make Titus more sensible of the necessity of using this precaution, he puts him in mind of those seducing Judaizing teachers with which that church was infested; who, under the mask of greater zeal and knowledge than others, concealed the grossest corruption of morals, and whose mischievous attempts were the more likely to succeed, considering the general character of the Cretans. Such therefore he directs him to reprove, with great severity, and, in opposition to their false and dangerous tenets, advises him to accommodate his exhortations to the different sorts of persons with whom he conversed, according to their respective sexes, ages, and circumstances. And to give the greater weight to his instructions, he admonishes him to be himself an example of what he taught, and by the purity of his doctrine, as well as the innocence of his conduct, to silence his opponents, ver. 10, to the end. Chap. ii. 1—8. St. Paul then proceeds to urge on Titus a care to instruct servants in the duties of their station, that they might, according to their sphere, do an honour to the religion they professed; and represents the obligation they were under to such a conduct, from the great design of the gospel-institution, and our Saviour’s sufferings and death, which was to deliver mankind from sin, and form them to universal holiness in heart and life, ver. 9, to the end.—Agreeably to this view of religion the apostle exhorts Titus to enforce
force subjection to the civil magistrate, and a readiness to all good works; to caution against censoriousness and contention, and recommend a meek, peaceable, and forgiving temper: which he intimates might the more reasonably be expected from Christian Gentiles, as before their conversion their character had been so corrupt. This leads him to acknowledge the grace of God in Christ, to which all Christians were indebted for the change produced in them, and for the hopes of salvation they were taught to entertain: from whence he takes occasion to remind Titus of the importance of insisting upon the great doctrines of practical religion, in opposition to those empty speculations and useless controversies to which some were attached. In the close of the epistle he directs him how to proceed with respect to heretical teachers; and having expressed his desire to see him at Nicopolis, where he proposed to winter, he concludes with a general salutation; chap. iii. 1, to the end of the epistle.

Upon a review of this, and the two epistles to Timothy, it is natural to reflect how much they tend to illustrate and confirm the internal evidence of Christianity.—It has been often observed, and very justly, that nothing sets the characters of great men in so true a light as their letters to their particular friends: while they are attracting in the eye of the world they frequently appear in disguise, and the real motives of their conduct lie out of sight; but in their familiar correspondence they open their minds with freedom, and throw off all reserve. If therefore any should object to the argument drawn from St. Paul’s epistles to the churches, that, as they were designed for the public view, he would be upon his guard, not to let any expression escape him that might give the world an unfavourable idea of himself or the cause in which he was engaged; yet certainly, when he is writing, as in this and the two former epistles, to his most intimate friends, who were embarked with him in the same design, and with whom therefore he could use the utmost confidence, we may reasonably expect to find him disclosing his real sentiments, stripped of all artifice and disguise.—And now, upon the most accurate and impartial examination of these epistles, what do we discover? Can we trace any marks of insincerity and imposture? Does the apostle wear any other character than that in which he had appeared to the whole world? Does he drop the least hint that can lead one so much as to suspect that he had been only acting a part, and imposing upon mankind? Can we perceive the least shadow of inconsistency between the views he gives of religion in these and his other writings? Is there any thing like that double doctrine which some have charged upon the ancient philosophers?—On the contrary, is it not most evident, that he founded his own hopes, and formed his own conduct, upon the very same principles which he recommended to others; that he had no views of secular interest or ambition to gratify, and was influenced by no other motives than those which he openly avowed in the face of the world: in a word, that his character, as well as his doctrine, was consistent and uniform, and

3
his inward sentiments the same with his outward profession? The instructions he gives his friends for the exercise of their office had nothing of art or subtility, but were all plain and simple, and centred in that grand design of advancing the interests of religion and the happiness of mankind, which ever lay near his heart: and so far is he from flattering them with the prospect of any worldly advantage, that he exhort them to be ready after his example, to sacrifice every temporal interest, and even life itself, in the cause they had undertaken to support.

Now if this be allowed a just representation of the case, it will certainly follow, that the apostle was himself thoroughly persuaded of the truth and importance of those doctrines he had taught: and since it may be easily proved, and the evidence on which he built his faith was of such a nature, as to exclude all possibility of mistake, we may safely conclude, upon the credit of his testimony alone (had we no other arguments to produce), that the Christian religion is not a cunningly devised fable, formed to answer the ambitious or interested views of its authors, but that it is indeed the power of God, and the wisdom of God.
A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

to

T I T U S.

SECTION I.

Paul, after a proper introduction, reminds Titus of the special reasons for which he left him at Crete; and directs him on what principles he should act in the ordination of those Christian ministers who were to take the oversight of particular churches. Tit. I. 1—9.

Titus I. 1.

Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness:

TITUS I. 1.

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before

a For the faith, &c.] This is the proper signification of σάλαμεν, in this connection, which expresses the end to which his labours tended. Compare 1 Tim. vi.

3. See Raph. ex. Xen, in loc.

b Before
Paul declares his commission to preach the gospel.

Sect. 1. Titus I. 2.

Great engagements into which he entered with his Son, under the character of our Surety and Redeemer, before the world began, or time was divided into these revolving periods which measure out its succeeding ages. The plan was distinctly drawn in his all-comprehensive mind; but he hath now manifested it, in his own due and well-chosen time, by his word, which administers to us that glorious hope, by the public preaching and declaration of it, with which I was intrusted, according to the commandment and sovereign pleasure of God our Saviour. And I address this epistle to Titus, [my] genuine son, according to the tenor of the common faith, even that Christian faith to which I had the happiness of converting thee: to whom with an affection becoming a father in Christ, I unfeignedly wish every desirable blessing, every grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, by whom we obtain an interest in him, and hope for that eternal salvation from him, with which no inheritance on earth is by any means worthy to be compared.

5 For this cause I left thee in Crete, though I could have been so heartily glad of thy company in my travels, that thou mightest set in order the things which were deficient there, as I could not stay long enough myself to reduce them into so regular a state as I could have wished; and particularly, that thou mightest ordain elders in every city, in which Christian churches are planted, to whom the stated oversight of them may be committed in the Lord, as I gave thee in charge when I parted with thee.

6 The office is so very important, that I hope thou wilt be proportionably careful as to the character of the persons who are to be invested with the world began;

3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

4 For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.

5 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused

b Before the world began.] It seems more natural to refer this to the promise made by the Father to Christ, in the covenant of redemption, than with Mr. Rymer, to explain it of the promise made, quickly after the creation, to our fallen parents: Gen. iii. 15. See Rymer of Rev. Rel. p. 49.

c Ordain elders in every city.] There were an hundred cities in the island of Crete though its dimensions were not very large; but it is well known, that every considerable town was called a city by the ancients. It is most likely that some congregations were settled under proper ministers while Paul was among them; but there were others not so provided, and the interposition of so wise and good a man as Titus, probably honoured with such extraordinary gifts, would no doubt, have great weight on such an occasion.

d Believing
A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God, &c.

accused of riot, or unruly.

and if any one is thought of in that view, let it be one who is known to be blameless in his conduct, the husband of only one wife, to whom he entirely confines himself, neither allowing of polygamy, or divorce, or an irregular commerce with any other women; and let him be one who hath believing children, if he have any that are grown up, not accused of any kind of debauchery, or ungovernable in their temper and disposition, which would render them a reproach rather than an honour to the Christian name. I must insist on a care in this respect, for it is evident, that the disorders of children often reflect a dishonour on their parents, and indeed arise from something amiss in them: but a bishop, or overseer of a Christian congregation, which the elder we speak of, by virtue of his office, is, must necessarily be blameless, as he is, in that society over which he presides, the steward of God, who is appointed in his name, to take care of his family. He must therefore be fierce and self-willed, obstinate, morose, and arrogant, not soon provoked to be angry, not one who sits long over his cups, and loves to drink large quantities of wine, not a striker of others, by which, whatsoever, his provocation may be, he always degrades himself in the eyes of those that are witnesses of the quarrel, nor greedy of sordid and infamous gain: But he ought to maintain a character directly the opposite of all these, and to be hospitable, benign, sober, and grave in his

d Believing children.] This is mentioned with great propriety; for, if a man were not careful to instruct his children in the principles of Christianity, there would be great reason to doubt, whether he were hearty in the belief of it himself, and under a governing sense of its truth and importance; and, if a man had only unbelieving children in his house, that is, such as were so obstinate that they could not be brought to embrace Christianity, by any of the arguments which could be laid before them in that age of miracles, it would be a great discouragement, and in some circumstances, a great hindrance to him, from pursuing the duties of a Christian elder, or bishop. And those evils, into which some obstinate infidel children might fall, would very probably, bring a reproach upon the family, which might, in a degree, hurt the character of him who presided in it.

e For a bishop must be blameless.] It has been often observed, that, if the bishop, of whom Paul speaks, had been invested with an office distinct from, and superior to the elder mentioned above, there could have been no room to conclude, that an elder must be blameless, because a bishop must be so, though the argument would have held strongly in an inverted order. By what degrees, and on what reasons, the distinction was afterwards introduced (as a distinction to be sure there early was) it is not my business here to inquire.

f Self-willed, obstinate, morose, and arrogant.] Raphelius has taken a great deal of pains to shew that this is the proper signification of ἀχαρά, the word here used. See Raph. ex Herod. in loc.
his deportment, righteous, holy, devout, and temperate in all things: Holding fast, in the most resolute manner, the faithful word which he hath been taught by those who were commissioned to publish it to the world, that so he may be able both to instruct others in sound doctrine, and to convince and silence those that contradict it.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Ver. **NEVER let it be forgotten by any that call themselves Christians, that the faith of God's elect is the acknowledgment of the truth which is according to godliness.** Never let the great design of Christianity be lost in an eager contention for any of its appendages, or any of its parts. Yet alas, how often has it, in particular instances, been wounded almost to death, in a furious attempt to rescue it, and that sometimes perhaps, from only an imaginary danger.

2 That we may be more sensible of its vital influence, let us ever retain the hope of that eternal life which it proposes, as the great end of all our pursuits; even of that life which God that cannot lie hath promised. Let us rejoice to think that so immense a superstructure has so firm, so divine a foundation; and let us never give it up for any thing that a flattering world, always ready to engage, and slow to perform, can promise.

3 Let us ever be very thankful for the provision God hath made for the manifestation of his word, through preaching, and for his goodness in raising up faithful pastors to his church, overseers in every age, who have been blameless, sober, just, holy, and temperate. Such may all be that appear under that sacred character; able, by their doctrine to instruct, by their reasoning to convince, by their practice to edify; ever solicitous, that they may not neglect their pastoral services, that they may not lord it proudly over their brethren, that they may not be transported by furious passions, or misguided by rash conclusions, or perverted by low interests, and the greediness of filthy lucre; but that they may approve themselves the faithful stewards of God, and promote the good order of his house; and so far as their influence can reach, the happiness of every member of his family.

6 In order to this, let them look well to their own houses, that nothing may be wanting on their part to make their children tractable, faithful and sober. And let the children of ministers consider the obligations they are under to cultivate a teachable spirit, and to maintain the strictest decency in their whole deportment, as remembering the superior advantages they may be supposed to enjoy for religious improvement, and how much a minister's reputation and usefulness depend upon the regularity of his family.
Paul cautions Titus against Judaising teachers;

SECT. II.

Paul cautions Titus against seducing teachers, and the native vices of the Cretans; and advises him to accommodate his exhortations to the different sorts of persons with whom he conversed, according to their respective sexes, ages, and circumstances. Titus I. 10, to the end. Chap. II. 1—8.

Titus, I. 10.

I HAVE particularly insisted upon it, that a bishop should be able to convince gainsayers, as well as to instruct candid and obedient hearers. And indeed the precaution is very necessary at present, and particularly in the place where you now preside; for there are many disorderly persons and vain talkers, who are deceived in their own minds, in consequence of which it is no wonder if they are active in deceiving others. And this is especially the case with those of the circumcision, who are so eager to impose on their Gentile brethren the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, as if Christianity itself were insufficient to save us without them: Whose mouth must therefore be stopped by solid arguments, and their unreasonable clamours silenced by the strenuous exercise of discipline: for they are persons who are so active in spreading these mischievous notions, that they overturn whole families, teaching things which they ought not for the sake of infamous gain; hoping by their doctrines to secure the favour of some rich men, who never think they can do enough for those preachers that support their own factions and dividing notions.

I know that there are many such at present in your island; and I remember that Epimenides, out of their [countrymen], and a poet in such high renown, that I may call him a kind of prophet of their own, has said, the Cretans are always liars, pernicious savage beasts, and yet slow

11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

12 One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretans are always liars.

a A prophet.] Epimenides, whose words Paul here quotes, is said, by Diogenes Laertius, to have been a great favourite of the gods; but Aristotle says he never foretold any future event; which, as Dr. Scott justly observes (Sect. Christian Life, Vol. III. p. 650) is a plain argument that the word prophet is sometimes used in a large sense, for one who is supposed, by the person applying the title to him, to be an instructor of men in Divine things, from whom the will of the Deity may be learnt.

b Cretans.
slow bellies), a wretched compound of luxury and idleness, fierceness and falsehood, which makes it exceedingly difficult to reform them, or even to live safely and quietly among them. This witness concerning them is, in the general, true, though some particular persons may be found of a different character. For which cause rebuke them severely, when they begin to show a disposition to corrupt Christianity; that they may be sound in the faith, and that the simpler part of them may be preserved from the dishonest artifices and attempts of others. And particularly, that they may not fall into the folly of giving heed to Jewish fables, and to the commandments and traditions of men, who pervert the truth of the gospel with those human mixtures by which they have in a great measure spoiled and enervated the law of Moses, for which they pretend so great a zeal.

13 I know they value themselves highly upon the distinctions of food, which they inculcate as of so great importance to purity. But they are much mistaken. To the pure indeed all things [are] pure. A man that habitually exercises a good

ciple, and corrupt the gospel. [Bleek. Paul, Vol. I. p. 248, 250.] But Paul speaks of reproving vice, not error; and if any consequence is to be drawn from one to the other, the remark is to be admitted with much caution, considering to what a degree pride and passion often transport men, even in the management of theological controversies, beyond all bounds of prudence, charity, and decency. Timothy is exhorted to rebuke with all severity. (2 Tim. iv. 2,) and some account for the difference, by the different tempers of the reprovers; supposing that of Timothy might be severe than that of Titus; others, by the different character of the persons to be reproved; as the Ephesians seem to have been more gentle, obliging, and complaisant, the Cretans more obstinate, rough, and headstrong. But the best reply seems to be this, that there is a degree of long-suffering and gentleness, very consistent with all that severity which faithfulness requires; which is not that of baseless passion, ill-nature, and sourness, but of meek, though resolute zeal for God, and friendship to the offender; which yet will not be silenced by trifling excuses, nor fail seriously to represent the fatal consequences that may attend the evil reproved.
good conscience towards God, according to the best of his knowledge, is accepted of him, whether he do, or do not, abstain from such particular kinds of food as they scruple; whereas, to the polluted and unbelieving, which, alas, is too generally their character, nothing [is] pure, but their very mind and conscience is defiled, and they pollute, as it were, every thing they touch; they sin in all their actions, and even in those very meals in which they are most careful to abstain from what they have been taught to esteem common and unclean. I speak not now of all who practise Jewish ceremonies; but of those [who, while] they profess to know God, and glory in their relation to him, as his peculiar people, in works deny [him], and act as if they disbelieved his very existence; being abominable to all that can judge of true worth, and disobedient to the plainest dictates of duty, and with respect to every good work reprobate, disapproved and condemned, when brought to the standard of God's word, though they are among the first to judge and condemn others.

Such is the temper and character of many! But do thou, O Titus, not only guard against the infection thyself, but endeavour to fortify others against it, and speak the things which become wholesome doctrine, doctrine which may tend to promote the health and happiness of those minds by which it is inebibed. And endeavour to suit thy instructions to the different characters of persons whom thou addressest. When, for instance, thou art applying thyself to aged men [admonish] them to be watchful against temptations, which might dishonour their advanced years, by drawing them into any unseemly behaviour: to be grave in their whole deportment, avoiding such levities as are, even in youth itself, rather pardonable than commendable, but in those who are quitting the stage of life highly indecent. Press it upon them, that they be sober and temperate in the use of animal pleasures, as their highest relish for them may well be supposed, by this time, to be abated. In a word, that they be sound, healthful, and vigorous in the several graces of the Christian temper, and particularly in faith, in love, and in patience; that the principles of Christianity may be retained, and have a suitable effect upon their hearts, and produce unbounded
bounded charity, and a calm composure under the calamities they may suffer from the hand of God, or the persecutions they may meet with in the cause of the gospel.

3 The aged women, in like manner, [exhort] to the steadiness which becometh saints, and suits the holy profession they make: that they be not false accusers of others, a character rather to be expected from the great enemy of mankind, who has his name from thence, than from the disciples of the benevolent Jesus. Urge them also that they be not given to much wine, for some of the Cretan women, as well as men, are infected with that luxurious evil. And, as it may be reasonably expected, that persons so advanced in life should have laid up a treasure of prudence and religious wisdom in their minds, press them, in such a manner as becomes their private station, to be teachers of that which is good.

And particularly, that they wisely admonish the younger women, for whom they ought to maintain a maternal affection, and form them, on discreet maxims, to a prudent care in future life; teaching them to love and honour their husbands, to love their children with such a true affection as shall engage them to use the most pious and tender care in forming their minds, by all the offices of a good education, so many of which will naturally depend upon the mother.

Let them moreover impress upon these young mistresses of rising families, [that they be] discreet and chaste, attentive to domestic affairs, and in that view keeping at home, to look after them with prudence and care: that they be good, kind, and benevolent in their behaviour to all, and, particularly, obedient to their own husbands, that so the word of God, which they profess to have received into their hearts, and to reverence as their oracles, may not be blasphemed by their foolish or perverse, rebellious or licentious conduct.

In like manner also, exhort the young men, the hope of rising families, upon whom so much of the credit and support of the gospel will depend, that they accustom themselves betimes to be sober and steady in their behaviour, superior

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.

5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

6 Young men like wise exhort to be sober-minded.
to sensual temptations, and constant in the exercise of every part of self-government.

And, that this address to them and others may be more successful in all things, be still showing thyself a pattern of good works, by which others may model their conduct with advantage: while employed in teaching, be constantly exercising uncorruptness, that nothing may be spoken but the genuine truth; and let it be attended with a gravity in declaring it, proportional to its importance, and proceed from sincerity of heart; Still uttering wholesome speech that cannot be confuted, that he who is on the contrary side, and will obstinately persist in his infidelity, may be ashamed of his opposition, having no evil to say of you, or those committed to your care; but may be obliged, with all his prejudices, to acknowledge that you are a worthy president over a worthy and valuable society of men.

IMPROVEMENT.

While we are reading the word of God, let us attentively observe what characters are adorned with honour, and what are branded with infamy. It is melancholy to think that any nation, though ever so small, ever so remote, ever so destitute of cultivation and instruction, should deserve the characters which Epimenides gave of the Cretans, and which Paul found reason to confirm: that luxury and fraud, idleness and fury, dissonant as they may seem, should be their governing inclinations. Sad distempers in the minds of men! But how peculiarly lamentable, when they prevail among professing Christians! for among those that are Christians indeed they cannot possibly prevail. Yet surely there are not a few, even in Britain, with all its advantages, who, while professing to know God, and Christ Jesus his Son, in works deny them. Such are abominable, in proportion to the degree in which they are disobedient; and, as they are reprobate to every good work now, must expect to be rejected with abhorrence at last by that God whose name they have blasphemed, and whose Son they have dishonoured.

To remedy, and if it be possible, to prevent such evils, let the ministers of Christ be still applying themselves, with suitable exhortations and charges, to all with whom they are concerned. Let them apply to the aged and the young; and let the aged of both sexes use that authority which their more advanced progress in life may give, to enforce upon the rising generation lessons of wisdom.
The gospel teaches men to be sober, righteous and pious:

Wisdom and piety, according to their respective sexes and circumstances in life: that prudence and chastity, economy and sweetness of temper, a subjection to their husbands, formed on love and on religion, may be the character of young wives; and that they may join to it that very important duty, of a pious care in the education of those children which God may give them. And may the sobriety of young men encourage a hope, that they will preside over their families in the fear of God, and repay the goodness of such amiable consorts! And may the teachers, whether in public or private life, be themselves examples of the virtues they inculcate; that they who study to asperse Christianity, may find themselves silenced, till their shame turns into a worthier affection; till their silence breaks out into praise, and they, imbibing the like principles, feel them productive of the like virtues!

SECT. III.

Paul urges on Titus a care to instruct servants in the duties of their station, and represents their great obligations to discharge them, from a general view of the design of the gospel, and the love of our Redeemer in it. Tit. ii. 2, to the end.

Titus II. 9.

Whilist thou art, according to the direction I have given thee above, instructing the superior ranks of mankind, I would not have thee neglect the lowest; but [exhort] their slaves and other servants, who are honoured with a call into the Christian church, to be subject to their own masters, with reverence and obedience; pleasing [them] in all things; so far as they lawfully may, and not answering again, in a pertinent and insolent manner, if they are reproved by them, even though it should be unjustly, or with an excess of severity. Not privately defrauding them of any thing that is committed to their trust, but shewing all good fidelity upon every occasion; that so, instead of bringing any reproach upon religion, they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

a Privately defrauding.] The word heretofore properly signifies to keep back part of the worth of any thing, and is used in the case of Artemas receiving a part, where the whole was pretended to be returned; Acts xiv. 23. Thisapplies, at least among the heathens, might probably do when employed by their masters to vend commodities; and other fraudulent practices, among persons of their rank, were so common that the same word in the Latin language, [Fur] is used for a servant, and a thief.

b The
Christ gave himself to redeem us from iniquity.

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men;

12 Teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto

and recommend it to the esteem of their masters and others, when they shall observe its influence on all its professors, to make them careful in the discharge of every social and relative duty.

For the saving grace of God, in the gospel-dispensation, hath appeared unto all men, to men of all nations, and of all ranks and orders of life, for this great purpose, that it may train them up for eternal salvation, by a holy temper, and a useful exemplary behaviour. This it effects under Divine influence, by instructing us all, wherever it comes, that denying the solicitations of ungodliness and worldly lusts, to which men of this world so naturally abandon themselves, we should live soberly in the government of our appetites and passions; righteously in our conduct towards our fellow creatures; and piously in our behaviour towards God, and converse with him, while we are by his providence continued in this present vain and transitory world; through which we trust he is leading us to a blissful immortality. And this is the great object which he requires us still to keep in view; and that we should all, in our different situations, be waiting, with ardent expectation and desires, for the blessed hope which he hath set before us, and for the full consummation of it, in the glorious appearance of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ; who shall be manifested with divine pomp and majesty, in the last day, to redeem all his servants from the power of the grave and to conduct them in their complete persons, to the full and everlasting enjoyment of his heavenly kingdom.

Such are our sublime hopes from this glorious Lord, to whom we have all vowed subjection, whether we be bond or free; even to him who gave himself up to ignominy, torment and death for us, that he might thereby redeem us, not only from final vengeance and destruction, but from the power of all iniquity; and might purify to himself a peculiar people, who should thankfully own themselves his property, and express their opposition between Him and the Father.

— Compare 1 Cor. xv. 27. Mr. Fleming, in support of this interpretation, observes (Flem. Christol. Vol. I. p. 205), that we never read in scripture of the Father's appearance.
their gratitude of such inestimable favours, by being not only careful to avoid the practice of evil, but zealous of good works, active in all the duties of life, and in every office of righteousness and goodness to each other. The highest of mankind are not above owning the obligation, and it is his will that the lowest should remember it. These things therefore speak boldly, and earnestly exhort all thine hearers to attend to them. And, if they fail of regarding them in a proper manner, rebuke them with all authority, as one that knows that he has a Divine commission to support him: and, upon the whole, let no man despise thee; but endeavour to give these exhortations with that solemnity and dignity, and to enforce them by that wisdom and sanctity of behaviour, which may set thee above all danger of contempt.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. HARDLY does the word of God afford a more instructive and comprehensive summary of the gospel, than that which is here before us. It gives us a view of the nature of the dispensation, as a doctrine of grace; and, at the same time, a doctrine according godliness. It hath appeared to all men, and it bringeth them to salvation, by inculcating the most salutary lessons that man can receive. It teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, how pressing soever their solicitations may be. It instructs us in all the branches of our duty to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow Christians. It guides us to uniform and complete goodness; not extolling any one part, to the neglect or injury of the rest, but tending to produce this beautiful birth, entire in all its members, and then to nourish it to its full maturity. As we are slow of heart to attend to such instructions, it enforces them with motives the most generous and the most animating. It represents to us, as it were in prophetic vision, that blessed hope, even the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; when he shall come with everlasting blessings in his hands, to reward all his faithful people; and with the terrors of Divine vengeance, to be poured forth upon all that have rejected the authority of his gospel. And that the most powerful considerations of gratitude, may join with those of the highest interest, it directs our eyes to this Divine triumphant Saviour, as having once given himself to torture and death for us, that he might redeem us from unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

15 These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.
from all iniquity, and purify us to himself, a peculiar people, devoted to God, and zealous of good works. And surely if this view cannot prevail upon us to consecrate ourselves to God, and to engage with vigour in his service, we must be utterly insensible, and worthy of the severest punishment.

Let these lessons, therefore, every where be taught with all authority. Let them be addressed at once to the meanest and the greatest of mankind; that they may join in a pious care, to adorn the doctrine of such a Saviour, and to secure their share in such a salvation.

SECT. IV.

The Apostle concludes his epistle with exhorting Titus to recommend obedience to magistrates, and readiness to all good works; to caution against censoriousness and contention: acknowledging the grace of God, as that to which all Christians owe their hopes of salvation, and strongly pressing him to insist upon the great doctrines of practical religion, in opposition to those idle contentions to which many were attached. He also instructs him how to proceed with respect to heretical teachers; and closes with giving him some directions about meeting him at Nicopolis, and a general salutation to all his friends. Tit. III. 1, to the end.

Titus III. 1.

AMONG other useful lessons, which it will be thy duty to give the Cretans, while thou continuest with them, remind them of being subject to those principalities and powers which God hath set in supreme authority over them, by no means excepting those who stand at the greatest distance from Christianity: exhort them also to obey subordinate governors; and upon the whole, to be ready to every good work, in every relation which they sustain in life. Charge them to calumniate no man, not to be contentious, but gentle in their whole demeanor, shewing all meekness unto all men.

2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

a Calumniate no man.] Not even your Pagan, or Jewish neighbour, says good Dr. Barrow, (vol. I. p. 162,) however enormous in their lives, or cruel in their behaviour to you.

b We
vocation. Let us not bear ourselves too high-
ly, on the superiority of our own characters, be-
they now ever so blameless, or ever so exam-
plary; for we ourselves also were formerly
foolish, as well as others, disobedient to the Di-
vine authority, and perhaps to those whom God
had invested with power over us; wandering
from the paths both of truth and virtue, and en-
slaved to various lusts, and pleasures; in the
pursuit and gratification of which we degraded
the nobler powers of our souls. We were
living in malice and envy, hateful ourselves
while under the tyranny of such fierce and de-
testable passions, [and] hating one another, on
account of little clashings and oppositions in
our temporal interests, while we forgot the great
ties and bonds which ought to have endeared us
to each other.

4 But when the admirable kindness and love of
God our Saviour towards man, so signally dis-
played in the gospel, appeared to us, we were
delivered from this miserable condition: the re-
membrance therefore of this deliverance ought
to make us compassionate, rather than severe,
towards others in the same unhappy circum-
stance in which we once were; especially when
we consider the manner in which it was accom-
plished. For it was not by any works of righ-
teousness which we ourselves had done; for any
acts of obedience, whether to ceremonial or
moral precepts, by which we had made ourselves
worthy of his favourable regard; but according
to his own mercy, that he saved us from condem-
nation and ruin, by the washing of regeneration,
and

5 For we ourselves
also were sometimes
foolish, disobedient,
disobedient, serving di-
vers lusts and plea-
sures, living in malice
and envy, hateful, and
hating one another.

6 We ourselves.] Dr. Whitby pleads,
this cannot be applicable to Paul himself,
and argues from Acts xvi. 1; 2 Tim. x. 6; Phil.
iii. 6. But I am persuaded that,
when the Apostle wrote this, he had such
sublime views of the purity of God's law,
and the imperfection of his own best ob-
dience, how capable sooner of being justi-
fied to men, that notwithstanding all he
says in the text quoted, he could apply
what he here wrote to much of his own
character while an enemy of Christianity.
Compare note c below.

c God our Saviour.] It is observable,
that God the Father is here called our Savi-
our, to intimate, that it was his paternal
love to us that engaged him to appoint his
Son to redeem us, and to perform all those
important offices for us, by which he ac-
complishes our salvation.

d By the washing of regeneration.] This
 hath often been explained of baptism, and
Mr. Joseph Mead insists upon it, that it
alludes to cleansing the new born infant
from the pollution which necessarily at-
tend it. (Tract xvi. 4—.) But I cannot
think the interpretation at all favour-
able to the doctrine of baptismal regen-
eration; since it is not by washing the infant
that the bath is produced; and therefore,
it can surely signify no more, than that
they who are regenerated are to be thus
washed. I have observed elsewhere, that
bapt, the word here used, is by no means
terely
They that have believed in God should maintain good works.

6 Which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour:

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men.

9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies,

entirely synonymous to a laver. The sense here given of this much controverted passage is what I verily believe to be the justest and safest; though I am well aware, that the Christian church soon began to lay a disproportional stress on forms, and to ascribe too great efficacy to the ritoal of baptism. (See the preface and postscript to my Sermons on Regeneration, second edition.)

These words have been explained, as referring to Paul alone, and the effusion of the Spirit upon him, to qualify him for his extraordinary office. But, to say nothing of the harshness of this interpretation, and the violence it must do to several phrases here used, it is evident that it would make the text quite foreign to the purpose for which it is introduced, viz. of dissuading from severe and uncharitable censures. Perplexed
amuse an idle curiosity; and those perplexed genealogies, about which they so eagerly debate and other strifes and contentions about the law of Moses; for they are unprofitable and vain, not only consuming to no purpose that time which is capable of much better improvement, but also tending to discompose the mind, to alienate the affections of Christians from each other, and to render them indifferent to the proper duties of life. And a man that, on this occasion, or any other, is a factions and obstinate heretic, that introduces such controversies as these into the church, and perversely maintains and propagates them, in a manner injurious to the peace of society, after the first and second admonition from the and the church, given with proper solemnity, reject, and declare him unfit to be any longer looked upon as a member of it. Knowing that such a one, who is so fond of his own darling notions, that he will ruin the peace of the church for them, and will not submit to thy remonstrances, and those of the wiser and better part of the society, is perverted by some very ill principles, whatever zeal he may pretend for what he maintains as truth; and that he not only errs, but sins too, in such obstinate efforts to diffuse his errors, being indeed self-condemned, and judged out of his own mouth, as his own words furnish sufficient matter of conviction; and, while he makes such a breach in the church, he in effect passes on himself that sentence of separation from it, which

LOGIES, AND CONTENTIONS, AND STRIVINGS ABOUT THE LAW; FOR THEY ARE UNPROFITABLE AND VAIN.

10 A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition reject,

11 Knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and symptomatic being condemned of himself.

f Perplexed genealogies.] It is well known that the Jews carried their fondness for these to a great excess; and Jerome tells us, they were as well acquainted with those from Adam to Zerubbabel, as their own names.


g Heretic.] After all the tedious controversies which have arisen about the sense of this text, I have been obliged to acquiesce in that given in the paraphrase, being well assured, that a person may be said to be self-condemned if he furnish matter of conviction against himself. Compare Jer. vi. 7; Mat. xv. 41, 42; Acts xviii. 46; Job xxv. 6; Luke xix. 22. And indeed, if Dr. Whitby's interpretation, borrowed and defended by Dr. Foster, is to be admitted, viz, that he is a heretic who teaches directly contrary to what he inwardly believes, the truth or falsehood of his notions will be a matter quite indifferent as to fixing this censure upon him; and a man, who was really an atheist, might be subject to condemnation, as a heretic, for teaching the most orthodox system of Christianity that can be conceived, if his secret atheism should by any means be discovered. And the word heresy will be made to signify a kind of solemn lying; which is such an abuse of speech as I suppose few will be capable of admitting. I shall only add, that, as Dr. Foster is obliged to allow there are fundamental errors, for which, those directly never recouped and maintained, a man ought to be separated from a Christian society, the dispute between this learned gentleman and his opponent, was brought to this question, what St. Paul calls heresy? and the hints laid down above convince me, that what Dr. Whitby has said on this head cannot be defended, even by that ingenious writer of it.
which he well deserves to lie under till he returns to a better temper.

When I shall send to thee Artemas, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis; for I have determined there to winter, if Providence gives me an opportunity.

As Zenas, the worthy lawyer, who though well versed in those studies, on which some of the Jewish brethren value themselves so highly, is now a sincere and active Christian, and my eloquent and pious friend Apollos, will be with thee when this comes to thy hand, or quickly afterwards, I desire thou wouldest bring them forward on their journey to me, with readiness and diligence; and take all the care thou canst, that nothing convenient may be wanting to them which thou canst supply them with. I hope these good men will meet with that hospitable treatment, among the Christians in your parts, which their character deserves; and let all those that belong to us, and call themselves Christian brethren, whether they were before Jews or Gentiles, learn to distinguish themselves in good works, for necessary purposes of aid and service to others; that they may not be unfruitful, and act as if they had learned nothing but barren speculations from that religion which is so well calculated to inspire and animate every sentiment of benevolence and generosity.

All the Christians that are here with me salute thee, in an affectionate and respectful manner. Salute them who love us in the bonds of our common faith; and assure my Christian friends that I feel an equal affection for them. Grace and peace, and every other blessing, from our Father and Saviour [be] with you all. Amen.

b There I have determined to pass the winter.] Several cities of this name are mentioned in antiquity; one, not far from Philippi, in Macedonia; another in Epirus, which took its rise and name from the victory of Augustus over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium. Mr. L'Enfant is of opinion this last is referred to here, supposing that Paul intended a visit to those in or near Illyricum, among whom he had preached the gospel; Rom. xv. 19. But Mr. Cradock, and many others, think it was the former. After all, it seems to me something uncertain; as well as the particular time when this epistle was written, and the place from whence it was sent. (See Introd. to this epistle, p. 44.)


Improvement.

Let the remembrance of the irregularities with which we ourselves were once chargeable, of that sinful and miserable condition in which we once were, make us candid to others, and silence our too severe censures against them. And let us, rather, with the apostle, humbly adore that grace which has now made a difference between us and those that are still foolish and disobedient, wandering in the paths of vice, and enslaved to divers lusts and passions. Let the kindness, the philanthropy of God, be daily celebrated and adored by us: of God, who hath saved us, not by the righteousness of our works, but by his own rich and overflowing mercy; hath justified us by his free grace, in Christ, and thereby made us heirs, according to the hope of eternal life. Nor let us ever forget how much we are indebted to the regenerating and renewing influences of the Holy Ghost, shed abroad upon us richly by Jesus Christ our Saviour. May it wash and purify our souls more and more from every stain of sin, and may it inspire us with a piety and ardour to honour our profession, by distinguishing our own in all good works for necessary uses, and according to the calls which Providence gives us in life. Having professed our belief in God, let us carefully practise all the virtues of the Christian character; for these things are indeed good and profitable to men. But let us guard against those airy curiosities and abstruse speculations, which on the contrary, are unprofitable and vain.

May all the churches of Christ be delivered from such factions members and teachers as would depart from the infallible rule of truth which is laid down in the word of God, and would subvert the faith once delivered to the saints; introducing, instead of it, the doctrines of men, and teaching things which tend to alienate the minds of Christians from the gospel, and from each other, that they may set up their own authoritie, and promote their own secular interest. We ought undoubtedly to be cautious how we pass such a censure on particular persons, without clear and evident proofs; but when such proofs arise, and the persons in question appear to be the turbulent and pernicious heretics that St. Paul describes, it were to be wished they might always meet with the treatment which he recommends. They ought first to be plainly and seriously admonished, and, if repeated admonitions are rejected, it is the duty of the wiser and sounder parts of Christian societies to expel them; that they may be less capable
of doing mischief, and that the *gangrene* of such pernicious principles and dispositions may not spread, to the disgrace and ruin of the churches to which they belong. But let it ever be remembered, that this is *all* the remedy which *scripture* furnishes us with; and they, who to the solemn censure of disturbed and injured churches, add any *corporal* severities, or *civil* penalties whatsoever, are taking up weapons which *Christ* has never put into their hands, and may very probably do *more* mischief in the church and the world than the most erroneous of those against whom they would arm their terrors.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS.
THE
FAMILY EXPOSITOR:
OR, A
PARAPHRASE
ON
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO
PHILEMON.

WITH
CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

VOL. V.
PHILEMON was an inhabitants of Colosse, as we may conclude from St. Paul’s mentioning Onesimus, in his epistle to the Colossians, as one of them (chap. iv. 9); as well as from his saluting Archippus in this epistle (ver. 2), who appears, from Col. iv. 17, to have been a pastor of that church. The title of fellow-labourer, given Philemon (ver. 1), makes it probable, that he was his colleague in the ministry: and, though we cannot certainly determine when he first embraced Christianity, it is evident, from the oblique insinuation in the 19th verse, that he was one of the apostle’s converts; and it is not at all unlikely (as some have conjectured) that he might have had an opportunity of attending upon him during his long residence at Ephesus, where we are told St. Paul preached with so much success, that all they there that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus Christ: (Acts xix. 10)—He seems, from several hints given in the epistle, to have been a person of distinction; particularly, from the mention made of the church in his house (ver. 2), and his liberal contribution to the relief of the saints (ver. 5, 7); and the general strain of the letter shews that the apostle held him in very high esteem, and looked upon him as one of the great supports of religion in that society.

It appears from the first verse of this epistle, that St. Paul was under confinement when he wrote it; and, as he expresses (ver. 22) his expectation of being shortly released, it is probable that it was written towards the close of his first imprisonment at Rome, and sent, together with the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus, about the year of our Lord 63, or the 9th of the emperor Nero. (Compare Introduction to Ephes. Vol. IV. p. 315, and Vol. III. § 60, note ε.)
A General Introduction

The occasion of the letter was this:—Onesimus, Philemon's slave, had robbed his master, and fled to Rome; where, happily for him, he met with the apostle, who was at that time a prisoner at large, and by his instructions and admonitions was converted to Christianity, and reclaimed to a sense of his duty. St. Paul seems to have kept him for some considerable time under his eye, that he might be satisfied of the reality of the change; and, when he had made a sufficient trial of him, and found that his behaviour was entirely agreeable to his profession, he would not detain him any longer for his own private convenience, though in a situation that rendered such an assistant peculiarly desirable (compare ver. 13, 14), but sent him back to his master; and, as a mark of his esteem, entrusted him, together with Tychicus, with the charge of delivering his epistle to the church at Colosse, and giving them a particular account of the state of things at Rome, recommending him to them, at the same time, as a faithful and beloved brother; (Col. iv. 9.)—And, as Philemon might well be supposed to be strongly prejudiced against one who had left his service in so infamous a manner, he sends him this letter, in which he employs all his influence to remove his suspicions, and reconcile him to the thoughts of taking Onesimus into his family again. And whereas St. Paul might have exerted that authority which his character as an apostle, and the relation in which he stood to Philemon as a spiritual father, would naturally give him, he chooses to entreat him as a friend, and with the softest and most insinuating address urges his suit, conjuring him, by all the ties of Christian friendship, that he would not deny him his request. And, the more effectually to prevail upon him, he represents his own peace and happiness as deeply interested in the event; and speaks of Onesimus in such terms as were best adapted to soften his prejudices, and dispose him to receive one who was so dear to himself, not merely as a servant, but as a fellow Christian and a friend.

But though the apostle's subject did not lead him to treat so directly of the doctrines or precepts of Christianity in this as in his other epistles, yet a person, whose mind, like his, was so deeply and habitually impressed with a sense of Divine truths, could not fail, even when writing upon the most common and familiar occurrences, to introduce some hints that might tend to cherish pious and virtuous sentiments in the breast of his friend; and accordingly, in this short epistle, we meet with several allusions to different parts of the Christian plan, interwoven, in so easy and natural a manner with the rest of the letter, as must convince us how near those subjects lay to his heart.

It is impossible to read over this admirable epistle, without being touched with the delicacy of sentiment, and the masterly address that appear in every part of it. We see here, in a most striking light, how perfectly consistent true politeness is, not only with all the warmth and sincerity of the friend, but even with the dignity of the Christian and the apostle. And if this letter were
To the Epistle to Philemon.

to be considered in no other view than as a mere human composition, it must be allowed a master-piece in its kind. As an illustration of this remark, it may not be improper to compare it with an epistle of Pliny, that seems to have been written upon a similar occasion, (lib. ix. let. 21;) which, though penned by one that was reckoned to excel in the epistolary style, and though it has undoubtedly many beauties, yet must be acknowledged, by every impartial reader, vastly inferior to this animated composition of the apostle.

One cannot but be solicitous to know what effect such an epistle produced. One would willingly hope it was attended with all the success which St. Paul seemed to expect, when he tells Philemon, that he wrote to him in full confidence of his obedience knowing that he would do even more than he said. And though nothing indeed is expressly asserted in relation to it, yet there is great reason to believe, from the nature of the thing, that Onesimus had already waited upon his master, and being received into favour, when he discharged the commission, with which (as we have observed) he was honoured, to the Colossians. For it is hardly to be imagined, that the apostle would direct him to join with Tychicus, in delivering such a message to a church, that was in part under the care of Philemon, before he had made his submission to him, and obtained his pardon. (Compare the Introduction to the Ephesians, p. 315.)
A PARAPHRASE AND NOTES
ON
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO
PHILEMON.

SECTION I.

Paul intending to intercede with Philemon, in favour of his fugitive servant Onesimus, introduces his design with a most affectionate and proper salutation. Phil. ver. 1—7.

PHILEMON 1.

Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved; and fellow-labourer.

2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house;

3 Grace to you, and peace

a To the beloved Apphia.] It has been observed, that this lady and Archippus are probably named in a view of engaging their good offices with Philemon, in favour of Onesimus; and no doubt Paul would wish they might be engaged: but, separate from that view, it would have been natural and decent to mention them both.

b Of
ing from them, which we so often wish to our Christian friends, when we are addressing them by letter, [he] unto you from God our gracious and bountiful Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, to whose intercession we owe our interest in the Divine favour.

4 You may be sure, my dear Philemon, that though absent from you, and surrounded with many cares and sorrows, yet far from being unmindful of you in my addresses to the throne of grace, I always thank my God on your account when I am making mention of thee in my prayers; Hearing, with greater pleasure than I can express, of the steady faith which thou hast, and always maintainest, towards the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great object to which our faith as Christians is directed, and of thy ardent love to all the saints, who are the excellent of the earth, and the most deserving our esteem and affection. It is therefore matter of my most fervent prayer that these promising openings may be abundantly answered; and that thy communion with us in the faith of our blessed Redeemer, the advantages of which thou dost now so happily share, may be more and more apparently effectual in extorting from all that behold it the due acknowledgment of every good and valuable thing which is in you all towards Christ Jesus, and all those whom he is pleased to own and favour. Permit me to say this, in my own name, and that of my companion Timothy; for we are ourselves greatly rejoiced and comforted by thy love, which thou art in so many generous ways expressing to our fellow Christians; and particularly, that the bowels of the poor saints are refreshed by thee our dear brother, while thou feedest and relievest the poor, and makest those possessions which Providence hath given thee, a general good. None of the hungry that are fed at thy table can find a supply of their necessities more sensible and delightful than the joy we feel, from the report of so beneficent a conduct in one whom we so tenderly regard.

Peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers;

5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing, which is in you in Christ Jesus.

7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Of the faith which thou hast towards the Lord Jesus, and of thy love to all the saints.] The words in the original stand as they are placed in our version, and many instances of such a transposition are produced by Dr. Whitby, in his learned note on this place; but Mr. Blackwell observes, that our language does not admit of the like, and therefore proposes the rendering we have followed. Blackwell's Soc. Class. Vol. I. p. 87.
IMPROVEMENT.

If any could be so weak as to think the character of the Christian and the minister, at all inconsistent with that of the well-bred man, they must see a remarkable demonstration to the contrary in this familiar epistle of St. Paul to his friend Philemon; which is conducted with the happiest address, and which, in true politeness, may vie with that of the greatest masters of the epistolary style in antiquity. The Introduction (the length of which obliges us to separate it from the remainder to which it is so happily connected) leads us naturally to a variety of useful remarks, and conveys important instruction in the vehicle of well-deserved praise. Ver. 5

How elevated soever the station of Philemon might be, and how plentiful soever his circumstances, it was his chief glory and felicity to be so distinguished for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and love to all the saints. And indeed it is most unworthy the profession we make of faith in Christ, as the great Head of the church, not to love all his members: unworthy our character of saints, not to feel a sympathetic affection for all that are sanctified. If others are deficient here, as alas! many are too sadly deficient, let us exert ourselves so much the more, and labour to give the most substantial demonstrations of our love. It will be an honour to us, and to the Christian name, that our communion in this precious faith should extort an acknowledgment of good things in us, from all who are intimately acquainted and conversant with us. Thus shall we diffuse happiness in a wide circle; for it is a sincere joy to all good men, to behold the graces and the usefulness of others. Especially are the hearts of faithful and zealous ministers comforted; when the bowels of poor saints are refreshed, by the liberality of the rich. They share alternately the pleasure which is felt on the side of the pious benefactors and their grateful beneficiaries; and were they with Paul, in the confinement and necessities of a prison, the report, would delight and enlarge their souls.

SECT. II.

The Apostle proceeds to the main business of this short epistle; and labours, by the happiest address that can be imagined, to engage Philemon kindly to receive and forgive Onesimus, his fugitive slave, who after having greatly injured his master, and happily been converted by St. Paul at Rome. He concludes with some particular salutations and messages. Philem. ver. 8, to the end.

Philem. 3.

Therefore; though I might be have been expressing, my dear Philemon, the confidence I have in your excellent character,
character, and the great pleasure with which, both I and Timothy my brother have heard of your many generous and beneficent actions; and therefore, in reference to the particular occasion of this letter, which, so good a heart cannot be disagreeable, though I might great freedom, of some of my relations to Christ, and the authority he has given me to prescribe, and enjoin that which is proper and reasonable for thee to do. I therefore, seek by love to entreat thee, I say, concerning a certain son of mine, whom I have begotten to Christ in my bonds; and whom I hope thou wilt upon that account be inclined to favour, knowing how dear he must be to me, considered as a soul which God hath given me at such a season as this. And it is no other than thy servant Onesimus; Who indeed, if I may so allude to his name, did not formerly answer it, for he was once unprofitable to thee, negligent of thy business, and so conscious of having deserved thy displeasure, that he fled from it. But he now is, and I trust will be, profitable both to thee and to me, so as daily

he much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient.

Therefore I beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.

Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to me and to thee:

a Paul the aged.] It is generally agreed, that this epistle was written about the year of Christ 63; and if we suppose Paul to have been 64 years old when Stephen was stoned (which is consistent with his being called a young man), that being about the year 34 (for we have not data sufficient absolutely to determine the exact time), he would now be 55; and considering how much his constitution would probably be impaired, by his fatigue and suffering, before that time, he might properly enough call himself, &c., &c., one advanced in age, though not an old man. Dr. Whitby indeed says, we are young till 30, and not properly aged till after 60, and concludes he might be about 54, at the death of Stephen, and 65 at the date of this epistle. If the reader be not satisfied with either of these conjectures, he may take any medium between them that shall appear to him more plausible.

b A son of mine, whom I have begotten in my bonds,—Onesimus.] Thus the word stand in the original; and I thought it incumbent upon me to preserve that order, because it keeps the mind in an agreeable suspense, and has a fine effect, which every reader of taste will quickly perceive.

c Unprofitable, but now profitable.] It has been justly observed, that it was strange, Onesimus, who had been so worked, in the poor family of Philemon, amidst all the religious opportunities he enjoyed there, should meet with conversion in his rambles at Rome. Instances have often happened somewhat of a similar nature; but it is very unpardonable, and may probably be fatal, for any to presume on the like extraordinary interpositions of providence and grace in their favour.—The word Onesimus is pretty generally known to signify profit, and Thamarkos is much of the same import. They were names which
daily to give increasing satisfaction to us both: Whom, how agreeable and useful soever he might have been to me here, I have sent back to thee again. Do thou therefore receive him with readiness and affection. Receive him, did I say? may rather receive, as it were, my own boxels: a person whom I so tenderly love, that he may seem, as it were, to carry the heart of Paul along with him whithersoever he goes. Whom indeed I was desirous to have kept near me, that he might have officiated for thee, and in thy stead have attended upon me in the bonds of the gospel.

14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him for ever; / 16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord?  

might perhaps be given to slaves by way of good men, expressing an expectation, that they would bring advantage to their masters; and it is very evident, that Paul refers to the etymology of the word.
But desires Philemon to receive him as a brother.

If therefore thou esteemest me as a friend and a companion in Christ, I beseech thee to receive him, even as thou wouldst receive myself; if I could have the satisfaction of making thee a visit in person.

If he have injured thee in any pecuniary matter, or is indebted to thee, in consequence of any former extravagancies and follies (of which divine grace hath now, I hope, made him truly sensible), so far as it has been the case, change it to my account. I Paul have written [it] with my own hand, and do hereby, as it were, give thee legal security for it; I will pay it again upon demand, as far as my little substance will go. Not to say to thee, that as I was the happy instrument of thy conversion to Christ, thou owest even thine own self unto me. We will put that quite out of the question, and if thou pleasest to require it, I will readily charge myself as thy debtor, and take the first opportunity of making thee a remittance. Yes, [my] dear brother, let me prevail upon thee in this request, let me have joy of thee in the Lord; and while thou art so ready to do good to others, and to communicate for their comfort, out of those stores which Providence has so graciously given thee, let me beseech thee to refresh my bowels in the Lord; for the Christian consolation, which it will afford me, to see thee and Onesimus happy in each other, will be better, and more delightful, than food to the hungry.

But I will not urge the matter farther; I have written to thee, in full confidence of thy ready obedience and deference to my request, and indeed, as knowing that thou wilt do even more than I say: thou wilt not think of insisting upon the exact balance of former accounts, but wilt readily embrace this thy returning servant.

Intimates the communion he felt, through the ardour of his concern for Onesimus; and seems to represent the eagerness of his desire for his re-establishment in Philemon's family, by the appetite of hunger. Incapable, as in many other places, of expressing this in the version, I have attempted it, though by no means with equal spirit, in the paraphrase. Compare ver. 7, where the same word is used, and seems to be referred to here with peculiar beauty and propriety.
in the arms of paternal love. At the same time I must also desire thee to prepare a lodging for me, for, though I am as yet a prisoner, I hope that I shall, ere long, through your prayers, be granted to you; and, if providence set me at liberty again, I intend to visit your parts, and shall, if it be convenient, cast myself on the known hospitality of your family. In the mean while, accept the greeting of our Christian brethren here at Rome, and let me particularly tell thee that Epaphras, my fellow captive in Christ Jesus, salutes thee: As [also] Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow-labourers, who are cordially engaged with me in the service of the gospel, and take a peculiar pleasure in lending that assistance to the churches in Rome which my confinement will not conveniently admit me to impart. I conclude with the best wish which the most endearing Christian friendship can form: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ever [be] with your spirit, and shed abroad on thee, and all thy companions in him, that peace and happiness which nothing but the communications of his favour can give. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

How amiable is the condescension of the holy apostle! how charming and delicate his address in this whole section! which makes the immediate occasion of this letter, minute as it may seem, a matter of congratulation to the Christian world. St. Paul lays aside the authority, which his office, his age, his sufferings, gave him, to address Philemon, as on a foot of equal friendship, choosing rather, by love to entreat. Let the example be imitated by those in superior stations and relations of life; and let them learn likewise, from the tenderness which such a man expresses about this poor slave, in whom he traced the appearance of a truly Christian temper, to interest themselves in the happiness of those whose rank is far beneath their own; and learn to make the situation of their servants easy, by a kind and friendly treatment. Well may such a care be expected, especially when we can look on such as brethren, beloved in the Lord, and partakers with us in the same Saviour and hope.

f Prepare a lodging for me.] Theodoret justly observes, that Paul's mentioning his purpose of coming to lodge with Philemon quickly, would naturally add greater weight to his interposition in favour of Onesimus.
Let those, to whom God hath blessed the labours of his faithful ministers, as the means of their conversion, remember it with pleasure, and ascribe it to the riches of Divine grace, to which all is originally to be traced; remembering also, that there is a sense in which they owe even themselves to those who have been honoured as the instruments of bringing them to Christ, without an acquaintance with whom they had lost themselves, and been ruined for ever. Let the kindness which Paul expresses for Onesimus, in being willing that his debt to Philemon should be charged to his account, lead us to reflect on our infinite obligations to a gracious Redeemer. He has suffered our ten thousand talents to be imputed to him, that his righteousness might be so imputed to us, that for the sake of it, we should finally be re-admitted to the family of God. With an ingratitude not to be paralleled, by any thing which can pass between mortal men, we had perfidiously deserted it; but the Divine goodness leaves us room humbly to hope, we may have departed from it for a while, to be received into it for ever. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirit, to produce those strong impressions of wonder, thankfulness, and love, which ought to fill it, in every remembrance of such overflowing and triumphant mercy! Amen.
THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR, A

PARAPHRASE

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

HEBREWS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.
ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE READER, BY THE EDITOR.

The Author of this work had written upon the title of that manuscript-volume, which contained the epistle to the Romans, the following direction: "N. B. If I die before this work is finished, as it is most probable I shall, I desire that it may be transcribed, as far as it goes, by Mr. Orton; and that he would add such notes as he shall judge most proper, from my written critical notes on the epistles; and that it may be printed, by subscription, in one, two, or three volumes, as shall be judged most convenient, and according to the progress which Providence may permit me to make in it. Jun. 1, 1746—7."—I think it therefore incumbent upon me to inform the subscribers what progress the author had made in this work, and what has been done to it since his death in order to remove those suspicions which often arise concerning the authenticity of posthumous works.

When it pleased God to put a period to the author's life and labours, he had finished his paraphrase and improvement of the epistolary part of the New Testament, and of the book of the Revelation, and fairly wrote it out in short hand; and had added the principal notes which he intended to publish. At the end of the manuscript volume containing the Revelation, he had wrote "Through the good hand of God upon me, which I desire most thankfully to acknowledge, I ended the first copy of the Family Expositor, Dec. 31, 1748, exactly two years after I began to write upon the Romans; having pursued it, during that time, without the interruption of one single day; such health and such resolution did it please God to give me, amidst the various scenes of business, danger, and amusement, through which I passed! May his grace raise to himself a monument of praise from this feeble effort to explain, illustrate, and enforce his word!"—And under—"I ended my notes on the books I had thus paraphrased and improved, Aug. 21, 1749, having daily pursued the work in like manner, whether at home or abroad."—He had transcribed for the press, the paraphrase, improvements, and notes, of the two first volumes, as now published; the paraphrase and improvements of the epistle to the Hebrews, and the two first epistles of John.—The notes on these three epistles, together with the paraphrase, improvements, and notes, on the remaining epistles, and the Revelation, were transcribed from his short-hand copy, by my own hand, or under my inspection, by some of his pupils; and I carefully revised the transcript several times, and compared it with his short-hand copy.—I can assure the subscribers, that the utmost caution has been used, that no one sentiment of the author should be suppressed or changed, and only such expressions varied, as to avoid tautology, and for the sake of perspicuity and accuracy, it might be presumed the author would have varied, had he transcribed this part of the

Vol. V.
the work, and given it his finishing hand. In the margin of the short hand copy, he had wrote hints of some alterations to be made in the phraseology and length of some sentences, as well as of notes he intended to add when he transcribed it for the press. I have endeavoured to follow these hints in the best manner I could; and accordingly a few notes have been added to vindicate or illustrate his version or paraphrase, and references inserted to other critics; most of which were taken from his notes, according to the directions mentioned above. On the whole, I hope the attentive reader, who is acquainted with his style and spirit, will discover nothing in the latter part of the work unsuitable to either; and will join with me in thankfulness to God, who spared his life till he had completed this important and useful undertaking.

There is one occurrence relating to it, which my own judgment, and that of many of the author's friends, forbid me to conceal, and the rather, because it has been greatly misrepresented. During the author's life (in June 1750) a fire occasioned by a wax-candle being left on his writing-desk, broke out in his study, and consumed many of his papers, and part of one volume of the short-hand copy of this work; but the light of the fire being providentially discovered by an opposite neighbour, who gave an immediate alarm, it was speedily extinguished. When the author was informed of this accident, he seemed most anxious about the preservation of this manuscript; and when the flames were extinguished, to his great joy and surprise, it appeared that the part of this volume, and that only which was destroyed, had been transcribed, and the transcript lay in another place out of danger, and all the untranscribed pages were perfectly legible, and only the edges of them singed. Being an eye-witness of the danger and deliverance, I record this account of it, partly for the satisfaction of the subscribers with regard to the exaggerated report, but chiefly as it seems to denote a particular care of Providence in preserving this work, and a favourable omen, that God intends it for extensive and lasting usefulness. *Whoso is wise and will observe such things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.* Psalm cvii. 43.

In the name of the author's family, I heartily thank the subscribers for their encouragement of this work, and the gentlemen who have kindly superintended the press; and I pray that it may answer those pure and benevolent ends for which it was composed and is now published.

J. ORTON.
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

LEARNED men have been divided in their opinions concerning the author of this celebrated epistle. It hath been ascribed to St. Luke, to Barnabas, and to Clement of Rome. But though some considerable persons have given the sanction of their authority to the several opinions I have mentioned, yet the most prevailing one among the ancients was, and among the moderns still is, that this epistle is a genuine work of St. Paul. Among those who believe that St. Paul was its author, there are some indeed who imagine it was written by him in the Hebrew or Syriac language, and translated into Greek either by St. Luke or Clement. And it is certain there was such an ancient tradition, mentioned by Clemens Alexandrinus, Eusebius, and Jerom. And there are arguments in support of all the particular hypotheses concerning the author of the epistle, the language in which it was originally written, and the person who translated it into Greek; I say, there are various arguments in favour of all these different opinions, taken from similarity of style, the use of particular words, and the manner of composition. But I apprehend, whoever carefully considers the observations that have been made by very learned men, upon the language of St. Paul, of Luke, or Clement, in defence of their respective hypotheses, will conclude, that such arguments are very little to be depended upon, as they frequently are much indebted to a strong imagination, and in the present case, appear to be urged with equal plausibility on all sides.

I have already given my opinion, that St. Paul was the author of this epistle, (Vol. III. sect. 60. note s;) and that because the current of antiquity, though not the authority of every individual father, runs strongly this way; Jerom expressly asserts, that the epistle to the Hebrews had been received as St. Paul’s by all the Greek
Greek writers And though this epistle wants one characteristic of St. Paul's other epistles, the prefixing his name, and his usual form of inscription; for a very obvious reason, that he might not too early awaken the prejudices the Jewish converts had conceived against him; yet it might be easy to collect from the epistle itself; some strong intimations, that St. Paul was its author.

It is of less importance in what language it was originally written, if the translation were made, (as the tradition says,) by some companion and fellow-labourer of St. Paul. Though it should be considered, that the presumption lies on the side of our present Greek copy, that it is an original and not a translation; and therefore the arguments which induce any to be of a contrary opinion, should be very strong and convincing. If the reader should be inclined to examine this matter more accurately, he may consult Spanheim's Dissertation concerning the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, particularly part iii. chap. 2, concerning the language *; and the learned Mr. Hallet's Introduction to his Supplement to Mr. Pierce's Paraphrase; which Mr. Wolthus hath translated into Latin, and published at the close of the 4th volume of his Cure Philologica, with some of his own remarks and strictures in the margin. As for the date of this epistle, I am of opinion it was about the year 63, while St. Paul was imprisoned at Rome, or quickly after it. See Vol. III. sect. iv. note e, and compare Heb. xiii. 23.

This epistle was written to the Hebrews, or converts from Judaism to Christianity, who inhabited at least some one particular country, (as may be inferred from the apostle's saying, chap. xiii. 19, I beseech you rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner;) and verse 13. Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom if he come shortly, I will see you.) And this country most probably was Judea, where the converts to Christianity from Judaism were almost incessantly persecuted by their unbelieving brethren, who tenaciously adhered to the constitution and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, which Christianity superseded. Now the manifest design of St. Paul in this epistle, is, "to confirm the Jewish Christians in the faith and practice of the gospel of Christ, which they might be in danger of deserting, either through the insinuations or ill-treatment of their persecutors".

It was natural for the zealous defenders of the Mosaic law to insist upon the Divine authority of Moses, the digustishing glory and majesty which attended its first promulgation by the ministry of angels, and the special privileges with which it invested those who adhered to it. In answer to all arguments and insinuations of this kind, the apostle shews,

1. That in all these several articles, Christianity had an infinite superiority to the law. Which topic he pursues from chap. i. to xi. Reminding the believing Hebrews, That it was a most extraordinary

ordinary favour, that God had sent them a revelation by his own Son, whose glory was far superior to that of angels, (chap. i. throughout:) very naturally inferring from hence the danger of despising Christ on account of his humiliation, which in perfect consistence with his dominion over the world to come, was voluntarily submitted to by him for wise and important reasons: particularly to deliver us from the fear of death, and encourage the freedom of our access to God; (chap. ii throughout.) With the same view he further magnifies Christ as superior to Moses their great legislator; and from the sentence passed on those who rebelled against the authority of Moses, infers the danger of despising the promises of the gospel; chap. iii. 1—13. And as it was natural from hence, to call to mind that rest in Canaan to which the authority wherewith Moses was invested was intended to lead them, the apostle cautions them against the sin of unbelief, as what would prevent their entering into rest: an expression, which he shows to refer to a nobler state of rest than what the Jews enjoyed in Canaan, even on their most sacred days, and in their most prosperous ages: (chap. iii. 14.—iv. 21. Further informing this caution by awful views of the omniscience of God, and animating representations of the character of Christ as our High Priest, of whose Divine appointment, gracious administration, and previous suffering, he goes on to discourse, and promises further illustrations of so important a topic; (chap. iv. 12. to the end; chap. v. throughout.) Declaring that he would advance to sublimer truths without dwelling upon the first principles, for the sake of those who might have apostatized from Christianity; and whose case he represents as very hope-less; (chap. vi. 1—9. And then for the establishment and comfort of sincere believers, he sets before them the consideration of the goodness of God, and his fidelity to his sacred engagements, the performance of which is sealed by the entrance of Christ into heaven as our Forerunner; (chap. vi. 9. to the end.) Further to illustrate the character of our blessed Lord, the Author and Finisher of our faith, he enters into a parallel between Melchizedec and Christ, as agreeing in title and descent; and from instances in which the priesthood of Melchizedec excelled the Levitical priesthood, he infers the surpassing glory of the priesthood of Christ to the priesthood under the law: (chap. vii. 1—17.) From these premises, which plainly manifested the defects of the Aaronical priesthood, he argues, that it was not only excelled, but vindicated and consummated by that of Christ, to which it was introductory and subservient; and by consequence, that the obligation of the law was henceforth dissolved; (chap. vii. 18, to the end.) He then recapitulates, what he had before demonstrated of the superior dignity of Christ as the High Priest of Christians, and further illustrates the distinguished excellence of that new covenant which was foretold by Jer-miah as established in him, and plainly enriched with much better promises than the old: (chap. viii. throughout.) Illustrating further the doctrine of the priesthood and intercession of Christ, by comparing it to what the Jewish high priest did on the great day of atonement; (chap. ix.
ix. 1—14.) And having enlarged on the necessity of shedding Christ's blood, and the sufficiency of the atonement made by it, (chap. ix. 15, to the end, and proved that legal ceremonies could not by any means purify the conscience, and from thence argued the insufficiency of the Mosaic law, and the necessity of looking beyond it, (chap. x. 1—15,) the apostle urges the Hebrews to improve the privileges which such an High Priest and covenant conferred on them, to the purpose of a fiducial approach to God, a constant attendance on his worship, and most benevolent regards to each other. (chap. x. 15—25.)

The apostle having thus at length obviated the insinuations and objections of the Jews to the gospel of Christ, as inferior to the Mosaic dispensation, by showing its transcendent excellence in a clear and convincing light, for the satisfaction and establishment of the believing Hebrews, proceeds,

II. To awaken their attention, and fortify their minds against the storm of persecution, which had come, and was further likely to come upon them, for the sake of the Christian faith. To this end, he reminds them of the extremities they had already endured in defence of the gospel, and of the fatal consequences which would attend their apostacy; (chap. x. 26, to the end.) Calling to their remembrance the renowned examples of faith and fortitude which had been exhibited by holy men mentioned in the scriptures of the Old Testament, and particularly by Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, (chap. xi. 1—16,) by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses: (chap. xi. 17—29.) Concluding his discourse with glancing on many other illustrious worthies; and besides those recorded in scripture, referring also to the case of several who suffered under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. (chap. xi. 30.—xii. 2.)

And having thus executed his design in the argumentative part of the epistle, he applies the whole by exhorting the Hebrew Christians to sustain and improve the afflictions to which they were exposed, and to exert themselves vigorously to promote the united interests of peace and holiness, (chap. xii. 3—14.) Cautioning them against disparaging the blessings of the gospel, and making them a sacrifice either to any secular views or sensual gratifications; representing the incomparable excellence of these blessings, and the wonderful manner in which they were introduced, which even the introduction of the Jewish economy, glorious and magnificent as it was, did by no means equal; (chap. xii. 15—29.) Exhorting them to brotherly affection, purity, compassion, dependence on the Divine care, steadfastness in the profession of the truth, and to a life of thankfulness to God, and benevolence to man, from the consideration of the inextinguishable privileges derived to us from Christ; which ought always to encourage us resolutely to endure any infamy and suffering which we may meet with in his cause; (chap. xiii. 1—16.) Concluding the whole, with recommending to them some particular regard to their pious ministers; and interceding their prayers; adding some salutations, and a solemn benediction (chap. xiii. 17, to the end.)
SECTION I.

The Apostle reminds the Hebrews to whom he writes, of the great favour God had done them in sending them a revelation by his own Son; on whose glory he expatiates as far superior to that of angels, intending by this representation to engage them to embrace and retain the gospel. Heb. I. 1, to the end.

Hebrews I. 1.

The great and wise God, who in his wonderful condescension hath at many times, and in various manners, of old, spoken to the fathers of the Jewish nation, by the prophets whom he hath in successive ages raised up and employed as the messengers of his will to them, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, his only-begotten, and best beloved

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The first word, as some apprehend, refers to the parcels by which God's will was delivered, in opposition to a complete revelation; and the last, to the manner in which it was made known, namely, by dreams, visions, urim, prophets, voices, signs.

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a. God who, &c.] Though St. Paul was the author of this epistle, as we have already observed, yet he does not begin it, as he does most of his other epistles, by prefixing his name to it; the reason of which probably was, that those to whom he was now writing were under strong prejudices against his name; and he was not willing to alarm those prejudices at the beginning of his letter.

b. Many times, and various manners.] The reason of which was, that God had spoken to the fathers of the Jewish nation, by the prophets whom he had raised up and employed as the messengers of his will to them, in various manners, of old, as is expressed in the next clause.

c. By the son.] This is no argument that God did not speak by Christ before; but only that it was not in so clear and express a manner.

d. His.
beloved Son, whom he hath sent into our world as the Ambassador of his mercy to us, even that illustrious person, whom he hath appointed the heir and possessor of all things. He hath adjusted all things in such a manner, as to advance the purposes of his glory, and committed the administration of his providential kingdom into his hands, by whom, and in reference to whose honour, he also created all things, and constituted the ages and dispensations of the church and world. I speak of that great Emmanuel, whom we have so long been taught to know and adore; who being the effulgent ray of [his] glory, and the express delineation of his person, on whom his likeness is stamped in living characters in a manner no created nature can admit, and upholding the universe which he hath made by the efficacions of his Father’s power, which is ever resident in him, as his own, by virtue of that intimate though incomprehensible union which renders them one, (John x. 30.) was nevertheless set forth in the feeble dress and humble form of human flesh, that he might be our atoning sacrifice. And accordingly having by himself performed that great transaction, which is the cleansing away of our sins, he is now returned to the celestial world from which he descended for this gracious purpose, and is set down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high, of that glorious and excellent Being, who reigns supreme in the heaven of heavens.

To this exalted Redeemer would I now call your thoughts, of whom I have some very important sense I have given in the paraphrase. Some copies read ἅγιος, which would fully justify our version. But if the power of the Father be the power of Christ, to be used by him at pleasure for the security of his people, it seems to be all that the establishment of our faith in him requires.

set down on the right-hand. Some understand this of the right-hand of the Messiah, in the most honourable place among men or angels; and quote 1 Pet. in. 22: Eph. i. 20, 21, supposing that the Father’s presence in heaven, as there was upon earth, which hath properly speaking a right or a left-hand. But this I esteem no article of faith. Compare chap. viii. 1.
portant and sublime truths to deliver. Consider, therefore, my brethren, what reverence, what fidelity, what zeal you owe to him who was made in exaltation and celestial glory as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited, and by which through many succeeding ages he hath been spoken of in the sacred oracles, [is] more excellent than theirs; For to which of the angels hath he ever said, as we know he hath said to the Messiah in that celebrated prophecy, (Psal. ii. 7.) Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, (2 Sam. vii. 14,) I will be a father to him, and he shall be my son? For if these words were immediately spoken of Solomon, it was chiefly as a type of Christ, the great son of David, the prince of peace. But so far is he from speaking of the angels in terms expressing equal dignity, that when he again introduces his first-begotten Son into the world, and speaks of him as coming with royal pomp to take possession of his kingdom, he saith, (Psal. xcvii. 7.) And let all the Angels of God worship him. And accordingly he did actually demand their homage to him, as constituted their Lord and Sovereign, not only in regard to his originally superior glories, but in consideration of that fidelity and zeal with which he had discharged his important errand to our world. And concerning the angels he saith, (Psal. xiv. 4.)

1 Superior to angels.] Some have, I think, very precariously imagined, that the apostle, in this and the next chapter, insists so much on Christ's superiority to angels, in order to take off the Jews from that angel-worship to which they were greatly inclined. But it is evident the apostle does not speak expressly on that subject. It is more certain, therefore, that his intention was to exalt their ideas of our blessed Redeemer; as indeed their entertaining high and honourable conceptions of him would be of great importance to their holding fast their Christian profession. It is plain the Jews considered the angels as concerned in the promulgation of their law, on which account they might be more zealously attached to it, and in this view there was a peculiar propriety in the apostle's labouring the argument he is here upon, namely, the superiority of our blessed Lord to all the angelic orders.  

k Thou art my son.] These words are taken from Psalm ii. 7. And I think it is evident (as others have observed,) that this and the rest of the passages here quoted, must refer to Christ in their original sense, and in the strictest propriety of interpretation; otherwise the argument would be entirely inconclusive; for it might be replied, that supposing these passages to be applicable to Christ, they will not prove him to be superior to the angels, since they originally refer to David and others confessedly inferior to those celestial spirits. It might be easily proved that this second psalm does originally belong to the Messiah. Compare Acts iv. 25, xiii. 33.

m He shall be my son.] Mr. Pierce hath laboured largely to prove, that these words can in their original and primary sense refer only to Christ.
he maketh his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire. He, who rules the winds and the lightnings, has his angels under equal command, and employs them with the strength of winds and the rapidity of lightnings in his service.

8 But to the son [he] speaks in a very different manner, and [saith] in those memorable words, which have an ultimate reference to Christ, (Psal. xlv. 6, 7,) Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom [is] a sceptre of righteousness. Thou hast in the most eminent degree, through the whole of thine administration, loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and hast taken the most effectual method to suppress it; therefore God, thy God, and Father, hast anointed thee plentifully with the oil of gladness above thy associates: thou art exalted to superior honour and happiness; so that none of thy brethren, none of the angels whom thou mayest in any instance or degree have condescended to join with thyself, and lead in thy train, can pretend to compare with thee in glory or in joy. Yea, as Divine, thou art fixed in thine eternal throne, that the whole created world may unite its prostrate homage before thee. And it is to him who presided, as is well known, over the Jewish nation and received the tribute of praise which they paid to Jehovah their God, that those words are addressed, Psal. civ. 25. Thou, Lord, from the beginning

m He maketh his angels winds ] That is, saith Mr. Cradock (Apost. Hist. p. 1.) He, the son, makes use of the angels as his ministers, in producing storms and lightnings according to his pleasure. But I would not change the signification of the pronoun. He, which returns here, without absolute necessity: — The rendering angeles wind, is very agreeable to the original and the context. 

n Thy throne, O God, &c. To render this, as some would do, God sit the throne for ever and ever, that is, God will establish thy throne, (according to 2 Sam. vii. 13, 14; Psalm lxvii. 4.) appears to me very unnatural.

o Loved righteousness, hated iniquity. ] It may be objected, that as all the angels have maintained this character, consequently this can be no just reason for preferring Christ to them. But I think the true answer is, not so much that the angels are chargeable with mistakes, though not with moral, John iv. 18. xv. 1, as Mr. Peck supposes, but rather that it refers to that unchangeable instance of the love of moral rectitude which Christ hath given in becoming a sacrifice for sin by his abatement; doing more than hath been ever done by any rational agent, towards displaying his love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity.

p Add thy answers: &c. ] It seems to be intimated here, that as Christ took the special charge of Judea, angels were charged with the government of other countries, in reference to which it is that they are called his ministers or companions: for (as others have observed) if felicis do not signify an, the quotation is nothing to the apostle's purpose.
Whereas the angels are ministering spirits.  

11 They shall perish but thou remaineST; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment.  
12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

15 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

beginning hast founded the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They, permanent as they seem, shall at length perish and wear out: but thou endurest in undecaying glory; yea all of them shall grow old like a garment. And as a mantle thou shalt fold them upon, and they shall be changed: thou shalt remove them out of their place, and introduce a new scene of things, with as much ease as a prince lays aside one robe and puts on another; but thou art ever the same, and thy years shall not fail through everlasting ages, nor can thy perfections admit any possible diminution.

But not to insist on the manner in which men have addressed their homage and their praises to him, even under the inspiration of an unerring spirit; let me refer you to another passage, in which the Father himself speaks to him under the character of his son, exalted to his mediatorial kingdom; that you may take an idea of his grandeur from thence. For to which of the angels hath he ever said, Sit thou enthroned in glory at my right-hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet, and give thee to trample upon the last and the proudest of them all? The spirits of heaven expect no such honour as this; the noblest of them all esteems himself happy in an opportunity of worshipping this triumphant Lord, and ministering even to the least of his servants. Is it not a known and delightful truth? are they not indeed all ministering spirits, who officiate before the throne of God, and are sent out to attend on those who shall inherit salvation? and always willing to undertake the offices he shall assign them, for the safety and good of his people? And therefore far from thinking of them in any view of comparison with him, let us humbly adore him, for the benefits which by his authority and favour we daily receive from these benevolent creatures.

q Fold them up.] For ἠλεξίζε ἡ τοῦ Πέτρου, for which Mr. Pierce would read ἠλέξε, change them, agreeable to the Hebrews; and imagines that heaven and earth here signifies, governments, as indeed the phrase sometimes may; but I think not in this place.
IMPROVEMENT.

Let us learn from this wonderful and delightful portion of scripture, how we are to conceive of our blessed Redeemer. Admirable contrast of characters! which might appear to our feeble reason, inconsistent, if faith did not teach us to reconcile them. Strange, that the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person by whom he made the worlds, should condescend by himself to purge our sins! That he, to whom God saith, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; that he, whom the angels are commanded to worship, that he, whose Divine throne is for ever and ever; that he, whom the church hath for successive ages adored as having founded the earth, and formed the heavens, as in his original perfections and glories far more immutable than they, changing them as a vesture at his sovereign pleasure; that this great, this illustrious, this Divine person, should have laid aside these robes of celestial light to array himself in mortal flesh; not only that he might reveal his Father's will, and speak to us in his name, but that he might redeem us to God by his blood! What shall we say? We will receive the message he brings us with all humble thankfulness; we will seek his favour with more earnest solicitude; we will congratulate his exaltation with loyal joy. O triumphant, transporting thought, that Jesus is enthroned above all heavens, that he is anointed with an unequalled effusion of the oil of gladness, with angels we will fall down and worship him as our Lord and our God. Our tallest shall proclaim it, that he is set down at the right-hand of the Majesty on high, and that God hath engaged to make his enemies his footstool. Angels minister before him with unwearied vigour, with inconceivable speed do they fly like flames of lightning from one end of the heaven to the other, from world to world, to execute his sacred commands. With delight do they minister to those whom he hath appointed heirs of salvation, nor do they neglect the youngest or meanest. Let us thankfully acknowledge the great Redeemer's goodness and care, in every kind office we receive from them. And as our obligations to him are infinitely superior to theirs, let us emulate their fidelity, vigour and zeal, in the steadiness and cheerfulness of our obedience; till we join them in services like their own, in that world where they dwell, and to which, if we approve ourselves his faithful servants, he will ere long give them a charge safely and joyfully to convey us.

SECT.
SECT. II.

From what has been before said, the Apostle infers the danger of despising Christ on account of his humiliation; which in perfect consistence with his dominion over the world to come, was voluntarily submitted to by him, for wise and important reasons; particularly to deliver us from the fear of death, and encourage the freedom of our access to God. Heb. II. 1, to the end.

Hebrews II. 1.

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward.

3 How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles.

a We have heard. Nothing can be more evidently weak than the argument drawn from hence, to prove that St. Paul was not the author of this epistle, because it was not by hearing only that he received the gospel. It is to be considered, that he speaks in the name of all to whom he was writing, as well as his own, to render the instruction the more unexceptionable and the more forcible. Besides, that to hear anything signifies in general to be instructed in it.

b Angels. See Dr. Whitby’s admirable note on this text.

c Signs and wonders. I think it is very needless to inquire curiously into the difference.
and various incontestible miracles, and endowing them in a rich abundance, with distributions of the Holy Spirit in its extraordinary operations, imparted in different degrees to different persons, according to his own sovereign will and pleasure.

5 And by these wonderful operations the superiority of Christ to angels is farther illustrated; for to angels, even the most exalted of them, he, that is, God hath not subjected the world to come, nor ever intended that they should preside in the latest and best dispensation, the kingdom of the Messiah, which extends not only to earth, but to heaven, concerning which we now speak, as it is the great business of the Author's life to prove its interests. But a certain [writer] well known I am persuaded to you Hebrews, somewhere bears his testimony, saying, Psal. viii.

4. O Lord, what is man that thou rememberest him.

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man things under him, as their common Head, Eph. ii. 10, 11 and this certainly is an honour to which no angel can pretend. Dr. Burnet's explanation of this as referring to the new heavens and earth, which he supposes shall succeed the creation in which Christ is to reign, (which he also tells referred to Isa. xxi.) is so very precarious and improbable an interpretation, that I think it is hardly worth mentioning. Burnet's Theory of the Earth, Vol. ii. p. 282.

"A certain writer [hears] his testimony, It has been matter of much debate among critics, whether these words are to be considered as in their original intent, a prophecy of the Messiah, or a description of the divinity and glory of human nature, to which the apostle alludes; making use of David's language to clothe his own ideas, though by an application very different from his design. It seems evident to me, that there is nothing in the sixth Psalm by which, independent upon the apostle's authority, it could be known to belong to the Messiah. On the whole therefore I prefer the latter opinion, though I readily confess, that if the former could be proved, it would establish a direct argument in words, which must otherwise be only understood as an allusion, but the grand truth to which they refer, the exaltation of Christ to supreme dignity, was so expressly asserted by himself, Mat. xxviii. 18, and was so fundamental a doctrine, and so universally received in the Christian church, that it did not seem to stand in need of such an additional proof.
And to him all things are put in subjection:

man that thou visitest him?
them lower than the angels; thou crown-
lower, and didst set him over the works of

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in sub-
nothing left, that is not put under him. But
now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of
crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of
should taste death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bring-
ing many sons unto glory,

hath been the conduct of God in this great affair of our redemption. And the beauty
and harmony of it will be apparent, in propor-
tion to the degree in which it is examined. For though the Jews dream of a temporal Mes-
siah, as a scheme conducive to the Divine glory, it well became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, the glorious Being who is the first cause and the last end of all, in pursuit

i For the suffering of death.] These words may seem ambiguous, and capable of being referred either to the preceding or following clause. It is indeed true, that Christ was crowned as a reward for suffering death, as the Apostle expressly teach-
es, Phil. ii. 8, 9. But the concluding words of the verse, which have plainly a connection with these, determine them to the former sense.

j It became him.] This seems to signify, not only that the course that he took was well worthy of God, but that in order to act worthy of himself, it was expedient he should take this method.
pursuit of the great and important design he had formed, of conducting many whom he is pleased to adopt as his sons, to the possession of that inheritance of glory he has intended for them, to make and constitute Jesus his first-born and best-beloved Son, the Leader and Prince of their salvation, and to make him perfect or completely fit for the full execution of his office, by a long train of various and extreme sufferings, whereby he was, as it were, solemnly consecrated to it.

11. Now in consequence of this appointment, Jesus, the great Sanctifier, who engages and consecrates men to the service of God, and they who are sanctified, that is, consecrated and introduced to God with such acceptance [are] all of one family; all the descendants of Adam, and in a sense, the seed of Abraham: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them whom he thus redeems and presents to Divine favour, his brethren, saying (Psal. xxii. 22, 26) in the person of David, when representing the Messiah in his sufferings and exaltation, I will declare thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the assembly of thy people, the great assembly, which by way of eminence shall be called the church, will I praise thee for thy gracious interposition in my favour. And again, speaking as a mortal man, exposed to such exercises of faith in trials and difficulties as others were, he says in a psalm which represents his triumph over his enemies, I will trust in him as other good men have in all ages done; and again, elsewhere in the person of Isaiah, (Is. viii. 18.) Behold I and the children which my God hath given me, are for signs and for wonders. Seeing then those whom he represents in one place and another as the children of the same family with himself, are partakers of human flesh and blood, he himself in like manner participated of them, and assumed all their sinless infirmities, that thereby becoming capable of those sufferings to which without such an union with flesh he could not have been obnoxious, he might by his own voluntary and meritorious death, abolish and depose him, who

11. For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

12. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.

14. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him with Archbishops Tillotson, that it chiefly means, that Christ might give mankind the hope of immortality, when they actually saw one risen from the dead and ascending
him that had the power of death, that is, the devil:

who by Divine permission had the empire of death and led it in his train, when it made its first invasion on mankind, that is, the devil, the great artificer of mischief and destruction; at the beginning the murderer of the human race, who still seems to triumph in the spread of mortality which is his work, and who may often by God's righteous permission be the executioner of it. But Christ, the great Prince of mercy and life graciously interposed, that he might deliver those his miserable captives, who through fear of death were, or justly might have been, all their life-time obnoxious to bondage; having nothing to expect in consequence of it, if they rightly understood their state, but future misery; whereas now changing their Lord, they have happily changed their condition, and are, as many as have believed in him, the heirs of eternal life.

We the sinful children of Adam, though the heirs of death, are thus delivered by him; but not the infernal powers, who were the first authors of their seduction; for truly he took not hold of the angels, to save them from plunging into the abyss of misery; but he took hold of the seed of Abraham, and hath made a gracious provision for the salvation of all who shall by true faith approve themselves the genuine children of that holy patriarch. From whence, and in consequence of which design, it behoved him to be made in all things like unto those whom he descended to call [his] brethren, that so he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people:

16 For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to heavenly, is, I think, sinking the interpretation a great deal too low.

The empire of death. Some have inferred from hence, that the devil is the executioner of the sentence of death both on good and bad men. But I think the sense in the paraphrase less obnoxious and precarious.
assaults and sorrows, he can, in the most ready
and endearing, as well as effectual manner,
help those that are tempted, and are making their
way through those scenes of difficulty which he
passed through with such fortitude and honour.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Eternal praise to our compassionate High-Priest, who put on
18 our infirmities that he might know how to pity and relieve them!
Eternal praise to him, by whom are all things, and for whom are
all things, that he has concerted the merciful scheme of bringing
10 many sons unto glory, in a manner so well worthy of his Divine
perfections, and so full of instruction and comfort to us; appoint-
ing his own Son the Captain of our salvation, and making him per-
fect through sufferings! Let us daily reflect upon it with pleasure
and gratitude, that he is not ashamed to call us his brethren, though
so highly exalted above the angels of God; and that he took not
hold of the superior nature of angels, which was sunk into apostacy,
guilt, and ruin, but took hold of the seed of Abraham. How vener-
able, as well as amiable, is that condescension with which he made
9 himself a little lower than the angels, that by the grace of God
which was to owe its highest honours to his cross, he might taste
death for every man! He hath effected his merciful purpose: by
death he hath deposed and abolished the tyrannical prince of death,
that is, the devil, and delivered from the fears of death, those who,
had they known and considered their real circumstances, might
have been continually in bondage to it.

We see our great enemy deposed; we see life and immortality
brought to light by his gospel: let us see it with gratitude and plea-
sure. And let us learn from all, if we would not charge ourselves
with the most inexcusable guilt, and the basest ingratitude, if we
would not plunge ourselves into the lowest gulf of perdition, not to
neglect so great a salvation. Let the doom, which the law of Moses
3 passed upon the presumptuous transgressor, deter us; and let the
2 grace of the gospel allure and invite us to attend to the salvation
1 spoken by the Lord, and to take the most earnest heed to it, lest we
let slip that golden opportunity, which, if neglected, will never
return.

SECT.
The Apostle further takes occasion to manifest Christ, as superior to Moses, the great legislator of the Jews; and begins to caution them from the sentence passed on the rebels against the authority of Moses, of the danger of despising the gospel promises. Heb. III. 1—13.

%Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

3 For this man was counted worthy of more

a Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling. Mr. Pierce thinks, when they are called holy brethren by the apostle, it is in allusion to what was said of their being sanctified, chap. ii. 11. that when he speaks of their calling, he means their being called the brethren; and that when he stiles them partsakers of this calling, it is to intimate that they do not ingross it. But all these interpretations seem to me more refined than solid. The calling, generally signifies the call that is given us by the gospel, to pursue immortality and glory.

b Apostle and High-Priest.] Both are properly mentioned, as the author was to shew, that as an apostle, Christ was superior to Moses; and as an High Priest, to Aaron. He is called an Apostle as sent from God with full commission for the important affair he came to transact. That apostle signifies messenger, see many places in the New Testament, cited vol. sect. 162. p. 236. note e.

%More
was esteemed worthy of far more honour than Moses, in proportion to the degree in which the builder of a house hath more honour than the house itself. For Christ laid the plan of the Mosaic dispensation, and Moses who was himself his creature, evidently acted as his delegate in the revelation which he made to the people of Israel; so that whatever excellencies that dispensation can boast, they reflect an honour ultimately on the Divine Person from whom he received it. For every house has some builder, by whom its several parts were modelled, raised and disposed, and everything well adjusted in it displays the skill of its Architect and Disposer; now he who built and adjusted all things is God, whose works of creation and providence are worthy their great Author, and proclaim that power, wisdom, and goodness, which set him infinitely above the most excellent of creatures.

And that Christ is incomparably more to be honoured than Moses, appears even from this consideration, though inferior to the former, that Moses [was] indeed faithful in all his house, as a servant, who was appointed to act in an inferior economy, for a testimony of things afterwards to be mentioned, the evangelical design of which we shall in some measure discuss in the following part of this epistle, according to their relation and connection. But Christ was faithful in a far superior character, even as a Son in his own house, that is, over the church, in which more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath built the house, hath more honour than the house.

4 For every house is built by some man; but he that built all things is God.

5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after:

6 But Christ as a Son over his own house:

[In note: A Son of God, not mere Son of man, heaven and earth by his outside, by the generation to the immortals.]

[In note: The Son is the living image of him who is Creator of all things.]

[In note: Dr. Calamy has argued from hence the supremacy of Christ, in consequence of his being the Creator of all things.]
To-day therefore they should hear his voice.

which as Heir of all things he hath not only a
trust and office, but also a property, and which
is appointed for him to inhabit and preside over;
whose house, his chosen and delightful habitation,
we Christians now are, if we strenuously main-
tain [our] freedom of profession, and boasting of
hope, stedfast unto the end; if having so glorious
an hope set before us, in which we may justly
boast as our greatest honour and happiness, we
resolutely adhere to it, and permit nothing to
wrest it out of our hands.

And to this I am labouring to animate you, by
the representation I have given of the dignity
and glory of our blessed Saviour. Therefore as
the Holy Ghost saith, in a psalm which he dictat-
ed to David, (Psal. xcv. 7.) To day if ye will
ever hear his voice at all, Harden not your hearts.
Any longer; lest you bring destruction upon
yourselves, as your predecessors did, in the bit-
ter provocation which they presumed to offer
me in the day of temptation in the wilderness;
When your unbelieving fathers tempted me, and
proved me, as if they would have made an expen-
iment how much it was possible for me to
bear; and this, though they saw my works in
such a variety of wonders, as passed in the wil-
derness in the course of forty succeeding years.
Therefore I was angry with that perverse gene-
ration, and said they always do and will err
in [their] hearts, through their own obstinacy
and folly, and they have not known my ways,
nor paid any regard to the clearest discoveries
of my will and design; So that after repeated
abuses of my patience and long-suffering, I
swear in my wrath, and solemnly declared by
my own holy and majestic name, that they should
never enter into my rest; but that the carcases
of all that came adult out of Egypt, shall fall
in the wilderness, and that generation of men be
totally consumed. How awful a determination, after
all the hopes which such signal deliverances
had

the very words are used and translated be-
fore; but as Christ is appointed the heir
of all things, the paraphrase cannot I think
be contested. Compare Heb. x. 21.

g Our freedom of profession.] Some
would render it, if we hold fast the con-
fidence, even the rejoicing of our hope firm un-
to the end, supposing it to refer to that con-
fession which they made at their baptism
with solemnity and joy.

h My rest.] Canaan is so called, as
they there repose themselves after the la-
bours of a long war, as well as the fatigues
of a tedious march; and perhaps as enter-
ing upon a course of stated worship, it
might appear as a kind of sabbath-keeping.

i Whils

G 3
had concurred to inspire! See to it therefore, brethren, lest there ever be in any of you a wicked heart of unbelief, in apostatizing from him who still wears the same ungodly terrors, and continues, and will ever continue, the living and true God, to whom you profess so great a regard, and from whom you will indeed revolt, if you give up the religion of Christ Jesus his Son.

13 You are surrounded with many temptations to do this; but when one another daily, while you are under this dispensation of grace, whilst it is called to day, and the deserved judgments of God are suspended, that no one of you may by insensible degrees and artful insinuations, be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and its fallacious advances on the mind; whereby if you are not resolutely on your guard, you may be seduced finally to forfeit the invaluable blessings, which are so freely offered, and which have so long been set before you.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. We are partakers of this heavenly calling, and to us are the messages of mercy addressed: let us therefore hear with reverence and obedience, the admonitions of the word of God. Let us behold with veneration and delight, the Son of God becoming the Messenger of his Father's love, and the High Priest of our Christian profession. He is the great prophet too, whom God hath raised up unto us its Moses, in many respects; but O how far superior to him! More completely faithful to him, who hath appointed him, faithful as a Son in his own house.

The world is an edifice raised by Christ, the church is the house in which he delighteth to reside. Let both be considered in this important view. The Divine perfections of the great Architect are indeed illustriously displayed in the construction and constitution of this visible world. Does the meanest house or cottage declare itself to be the work of some intelligent agent? And does it not much more evidently appear, that this commodious and magnificent structure must have been planned and reared by proportionable wisdom, grandeur and power?

It is the work of Christ, and let it often be devoutly surveyed and contemplated in this view; and from thence let us infer his Divine glories, and read in them his matchless condescensions.

15 But exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

*Wilt it be called today?* 1 Tim. 4:13. *Thence let there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

*Hab. 3:1. "And one shall miscarry among seven, and be cut off among the Eight. (The fire it is not damped; the flame of the Lord is not quenched.)"*
Let us learn with how much security and delight we may commit our immortal souls to him who stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and shall endure the same when they shall be dissolved and perish. Let us view him also as the Lord of the church; and consider the fabric of grace as raised to his honour; that in that as his temple, every one might speak of his glory; and let all the churches, and every member of each, make it their faithful care to honour him more and more.

In this view may we hold fast the confidence, and rejoicing of Ver. our hope, stedfast unto the end, and never suffer any one to take our crown, or terrify, or allure us, from that faithful subjection of soul to Christ, which his perfections and our obligations, to him concur to demand. Who of us can say, he is beyond all danger of being ensnared by an evil heart of unbelief, of being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? Let us then, in compliance with so salutary and necessary an exhortation, redouble our guard; let us watch over ourselves and each other; exhorting one another daily, while it is called to-day, and charging our souls by the awful authority of the living God, that after having approached so near him, that after having so solemnly professed to devote ourselves to him, nothing may ever prevail upon us deliberately and wickedly to depart from him.

SECT. IV.

The Apostle goes on to repeat the caution he had given against unbelief, as what would prevent their entering into rest: an expression which he shows to refer to something much nobler than that rest which the Jews enjoyed in Canaan, even on their most sacred days, and in their most prosperous ages. Heb. III. 14.—IV. 11.

15 While it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his

15 While it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his

HEBREWS III. 14.

I GIVE you such cautions to guard against the deceitfulness of sin, and an evil heart of unbelief, because I know your highest interests are concerned; for we are made partakers of the grace and mercy of Christ, and admitted by him into the family of God, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence in him as our great Saviour, stedfast unto the end of our lives, whatever difficulties and oppositions may arise. Let us therefore be strenuous and incessant in this care; forasmuch as it is said, in the passage I have

a Forasmuch, as it is said.] The words σω τω λεγοναι are something ambiguous, and may either signify, forasmuch as it is said, or while it is said; and if the latter
For unbelief would prevent their entering into rest.

I have quoted above, *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as they did in the provocation which was offered to God in the wilderness. For some of them who heard so many Divine messages solemnly declared, and the law spoken by the very mouth of God Himself from mount Sinai, provoked [him] to indignation; but not all they who came out of Egypt by Moses: there was a remnant then, as there now is, of believing and obedient souls, to whom the promise of God shall be accomplished. And by whom was he provoked by a long succession of infidelity and folly for forty years? [was it] not with those who well deserved that displeasure? With those who sinned against him by suspecting his presence with them, after so many amazing and unparalleled demonstrations of it; whose caresses, according to his awful prediction, fell in the wilderness during those years of wandering to which they were justly doomed? And was there any thing in this that looks like a breach of promise on the part of the blessed God? Far from it.—To whom did he swear that they should not enter into his rest, but unto those who were so obstinate and disobedient, as entirely to forfeit all claim to his promise and favour? And when we come to consider the cause of that disobedience, we see that it was owing to a secret infidelity with regard to the Divine power and goodness, either to preserve them in the wilderness, or conduct them into Canaan. So that I may say they could not possibly enter into the promised rest, because of unbelief: that was upon the whole, the

version be preferred, perhaps this 14th verse may be connected with the 11th. In such case one and the other would be inserted together, where it is now. I say if ye will hear in verse 3: as it be had said, The matter is of so much importance, that it is not to be neglected so much as for a single day, lest the proper season should be slighted. But as upon a different phrase, was used here, in the 15th verse. I judge the rendering I have given must, probably, and ventured it, in order to avoid an inconvenient length, by dividing the verse as I have here done.

b But not with those who came out of Egypt. Mr. Pyle gives a different and remarkable interpretation, making the former part of the verse an interrogatory, Who were they that even they heard, that is, heard the report of the spies. (Num. xiv.) did provoke him? Were they not all that came out of Egypt? And this be supposed is a distinct argument for perseverance, taken from the injurious nature, as well as pernicious consequences of infidelity and apostasy. But let it been the sense I think would have been used instead of ands, especially as by this means the correspondence with the 15th verse would have been more evident. c There was a remnant.] Joshua, Caleb, the women and children, and some think, some of the Levites, were not included in the sentence. Bishop Fell mentions this as an intimation, that all shall not apostatize in the worst times.
The Jews entered not because of unbelief.

IV. 1. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest; although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 And in this place again, if they shall enter into my rest.

\[d\] Let us therefore fear.] This example, as has often been observed, is most suitable, being taken from their own ancestors, the evil being the same, namely, unbelief, the time resembling it just after the establishment of a new constitution, and the consequence the same, the exclusion from the rest. The superior dignity of Christ above Moses, and the superior excellence of Heaven above Canaan, greatly confirm the force of the argument. Pierce on Heb. iii. 11, note n.

\[e\] Any of us.] Some copies read now us, instead of you; and their authority is evidently confirmed by the connection. See Dr. Mills in loc.

\[f\] Partakers of the good tidings.] So I chose to render the word \textit{παρτοκαλίσματες}. For, that we may have the \textit{gospel} (taking it for the message by Christ) at least as well as these people had in the \textit{wilderness}, and indeed a great deal more plainly, is so evident, that it may seem but a very low sense of the words, and not worthy the wisdom and gravity of the apostle to insert it.

\[g\] We believing have entered, &c.] Mr. Pierce would render it, \textit{We believing enter into rest}, that is, Faith is the way by which men must expect to enter into whatever rest God promises in one age or another; and so it appears necessary that the word should be mixed with it. This, it must be acknowledged, is a very probable and weighty sense.

\[h\] His works finished from the foundation, &c.] Mr. Pierce thinks the apostle intends to lay in an \textit{answer to an objection} which might arise against the caution given from their being entered into rest already, that is, into the land of Canaan, where they celebrated the \textit{sabbath}. He therefore shows that the words could neither extend to the one or the other of these rests.
God, from which these sinners should be excluded, though they actually dwelt in the land of Canaan, secure under the protection of David, their victorious Monarch, and enjoyed the repose of God's sabbath there.

6 Seeing then it remaineth that some must enter into it, which is spoken of in this scripture as a certain thing, and they to whom the good tidings of rest were at first declared, did not enter because of their unbelief, which you know was threatened with such punishment: He again determineth a certain day, marked out within certain limits and boundaries, in reference to which he urges their immediate attention and obedience to the manifestation of the Divine will, saying in that well-known composition of David, of which we have just been speaking, This day, and that after so long a time as had passed after the rest of God at the creation mentioned above, as it is said, This day, if ye will hear his voice at all, harden not your hearts.

8 Ver., it is certain, as I hinted above, the rest here referred to is not, and cannot be, interpreted of the land of Canaan; for if Joshua, who introduced them thither, and settled them there, had given them the great and peaceful rest referred to, he would not so long after that settlement have spoken, as you see in the days of David he does, concerning another day of trial, and another day of rest into which it was a supposable case that they might not enter. Therefore it is very evident, that there remaineth a rest for the people of God, which, when we consider it in reference to that sabbatical rest of which we have been speaking, may properly be called the celebration of a sabbath, which, blessed by God, will be eternal. It may be thus called with happy propriety, for he who hath entered into this, his final and complete rest, of which we now speak, hath also himself entirely ceased from all the labours and fatigues of his works, as God rested from his own on that first seventh day, which, in commemoration of it, was appointed sacred to future ages. Let us therefore

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached, entered not in because of unbelief:

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time, as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, there would be no afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that
that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

therefore labour with all possible diligence and constancy, to enter into that important and eternal rest, that no one may finally fall into ruin by the same example of disobedience, which hath undone so many thousands already, and proved so fatal to Israel, in the instance I have been handling at large.

IMPROVEMENT.

What can be so desirable as to partake of Christ, and all the saving benefits, which believers receive in and by him, by virtue of that relation to which he condescends to admit them? Let us seek this happiness by persevering faith, and holding fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; bearing still in our minds the melancholy example of the children of Israel, who though by such wonderful interpositions led out of Egypt, were doomed by the Divine vengeance to die in the wilderness for their unbelief. That obstructed their entrance into Canaan; nor can we ever hope to partake of the land of promise above, if we resign that faith, which is the spring of every other grace that is necessary to prepare us for it.

Let us take the alarm, and exercise that pious fear which so well consists with a cheerful hope in God, and committing our souls to his fatherly care. We hear the word of salvation; let us pray that it may profit us; and for that purpose, let us be often realizing to our minds its Divine authority, and those invisible objects which it opens upon us. It speaks of a rest remaining for the people of God; and O! how much nobler a rest, than that of Canaan. Our true Joshua leads us on, as the Captain of our salvation. He conquers all our spiritual enemies by his invincible word, and will divide us an inheritance, an everlasting inheritance there, if we are faithful to the death. To-day after so long a time, are we still called to pursue it: let us therefore give diligence, that we may enter: and let those sabbaths, which are instituted in kind commemoration of God's having rested on the seventh day from his labours, and which are intended in some degree to anticipate the heavenly rest, be improved for this valuable purpose. So shall we ere long rest from our works, as God did from his, and after the labours of these few mortal days, shall enjoy immortal tranquillity and repose: we shall pass a perpetual sabbath in those elevations of pure devotion, which the sublimest moments of our most sacred and happy days here can teach us but imperfectly to conceive.
HAVING warned you against the fatal example of unbelief, which we see in God’s Israel of old, let me intreat you to dwell upon it, in your most serious and attentive reflections. For the word of God, which gives you this account, as well as that glorious person his essential word, by whom he manifested himself to Israel in the wilderness, [is] still living and efficacious, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing in the acutest manner that can be imagined, even to the separating between the soul and spirit, the respective principles of animal and rational life, and to the dividing the remotest and most closely connected parts of the body; so that it reaches to the joints and even to the marrow, contained in the bones. And, to speak in less figurative terms, as he [is] an exact discoverer of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, his word meets with the most secret purpose, and exerts a Divine authority, in controlling irregularities and disorders which no human

a The word of God] It is greatly debated among commentators, whether this is the understanding of Christ, or of the gospel and scripture revelation. I have endeavored to give a just rule in the sense; but admitting the latter preferable, I have only pointed that out; and believe any one versed in the energy of scripture will take it a very natural and usual sense.

b HEBREWS IV. 12. Mr. Pierce thinks there is an allusion here to the ancient by which they fell in the wilderness, whom he had often and so long been speaking of.

c Soul and Spirit, joint and marrow.] There seems in this text an evident reference to the doctrine of two principles, called soul and spirit, as the seats of rational and spiritual life; to discern these seems to be spoken of as an instance of the greatest penetration. Some have explained, as if he had said, he is able at pleasure to give a distinct word, as when the marrow is separated from the joints, or the soul from the spirit, death ensues. But I rather think the meaning of the latter clause is, he can divide the joints, and divide the marrow, that is, enter irresistibly into the soul, and produce perhaps some sentiment which it would not willingly have received; and sometimes discover and punish secret, as well as open wickedness.
13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 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.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

V. I. For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for

man eye can penetrate. And it may well be supposed that it should be so; for there is no creature, which is not apparent and manifested in his presence; but all things [are] naked, and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we are to give an account. He discerns them as the inwards of sacrificed animals are discerned, when their bodies are completely laid open, and therefore it will be altogether in vain to attempt a disguise before him.

Now on this consideration, and because the all-seeing God who is to be our final Judge, has displayed his mercy in directing our eyes to a Saviour, by whose mediation we are to be delivered from the fierceness of his deserved vengeance; let us, I say, by such powerful considerations be awakened to have recourse to him, and encouraged to confide in him, and to adhere to his cause amidst all opposition. Having therefore a great High Priest, who hath passed through the vail, and entered into the heavens, that he might there intercede with God for us, even Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession of faith in him, and never suffer the most violent attack to wrest it from us. For we have not an High Priest incapable of sympathising with our infirmities, but on the contrary, [one who] has a most tender feeling of them, having been himself tried in every respect, in like manner, [with us, yet] without any degree of sin, or any approach toward it, from which, amidst his severest trials, he remained perfectly free. Let us, therefore, humbly confiding in his intercession, approach with freedom of speech to the throne of grace, to present our petitions, that we may receive that mercy which he hath been appointed to purchase, and may find grace from that throne for our seasonable assistance, according to our respective necessities.

I speak of Christ under the character of the V. I. great High Priest with evident propriety, to which I hope you will attend; for every high priest taken from among men, as those of the Mosaic

d Naked and laid bare.] It has been well observed, that these two words contain a graceful allusion to the custom in sacrificing of flaying off the skin from the victim, and cutting it open, whereby all the vitals and inwards are exposed to full view; as γυναικος signifies what had no cover, and περιγυναικος, what had no concealment within. See Blackwell's Sacred Classics, Vol. I. p. 231.

e Every high priest.] All the following discourse is intended to moderate their regards.
Mosaic ritual are, is constituted, or chosen for the benefit of men, and set over things which relate to the service and honour of God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins in an acceptable manner. Being able to proportion his compassion to those that are ignorant, and wandering from the exact paths of God's commandments, for whom alone, you know, sin-offerings are provided; because he himself also is incident to infirmity. And for this reason it is necessary that he should offer an appointed expiatory sacrifice for sins on his own account, as well as for the people, and should make way for their sin-offering by the presentation of his own.

And this is so awful an office, that no man who has any regard to duty or safety, taketh it to himself; but he only wears it who is called of God for that purpose, as Aaron [6] so Christ also, we well know, did not glory himself to be made an high-priest; he did not aspire to, or seize upon this exalted office without a proper call; but he raised him to this conspicuous dignity, who said unto him, in the place quoted and pleaded above, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. As also in another [place], which it will be proper to take very particular notice of, (Psal. cx. 4) He saith to him whom he had called to sit on his right-hand, thou [art] a Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec.

Such a priest shall we presently see our great Redeemer to have been, even that compassionate Saviour, who in the days of his flesh, and while he sojourned here amidst the infirmities and calamities to which human nature is obnoxious, being assaulted with the utmost violence by the

for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the ways for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

And by reason hereof he might, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, before his time in the pomp and splendor of it.

If this day have I begotten thee.] This will by no means prove he was not a High Priest, before his resurrection from the dead; and indeed if it signifies that his priesthood is to be dated only from the day of his resurrection, not to mention the other absurdities of that supposition, it would contrary to the judgment of those who bring it in this view, prove, that Christ was a Priest while he was upon earth, that is, during the period between his resurrection and ascension.
the powers of darkness, offered repeated prayers and supplications, which were attended with humble prostrations, a strong cry and flowing tears to him who was able to save him from death, and his supplications were not in vain; for though his heavenly Father did not think fit to exert that power in his total deliverance; yet he was heard in being delivered from that which he particularly feared, and which threw him into such an agony in the garden, that he sweat drops of blood. It is indeed a wonderful, but at the same time a very instructive dispensation, and therefore worthy of our deep consideration and reflection; that though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and was trained up for more eminent services, by a series of painful discipline. And being thus consecrated to God by his own blood, in virtue of which he was installed in his priestly office, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him; to all that practically own his authority, as well as profess a dependence on his grace; being, as we observed before, Called and denominated of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec: Concerning whom by the way, it is necessary that before we dismiss this argument, we speak, having much discourse, and some of it perhaps hard to be understood; not so much from the difficulty of the thing itself, as because you are slow and sluggish of hearing, and your minds are not awakened to that attention to these things, which might reasonably be

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8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by things which he suffered:

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him;

10 Called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

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[1] From that which he particularly feared.] So I chose to render and explain the words, though Bishop Fell and some others, taking occasion for a religious reverence of God, (compare chap. xii. 22) interpret it, as if it had been said, that his piety rendered his prayer acceptable. Dr. Whitby has said so much to confute this sense, and establish the rendering in the paraphrase, that I need not add more, but refer to the note on Luke xxii. 42, (Vol. VII. p. 549 note h,) for a further illustration of the general interpretation given to this text.

[2] Learned obedience.] He found he must suffer, and by one degree of suffering was better fitted for another. As Christ's human soul advanced gradually in knowledge, so also in the perfection of virtue, though always free from any defilement of sin; and his patient and cheerful submission was improved by every trial.—But Dr. Whitby would render it, he taught obedience to others by it.

[3] Being made perfect.] Archbishop Tillotson would translate it having attained the end of his race through sufferings, that is, pass through sufferings in his way to consummate glory. (Compare John xix. 30; Luke xiii. 32; Heb. ii. 10.) But Dr. Jackson would render it, being consecrated, and is large in shewing how Christ might be said to be consecrated to his priestly office by his passion. Compare chap. vii. 28, ii. 10. See Dr. Jackson's Works, Tom. ii. Book ix. p. 943, &c. and Dr. Owen on chap. ii. 10.
be expected from you: and especially as you are much prejudiced against every thing which may seem to lessen the glory of the Levitical priesthood: For indeed, whereas you ought for the time that you have been under the instructions of the gospel, to have been qualified to be teachers of others, you are so attached to Jewish ceremonies and forms, that ye have need again that one should lead you back as it were to some of the first principles of religion, relating to the ends and purposes of Christ's death, and teach you what [are] the first initial elements of the Divine oracles, so that you seem to be in a state of infancy as to these things, and are become persons who have need of milk, and not of strong food, such as suits a manly age and robust constitution. For every one who partaketh of milk, and subsists on that, without being able to digest strong food, is to be considered as unskillful in the word of righteousness, that is in the gospel, which directs us in the true way to justification by the blood and righteousness of the great Redeemer; for he is yet but an infant, and a compassionate regard must be paid to him under this view, in hope that he may hereafter attain to a superior stature, and more vigorous age. But strong food belongs to full grown men, who by long use and habit, have [their] senses exercised so as to be able readily to distinguish between both good and evil; which if they cannot, there may indeed be danger of being imposed upon by that which would be unwholesome to their souls; though administered under the pretence of being fit to nourish them, and adapted to persons of most eminent attainments.

IMPROVEMENT.

May we all experience more of the efficacy of the Divine word upon our hearts. May we all be more and more thoughtful of the account we are to give up of ourselves to God; and of that perfect discerning which he has not only of our actions, but the secrets of our hearts, that we may never be about to conceal any thing from him, before whom all things are naked and open.
When we consider how many evils this all-penetrating eye hath discerned there, let it teach us to rejoice in that compassionate High-Priest, who hath undertaken our cause; which could never succeed in any other hand. And let it embolden our petitions in humble expectation, that we shall not only receive that mercy without which we perish, but grace to strengthen and help us in proportion to all our necessities. And when pressed with temptations, let it revive us to recollect, that he was in all points tempted as we are, so far as it was consistent with the perfect innocence which his office required, and which always gained new lustre by every attempt of the enemy to obscure and pollute it.

Let inferior ministers in God's sanctuary learn to imitate him; and being themselves compassed with so many infirmities, have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way. And under a sense of our common weakness, let us all be earnest in our applications to the throne of grace for help. If Christ himself, in the days of his flesh, poured out supplications with strong crying and tears, let none of us imagine we can be safe in the neglect of prayer, or that we are ever to despond in any circumstances which leave room for devout ejaculations to God. Still he lives, who is able to save from death, and who can also hear us in that which we fear.

Let us wisely prepare for affliction. If Christ, though a Son, learned obedience by sufferings, how much more do we need the salutary lessons they teach. But let no sufferings prevent our adhering to him, who being consecrated by them to so high an office, is become the author of salvation, of eternal salvation, to his faithful followers. Let it ever be remembered, that it is to them that obey him, that this salvation is promised: may we be found in their number; and being entered as obedient disciples into his school, may we become proficients there; not such dull and for-getful scholars, as need to be led back daily to the first elements and first principles of the Divine oracles, not babes in Christ, and unskilful in the word of righteousness; but such as having our senses spiritually exercised to discern good and evil, may be capable of receiving and digesting strong meat, and may thereby grow stronger and stronger.
SECT. VI.

The Apostle declares his resolution of advancing to sublimer truths without dwelling farther upon the first principles, for the sake of those who might have apostatized from Christianity; and whose case he represents as very hopeless. Heb. VI. 1—9.

HEBREWS VI. 1.

We have had reason to complain, that too many of you are but in an infant state; yet I know, that as I intimated before, there are some among you, who can bear stronger food than the state of babes will admit: to such I would shew some regard. Dismissing therefore any farther discourse on the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us be carried on to perfection, and pursue more eminent degrees of improvement in it, and more advanced and elevated knowledge: not laying again the first foundation of Christianity, by inculcating the well-known necessity of repentance from dead works, from the practices of those who are dead in sin, and whereby the soul is defiled, as the priests of God were by the touch of a dead body; nor insisting on the importance of faith in the one living and true God, as the universal Lord of all; Nor leading you back to the doctrine of baptisms, those instituted under the Mosaic dispensation of the prophets, (which might in the nature of things render the doctrine of Christ's resurrection more credible to those who believed these,) or the resurrection of the Jewish people from Egypt, or deliverance from any other great extremity. Compare Isa. xxv. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 12. And the latter, that is, eternal judgment, he thinks may be explained of dreadful judgments inflicted of old, as upon the sinners of the old world, the inhabitants of Sodom, &c. I thought it not improper to propose so remarkable an interpretation, but not seeing any reason for confining several of the clauses to so contracted a sense, I have taken them in a much larger extent.

1 First principles.] Mr. Pierce understands all that follows as referring to the Jewish doctrines, which might be considered as the elements of the Christian. Repentance from dead works, that is, from sin, was a Jewish doctrine, and he thinks it had a peculiar reference to that solemn and public repentance on the day of atonement. Faith towards God, he considers as without any regard to the Messiah. The baptism he takes for the Jewish washings, observing that baptism in the plural number is never used in any other sense. Laying on of hands, he takes for the rite that attended sacrifices; and imagines that the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment, are either to be understood as principles common to Judaism and Christianity, or rather peculiar to the former; in which view, the resurrection of the dead refers either to the resurrection of particular persons under the Old Testament in confirmation of the Divine mission of the prophets, (which might in the nature of things render the doctrine of Christ's resurrection more credible to those who believed these,) or the resurrection of the Jewish people from Egypt, or deliverance from any other great extremity. Compare Isa. xxv. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 12. And the latter, that is, eternal judgment, he thinks may be explained of dreadful judgments inflicted of old, as upon the sinners of the old world, the inhabitants of Sodom, &c. I thought it not improper to propose so remarkable an interpretation, but not seeing any reason for confining several of the clauses to so contracted a sense, I have taken them in a much larger extent.

b Of baptisms.] Lord Barrington understands this of the baptism of water, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit, by which the first disciples among the Jews, and the first converts among the devout and idolatrous Gentiles were initiated. He also explains
That he might lead them on to perfection.

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baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

3 And this will we do, if God permit.

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have explains the laying on of hands, as referring to the immediate communication of spiritual gifts by means of the apostles. These he thinks were first principles, as baptism was the first entrance into the church, and laying on of hands, the great evidence of it, as faith and repentance are the substance of Christianity and a resurrection and eternal judgment the great motives leading men to embrace it. Bar. Misc. Esr. II. p. 116.

c The imposition of hands.] This answered such great purposes in the Christian church, as the appointed method of communicating important gifts, that it might well be mentioned among first principles. But it is by a very precarious consequence, that any can infer from hence the universal obligation of this rite, in admitting persons into full church-membership, or even to the ministry. See Pierce’s Vindicat. p. 463.

d For it is impossible.] This text has been the subject of great debate, which I must not by any means enter into here.—Compare Limb. Theol. 5. lxxiv. 10—19; Baxter’s Works. Vol. II. p. 505.—As to the phrase enlightened, it is certain, the ancient fathers early used it to express baptism. But in this view I much question the propriety of the phrase, and think that illumination, as well as regeneration, in the most important and scriptural sense of the words, were regularly to precede the administration of that ordinance. And I think that what the Papists, and some too ready to follow them, have taught of an extraordinary illumination following the administration of the ordinance of baptism, is very enthusiastic, and absolutely destitute of proof.

Heavenly.
If they fell away, after having been enlightened,

have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come:

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance: seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.
Their case would be deplorable and desperate.

In their case would be deplorable and desperate. they have been so gloriously demonstrated to them, they do in effect declare they look on Jesus as an impostor, who deserved what he met with; and they seem to ascribe the miraculous energy of the Spirit to some diabolical agency: which Christ himself represented as the sin that should never be forgiven. (Compare Mat. xii. 30, 31.)

We will therefore, without any farther efforts for the recovery of such, leave them to the awful sentence which he hath pronounced upon them. For whereas the earth that drinketh in the rain, which often cometh upon it, and produceth herbage fit for them by whom it is cultivated, partaketh of the Divine blessing, and wears a pleasant and delightful face; so shall those souls, who improve gospel-ordinances and Christian knowledge, so as to produce the fruits of holiness, be favourably accepted of God, and feel a Divine joy in themselves. But as that ground which bringeth forth only thorns and briers, under the same cultivation, and the same refreshing showers, is rejected as utterly useless; so likewise shall the unfruitful soul be deserted by God in righteous displeasure, and is near to that dreadful hour, when a curse shall come upon it never to be revoked. And as such a barren soil, whose case we have been describing, is at last burnt up by the violent heat of the sun, and becomes dry heath; so the end of such an unhappy creature shall be everlasting burning, in that miserable world, where all the means of grace and influences of the Spirit of God shall be for ever withdrawn, and the soul shall be given up to incurable wickedness, and eternal anguish. Such is the case of these wretched apostates; but I will enlarge no farther on this awful subject; for we are persuaded there is room to hope much better things of you, my beloved brethren, even things that accompany salvation, and do, as it were, bring it along with them; we have this cheerful expectation concerning you, though we think ourselves obliged thus to speak; that nothing in our power may be wanting to guard you against the greatest danger.

IMPROVE-

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

[1 Dry heath.] Heath is the emblem of the cursed man. Jerem. xvii. 5, 6. See Dr. Whitby in loc.
IMPROVEMENT.

In every respect, both with regard to knowledge and practice, let us go on to perfection: and if we cannot attain to it, let us Ver. rise as near it as we can! For this purpose, as Christians, let us 1, 2 remember what foundation has been already laid, of repentance and faith, of baptism, of a resurrection, and a future judgment; a judgment, eternal in its consequences, and therefore infinitely important. And let us remember, that as the building, in its highest advances, rests upon the foundation, and owes its stability to its union with it, so in like manner does our progress and advance in Christian prettiness stand in a near connection with our retaining these truths, though we by no means confine ourselves to them.

4 It is by a continual care to improve in them, that we shall most happily escape the danger, the dreadful danger of apostacy, to which we may otherwise be exposed. And O! let the awful passage before us be duly attended to in this view! Let us not 5 rest in any enlightening we may have received, in any taste we may have had of the heavenly gift, of the good word of God, or the powers of the world to come, nor in any operation of the Spirit of God upon our minds, to form them to the most splendid talents, and qualify us for the most pompous external services. Men may have all these, and yet fall away, and their guilt become more aggravated: they may injure the Redeemer so much the more in proportion to all they have known of him; and indeed will be capable of wounding him the deeper by their apostacy, and of exposing him to greater infamy. Let us daily pray to be delivered from so great an evil! We are not left to be like a barren wilderness; the rain from on high comes often upon us; and we enjoy the choicest cultivation: may we bring forth fruits meet for him by whom we are dressed, the genuine fruits of practical, vital religion. So shall we receive a blessing from God, and flourish more and more, till we are transplanted to the paradise above.

8 But as for those unhappy creatures who still continue to bring forth briars and thorns, let them dread that final rejection which will be the portion of those who persist in abusing the Divine goodness; let them dread the curse, the awful, the irrevocable curse, to be pronounced on such; let them dread the everlasting death with which their souls shall be parched, when ordinances, when the workings of the Spirit of God, when the common comforts and supports of this mortal animal life, shall be no more.

Gladly
Gladly do the ministers of Christ entertain better hopes concerning those committed to their care, while yet there is room for hope, though faithfulness to God, and to the souls of men, obliges them to speak in the language of such cautions as these. May Divine grace apply it to those who are particularly concerned in it, and plant what hath hitherto been a barren and abandoned desart, with such fruits of holiness, as may transform it into the garden of the Lord.

SECT. VII.

Addressing himself to sincere believers, the Apostle comforts them with a view of the goodness of God, and his fidelity to those sacred engagements into which he hath condescended to enter; the performance of which is farther sealed by the entrance of Christ into heaven as our forerunner. Heb. VI. 10, to the end.

Heb. VI. 10. 

And we desire, that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

a Through faith and long suffering inherit the promises. Mr. Pierce explains this of the Gentiles who were converted to Christianity. If it be intended as a hint to stir up the Jews to emulation, as he supposes, it is indeed a very obscure one:

Heb. VI. 10.

JUST now mentioned my hopes of your complete salvation; and I have reason to entertain such hopes, as well knowing the benevolent and pious dispositions which many of you have expressed. For God is not unrighteous, or unmindful of his gracious promises, so as to forget your diligent work and labour in his service, animated by a principle of unfeigned love, which you have manifested, not only to your brethren, but to his name also, in having ministered, and in still ministering. As his Providence gives you opportunity, to the necessities of the saints. And we heartily wish that this temper were as universal as it is commendable where it prevails; so that every one of you, into whose hands this epistle may come, might shew the same diligence and exert the same studious care, in order to establish the full assurance of your hope, even unto the end of your Christian course; by which hope you must still be supported, while in this world; That so on the whole you may not be sluggish and indolent, but imitators of those, who, through the exercises of faith and long-suffering, do now reap the blessed fruit of these graces, and inherit the promises which God hath
hath made to support and cherish them in the hearts of his people through every age.

And a glorious confirmation you will find these promises to be, when you come to compare one spiritual object with another, and are better skilled in the method of interpreting the sacred oracles, on principles which I am going to lay down. For I may in the first place lead you to observe, that when God made the great and comprehensive promise to Abraham, (Gen. xii. 2, 3, and xvii. 1—5,) on which so much of our hope as Christians doth also depend, the promise that he would be a God to him, and that all nations should be blessed in his seed; seeing he had no greater [a person] to swear by, he swore by himself, even by the honours of his own sacred and Divine name; Saying, by an audible voice from heaven when he repeated the promise, while Abraham stood with Isaac before that altar on which with humble submission to the Divine appointment he had just before laid him, (Gen. xxii. 16, 17,) "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that blessing I will assuredly bless thee, and multiplying I will assuredly multiply thee." I will bless and multiply thee remarkably, so as to make thy seed as "the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore." And thus having waited long in humble faith and patience, he obtained, in due time, the accomplishment of the promise, first in the birth of Isaac, and then, after a much longer attendance, the consummation of a better hope. And we whose circumstances so happily resemble his in this respect, may well follow the example of his faith, when we survey the foundation of it. For men truly swear by a [being] greater than themselves, to whom they

for comparatively it is in a low sense, in which Christians in the imperfect state can be said to take the promise. I rather think that reference to all good men, who were dispersed out of one world, whether in former or latter days, and quizz sooner whatever dispensation they died—taking it in this sense, it will be (as several have observed,) an argument against the evil's continuing in a state of stop during the interminable period between death and the resurrection.

b Multiplying, I will multiply thee.] That part of the promise to Abraham which immediately follows the clause here quoted, in Gen. xxii. 17, most certainly relates to the Gentiles; and therefore had the generic intended ver. 12. of this chapter in the sense in which Mr. Pierce explains it, of the Gentiles coming to Christianity, I cannot think he would have stopped short at multiplying, I will multiply thee, and omitted what follows, of making him "the prince of the power of the air, and at the head of the sea above, and in the seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,"
and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us;

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail,

Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

ascrIBE that knowledge and power, which is supposed to render him the object of their veneration and worship; and an oath, when thus taken for confirmation [is] to them an end of all farther strife and contention. On which account, the blessed God, in humble condescension to our infirmities, being willing in the most abundant manner to manifest to the heirs of the promise, the immutability of his counsel, and his determinate resolution of bestowing upon them the blessings he engaged, interposed with the solemnity of an oath. That by two immutable things, in each of which [it is] impossible for God to lie, even his word and his oath, we might have strong consolation, even we who in humble obedience to the gracious designs of his gospel, have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope laid before us, the noble prize which that gospel proposes as the great object of our ambition and pursuit; I speak of eternal life, the hope of which through the Divine goodness we have, and I trust we shall resolutely retain it, as an anchor of the soul, both secure and steadfast, and as entering into the place within the vail, the holy of holies, where God dwells, and where we hope to dwell for ever with him. This anchor will indeed be sufficient to enable us to out-ride all the storms of temptation, being fixed in that glorious, though invisible world, whether Jesus as the Forerunner is entered for us, to take possession of glory in our name, and prepare all things necessary for our admittance into it: even he [who is] made an High-Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec; as we are going more largely to shew.

IMPROVEMENT.

With what amazing condescension doth God, by his apostles, speak of those works and labours of love, which the persons who have performed them with the greatest simplicity of heart, know to be most undeserving of his regard! How kindly hath he made himself a debtor to us, or rather to his own promise and oath, so that it would indeed be unrighteous in him to fail those expectations which nothing in ourselves could possibly raise! Let us then be animated to the greatest diligence, by a full assurance of hope. There are those who inherit the promises, of which we are the heirs, and they have passed to that glorious inheritance by the
The Apostle having mentioned Melchisedec,

the exercise of faith and patience. Let us chide our sluggish souls into a more resolute imitation of them. And when they are ready to sink into indolence again, let us again awaken them by viewing those promises, and the fidelity of that God who hath made them, and who hath added, by a condescension that can never be sufficiently acknowledged and adored, the sanction of his oath to that of his word. Behold the strong consolation which he hath given.

And given to whom? To those who fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. Thither let us fly for our lives; fly, as if we heard the footsteps of the avenger of blood just behind us, and our lives depended upon the speed of the present moment. Happy the souls that have found this refuge! whose faith and hope like a strong and steady anchor, hath entered into heaven, hath fixed on that blessed Redeemer who lives and reigns there, who appears as an Intercessor for his people, and intercedes with such efficacy and success, that he is also to be regarded as their Forerunner, as gone to prepare a place for them. Let us constantly retain that view of him; and while we continue exposed to all the labours and sorrows of mortality, let us seek our safety and our comfort by fixing our regards upon him, waiting continually the aids of his grace, till he shall see fit to call us to fill the place he hath provided, and receive the inheritance he hath secured for us.

SECT. VII.

The Apostle enters into a parallel between Melchisedec and Christ, as agreeing in title and descent; and from various respects, in which the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior to the Levitical priesthood, infers also the superior glory of the priesthood of Christ. Heb. VII. 1—17.

I have again and again mentioned that scripture, in which the Messiah is spoken of in prophecy, as made a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Now I think, it may be worth our while to dwell a little more intently on the contemplation of this subject; and then we shall find, that without straining the allegory, it holds in a variety of instructive particulars: for this Melchisedec, of whom Moses speaks in that celebrated history, (Gen. xiv. 18, &c.) to which David refers, [zeus] king of Salem, and priest of the most high God: in both which offices
God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the Kings, and blessed him; for a Kings not God, Abraham, when returning from the slaughter of the kings, who had taken Lot prisoner, with the king of Sodom, Gomr-r rah, and the neighbouring cities of the plain. And we are expressly told, that he blessed him on this occasion, that is, he pronounced on Abraham himself a blessing in the name of God to whom he ministered. To whom also Abraham divided the tenth of all the spoils he had brought back, in token of his reverence to the office he bore. And indeed when we come to consider his name and title according to the signification of it in the Hebrew language, we shall find it bear a remarkable analogy to that of our Lord Jesus Christ: for first, his name Melchisedec, being interpreted, signifies that he [is] King of righteousness, or a most righteous sovereign; and then, his title taken from the place where he resided and ruled, is, King of Salem, that is, King of Peace; for it is well known that Salem in the Hebrew tongue is peace, as Melech is King, and Tsedec righteousness.

Now if we come to compare this Melchisedec, this King of righteousness and peace, with the Mosaic priests, we shall find a remarkable difference in many respects, in all which there is a resemblance between him and our Lord. For instance, whereas it is necessary the Jewish priests should all be of the family of Aaron, and there are several laws concerning the descent and qualities of their mothers, which must be observed and recorded, in order to make out their legitimacy, and their consequent right to serve at the altar, Melchisedec is, as it were, without father, and without mother, neither his father

a Abraham divided the tenth.] The objection which Mr. Chubb has brought against this from Gen. xiv. 23, as if it were Melchisedec who paid tithes to Abraham, and not Abraham to Melchisedec, is really trifling; a change of person, without express notice given of it, being usual in the sacred scriptures, and in all writers, and languages; not to observe, that the version of the Seventy in the common editions, and in that copy which is printed in the polyglot, instead of His, expressly reads Abraham. But Mr. Chubb's particular exceptions have been so abundantly answered by the author of the case of Abraham and Melchisedec, Jacob and Esau, &c., considered, published anno 1746, against Chubb's four Dissertations, that I need not particularly enlarge. This may however be a proper place to observe, that the relative must evidently refer to the remote antecedent in the following passages, Luke xvii. 16. Acts xxiii. 29. 2 Kings xviii. 19. Psal. cv. 37. Acts vii. 5. Dent. xxxi. 92. 23. Gen. xiv. 20, &c.

b Without father, without mother.] It has been
To whom Abraham gave the tenth of his spoils:

father nor his mother are mentioned in scripture; and he is without pedigree, or any written account of his genealogy, by which it may be traced up to more distant progenitors of the priestly order; and herein he answers to Christ, who with respect to his human nature, had no father, nor any mother with regard to his Divine. Again, as there was a certain age at which the Jewish priests entered upon their ministry in the tabernacle or temple and at which they quitted it, Melchisedec having neither beginning of days nor end of life, mentioned in scripture, but living in that respect as if he were immortal, and therein made like the Son of God, who existed before all worlds, he remaineth a priest for ever.

4 Now I doubt not, my brethren, but that as I proceed in this argument, you see and reflect, how great a man was the Melchisedec [see], to whom, as I hinted above, even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of all the spoils he had recovered from the king of Shinar and his allies.

5 And this will be farther illustrated, by considering that truly they of the descendants of Levi who receive the Aaronical priesthood, have according to the law by which they are constituted, a commandment, and in consequence of that, a right only to take the people that is their brethren, though indeed coming as well as themselves, out of the laws of Abraham: But he of whom we speak was observed by many, and a great light the sun should be concealed of it here, but several ancient historians of the Alexandrians, and some of the Fathers, as Tertullian, and afterward I Irenaeus, when they were only to express it, that their father was unknown. See Horae on the Mosaic Law, p. 62 of the Greek; and also some remarkable quotations to show that it was usual among the Greeks, to say of a person that he was archon, archon, without father, without mother, when his parents were unknown. And accordingly several of the fathers imagine, that this is here asserted of Melchisedec, because there is no mention made of his parents in the several scriptures. But the reason, in Elsner’s opinion, is, that there was no trace of his patrimony in the records, as being without parents, or ancestors; and as it immediately follows, not carnally, the previous.

As the genealogy

4. Now consider how great this man was among whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

5. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they came out of the loins of Abraham.

of our Lord is so distinctly delivered both by the evangelists Matthew and Luke, there may seem here to be a failure in the resemblance. I therefore add the words words as determining it to the idea of some priestly ancestors, which will render the propriety very conspicuous, and is agreeable to Elsner’s interpretation mentioned in the note above.

d Remained a priest for ever.] Bishop Burnet would transcribe this clause, He was a priest of God for ever, made like unto the Son of God. I cannot forbear observing, that I think his interpretation and illustration of this scripture, 1 Thess. p. 117, the best I remember to have seen.

e How great a man.] This is a severe stroke upon the Jews, not only as it presseth the superior dignity of Christ above the Aaronical priesthood, but also that God had of old a people among the Gentiles, and that there was a person among them superior to Abraham himself.
He was therefore superior to the Levitical priests.

6 But he whose descent is not counted from them, received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

7 And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better.

8 And here men that die receive tithes: but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

9 And as I may so say, Levi also who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham.

10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received

we have now been speaking, whose pedigree is not reckoned from them, nor had any relation at all to the Abrahamic family, took tithes of Abraham himself, and even blessed him who had received the promises, so much celebrated in your history through every generation. But without all contradiction, the inferior is blessed of the superior, rather than the superior of the inferior: so that while pronouncing this blessing upon Abraham, Melchisedec evidently acted in an higher character than the patriarch himself sustained at that time, and in that circumstance. And again, it may farther be observed for the illustration of this argument, that here, under the institution of Moses, men who die, receive tithes; the priests of that dispensation are mortal men, like their brethren; but there, in the case of Melchisedec, he receiveth them of whom it is only testified in scripture, that he liveth, but of whose death we have no account; and in that respect, he may be said to bear some resemblance to the ever-living, and ever-blessed Jesus. And indeed as one may say 

and in his person, even Levi, who in his posterity received the tithes of the other descendants of Israel, was himself tythed. For he was yet in the loins of [his] father Abraham, when Melchisedec met him upon the occasion I have just been mentioning.

Now I introduce all these reflections, to lead you to consider the aspect this wears as to the gospel, and the view it gives of its superior excellence in comparison of the law. And I may reason thus upon the premises, If perfection had been by the Levitical priesthood, and no more excellent atonement and intercession than theirs

[As one may say: we say. Ymir.] Else-ner is of opinion, (Obscr. Sacr. Vol. 11. p. 258.) that this should be translated, to say the truth; alluding, that it is not accessible to the respect we owe to the apostle's character, to suppose that he inserted these words as an apology for an assertion in itself not strictly just and exact; and he produces some passages out of the classics to vindicate this version. But the justness of it is largely controverted by Raphelus, Annal. cx Herod. in loc.

[In the lains of Abraham.] Christ could not be said to be so, because of his extraordinary descent; otherwise the argument would, I think, have been

conclusive, as it would have been proved that Christ, as well as Levi, paid tithes in Abraham.

h Now—if perfection, &c. Elsener justly observes, (Obscr. Sacr. Vol. 11. 351.) that this is not to be considered as a consequence flowing directly from the verses immediately preceding, as might be concluded from the rendering of the vulgar and Erasmus Schmidtius, and our common translation: but that it is the beginning of a new paragraph, or branch of discourse; and that if not we should be rendered, but if, or, which is much the same, now if, in support of which he produces several authorities.

i For
there's could be expected, (for you know that it was under it that the people received the law, that is, it was a part of the legal appointment to which a multitude of other precepts in the ritual referred, and on which the possibility of performing them depended,) what further need [was there] that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchisedec, and that he should not be reckoned according to the order of Aaron?

12 This will draw after it a long train of extensive and important consequences; for the priesthood being changed, there must of necessity also be a change of the law: for as I hinted above, all the ceremonial law depended upon it; and if our regards be directed to another priest, who is not of the family of Aaron, there is then an end of the obligation to the ritual, which confined all its precepts to priests of that line, and supposed that as long as it was binding, they would always subsist and bear office. And that is now evidently the case, for the person of whom these things are spoken, belongeth to another tribe, of whom no one appertained to the Jewish altar, or had any right to minister at it. For [it is] plain that our Lord Jesus Christ, the only true Messiah, foretold by David in the passage I have been discoursing upon, sprung from Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing at all relating to the priesthood he ordained, so as to reserve any right of sacerdotal minstry to them, more than to any other tribe in Israel. And independent on all genealogical controversy, which the most ingenious malice could urge concerning Mary's family, it is yet more abundantly manifest, from the least attention to that single scripture alone which I have so frequently mentioned, that there arises another priest according to the similitude of Melchisedec. Who therefore, we may assure ourselves, is made and constituted not according or in regard to the law of the carnal commandment, that system of ceremonial precepts received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron.

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertained to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

14 For it is evident that our Lord sprung out of Judah: of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

16 Who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after

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1 Sprung from Judah.] It may be worth remembering here, that Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Chrysostom, refer to the table made at the taxation, in proof of this; and it may be considered whether the apostle does not insinuate the same reference. See Dr. Barrow's Works, Vol. II., p. 188. Undoubtedly he would not have spoken with such confidence, if it had not been generally allowed.

2 That there arises.] Dr. Whitby proves by many convincing authorities, that the particle it sometimes signifies that, as it is plain it here does.
after the power of an endless life.

17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.

precepts which contained so many things of an external, and comparatively of a carnal nature, and which considered men as dwelling in mortal flesh, and so to succeed each other; but according to the undecaying power of an indis- solvable and endless life. For you will be careful to remember what he testifieth, Thou[17] art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec: which implieth all that I have asserted concerning Christ. Let us reflect upon it with pleasure, that he retains his priesthood for ever; and therefore is able to give everlasting efficacy to his administration, and everlasting blessings to those who cast themselves upon its protection, animated by the glorious promises which it exhibits.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let our souls adore the King of righteousness, and the King of peace; submitting to him under the former title, that we may experience the peace which he gives, and which none can take away. Let us repose our confidence in the Son of God, who without beginning of days, or end of life, abideth a priest for ever; a priest on a throne, to confirm the counsels of eternal peace transacted between the Father and himself. (Zech. vi. 13.) To him do all the prophets bear witness, to him did all the patriarchs render humble homage, and his blessing was that which rendered Abraham, the father of the faithful, blessed indeed. He sprang from the tribe of Judah, and was the Shiloh that was to come before it ceased to be a tribe, according to the ancient oracle of dying Jacob. (Gen. xlix. 10.) But the honours of the priesthood are now transferred to, and centered in him, not according to the law of a carnal commandment, but the superior power of an endless life. Let us rejoice that his life is endless, and that by him we may likewise attain to an endless life, to an immortality of glory. The priests of the Old Testament, the ministers of the New, as well as private believers under both dispensations, die; but the eternally prevailing priesthood of Jesus gives us life in death, and entitles us to the hope of that glorious world, where

1 Of an endless life.] Archbishop Tilloon thinks the gospel is called the power of an endless life to intimate the powerful influence which the views of immortality proposed by it, will have upon the mind. (Vol. III. p. 407.) I have therefore kept that thought a little in view, though I am far from imagining it to be the chief de- sign of the expression.
he will put his own likeness and splendor upon us, and make us in our inferior degrees of dignity, immortal kings and priests to God, even the Father: to him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Rev. i. 6.)

SECT. IX.

From what has been said above, the Apostle argues, that the Aaronical priesthood was not only excelled, but vindicated and consummated by that of Christ; and by consequence that the obligation of the law was dissolved. Heb. VII. 18, to the end.

I HAVE been discoursing largely on the resemblance between Melchisedec and Christ; and I may fairly argue from hence, not only the superior dignity and excellence of Christ; and the freedom of Jews as well as Christians, from the obligations of the ceremonial law. Let me urge it therefore plainly, that there is an abolition of the former commandment in all its extent of ritual observances, because of its weakness and unprofitableness: for weak and unprofitable it appears to be, in comparison of that everlasting priesthood which I have just now mentioned.

For the law of Moses made nothing perfect, but left in its most essential institutions, as we shall presently shew, the manifest traces and evidences of its own imperfection; whereas full provision for our pardon and sanctification, must be ascribed to the introduction of a better hope, by a dispensation of a far superior nature, by which we now under the gospel draw near to God in cheerful dependance upon the efficacious intercession of our ever-living and glorious High Priest: A High Priest, evidently superior to any of the Aaronical line, on many other accounts, and we may add on this likewise, inasmuch as (he was) not constituted without the solemnity of an oath on the part of God; intended no doubt to shew the great importance of what he was to transact. For they indeed are become priests by a general Divine

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a The law made nothing perfect.] Mr. Pierce includes these words in a parenthesis: as if the Apostle had said, "Since the law made nothing perfect, it could not make the priesthood so; it could not remove the guilt of sin, or give strength to obey its commands."

b An oath.] Which argues the solemnity and importance, and also the immutability of the action.

c Better
And Jesus is the surety of a better covenant.

were made without an oath, but this with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec;

22 By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better testament.

23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

26 For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled

Divine ordination, without the interposition of an oath at their investiture; but he, of whom he have been speaking, was set apart to his office with an oath, by him, who said unto him, the Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec. Now by so much dignity as such an introduction to his office by the oath of God adds to him, does it appear that Jesus our Lord is preferable to Aaron and his sons: from whence it is natural to infer, that he is the Surety of a better covenant; or that the covenant of which he is the great Guarantee between God and man, is more excellent than that, of which Aaron and his sons might be said to be sureties in reference to certain acts which they were to perform on the part of the people to God, and in the name of God to the people, with which promises of temporal pardon and blessings are connected; for to them alone did that covenant extend.

And again, I may further observe that there were many priests, because they were hindered by death from continuing in the perpetual executions of their office. But he, because he abideth for ever, and is risen to a life of immortal glory in the heavens, where he shall reign as long as any can need the benefit of his ministrations, hath a priesthood that never passeth over to another as his successor. From whence also it appears, that he is able to save to the uttermost, that is always and completely to save, those who humbly approach to God by him as their appointed High-Priest, always living to intercede for them, in every circumstance of their respective lives, through all successive ages and generations.

Let us pause, therefore, and enjoy the comfort of so glorious a truth; for the more we reflect upon it, the more consolation shall we derive from it. Exactly such an High-Priest as this, indeed suited us; his character most perfectly corresponded to our circumstances and necessities, [who was] solemnly set apart to his office by the highest authority, and in the execution of it, entirely holy, harmless in himself, unpol-
luted by others, separate from all defiling society of sinners, though mercifully conversant among them; and to complete all, a person of such dignity of nature, and so eminently dear to God, as to be made higher than the heavens; and all their inhabitants, far more superior to the noblest of them, than Aaron himself to the meanest Levite who ministered in the tabernacle.

27 Glorious High-Priest indeed! who had not daily necessity, as those high priests appointed by Moses, first to present sacrifices for his own sins and then for those of the people: of the former of these he never had any need, nor could there be any room for it; and this last he did once for all, in offering himself as a spotless and acceptable sacrifice to God. For the law, as is well known, constituted men high priests, who have information of their own, which need expiation; but the word of the oath, which reaches beyond the law, and of which I have so largely been speaking, constitutes that office, the only begotten Son of God, who is consecrated for ever to the execution of it, and is the great substance of what they were only dim and imperfect shadows.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let the introduction of the better hope which we receive by Jesus Christ, and which bringeth the greatest perfection of happiness to those that embrace it, fill our hearts with thankfulness to God, and with a solicitous zeal to secure an interest in it. Let us draw near to God under his supporting influence, and be quickened thereby to purify ourselves from all pollutions of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God; in firm dependence upon that great High Priest, whom he hath constituted with the solemnity of an oath, as the great Surety and Guarantee of the better covenant.

God helps the frailty of our nature, by transmitting his promises to us through the hands of his Son, and by giving us such a proof of his gracious regards, as his incarnation and sufferings afford: in which it is certain, that God hath already done what is far more

defiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;
We have an High-Priest in Heaven.

more astonishing than any thing which he hath promised farther to do. And Jesus takes his covenant-people under his care, and graciously engages to watch over them for their good, and to communicate to them all such assistances of his grace as may be sufficient to induce them to answer their part of the engagement.

He is possessed of an unchangeable priesthood: let us daily look to him, as knowing, that in consequence of the intercession, which he ever lives to make, he is ever able completely to save all that come unto God by him. Let us every day, and every hour, have recourse to him as the Mediator of our approaches to God. And let us make the thoughts of him familiar to our minds, the thought of his sanctity, his dignity, and his love: confiding in that sacrifice he hath once for all offered for his people, being above all need of sacrificing for himself. To conclude, while we cheer and strengthen our hearts with such contemplations as these, let us always consider the obligation which the character of our High-Priest and our Saviour lays upon us, to be ourselves holy, harmless, and undefiled, and to maintain a separation from sinners, so far as the duties of life, in the present circumstances of the world, may admit.

SECT. VII.

The Apostle briefly recapitulates what he had before demonstrated of the superior dignity of Christ as the High-Priest of Christians, and farther illustrates the distinguished excellence of that new covenant which was foretold by Jeremiah as established in him, and plainly enriched with much better promises than the old. Heb. VIII. 1, to the end.

IIEWEBS VII. 1.

NOW of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum: we have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens:

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which

IIEWEBVS VIII. 1.

NOW the chief article of the things which have been spoken, in the preceding parts of this discourse, [is this] that we have such a great and illustrious High-Priest as hath been describ-

ed, made after the order of Melchisedec, and by the oath of God himself invested with immortal honours; who having on earth performed all that was necessary, by way of prepara-
tion, hath now sat down on the right-hand of the majestic throne in the heavens, (compare chap. i. 3, note h,) exalted by the Divine authority to rule over all things, for the glory of God, and the good of his people. And we are ever to re-gard him under his priestly, as well as his royal character as a minister of holy things, and of the
the true tabernacle, which not man, but the Lord himself, hath pitched: a sanctuary infinitely superior to any which human hands could be concerned in rearing, and proportionable to the boundless wisdom, power, and magnificence of God.

3 For every High-Priest, who ministers there, is constituted to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore it was necessary that this man also, even the glorious person of whom I speak, should have something to prevent. But we may observe by the way, that if he were always to continue on earth, he could not, in any consistence with the Jewish institutions, have been a priest, to officiate at the temple of God in Jerusalem; as there are already a certain order of priests there, who offer the gifts of the people, according to the law, and it is expressly settled, that none of any other family should have access to these services; nor would it have been agreeable to the Divine schemes, that Jesus should, by extraordinary dispensation, have interfered with their peculiar functions. These he left entirely to those priests, who performed divine service to an economy, which contains only the example and shadow of celestial things: as Moses was charged by the oracle, when he was about to finish the tabernacle, for see, saith he [that] thou make all things according to the model shown thee upon the mountain, lest an error, which may seem to thee small, should be more material than thou art aware. (Exod. xxv. 40.) Now this exactness was required in special regard to the typical representations couched under these ordinances, the particulars of which Moses himself did not perfectly understand. But he, that is, Christ hath the Lord pitched, and not man.

3 For every High-Priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore it is of necessity, that this man have somewhat also to offer.

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.

5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle. For, see (said he) that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.

6 But now hath he obtained...
hath now much nobler services allotted to him in that heavenly sanctuary, inasmuch as he is the Mediator even of a better covenant than that in which the Jewish high priest mediated; which was established upon better promises than those of the Mosaic law: for they only referred to the blessings of a temporal Canaan, to be enjoyed by the people, while they continued obedient to its precepts, which placed them under such a special providence, as the nature of that dispensation absolutely required, and made them a spectacle to the whole world.

This superior excellence of that economy which our Lord introduces, might indeed have been concluded from its being exhibited after the Mosaic: for, as we know God never alters but for the better; if that first [covenant] had been esteemed so faultless, as to have no remaining deficiency, there would have been no place sought for the second; yet we in fact see this intimation of an exception taken to it: For finding fault with them, that is, with the Jews, to whom he was addressing, he saith by the prophet Jeremiah, in that celebrated text which undoubtedly refers to the gospel-dispensation, (Jer. xxxi. 31.) Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. And he expressly mentions the superior excellence of the covenant there referred to, when compared with that which was transacted on mount Sanaï. For he adds there, The transaction shall not be according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; as you well know it was while the great work of conducting them to Canaan was yet imperfect, that the law of Moses was given;) because they continued not in my covenant, and I disregarded

Finding fault with them.] This is translated by Grotius and others, finding fault, he saith to them, and understood of finding fault with the former covenant. But that covenant was certainly wise and good, and adapted to the purpose for which it was designed and appointed. It seems therefore much more proper to understand it, finding fault with the Jews, (as God evidently does in the words preceding those quoted here, Jer. xxxi. 29, 30,) for using the proverb against which he expresses so much displeasure in Ezek.xviii.

2. And in the words themselves he also finds fault with them for breaking this covenant, though he had with so much tender care brought them out of the land of Egypt, Baphneus in loc. translates the words under consideration (μετατρέπεται τας προφητικας λέξεις) finding fault with them he saith; agreeably to our common translation; and justifies this version by the authority of Chrysostom, a Greek father, and by two passages from Hierodorus, where μετατρέπεται is used with a tative case after it.
disregarded them, saith the Lord. For this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days; that is, in the times of the Messiah, with the Lord, I will give my laws to their soul, and I will inscribe them upon their hearts, in more lasting characters than those in which I wrote the commandments on the tables of stone; and I will be unto them for a God, and they shall be to me for a people: I will answer all the import of that high relation to them, and they shall persist in their obedience to me. And they shall no more have need to teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them even to the greatest of them. They shall have a much more certain and effectual teaching than they can teach one from another. For I will be merciful to their unrighteous deeds, various and aggravated as they are, and their sins and their iniquities, of what kind soever. I will remember no more, so as to bring them into judgment; but will pardon the most heinous offences; which were incapable of expiation under the former covenant.

Now I would observe in the close of this argument, that when he saith, A new [covenant] shall be made, he hath in effect made the first old, he hath, as it were, spoken of it as antiquated: now that which is antiquated, and fallen into old age, cannot be expected to live long. And so in like manner is that old covenant of Moses just ready to disappear. Divine Providence will put such a period to it ere long, as shall be remarkable in the eyes of the whole world; so that the grand apparatus which now preserves its visible form and lustre, shall be known no more.

IMPROVE-

10 For this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws in to their mind, and write them in their hearts: And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.
Reflections on the covenant established in Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

Adored be that grace which hath constituted and revealed this everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things and sure; established on such promises, as are of all that can be conceived, Ver. most valuable to sinful creatures; and especially on that, without which no other declaration could impart any comfort to such, I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more. With this is connected that other promise, so comprehensive of every thing that is truly valuable, I will be a God unto them, and they shall be unto me a people. Happy indeed the people that are in such a case; yea, happy the people whose God is the Lord who are taught by him to know him under that character, taught by that energy of his Spirit, which gives his law to their mind, and inscribes it on their heart. There may we ever retain it engraven in living and durable characters, as a law of love, which may make obedience to every precept easy.

In this connection let us look with pleasure to that High Priest, who is sat down on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, and presides over all for the good of his people, that minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord, not man, hath pitched! ever main- taining an humble dependence on the sacrifice he hath offered: A sacrifice better than any of the Aaronical priests could present, in proportion to the degree in which the covenant, of which He is the Mediator, is nobler than theirs. The first covenant, wisely allayed with such a mixture of imperfection as was suitable to its being introductory to the second, is now vanished, to make way for this second and better dispensation: to this let us therefore adhere, and so doing, cheerfully expect all the invaluable blessings it imparts.

SECT. XI.

The Apostle illustrates the doctrine of the priesthood and intercession of Christ, by comparing it to what the Jewish high priest did on the great day of atonement. Heb. IX. 1—14.

Hebrews IX. 1.

THEN verily the first covenant had also ordi- HOW reasonable it is to expect, that the former covenant of which I have been speaking, should give way to another and a nobler, you may easily apprehend from surveying it,
it, and considering in comparison with it, the great things which the gospel teaches us concerning Christ, and to which I would now call your contemplations. The first tabernacle, you will therefore recollect, had certain ceremonial ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary: a sanctuary made of such materials as this earth of ours could furnish out, and the center of a ritual which contained many institutions comparatively low and carnal. For the first part of the tabernacle was prepared of boards and curtains, pillars and coverings, which constituted a little apartment as a kind of anti-chamber to the oracle; in which there [was] the candlestick of pure gold with its seven lamps, and the table of shew-bread as it was called, and the setting on the twelve loaves upon it, which were always to stand before the Lord; and this apartment is called the Holy place, in which also the golden altar of incense stood.

And beyond the second veil was that apartment of the tabernacle which was called the Holy of Holies, or the most holy of all, where God was pleased to keep his special residence, and which was as his presence-chamber. Having the golden candlestick, in which the high priest used to burn incense on the great day of atonement, and the ark of the covenant so reared over on every side with gold, that it appeared as if it had been one mass of that precious metal; in which apartment, in or very near the ark, [was] the golden pot, containing the manna that remained incorruptible through so many ages, and the rod of Aaron that blossomed, and the ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

For there was a tabernacle made: the first wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread; which is called the Sanctuary.

And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the Holiest of all;

Which had the golden candlestick, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

The first tabernacle.] Mr. Pearson thinks this is to be considered as connected with chap. viii., and that all which intervened is a digression, though a very pertinent and useful one, relating to the holiness of the ceremonial outshone under that better Priest. But I can see no necessity for this, since it may well be connected with the words immediately preceding: as if he had said, and because that covenant was intended, but for a little while, therefore there was a great deal of external ceremony in it, fit for the pristine disposition of the persons in whom it was given. Our translators strangely supply the word covenant instead of tabernacle, where most expounders, tabernacle, and that undoubtedly suits the connection best. The word we render ordinances is διάτροπος, for first or, or ways of便民 righteous.

17. In which: or, as, many good commentators think the words or are, may be taken in that latitude, to reconcile it with I Kings viii. 9, where it is said, that there was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone. Or perhaps or, or which, may refer to were, the tabernacle, rather than to were, the ark, as probably Aaron’s rod, which is here said to be in the same place, could not lie in the ark.

Ch. vii.
And after the second vail the holy of holies;

5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat: of which we cannot now speak particularly.

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all, was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining

d Cherubims of glory. That is, the cherub that waited upon the Shechina, or sensible glory of the Deity.

e Referring to the present time. We render it, for the time then present. But the words εκ τον καθαρ η διαβατης may certainly bear the rendering which I have given them; and I would understand it, not merely as if he had said that this simi-

litude of comparison may be properly used in this present time, as to the temple at Jerusalem, which has its holy of holies, as the Mosaic tabernacle had, but that the constitution before described, was a figurative representation of the Christian dispensation, which at the time when the apostle wrote, was displayed in all its glory.

f Averting...
the nature of things, are not able to make the person who performs the service perfect with respect to the conscience, as they refer not to the real expiation of guilt, but only to averting some temporal evils by which the law denounced on transgressors. For this the Mosaic dispensation was insufficient, which in the peculiarities of it related, not to the views of another life, nor the sublimest means of preparing the soul for it; [but consisted only in] the distinction between different kinds of meats, clean or unclean; and drinks, some of which were allowed, and others denied to priests in some circumstances, and to Nazarites in others; and in different baptisms, or washings, either of the whole body, or a part of it in water, as different occasions demanded; and in a variety of other ordinances relating to the purification of the flesh, which were to continue in force only till the time of reformation, when things should be put into a better situation by the appearance of the Messiah himself in his church. But Christ having now appeared, and being become an high priest of good things which were then future, and which the church through preceding ages expected as to come, the obligation of these things would of course soon be superseded. Accordingly he performed his ministry in a greater and more perfect manner above, not made with human hands, that is, not making any part of this lower creation. Neither did he expiate the guilt of his people by presenting before God the blood of goats, and of calves, and of young bullocks, which were the noblest sacrifices the high priest presented in the day of atonement; but it is by the efficacy of his own blood, which he con-

10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats, and calves, but by his own

This in a less work expresses what I take to be of the greatest importance for understanding the Mosaic services, which is, that they were never intended to express any means toward a change, to deliver the sinner from the ruin and guilt of God in another world; but merely to make his peace with the same God under which he then was, and to furnish him with a pardon, place only second, any pretension which might be conceived against him in their several offices, or any exception from the privilege of drawing near to God, as one entitled at peace with him, in the solemnities of his temple-worship. And I

13 Entered
own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

15 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your sin. (Note.)

Heb. IX. 12, 13.

1 Entered once.] Hence Bishop Pearson infers, that Christ ascended only once for all into heaven, and not again and again, as the Socinians pretended. Pearson on the Creed, p. 109.

1 How much more shall the blood of Christ? The argument in these words seems to consist in this: it was merely by an arbitrary appointment that blood and ashes, which in themselves are rather defiling, should be the methods of purification; but a death like that of our blessed Lord, has in itself a proper and mighty energy to promote the purification of the soul.

k Eternal Spirit.] Many have understood this of the Deity in general, or the Divine nature of Christ. But since the words may in a very good and consistent sense be referred to the Spirit, I could not acquiesce in any other interpretation. Bishop Fell considers them in the same light, and pertinently mentions Christ's being conceived, proclaimed, anointed for working miracles, and at last voluntarily laying down, and taking up, his life by this Spirit. And I have the pleasure to find Dr. Owen, (on the Spirit, p. 143, see also his Exposition on the place,) expressing himself to the same purpose; mentioning also, agreeable to the paraphrase, that by this Spirit Christ was strengthened in the exercise of that admirable faith, submission, charity and zeal which he shewed in his dying moments.—But when this Spirit is called eternal, I can never think with Dr. Patrick, (on Numb. xix. 4,) that it refers to the inexorable nature of the ashes used for purification under the law; nor with Mr. Hallet, (Notes and Discourses, Vol. I. p. 36,) that it is opposed to the spirit of brutes, or relates to the eternal redemption purchased by Christ. It seems a plain testimony to the eternity, and consequently the Deity of the Holy Spirit.
more, I say, shall that blood of his, avail to cleanse your conscience from the pollutions ye have contracted by your dead, unprofitable, and sinful works, that ye may freely approach, and serve the living God with acceptance? How surely shall it appease that consciousness of guilt, which might otherwise be so painful to us, and introduce us to present our homage in the Divine presence, with the hope of the most favourable regard.

**Improvement.**

Ver. The whole progress of the apostle's argument will lead us to reflect on the reason we have for thankfulness, whose eyes are directed, not to an earthly sanctuary and its furniture, splendid indeed, yet comparatively dark, mutable, and perishing; but to the holiest of all, the way to which is now clearly manifested. What manner of solid and everlasting joy! that whereas those gifts and sacrifices were incapable of making those perfect who presented them, or attended upon them, and the ordinances of that sanctuary consisted only in meats and drinks, and corporeal purifications and ceremonies; we by faith behold an High Priest of a better and more perfect tabernacle, an High Priest who hath wrought out eternal redemption, and entered once for all into heaven for us!

12 Eternal redemption! who hath duly considered its glorious import? To him, and only to him, who hath attentively considered it, is the name of the Redeemer sufficiently dear. But O, what short of the possession of it, can teach us the true value! What, but to view that temple of God above, where through his intercession we hope to be made pillars, and from thence, to look down upon that abyss of misery and destruction from which nothing but his blood was sufficient to ransom us!

15 Let that blood which is our redemption be our confidence. We know there was no real efficacy in that of bulls, or of goats, or in the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean. All that these things could do was to purify the flesh, and to restore men to an external communion with God in the Jewish sanctuary. But the blood of Christ can purify the conscience, and restore its peace when troubled, when tortured with a sense of guilt, contracted by dead works, which render us unfit for, and incapable of Divine converse. To that blood therefore let us look: let the death of Christ be remembered, as the great spotless sacrifice by which we draw nigh unto God, and let those virtues and graces which were displayed in it, under the influences of that eternal Spirit, which was given unto...
unto him without measure, concur with that benevolence which subjected him to it for our sakes, to recommend him to our humblest veneration, and our warmest affections.

To conclude, since it is so expressly said, that the Holy Ghost signified in some degree the great and important doctrines of the gospel by the constitution of the Jewish ritual; let us think of that ritual, whatever obscurity may attend it in part, with a becoming esteem; and peruse it with a view to that great antitype, who is in every sense the end of the law, for righteousness to every one who believeth; to him, who by fulfilling it hath given it a glory, much brighter than that which was reflected upon it from the face of Moses, or the most splendid magnificence of Solomon's temple.

SECT. XII.

The Apostle discourses, by way of digression, on the necessity of shedding Christ's blood, and the sufficiency of the atonement made by it. Heb. IX. 15, to the end.

Hebrews IX. 15.

AND for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

16 For where a testament is made by testament a Mediator of a new covenant,] This is the only place in the New Testament, where covenant can be supposed to signify a testament or will, rather than a covenant. But the mediator of a testament is a very improper expression; and one cannot suppose the apostle would play on the ambiguity of the word; I therefore think with Mr. Pierce, that it is better here to retain the usual translation of it.—Redemption in the next clause plainly signifies purchasing the pardon.

b Immediate reference.] For the proof of this I must refer my readers to what my learned friend Dr. Warburton has written, I think, irrefragably on this subject, in his elaborate and ingenious volumes on the Divine Legislation of Moses.
quency of his undergoing death, that he effectually secures these blessings to us by his covenant: for where a covenant [is] answerable to that which typified this of what I now speak, it necessarily imports the death of that by which

17 the covenant is confirmed. For you know that sacrificial rites have ever attended the most celebrated covenants which God hath made with men; so that I may say, a covenant [is] confirmed over the dead, so that it does not wait, nor has any force at all, while he by whom it is

18 confirmed is th. From where, and on which principle we may observe, neither was the first [covenant] of which we have been speaking, I mean that of Moses, originally transacted without the blood of an appointed sacrifice. For when every command was spoken and delivered according to the law by Moses to all the people, it is expressly said, that taking the blood of calves and goats mingled with water, and dipping into it a piece of scarlet wood, and a branch of hyssop, he sprinkled the altar itself, which contained the covenant, and all the people who were to enter into it; saying at the same time, This [is] the blood of the covenant which God hath commanded with respect to you, appointing you to declare your consent to the terms of it, as you

20 desire Divine favour and acceptance. And the tetrarch, and all the vessels of Divine service

c In which the covenant is confirmed.] Mr. Pierie would rectify it, that the manner for what is appointed by God in part: and he draws a remark or observation from Jews where the same sacrifice is.

17. He says, it is expressly required that it should be thus administered, and necessary in the use very necessary.

The passage is a remarkable one to be heard. But I think it may, if be rendered, to be used in connection, the argument will be clearer. Yet I cannot consider it, as Dr. Owen does in some interpretations, though the connection with what follows is equally upon that which I have given. The reader will do well, if he consult Dr. Owen upon this passage, who assigns and vindicates an interpretation much in the same with that which is proposed in the context and paraphrase.—The paine sacrifice and which I have rendered, as some comment, is very strong; that is, must be understood, it must not only be evident, but also appear. Else be hath shown, (Observe.

Vol. II. p. 21.) that the word and is used in a sense more, for what is produced, and proved, or made apparent in a count of its nature.

It is certain that Moses, in his account of this transcription, always does not mention all the ceremonies. Probably St. Paul received them in the transaction. Ceremonies of a similar kind were prescribed Lev. xiv. 4-6. But the other, and is to the leper. And it is by the principle, that the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant might be done in the ordinary. The blood was raised with water, to preserve it from coagulating: and perhaps that the mixture of human blood with water, which pretty soon particular to the primitive sense, must have made intended reference. It is not certain of Dr. Owen that the ceremony he refers to, was concretely performed in the covenant. But it is certainly not expressly prescribed in the account given us of the remembrance of that day.

c N
blood, both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood: and without shedding of blood is no remission.

23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place, every year with blood of others:

26 For then must he often have suffered since vices with which it was furnished, he also sprinkled with the same blood of the sacrifices. And indeed almost all things were under the law purified by blood in their first consecration; and it was by blood that they were cleansed from pollution, whether general or special. And if any transgression had been committed through ignorance or surprise, yet so solicitous was the blessed God to maintain the honour of his law, and the decorum of his administration, that in case of such offences, without shedding of blood, where an animal sacrifice could be procured, there was no forgiveness of sin.

[It was] therefore necessary, according to the 23 Divine appointment, that the tabernacle, and those instruments and utensils belonging to it, which were the copies or imitations of things in the heavens, should be purified by the blood of these animal victims; but the celestial things themselves, with more excellent sacrifices than they, even with the sacred blood of Christ himself, which these offerings were designed to typify. And the expediency of this appears from 24 the method which God hath in fact taken; for it is plain, that Christ is not entered into an earthly tabernacle, or holy places made with hands, though adorned with ever so much art and expense; [which] at best [were] but the figures, or imperfect copies, of the true: but he is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, as our great High Priest, and ever-glorious and powerful intercessor. Not that it was necessary he should offer himself frequently, as the High Priest entered into the most holy place yearly on the day of atonement, with the blood of others, that is, of bullocks and goats: For then, as the Jewish sacrifice was often repeated, so it would have been necessary.

e No forgiveness.] I look upon this as a certain proof, that the sin-offerings were not merely tokens of friendship restored between God and the offender; but that the blood was looked upon as the consideration on which the pardon was granted, being an acknowledgment on the part of the offerer that he had deserved death if God had been strict to mark offences.

f The celestial things themselves with more excellent sacrifices.] It may perhaps seem strange, that celestial things should be spoken of as needing to be purified and cleansed. But it is to be considered, that as the sacred dwelling and the vessels were esteemed to be polluted by the Israelites, who in various degrees had access to them; so heaven would have been, as it were, polluted by the entrance of such sinners as went into it, had not the blood of Christ intervened. This I think much more natural, than with Bishop Fell to explain it of some pollutions contracted by the sin of the angels.

2 Lower.

22 Hebr. ix. 22.

23 Heb. xii.

24 Acts xiv. 23.

25 Hebrews x. 12.
For he was once offered to bear the sins of many.

since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.

g Conclusion of the ages. So embarrass we now in the most exactly rendered, in 1 Thess. ii. 1, rendering the end of the ages of God even intended to save mankind. See Vol. II. p. 49, to end.

h Purchase the pardon of it, and teach men to subdue it.] Dr. Harris (in his Dissertations on the principal Propositions of the Gospel, p. 227) explains the expression as meaning, for the abolishing of sin of的男人, to that it should be no longer actionable. But I think it extends to every method of abolishing sin, or putting it away, and may include, besides the sacrifice made to the Divine justice, the subduing it sin in their own persons.

i Like the High Priest.] I doubt not but there is indeed, as Leakeh supposes, an allusion here to the high priest coming out to bless the people, who were waiting for him in the temple when the great day of atonement was over. And as he then appeared to his own garments, whereas before he had officiated in the plain dress of a common priest; and as the temple of the judging on that year sounded to proclaim the expiament of that happy period, there is not perhaps an image that can enter into the mind of man more capable to convey the grand idea in which the Lord intended to convey by it, than this would be to a Jew, who well knew the grand solemnity to which it referred.

k But not on | Mr. Thomson supposes this refers to Christ's coming, in that great day, the glory of the Saaph, upon him, of whom the splendor of the ancient tabernacle Aaron and his sons were, was but a faint shadow; and that it further alludes to the stripping Adam of that glory which he contracted from his first interview with the Seraphim, as soon as he had sinned. In consequence of which, Christ appearing in the day of his flesh like one of us, without this glory, might be said to come as with no, or as it is expressed, Rom. vii. 4. In the Merits of Sinful Flesh, Lem. Chas. Vol. II. p. 301, l 70.
Reflections on our obligations to Jesus Christ.

Improvement.

We are heirs of an eternal inheritance, and we owe all our expectations of it to the Mediator of that better covenant, who at the expence of his own blood procured redemption from the guilt and condemnation of those transgressions which have been committed under the first covenant; that praise do we owe to that voluntary victim, who made his blood the seal of that better covenant? O, that as all the vessels of the sanctuary, and all the people were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifices, on that day when Moses entered them into solemn covenant with God, so our souls and all our services might be under the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus! By the efficacy of that were the heavenly places sanctified and prepared for us; by that our way into them is opened: let us be daily looking up to the Lord Jesus Christ, as gone to appear in the presence of God for us, and entered into heaven with his own blood. May his death be as efficacious to subdue the power of sin in our hearts, as it is to expiate our guilt before God. Then may we look forward with pleasure to the great solemnities of death and judgment, and expect that faithful Redeemer, who though he is to come no more as a sacrifice for sin, will then appear for the complete salvation of all, who have obediently received him under that character, and waited for him according to his word.

In the mean time, that we may be engaged thus to apply to him, and improve our knowledge of him to the great purposes intended; may we live in the continual views of death, as what is indispensably appointed to men; and remember that it is our certain inevitable doom. May we also consider it, as standing in a most certain connection with judgment; assuring ourselves, that whatever the period of time between the one and the other may be, there is no room for a change in our character or state. Let therefore

1 To salvation: τις σωτηρίας. Wolius is of opinion, that these words should be connected with those immediately preceding, as expressing the view with which they waited for the returning Saviour, namely, that they might obtain complete salvation. But, with Grotius, I think it preferable to connect them in this manner, επεξεται τις σωτηρίας, he shall appear to salvation. And certainly this is much more natural, than with Beza and Erasmus Schmidius, to refer it to so remote a clause εις το θαλαυ αναφερεται αμαφαγα θείας to bear the sins of many, in order to their salvation. See Wolius Curs. P. Il logic. in loc.

a Shadow
The legal sacrifices could not make them perfect:

therefore the thoughts of judgment, and its awful eternal consequences, stir us up to a diligent preparation for death. Let it engage us to make an immediate application to Christ as the great Saviour, with entire submission to his princely authority; for if that he disregarded, how shall we meet him as our Judge? For when he appears the second time for the salvation of his people, he will execute righteous vengeance on his enemies; and that vengeance can never appear so terrible, as when considered as coming from the mouth of him who was once manifested to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

SECT. XIII.

The Apostle returns from his digression to prove, that the legal ceremonies could not by any means purify the conscience; and from hence argues the insufficiency of the Mosaic law, and the necessity of looking beyond it. Heb. X. 1—15.

HEBREWS X. 1.

YOU see that it is the design of all this discourse, to raise your minds from the Mosaic law to the gospel; and it is an important design, which the dearer you are to me, the more earnestly I must pursue. For the law having, as it were, only a shadow, or imperfect sketch, of future good things, and not the complete delineation, or the very image of the things themselves, could by no means, even by those sacrifices, of atonement which they always offer yearly, and are the most solemn which belong to the whole Hebrew ritual, perfect those who come unto them, so as to remove the moral guilt of their offences, and bring them into a state of reconciliation with God, and to that settled

\[\text{\textbf{Note:}}\]

a. Sacrifices which they always offer yearly. The sacrifices offered on the day of atonement, being by far the most solemn of any of the expiatory kind among the Jews, are mentioned here with the utmost propriety. And this interpretation seems to supersede the necessity of following Mr. Pierce’s translation, who would, by transposing the points, render it, The law having only a shadow of good things to come —yearly, can never with the same sacrifices, which they continually offer, make the concem thereunto perfect.
2 For then would they have ceased to be offered; because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5 Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not have offered; but have rather suffered those things which are offered by the law: for whensoever he was offered, he was suffered according to the law of Moses: for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

6 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not have offered; but have rather suffered those things which are offered by the law: for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

7 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.

8 But this man, because he offered one sacrifice for sins, and took no more place thereof, he sanctified for ever them that draw near unto God through the blood of his offering. For the law appointed unto the former things a Copies of and image of things to be performed in the time to come; but now hath He appeared making reconciliation for sins by the sacrifice of himself. And not only so, but declarations also of the grace of God for the remission of those things which are spoken of in the law, for an offering for sin.
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Reflections on the readiness of Christ to be our sacrifice.

of times the same sacrifices which can never take away sins:

12 But this Man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God:

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

IMPROVEMENT.

Since the shadows are now fled away, and the substance is come: Ver. since the most substantial blessings are bestowed by the gospel, let us celebrate the praises of him by whom we have received them; of him, who so cheerfully presented himself a spotless sacrifice to God for us. In the body which God hath prepared for him, he fulfilled all righteousness, and made a most perfect atonement: in that he, once for all, made full expiation for the sins of his people, having no sin of his own to expiate: and O! with what grateful emotions of heart should we commemorate his love; reflecting that when all other sacrifices would have been vain, he should so readily cry out, Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, O God; when that will of his heavenly father was, that his body should be offered in so painful and so tragical a manner! With such readiness let us too concur in every intimation of the Divine good pleasure: let us, like the blessed man whom David described, not only fear the Lord, but delight greatly in his commandments, (Psal. cxii. 1,) and labour that the law of God may be inscribed on our hearts, and the characters grow larger and deeper there. This shall please God better than the most costly sacrifices,
Where there is remission, there needs no more sacrifice:

Even of his own ritual; better than any whole burnt-offering, and sin-offering, though it were an ox or a bullock, which hath horns

Ver. and hoofs, Psalm lxix. 31.

May we be so sanctified through the sacrifice of Christ, according to the will of God, that we may approach the Divine Being with acceptance. And may we daily be looking to Jesus as sat down at his Father's right-hand, where he waits till his enemies are made his footstool. Let us likewise expect that great event in full assurance of faith. Let our affections be there where Jesus sits; and let us live in cheerful confidence, that the Saviour, in whose cause we are engaged, will finally appear triumphant over all his enemies, and ours. Amen.

Sect. XIV.

The Apostle urges Christians to improve the privileges which such an High Priest and covenant gave them, to the purposes of a fiducial approach to God, a constant attendance on his worship, and a benevolent love to each other. Heb. X. 15—25.

Heb. X. 15.

I HAVE spoken of Christ, as having by one offering of himself, for ever perfected those that are sanctified; and this is a representation very agreeable to the word of God: for even the Holy Ghost testifieth to us, in that passage (Jer. xxxi. 33, &c.) which I have quoted above, after having before said, This [is] the covenant which I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will give my laws to be written on their hearts; I will also inscribe them on their minds: my Holy Spirit shall work in them cordial dispositions humbly to practise and obey them: He adds in consequence of this, their sins and their transgressions, how many and aggravated soever they may have been, I will never remember any more. But where [there is] such an entire remission of these, as this great amnesty, this universal pardon implies, which wipes out the very remembrance of all offences, [there is] no more room for any sacrifice for sin, which implies that they are remembered, and remain to be expiated.

This

a Testifeth thousands. Or, as it might be rendered, bears witness with us, that is, avows to, and confirms by his testimony what I have said; in which sense the original word is used, as Raphelius hath shown by several Greek Clarities.

New
Therefore we should draw nigh through the blood of Jesus; and let us endeavour to enjoy and improve it aright. Having such liberty to enter into the holy places by the efficacy of this atoning blood of Jesus: [Having that] new discovered and ever-living way\(^b\), which he hath consecrated for us through the veil\(^c\), that is, by means of his flesh, or of that human nature in which he hath vailed his Divine glories, and to which it ever becomes us to pay a regard in our access to God: And [having] also such a great and glorious Priest over the House of God, who most faithfully manages his Father’s concerns, and bears a most tender regard to ours; Let us not stand at a distance as if God were inaccessible; but, on the contrary, let us draw near with a sincere and affectionate heart in the full assurance of faith, supported by such considerations as these, which may well embolden us, (conscions as we are of our own unworthiness,) to make our approach unto him in the most cheerful expectation of his blessing. Only let us take care that this approach be made in a regular and proper manner, as ever we desire to meet with Divine favour and acceptance; particularly, as the water of purification was to be sprinkled on the Israelites, to cleanse them from any pollutions they might have contracted, so let us see to it that we come, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, free from all allowed guilt and indulged sin. And this is indeed our case, if we are true Christians: our hearts are thus sprinkled by the purifying and cleansing blood of Jesus, as well as our bodies in baptism washed with pure water\(^d\), intended to represent

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\(^b\) New and living Way.] Dr. Owen illustrates this, by observing that the blood of other sacrifices was to be used immediately upon its effusion; for if it were cold and congealed, it was of no use to be offered or sprinkled: but the blood of Christ is, as it were, always warm, having the same spirit of life and sanctification moving in it. So that the way of approach by it is said to be κωπων και ποροποιημένον, living, yet, (putting it for Christ who is the Way) always, as it were, newly slain. See Owen on the Spirit, p. 816.

\(^c\) The veil.] It is well known, that the veil was a curtain separating the holy from the most holy place. The priest could not pass to the sanctuary, unless he passed through it: so Christ could not pass into heaven as our High Priest, till he had taken human flesh in his way; and till it had been, as it were, put aside by death. And I cannot forbear thinking, that it may further refer to the Shechechinah being vailed by this curtain, which bore so remarkable an analogy to the Divine glory of Christ, as vailed by assuming human nature.

\(^d\) Bodies washed with pure water.] Mr. Pierce would make this the beginning another sentence; and having washed our bodies with pure water, that is, if having been solemnly devoted to God in baptism, let us answer the engagements of that holy ordinance by holding fast the profession of
And hold fast the profession of our hope.

represent our being cleansed from sin. And since we have received such benefits by the gospel which we have embraced, let us hold fast the profession of [our] hope, without ever giving way to the pressure and agitation of any temptation, or wavering in a case where we have such certain and indubitable evidence; for we know that whatever storms and tempests may arise, he [it] assuredly faithful who hath promised, he will stand by to defend us, and to make us more than conquerors over all. And let us consider each other, and reflect seriously on the circumstances in which we and our brethren are situated, that we may judge what influence we can have over them for their advantage, and may endeavour accordingly to provoke, and stimulate them on to the exercise of sincere love, and to a readiness to all good works, by our exhortations, and especially by our example, and by such a conduct towards them as may engage the return of their affection, and the exertion of their zeal for the general good; Not deserting the assembling ourselves together, for the solemn purposes of public worship, as the manner of some now is, in order to decline that reproach and persecution which the attendance on such assemblies may draw after it; but exhorting and comforting [one another] as much as we can; and this counsel the rather, as ye see the day approaching, that awful day in which we must appear before the tribunal of God, and that day of vengeance upon the Jewish nation, which Christ hath described as so terrible an emblem.

our faith, &c. considering that he is faithful to the engagement he was pleased to seal unto us by it. But I think the sense will be very clear and intelligible, if it be connected with the preceding words, as referring to the custom of casting their bodies in clean water, before they went to wash up at the temple, especially upon their solemn days.

ex Position of [our hope.] Instead of [our hope], our translators read [a single manuscript. See Dr. More's note.]

[Assembling ourselves together.] Mr. Piers is of opinion, that when the apostle adds, or the manner of assembly, he intends to blame the conduct of the Jews who on account of their old prejudices against the Gentile converts, isolated themselves from the assemblies into which they were admitted; and perhaps also to censure a similar behaviour in the Gentile converts arising from prejudices they had newly contracted against the Jews. And he imagines this, in some measure, is intimated by the use of the word 's'omewhat. (Compare 2 Thess. ii. 1.) But I think the account given of the ground of this caution in the paraphrase, is on the whole much more certain.

[Day approaching.] They knew that the day of Christ's final judgment, being certainly future, came nearer and nearer. And from what Christ had said concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, as to happen in the lives of some who had been present with him about thirty years before the date of this epistle, (compare Mat. xvi. 28,) they might infer that that was now near, though they should not have been able to trace it up into its causes, or to calculate the exact time.
Reflections on our liberty of access to God.

blem of it. And let none, who would not share with the enemies of Christ in the destruction which shall be poured out upon them, abandon his people now, and basely betray that cause and interest, by which none shall on the whole be losers, whatever they may for the present suffer on its account.

IMPROVEMENT.

What can be more desirable than to approach to God! what Ver. more effectually encourage that approach, than the consideration which the apostle here urges: the new and living way which this great High-Priest hath consecrated! Let us then see to it that we thus approach in the way of his own appointment. But if we desire acceptance, let us attend to the strength of our faith, and the purity of our consciences; that inward purity, without which our baptismal washing will stand us in little stead. To establish us in a resolution of retaining the profession of our faith and hope, amidst all the attempts that may be made to wrest it out of our hands, let us often reflect on the importance of those promises we have received, and the infallible fidelity of that God, who hath condescended to enter himself into such engagements. Let the community of that blessed hope which these sacred engagements afford, unite us in the bonds of the most affectionate love. Instead of watching over each other for evil, let us consider one another's circumstances with the most friendly and compassionate eye. And whatever we behold of necessity or distress, let us immediately be instigated and quickened, kindly to attempt relief and assistance; that every one may be, as it were, in a confederacy against the evil by which any one may be attacked.

Much will this benevolent disposition be promoted, by a diligent attendance on the ordinances of religious worship; and much is it to be lamented, that it is the manner of so many to forsake them, even the assemblies which are honoured with the promise of the Divine presence; a promise to the accomplishment of which thousands can bear testimony. Let us guard against so ungrateful and pernicious a neglect; and set ourselves to promote as far as possible, mutual edification; and so much the rather; as we see the day approaching; that solemn day, when all our opportunities in this world being come to a period, we must render up an account of all. It is a day, in which God will bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good or evil: let us therefore give all diligence to prepare ourselves for it; and remember how happily the ordinances of public worship are calculated to promote that preparation.

SECT.
If any, having received the truth, sin wilfully,

SECT. XV.

The Apostle enforcing his exhortation steadily to adhere to their Christian faith, by reminding them of the extremities they had endured in its defence, and of the fatal consequences of apostasy, Heb. X. 26, to the end.

I HAVE urged you to a steadiness and courage in the profession of the Christian faith, and have cautioned you against neglecting those acts of public worship by which it is professed, on any consideration whatsoever. And I must continue to inculcate the caution with the greatest seriousness: for if we sin wilfully a and presumptuously by apostatising, after having received the knowledge of the truth with such incontestable evidence and power, there remaineth yet no more sacrifice for sin b, nor is it possible to find any atonement that shall be efficacious, after having thus ungratefully and wickedly disowned 27 that which God had appointed. But on the contrary, all that remaineth is a certain fearful expectation of the judgment of God, and of his fiery indignation, which is just ready to devour the adversaries of his gospel, and shall in a very little time be poured out upon them in all its terrors.

28 This we might easily infer from the nature of things, even though we had not been so expressly warned of it in the word of God. For if any one of whatever order and dignity, who set at naught the law of Moses, by any presumptuous

a [We see this.] The emphasis of the Apostle's argument must lead us to interpret this of sinners from Chriftians. But as Dr. Beare well observes, it might perhaps be expressed in this more general manner, to indicate how punitively we ought to guard against every degree of wilful sin, lest it should lead to that dreadful conclusion.

b [No more sacrifice for sin.] This plainly intimated, as Dr. Baxter (Harm. p. 387) well observes, that God will not pardon us without some sacrifice or satisfaction: else the argument would be inconclusive.

c [Set at naught the law of Moses.] This evidently alludes to that very important precept, Num. xxv. 11, which doomed to certain death every one who attend ed with an high hand; that is, who was guilty of any wilful, deliberate, and presumptuous sin, whether in matters great or small; though a plea of ignorance or reconsideration was allowed, where the rebellion and presumption was not made apparent by any overt act. And thus was the foundation of the re-offering, which was in some degree analogous to the smaller punishment instituted among us, for a crime, in other circumstances, capital, where benefit of clergy is sought and admitted.

Hebrews X. 26.

For it was not wilfully after that we have removed the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin;

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law, died without...
They must expect the severest punishment:

29 Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, Vengeance belongeth unto me.

transgression of it, though that transgression might in itself seem ever so small, died without mercy [on the evidence of] two or three witnesses, and was excluded any benefit from those sin-offerings which were appointed for offences of ignorance and inconsideration: Of how much sorer punishment do ye suppose he shall be counted worthy, who hath not merely insulted a faithful servant, but even trampled upon the Son of God, and who hath not only slighted the method of reconciliation and purification which God hath appointed for lower purposes, but hath accounted the sacred blood of the covenant, by which he was sanctified, and solemnly set apart to the service of God, a common or an unclean thing, like the blood of a malefactor justly executed for his crimes? Now this he certainly doth who rejects the gospel; which cannot possibly be done without the greatest imaginable outrage to the memory of its Divine Author, who, had he not indeed been the extraordinary Person he professed himself to be, would deservedly have been reckoned among the most detestable of impostors. And such an offence is in present circumstances the most aggravated, as it is plain, that he who commits it, has offered the most contemptuous injury to the Spirit of grace, by whose miraculous and saving operations the truth of the gospel is demonstrated, to such a degree, that the highest blasphemy against him must virtually be expressed by such a conduct as we here suppose.

Avoid therefore all approaches to this with the most solicitous care, for the Divine justice is not to be trifled with; as we know him that hath said, (Deut. xxxii. 35, 36.) Vengeance belongeth unto me. I will recompense, saith the Lord; and again, The Lord will judge his

d Trampled upon.] As it appears to me that this is a description of a case that could only occur where what was properly the sin against the Holy Ghost was committed, that is, ascribing the miracles wrought by his power to magic, and the operation of demons, I have paraphrased these words agreeable to that principle.

e By which he was sanctified.] As it could not on any principles be certainly inferred, that every one who thus apostatized from Christianity had been truly sanctified, I think it very apparent, that this sanctification must only refer to his being externally set apart, or consecrated to God; though I will not certainly say, how far it may, as Bishop Hoadly has thought, refer to the sacramental wine representing the blood of the covenant. Hoadly on Episc. p. 433. Some have interpreted it, of the blood whereby Christ was sanctified, or dedicated by God as a High Priest. Comp. John x. 36; xvii. 19. But the former sense seems to me more natural.

f The
For it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God.

his people: and if he vindicate and avenge the injury done to them, he will much more severely animadvert upon those which are offered to his Spirit and his Son. Now surely you must immediately be sensible, that [it is] dreadful indeed to fall into the hands of the living God; who living for ever, can for ever punish, in what degree he pleases, the wretched creatures, who have made themselves the objects of his final displeasure.

But I humbly hope, you will be delivered from so terrible a ruin; and that you may, I will lead back your thoughts to former events, which if duly considered, may be very instructive, and may prove the means of establishing you in your resolution of adhering to the gospel. And I must particularly urge you to call to remembrance the former days, in which having been enlightened, with the knowledge of Christianity, and solemnly engaged in the profession of it by baptism, you endured a great contest of sufferings, struggling and contending as for your lives, or what indeed was much more valuable: Partly as ye were made a public spectacle both by reproaches and afflictions, like men exposed on a theatre as infamous; and partly as ye were made partakers with those who were so treated, and most affectionately appeared in the defence of the Divine cause, at the greatest hazard as well as expense.

And indeed I have reason to speak this upon my own knowledge for I sympathized with me in my bonds, and yet took the plunder of your goods not only with patience but with joy, knowing yourselves that you have, upon the security of the again, the Lord will judge his people.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great light of afflictions.

Partly while ye were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spurring of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have supposing, as Dionysius himself does, there was any efficacy in hopes to entice any more to regenerate. Though it was indeed the ordinance by which persons were solemnly entered into the list of those who were in the main, and is the judgment of charity, enlightened and regenerated, my respect for the opinion of so many eminent persons, ancient and modern, has determined me to limit at the sense they have generally given to it in the paraphrase.

A great contest.] This is the emphatical significance of the word ἀφίσα, which gives a view of their courage and bravery very proper for his purpose, while he was thus commending and animating them.
have in heaven, a better and an enduring substance.

35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great remembrance of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience; that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come; and will not tarry.

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

the gospel-promises, a far better, and an enduring substance in the heavens, where eternal riches and felicity await you, when all the possessions of earth are lost, and all its sorrows come to a perpetual period.

Let the remembrance of these things there-fore animate you to persist in such heroic resolutions; and cast not away that confidence of yours, and that free and courageous profession of it, which hath so great and glorious a remembrance entailed upon it; even that of eternal life and happiness, which the Divine goodness will bestow as a gracious reward on all who thus maintain it. It will indeed be necessary, that in order to secure it, you should take up a firm and vigorous resolution; for ye have still need of continued patience, that having done the will of God, during this short state of probation here, ye may receive and inherit the promise of life and salvation, to which ye have already expressed such a firm regard. And I hope you will still go on to maintain the glorious cause; for it is but yet a very little time, and as God declared by the prophet Habakkuk, though he supposes he might for a while tarry, (Hab. ii. 3,) he that cometh, he that is known by that illustrious title of the Comer, even the Lord Jesus Christ himself, on whom our eyes and our hopes are fixed, will come to the rescue of his people, and he will not delay beyond the period which his wisdom and faithfulness have marked out. He will come and open those important scenes, which shall not only conclude our labours and sufferings, but abundantly repay them all. But in the mean time, as it is there added, the just shall live by his faith, so we are assured by the repeated testimony of the word of God, that the truly good man shall by firm faith in the Divine perfections, promises, and grace, obtain justification and comfort, life and happiness. Yet if he draw back, my soul, saith the Divine oracle, shall have no complacency in him: a total apostasy would expose even the best of men to the Divine displeasure and abhorrence; as former

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1 Yet a little time.] Some would render it, a little, a very little time.—It has been observed, that εκείνος, the Comer, is a title given to the Messiah, Mat. xi. 3.

k Yet if he draw back.] We render the phrase in Habakkuk, lifted up. And it is observable, that the alteration of a single letter changes the reading into this sense in which the Seventy have taken it.—The original word ἀπέβαινει properly signifies to sneak or to sink away. Acts xx. 20; Gal. ii. 12.
former experiences of religion would render the
guilt of such apostacy more aggravated. But
blessed be God, we have a cheerfull hope of
being preserved from so terrible a state; for we
are not of them that draw back to such dreadful
destruction, but of them that go on amidst all
opposition still to believe; and sustained by Di-
vine grace, will persevere in that happy way, to
the preservation and complete salvation of the
soul.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. We see the dreadful consequences of sinning wilfully, after we
26 have received the knowledge of the truth: how diligently should we
guard against every, even the least appearance of it. Should we
fall into so great an evil, there would remain no more sacrifice for
sin, and O! how dreadful, to lose our part in that great sacrifice,
27 and be consigned over to a certain fearful expectation of wrath and
fiery indignation! but blessed be God, it is not yet our case. It
is not every wilful sin which thus seals up the wretched soul to
condemnation; for who then could hope for heaven? or who in the
utter despair of heaven, could enjoy this world? may we not say
who could endure it?

If we would avoid this dreadful doom, let us guard against every
approach toward any thing which might be interpreted treading
29 under foot the Son of God, or doing despite unto the Spirit of
grace. On the contrary, let us ever retain the most reverent
affection for the Son of God, and ever cherish the influences of
the Spirit. So shall we avoid the threatened vengeance, and
31 escape that infinitely dreadful thing, the falling into the hands of
the living God.

To have experienced in any degree the power and efficacy of
religion, is the great preservative against apostacy. They who
32 have already, like those believing Hebrews, made great sacrifices
to their conscience, ought to feel the force of the obligation. The
struggles through which they have already passed, the combats they
have already maintained, should have a powerful influence on their
future resolution, that they may not stain the lustre of their
former victories.

34 If such trials be appointed for us, may our faith be proportion-
ably strengthened; that we may take joyfully, not only the spoil-
ing of our goods, but the torture of our bodies; knowing that we
have in heaven a better and more enduring substance than worldly
36 wealth, and a far more glorious abode than these tabernacles of
clay. Let the recompense of reward be kept continually in our
view;
view; that thereby that patience may be supported, of which we ever stand in such evident need, that after we have done the will of God, we may go to inherit the promises.

Let the certain and speedy approach of him that is to come, daily comfort us, and confirm the faith by which we live; and let us still pour out our fervent supplications before God, that we may not draw back, which if we do, it will be infinitely fatal. Then instead of beholding us with complacency, God's soul will abhor us; and that abhorrence will be proportionable to our violated engagements, and dishonoured profession. Perdition pursues our retreat. Let every consideration therefore, of honour, of gratitude, of interest and of safety, concur to urge us on, and to support the steadiness of our faith, till we receive the glorious crown of it, in the complete salvation of our souls.

SECT. XVI.

The Apostle enters on a discourse, in which he proposes to the Hebrews, illustrious examples of faith, which had appeared in holy men mentioned in their scriptures, and particularly in Abel, Enoch, Noah; and Abraham and Sarah. Heb. XI. 1—16.

HEBREWS XI. 1.

NOW faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

I HAVE spoken of the faith by which the just shall live; and that I may excite you to cultivate that blessed principle more and more, let me now enter into a more distinct consideration of it, and set before your eyes, O ye believing Hebrews, some glorious examples of it, with which your sacred history abounds. To consider it then in its nature; faith is the confident expectation of things hoped for, upon the security of the Divine promise, and the powerful conviction of things which are not seen; but of whose certainty and importance there is such a full persuasion, that they act upon the mind, in a great measure, as if they were present.

a Confident expectation.] Compare 2 Cor. ix. 4; Heb. iii. 14; where the word ἐπιθυμοῦ, is used in this sense; and Raphelius has confirmed it by some pertinent quotations from Polybius.

b The powerful conviction of things not seen: τινὰ ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν ἑαυτὸν ἔκφρασιν.] Ezek. xxxvi, it hath been observed by many learned men, and particularly by Raphelius in loc. is a strict proof or demonstration, that is, saith Mr. Hallet, such a kind of reason and argument, as both convinces the understanding, and engages a man to act according to that conviction. Accordingly I have rendered it by the word conviction, which I think properly expresses the apostle's meaning.

c That
To this I would excite you, by considerations peculiarly suited to your own case, as the children of the patriarchs; for by it the illustrious elders obtained an [honourable] testimony to their character, and it lay at the root of many of the most glorious things they have ever done.

By faith we understand that the worlds were adjusted by the word of God, and the several revolutions of them directed by the operations of his secret providence, as the whole universe was at first created by his power, wisdom, and goodness, and the things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear: it is certain no visible cause could produce these things, which would be in effect to suppose them to have produced themselves; we therefore by faith refer them to a Divine invisible original.

And this happy and sublime principle hath wrought even from the beginning of the world, and animated good men to actions most pleasing to God, and honourable to themselves. It was for instance, by faith that Abel offered to God a greater and more acceptable sacrifice than Cain; by which clearly expresses, I apprehend, the apostle's intention. The construction of Rom. iv. 16, is somewhat similar to this; Therefore is it of faith, that, it might be of grace, for otherwise were not many, that is, "that it might appear to be of grace, as we have already proved it is". The apostle's intention was, by the latter clause as an incontestable principle to establish what he now wanted to prove, namely, that justification was by faith; and this he does from the consideration of its being by grace. It may be proper to consult Mr. Hudin on Heb. x. 3, with whom refers to Eph. ii. 12, and I Cor. x. 6, where the apostle's words mean, &c. cannot signify any thing but in the sense that.

A greater and more excellent sacrifice (1) A late ingenious writer, Mr. Kennett, in his Dissertation on the True Life, and the Obits of Cain and Abel, page 167, has inferred from the word γνωρισθείς 3:19, which may be rendered a greater or better service, that Cain contented himself with presenting only the body, or by extenuating, without a cover; whereas Abel presented both, and by presenting a lamb, showed his faith in the great sacrifice of the lamb of God. After all that has been offered to the contrary, I must think that the Divine order of sacrifices is strongly insinuated in this place.

Dead
By faith Noah prepared an ark for saving his house.

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

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh by means of which he obtained a testimony that he was righteous: God, by the visible tokens of his favour, bearing witness to his gifts, which he presented on the altar; and by it he being dead, yet speaketh; and recommends to us in all ages that regard to the great atonement, which he expressed by bringing an animal sacrifice, while Cain contented himself with the vegetable products of the ground. And though Abel became the early victim of Cain's rage, yet that circumstance, in conjunction with the declaration he received of the Divine acceptance and favour, is very instructive, in that it affords so powerful an evidence of a future state.

By faith the celebrated patriarch Enoch was, in a miraculous manner, translated from among men; so that he should not see death: and he was not found among any longer among the inhabitants of this lower world, because God had translated him to the celestial regions, in a manner before altogether unexampled, nor ever since equalled among mortals, but in the single instance of Elijah. And God thus translated him, not only because he had a regard for his character, but because he would by such an interposition, give a visible and very important lesson to others, to seek and secure his favour by the exercise of such a disposition. For before his translation, he obtained witness that he pleased God: preceding tokens were given of God's favourable regards to him; and that character is expressed by the sacred historian when it is said, (Gen. v. 24,) that Enoch walked with God: that is, he maintained a constant regard to him, and received the indication of his favour; so that there subsisted a holy intercourse and friendship between God and Enoch. But without a sincere faith, as the great principle of action [it is] absolutely impossible to please [him]; for he who approacheth to God, and pretends to walk with him, must.

† Dead, yet speaketh.] Some would render it, And for this they say he died, that is, there is a tradition that he was massacred by Cain, in a dispute about the recompense of a future state, which faith proposes. Serin's Sermons, Vol. IX. page 54. I rather think it refers to the testimony borne, as it were, to a future state by his story, as he was so excellent a person, and visibly approved by God, yet left to suffer by the cruelty of his wicked brother. Some would render ἡλθεν, he is spoken of to this day, as a person of most eminent piety and goodness.

‡ Was not found.] The circumstances of his translation are not mentioned; but some have thought this intimates he was privately translated, and sought for, as Elijah afterwards was, 2 Kings ii. 17.

b Approacheth to God, and pretends to walk with him.] Raphelius hath shewn, that the original word ὑποδηματιον is applied...
must, as the foundation of that intercourse, firmly believe that he exists, and (that) he is the reworder of them that diligently seek him, and will bestow some peculiar and important blessings upon them. For where there are no such expectations as these, the soul cannot be animated to the labours and struggles of a truly religious life.

7 By faith the patriarch Noah, the second common ancestor of mankind, being admonished by a Divine oracle, concerning things which were not yet seen, and things of such a nature, that no one had ever seen or heard of any thing parallel to them, the dissolution of the world by a flood, and the destruction of all its inhabitants, believed and revered the awful threatening. And being impressed with a pious, and in that connection, most rational fear of the Divine judgments, with immense labour and cost, amidst all the insults of profligate and wicked men, prepared an ark, which God taught him to build for the salvation of his house and family; by means of which he condemned the unbelieving world, by hearing a public and convincing testimony against them. And thus became heir of the righteousness which is obtained by faith; he was pronounced by God a righteous person, though his character was not absolutely free from imperfections, and became by divine grace entitled to the promise of eternal life, of which his temporal deliverance, though so amazing, was only an emblem.

8 By faith, that illustrious patriarch Abraham, from whom you justly esteem it a peculiar honour and happiness to be descended, being called by the God of glory, who appeared to him, to go out, from his Father's house and native land, to a distant place, which God promised that

By faith Abraham journeyed in a strange land;
receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

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

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

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

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him that he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed without disputing or murmuring, and went out, though he knew not at all whither he was going, or to which part of the world he was to steer his course, humbly resigning himself to Divine Providence to mark out his journey and his abode. By faith, he sojourned all the remainder of his days in the land of promise, when he knew it to be so, as [in] a strange country, without having any property there, unless it was that of a sepulchre towards the close of his life; dwelling in tents, easily moved from one place to another, some part of the time with Isaac and Jacob; who, in their succession, were heirs with him of the same promise, and depo-sitaries of it, yet led the same kind of wandering life. But he passed from place to place with cheerfulness; for he expected at length to be led on to a city, and that not such an one as he had left his native land, or such as he saw in Canaan, or even in Egypt, grand and populous as some of their buildings were; the object of his joyful and confident expectation, was that city, which alone hath firm and immovable foundations, in comparison with which they were but like a frail tabernacle; a city, of which God is the builder and former, who drew and executed the grand plan, and laid out upon it all the richest ornaments, which might raise it to a magnificence, worthy of his own abode, and the inheritance of his beloved children.

By faith, Sarah herself, notwithstanding some mixture of suspicion, at length, as the worthy consort of such an husband, and worthy mother of such an offspring received strength for the conception of seed, and brought forth a child beyond the due time of age for such a purpose, when she was ninety years old, and in the course of nature absolutely incapable of being a mother; because she accounted him who had promised, to be the faithful and Almighty God, who could with infinite ease accomplish an event, which then seemed to be, and indeed was unparalleled. Therefore by this mighty principle of faith in her, and in Abraham, there sprang even from

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1 With Isaac and Jacob.] It is plain from the account of the lives of these patriarchs, that Jacob was born fifteen years before Abraham died; and the oracle given to Isaac before the birth of his children, would sufficiently intimate to Abraham that he was the heir of the promise.
These all desired a better country, that is, an heavenly.

13 Now all these worthy and excellent persons, of whom I have here been speaking, died in faith, not having received the blessings promised in the promises; but having seen them afar off, and having been fully persuaded of them, and embraced them, with the most cordial affection, and greatest ardour of mind, and having, through the whole course of their lives, confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on earth, as we know that these holy patriarchs, and some of their most eminent descendants did. (Gen. xxi. 4; xlvi. 9; I Chron. xxix. 15; Psal. xxxix. 12; exix. 19, 54.)

14 For they who say such things as these, and speak of themselves as strangers and pilgrims, plainly express that they seek a country, different from that in which they dwell, when they use such language. And as for those excellent men, if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they came out, they might sure have had an opportunity of returning to it; for they were a considerable body, and they might have marched back without the probability of meeting with any resistance, and might have expected a subsistence among the relations of their family, who were themselves in a prosperous state, and often expressed on proper occasions, their regard to these their illustrious kinsmen. Now therefore it appears, that they were desirous of a better, that is, an heavenly [country]; for there was no earthly country, which they seem to have been pursuing. And indeed this is the great excellence of their character, to be governed by such views

In multitude as the stars of heaven, &c.] Mr. Huet observes here a great propriety in the apostle's saying, that they should be in multitude as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore innumerable; there being an impossibility of numbering the latter, whereas the former, since they have been reduced into constellations, have been numbered with a considerable degree of exactness. See Huet in loc. where he endeavours to account, consistently with this observation, for Psal. cxlivii. 4. He calleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names, as if this were the peculiar prerogative of God.

Seek a country; when. [The original word is very emphatical; it signifies, as it were, a native country, or a country in which their fathers dwelt, and is opposed to that in which they were strangers and pilgrims.

Better country, that is, an heavenly. The argument, according to the turn I have given it, is much the same with that which our Lord urges, Mat. xxii. 32.
views; therefore God determined to bestow this happy land upon them, and he is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let the many glorious examples of faith, which are here set before us, animate our souls to imitation, and excite in us a generous desire of acting upon that noble and sublime principle, without which it is impossible to please God. And O, may what we call our faith be not merely a speculative and ineffectual assent to the truth, even of the most weighty propositions; but a firm persuasion of their certainty, and a deep conviction of their importance, that we also may obtain a good report.

May we believe in God, as the former and support of universal nature, as most assuredly existing, and as most bountifully rewarding all that seek him with sincerity and diligence. So shall our sacrifices be acceptable to him, as those of Abel were, while with him we look to that great sacrifice and atonement, of which his victim was the appointed representation. Like Enoch we shall then be animated to walk with God, andfavoured with Divine intercourse and communications. And though we cannot expect a translation like his, which should exempt us from the common lot of mortality, we shall be secure of admission into the paradise of God above, and in due time shall ascend to it in our complete persons. We shall then, like Noah, find our safety in the midst of a dissolving world, and while sinners are condemned, be found the heirs of righteousness.

While we wait for this happiness, let us endeavour to approve ourselves the genuine children of Abraham, the father of the faithful. Ever attentive to the Divine call, may we in obedience to it, be willing to go forth, though we do not particularly know whither; and with an intrepidity like his, may we even be ready to exchange worlds, at the command of God, ignorant as we are of what lies beyond the grave; thinking it enough, that we know it is a land which God hath promised as the inheritance of his children. It is indeed a city that hath foundations, in comparison of which all
the most magnificent and established buildings of the children of
men are but mean and moveable tents.

Ver. God boasts in the title of its builder and maker, having formed
and fashioned it for the highest displays of his glory and his love;
and in reference to it, he is not ashamed to be called our God; for
by bestowing it upon us, he answers all that which high and glori-
ous title might import. May we ever desire this as our better
country, and live as its citizens ought; confessing ourselves, in re-
ference to it, to be pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. And
though we here receive not the accomplishment of the promises,
may we keep our eyes on the objects they exhibit, how distant
soever they may seem; and being persuaded of them, may we em-
brace them; embrace them even with our dying arms, and breathe
out our prepared and willing spirits, in full assurance that we are
going to receive and possess them.

SECT. XVII.

The Apostle further dilates upon examples and instances of faith in

I have already mentioned some glorious in-
stances of the faith of Abraham, our illust-
rious progenitor; but I should be far from
doing justice to my subject, if I were not to add
another, the most celebrated of all. You will
remember therefore, that it was by faith that
Abraham was supported, when he was tried, in
that most severe instance, and at the Divine
command offered his son, his only son, Isaac,
whom he loved; yea he who had received the
promises, which terminated not only in his seed,
but in Isaac by name, offered his only-begot
[son] in whom they so centered, that they must
necessarily have failed if he had perished with-
out any offspring. So that nothing seemed more
difficult, on principles of common reason, than
the reconciliation of the command with the com-
mand. Even when he was destined to the
altar, concerning whom it was said, In Isaac
shall thy seed be called, (Gen. xxv. 12) yet his
triumphant faith surmounted even such an ob-
stacle, and it was as wise and rational as it was
pious and heroic: Reasoning within himself as he did, that God was able even to raise [him]

Of whom it was said, That in Isaac
shall thy seed be called:

Accounting that

God was able to raise
20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped bowing upon the top of his staff.

a Reasoning that God was able even to raise him.] Archbishop Tillotson justly observes, that his faith was in this respect the more admirable, as, so far as we can learn, there never had been one single instance of a resurrection from the dead, in, or before, the days of Abraham.

b In a figure: ωραγαθων.] Some think this implies, that his birth was a kind of resurrection from the dead. But the learned Dr. Warburton contends earnestly for it, that ωραγαθων intimates, that the whole transaction was parabolical or typical of the method God would take for the salvation of men. The learned Wolfius is of the same opinion, (Carne Philolog. Vol. IV. p. 762.) and observes in support of it, that the Greek word ωραγαθων answers to the Hebrew חנניל, and is so used by the Seventy; and that the Hebrews are wont to say חנניל, in or by a parable or figure when they would express a typical representation. He imagines this interpretation to be the more probable, because the Apostle hath put a mark of emphasis upon ωραγαθων, by prefixing ως to it, even in a figure.

c Blessed Jacob.] He was persuaded that God would one way or another make good his promises to them, though he could not certainly tell how, and was mistaken in the person.

d Worshipped.] He thought it so great a privilege to be buried in the land of Canaan, that he bowed his head, in token of thankfulness for it; which was another demonstration of faith in God's promise. Gen. xlvi. 30, 31.

e On the top of his staff, as he sat on the side of his bed.] In the passage referred to Gen. xlvi. 31, it is said according to our English version, Israel bowed himself upon
Again, it was by faith that Joseph, when dying, mentioned the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, as a fact which should certainly come to pass, though at a long distance of time; and then in token of his entire dependence upon it, and expectation of the inheritance they would then possess, he gave a charge concerning the carrying his bones with them, to be interred in the sepulchre of his fathers in Canaan.

23 The case of our illustrious law-giver will also furnish us with further glorious examples of that, which was in him a kind of hereditary virtue; for it was by faith that Moses, when he was just born, was hidden three months by his pious parents, in their own house, because they saw [he was] a graceful child, who seemed by his aspect to promise something uncommon. And they therefore determined, if possible, to preserve his life, and feared not the commandment of the king, requiring all Israelitish parents, on pain of death, to give up their male-children, that they might be thrown into the river.

24 By faith this Moses, when he was grown up, came to the maturity of age, and became great in the dignities and preferments of the Egyptian court, on full consideration of all that could be pleaded in favour of secular views, deliberately refused to

upon his bed's head. The Apostle says, he was stipped upon the top of his staff; and this agree with the Greek and Syriac translation; and Wyclif adds, that the Septuagint always render the Hebrew word מַמָּח, a staff. Mr. Hallett, therefore, in a learned note upon this place, gives the opinion that the Hebrew word signifies either a bed or a staff, and that our English translators too improperly followed the modern Jews, and supposed it here to signify a bed, in opposition to the authority of the Septuagint and of the apostle. The passages may possibly be reconciled, if there be any occasion for it, by the circumstance mentioned in the paraphrase, as it is not likely that Jacob was now in bed, (see Gen. xlvi. 25,) but he might very probably be sitting on the side of it. His leaning on the top of his staff shows that he was very old and feeble; and this circumstance, saith Mr. Hallett, is very pertinently mentioned by the apostle, to intimate that feeble as he was, he would worship God in the best manner he was able.

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

23 By faith Moses when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called
Having respect to the recompense of reward.

25 Chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;
26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

g. Reproach of Christ.] There are some who understand this of the reproach of Israel, God's anointed people, and so would render it, the reproach of the anointed; but I rather apprehend, considering the sense in which this name is every where else used by the apostle, that it refers to the relation in which Christ stood to Israel, as his peculiar people, so that reproach borne on their account was borne for him. (Compare 1 Cor. x. 9; and Mr. Fleming, (Christology, Vol. i. p. 169,) urges this as an argument for Christ's existence before the time of Moses. Du Mont supposes that the Israelites expected deliverance by the Messiah, and that the Egyptians insulted them on that account; and it is certain, reproach borne on the account of Christ, may be, and is called the reproach of Christ. Compare Heb. xiii. 12; Du Moulin's Sac. p. 151—155. And for the illustration of this he quotes, and by this key explains, Psalm. lxxix. 50—52.

h. Recompense of reward.] That reward could not be temporal greatness, which he might have had with much greater security and advantage in Egypt; nor the possession of Canaan, which he never saw. It must therefore be the eternal inheritance which was discovered to him by the principle here so largely described and recommended:

i. Fear the wrath of the king.] As it is so expressly said, (Exod. ii. 14, 15,) that when he first quitted Egypt, and went to sojourn in Midian, he was afraid; I apprehend the assertion of the apostle, that he did not fear the wrath of the king, refers to the instance mentioned in the paraphrase.

k By
never by any consideration, be influenced to offend him, nor much impressed with the fear of any thing that would tempt him to do this.

By faith that God would assuredly send his angel on the vindictive design foretold, and spare the houses properly distinguished, he celebrated the passover, and the pouring forth the blood of the lamb, which he sprinkled on the lintels, and the posts of the doors, as the mark of communicating those who dwelt under such roofs to the Divine protection; that he who destroyed the first-born might not touch them, under the security of that peaceful sign: an emblem of the safety we expect by means of the blood of Jesus, the true and great passover, who is sacrificed for us.

Again, by faith, operating in Moses, and in its degree in them likewise, they passed over the Red sea, as lately, as if they had marched on dry land, while its waters by the Divine command divided, and left the channel bare to them, so that they completed their march through it, and arrived safely on the opposite shore; which the Egyptians making an insolent and rash attempt to do, were, all drowned, and sunk like lead in the mighty waters, which returned upon them with irresistible violence.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let these glorious instances of faith be preserved in our memories, and have their due influence upon our hearts. When God calls us to resign our dearest comforts, let us think of that heroic act of faith by which Abraham offered up Isaac, and seemed in him to sacrifice all the promises, as well as his son. Yet he therein acted a part the most strictly rational; as rightly concluding, that God could with infinite ease call him back to life again, and make a person, who had poured forth all his blood on the altar, and been reduced to ashes there, the father of many nations. Let dying parents commit their children to the care of the ever-living God, like Jacob; and worship him who hath fed them all their lives.

[Mr. S for sake of brevity, with his usual delicacy, has omitted a long and very evident appearance, that of those who passed through the sea, there were none with whom God was not well pleased, 1 Cor. xii, 20, which we cannot infer, that all the persons afterwards mentioned by name, as instances of faith, were, on the whole, in such a state of acceptance with him as to be entitled to his everlasting favour. See Mr. Spen, Vol. IX. p. 97.]
By faith the walls of Jericho fell down: and who will never forsake those that put their trust in him. Let those who are called to glorify God, by opposing the unjust commands of great and powerful men, remember the Ver. parents of Moses, and remember their illustrious child. Does he now repent that wonderful choice that he made at an adult age? does he now wish that he had been called the Son of Pharaoh's daughter, rather than the servant of God, faithful in all his house? does he wish that he had secured the treasures of Egypt, and the temporary pleasures of sin, and declined that reproach of Christ, which has ended in eternal glory? Our hearts, our consciences will soon answer; let us then, like him, have respect unto the reward. Let us endeavour more frequently to direct our regards to God, and live as seeing him who is invisible.

And while our faith is thus viewing him, let us look with pleasure to the blood of sprinkling, which places us under his protection; which introduces us to his favour; which secures us from the destroying angel. He will lead us on safely to his heavenly Canaan, if we fall not by unbelief. He will open our passage through seas of difficulty; he will send down upon us every suitable supply, and would much sooner command the skies to rain down bread, or the flinty rock to melt into streams of water, than desert his people in the wilderness. Let all his wonders of power and of love to Israel of old, animate our faith; and let them all quicken our obedience; and under a sense of our own weakness and the importance of this leading, this princely grace, let us daily pray, Lord, increase our faith.

SECT. XVIII.

The Apostle concludes his discourse on faith, by hinting at many other glorious instances of it, and besides several recorded in scripture, refers also to the case of those who suffered under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Heb. XI. 30.—XII. 2.

HEBREWS XI. 30.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed.

I HAVE mentioned the faith which our forefathers exercised on the miraculous power of God to lead them out of Egypt, and through the Red-sea; and I must farther observe, that they continued under the influence of the same principle when they came into the promised land: for it was by faith in those who marched round the strongly fortified walls of Jericho, following the ark, and who at the appointed signal blew the trumpets of rams-horns and shouted, that, contrary
contrary to all sensible appearance of possibility, they fell down, smitten by the hand of God, without any human force, having been only surrounded seven days in solemn silence, according to the Divine command; how absurd a spectacle soever their procession might appear to the besieged. It was by faith, and in consequence of it, that Rahab the harlot did not perish with the infidels of that city among whom she dwelt; having received the spies hospitably and dismissed them in peace, when an alarm was taken by her fellow-citizens, and they searched for them to destroy them. She therefore hazarded her own life to preserve theirs, believing them to be the servants of the Almighty Jehovah, and assuming herself that he could protect her in her efforts for their security, and could make them the means of delivering her and her family; which was accordingly the case.

32 And what shall I say further upon this copious, this inexhaustible subject for the time would fail me if I should attempt to discourse at large concerning Gideon, who with so small a band of men cut off so many thousands of the Midianites; and Barak, who freed Israel from the oppression of Jabin, and routed Sisera his general; and Samson, who slew so many thousands of the Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass; and performed so many other astonishing achievements. I might also speak of the victory of Jephtha over the Ammonites, and the heroic acts of David, in his combat with Goliah, and his other frequent encounters with the enemies of God, and his Israel; and even of Samuel, who though his character seemed more pacific, as a prophet and a judge, yet led on the armies of the Lord on a remarkable occasion, to an illustrious victory. I might also enlarge on the celebrated histories of Elijah, Elisha, and others of the prophets, particularly Daniel, and the three young worthies, whose magnificent history he hath particularly recorded. I will not dwell on the history of those heroes who have transmitted their names to our age, and shall transmit them to all who are to come, with such distinguished honour; but shall content myself with observing, that it was by the exercise of this great principle, that they were raised to those sublime degrees of reputation and glory. It was by faith that some of them, after many

passed about seven days.

31 By faith the harlot Rahab purposed not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

32 And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me if I should attempt to discourse at large concerning Gideon, who with so small a band of men cut off so many thousands of the Midianites; and Barak, who freed Israel from the oppression of Jabin, and routed Sisera his general; and Samson, who slew so many thousands of the Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass; and performed so many other astonishing achievements. I might also speak of the victory of Jephtha over the Ammonites, and the heroic acts of David, in his combat with Goliah, and his other frequent encounters with the enemies of God, and his Israel; and even of Samuel, who though his character seemed more pacific, as a prophet and a judge, yet led on the armies of the Lord on a remarkable occasion, to an illustrious victory. I might also enlarge on the celebrated histories of Elijah, Elisha, and others of the prophets, particularly Daniel, and the three young worthies, whose magnificent history he hath particularly recorded. I will not dwell on the history of those heroes who have transmitted their names to our age, and shall transmit them to all who are to come, with such distinguished honour; but shall content myself with observing, that it was by the exercise of this great principle, that they were raised to those sublime degrees of reputation and glory. It was by faith that some of them, after many
Faith illustrated in the sufferings of ancient worthies:

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might

Many a painful struggle, subdued the kingdoms of those princes which had oppressed God’s Israel; others of them wrought righteousness, and carried their obedience to God, and their zeal for his law to the most extraordinary degrees; others of them obtained promises of the most unexpected events in their favour, which were exactly and circumstantially performed; others stopped the mouths of lions, which came roaring against them, as if they would have devoured them in a moment, or into whose dens they were thrown.

Nay as to some of them we are expressly said, 34 that they quenched the violence of the fire, when they were actually thrown into the furnace; others of them escaped the edge of the sword, when it was just lifted up to destroy them; they were strengthened in the midst of weakness, and many of them became so valiant in battle, that they repelled the armies of the aliens, or foreign enemies, when they encamped against them. There are also recorded in the prophetic writings other instances, in which women received their dead [children] by a resurrection from the dead; which till these examples, had never been known or heard of. (Compare 1 Kings xvii. 22, 23; 2 Kings iv. 36, 37.) And the credible records of succeeding ages inform us of the triumphs of faith in a still more glorious degree: in which several others, and particularly seven children, and one pious and holy mother, were tortured, in the most inhuman manner, to compel them to renounce their religion, and commit idolatry; but endured all with invincible fortitude, not accepting deliverance, when it was offered them when they were extended in the most violent manner, and then beaten with clubs, which must give exquisite pain, when all the parts were on such a stretch. See Wulfius Curta Philolog, in loc.

a Wrought righteousness.] Some have interpreted this, not only of their leading lives exemplary for holiness, but administering justice to others. But I do not know that the phrase has ever that signification.

b Edge of the sword.] Probably this may refer to the deliverance of David from the sword of Saul, and of Elijah, and Micaiah, from that of Ahab.

c Strengthened in weakness.] Some refer this to their being recovered from sickness, by faith and prayer, as Hezekiah, Job, and David were.

d Were tortured.] The original word signifies a peculiar sort of torture, which was called that of the tympanum, or drum
them; nor even riches and preferments added to the proposal, that they might obtain a better resurrection: but neither the drudgery, nor the pain, could prevail upon them to desert their profession. Yea, they proved also the utmost force of bonds and imprisonment, in which many of them languished for tedious months and years, under all the ill-usage which commonly attends such confinements.

And others were brought out from their bonds to the most infamous and painful executions; and they were some of them stoned, and others sawn asunder, they were tempted by unheard-of cruelties on the one hand, as well as the offers of immediate deliverance on the other, and at length slain with the sword, they wandered about clothed in the meanest manner, and sometimes, when their former habits were worn out, only, to frequent a punishment, both alone, and before a capital execution, (compare Dr. Lardner's Continuance of the Gospel-History, Vol. I. Book I. ch. v. 1, and Dr. Scott on Matthew xxvii. 31, that it is probable it was inflicted on many other persons on account of their religion.

k Some answer. Dr. Pearson, (Comm. in Vol. I. p. 153, and many others, suppose the apostle might have referred to the treatment which the Jews, and the proselyte James was seen to suffer at the command of Manasseh, Celsius understands by this expression, being torn in pieces, as it were, under a thousand feet, consisting of wooden rollers, full of sharp iron teeth like a bear's. Compare Dr. Lightfoot, loc. cit. Mr. Hall observes, that the opposition lies between the resurrection to eternal life, which they most expected, and the resurrection of the dead children to life in the world, mentioned in the first clause of the verse.

\[S\text{ec.} \times \text{viii.} \]

\[\text{Ilxxviii.} \]

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only in sheep-skins\(^k\) and in goat-skins, being destitute of the common accommodations of life, afflicted and even tormented, sometimes by the fury of their enemies, and at other times by the rigour of the seasons. And though these were persons of the most amiable and venerable characters, of whom the world was not worthy that they should inhabit it; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these heroes in different ages, were supported under their respective trials, severe and extreme as they were, by the exercise of a firm and lively faith, in the fidelity of God, and the invisible rewards and glories of a future state; and it was by this, that having obtained a good report, they persevered to the end. But they did not receive the full accomplishment of the promise made to their fathers, nor have they yet arrived to the full and complete enjoyment of that glory which faith taught them to expect:

God having according to the counsels of his infinite wisdom, provided something still better for us, in the gospel-revelation; that so the beauty of his conduct and administration might be so much the more apparent; and that they, without us, might not be made perfect; but all might end with the greatest dignity and propriety, in bringing all his children together, to the full consummation of their hopes in Christ Jesus his Son, at the time of his final and triumphant appearance.

\(^k\)Of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

\(^{39}\)And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

\(^{40}\)God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

\(^\text{Note:}\) The Seventy, in the case of Elijah, translate the word which we render mantle, by ἠμαχία, a sheep skin. That sheep-skins and goat-skins, or at least the skins of some animals, were frequently worn by the ancient prophets, seems to be intimated, Zech. xiii. 4.

\(^\text{Note:}\) That they, without us, might not be made perfect. It is debated, whether this refers to the most perfect state of the church on earth, and so expresses a decorum in the conduct of providence, in gradually improving the church of God; or to the glory of the future state. I have given in the paraphrase what seemed to me the most noble and important sense.—The learned Wal Gibson, Curæ Philolog. Vol. IV. p. 774, mentions with approbation the exposition of Alexander Motte, to this effect, that the promise which these worthies did not receive, related to the first personal appearance of the Messiah: that the better thing which God hath provided for us, is the promise of Christ's second appearance, that they might then be made perfect, but not without us, though we have received the accomplishment of the first promise without them.
We then are compassed with a great cloud of witnesses.

In the mean time, we may consider this glorious and triumphant assembly, as looking down from the peaceable and blessed state at which many of them are already arrived, and observing the manner in which we endeavour to follow them. And let the thought animate us in a becoming manner. Being therefore, as we are, encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, who surround us on every side in a vast unnumberable assembly, the spectators of our trial, let us lay aside every incumbering weight, and especially the sin which in present circumstances has the greatest advantage [against us]. I mean a disposition to relinquish, or dissemble the gospel, for fear of sufferings; [and] let us run with patience and perseverance, the race which is set before us, resolutely persisting in it, how long and painful soever it may be. Looking off from every object which would interrupt us in our career, and fixing our eyes upon Jesus, the leader and finisher of [our] faith, who called us out to this strenuous, yet glorious, enterprize; who animates us by his example, and supports us by his grace, till the season comes, in which he shall bestow upon us the promised crown.

XII. 1. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

2 Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured...
endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God.

He indeed is the most illustrious example of all, who for the joy and glory that was set before him, in the view of honouring his heavenly Father, and procuring the salvation of men, and so passing to such exalted honour and felicity, endured all the agonies of the cross despising the shame of so ignominious an execution. And accordingly, now the infamy, the pain, and the humiliation are ceased for ever, he is ascended to that world, where alone such consummate goodness could receive its proper reward. And there he is set down in conspicuous and peerless majesty, at the right hand of the glorious and exalted throne of God, there to live and reign in immortal felicity and dignity. And among all the illustrious examples of faith, by whom you may be animated and edified, there is none comparable to him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Is it possible we should read these animated periods without feeling our hearts glow with a sacred ambition of acting as becomes those who have heard such tidings and beheld such examples? If the triumphs of faith in Rahab, and Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Jephtha, cannot move us, nor even those of David, and of Samuel; if we are insensible of the martial prowess which they exerted in firm dependance on the Lord God of hosts; let us behold other combats, in which they who seemed weaker; became yet more gloriously victorious. Let us remember, not only the mouths of lions stopped, but the violence of fire quenched, when the faithful servants of God were thrown into it. Yea, let us behold those who endured its unquenched violence, and turned all those painful and terrible sensations into an heroic occasion of expressing the superior ardour of their love to God, and the stedfastness of their faith in him. Let us remember those youths, and children, and women, among the rest of these worthies, indeed among the worthiest of them, who were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

For the joy that was set before him.] Some would render it, Instead of the joy that lay before him, meaning the honour and happiness he might have enjoyed in the present world. But ἐπιλήψεις has so evident a reference to verse 1. that I cannot by any means acquiesce in that interpretation. Besides, the word ἄνει may well signify, set against that joy, and then the meaning will be, that he despised the shame of the cross, in comparison of the joy set before him. Nor can we imagine any love more distinterested than that, which should make his recovering sinners to God and happiness, the great joy of his heart, and in subserviency to the divine glory, the grand motive of his actions and sufferings.
In vain were all the terrors of persecuting rage and cruelty opposed to these triumphs. They submitted to imprisonment, and banishment, how dear soever liberty and their native country might be; they quitted their commodious habitations for rocks, and cases, and their comfortable apparel for sheep skins and goat-skins. And when deserts and dens could no longer shelter their wretchedness, but they were seized by their blood-thirsty enemies, they held, and endured, undismayed, the most horrid instruments of death. When the piercing sword entered their vitals, when overwhelming stones dashed them in pieces, when the torturing saw was tearing out their very entrails, there was a principle within superior to all these, which nothing could pierce, which nothing could rend away, which nothing could overwhelm. God hath done an honour to our nature in raising up such illustrious persons, of whom the world was not worthy, and whose distinguished worth could never have been manifested in the eyes of their fellow-creatures, had it not been called out to such rigorous trials. Well might they rejoice on any terms in their dismission from a state of existence, so far beneath the elevation of their views. And though their names may be perished from among men, and the distinct history of each, lost in the crowds of countless multitudes, yet are they all in remembrance before God; and the death of each of his saints, in such circumstances, peculiarly precious in his sight. They are now bathing in those rivers of delight, which flow through the celestial paradise, and waiting the full consummation of their hope in that better resurrection, in the views of which they suffered so bravely. In the mean time, they look down, as it were, from the battlements of heaven upon our combats, upon our race. O, let them not see us basely shrinking back, or loitering! Let us lay aside every weight; let us, especially, guard against the sin which most easily besets us. And to establish all our fortitude, and to awaken all our ardour, let us look to an object brighter and nobler than all these, even to the Son of God, the Son of righteousness, shining in high pre-eminence above all this cloud, and as it were gilding it by the reflection of his eulogent rays. Let us look to Jesus, who leads us on; to Jesus, who will complete the triumph of our faith, and set the crown on the head of every one who overcometh! Let us daily think, what agony, what ignominy, he endured for us; and let every consideration of noble ambition, of duty, and of gratitude, fire our souls, and add wings to our zeal; so shall we at length share in his joy, and sit down victorious with him on his throne, as he hath also overcome, and is set down with the Father on his throne.
The Apostle animates the believing Hebrews to bear and improve the afflictions to which they were exposed, and to exert themselves vigorously to promote the united interests of peace and holiness. Heb. XII. 3—14.

In order to encourage you, my dear brethren, in your Christian course, I have directed you, and I must again direct you, to the Lord Jesus Christ; for what can be more important than to consider him, who with patient fortitude, endured such obstinate and perverse contradiction of ungrateful sinners against himself. Think how great and illustrious a Person he was, and what severe things he suffered, that you may not grow weary in your Christian course, nor faint in your minds, when called to share in some degree of his trials. And indeed you will be excusable if you should desert his cause, on account of any such trials as you have yet endured; for you have not as yet undergone the severest proofs of your integrity, nor resisted unto blood, striving against sin, as he did, who made his life a sacrifice to duty.

And ye seem to have forgotten the exhortation, of the word of God, which speaketh to you, as to his sons, (Prov. iii. 11, 12,) saying, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, as if it were a small matter; nor faint and sink, when thou art rebuked by him; but avoid the extremes of proud insensibility, and entire dejection. For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and scourgeth, with seeming severity, every son whom he receiveth,

a Consider him: ανελημμένης.] The original word is very emphatical; and as Erasmus Schmidius observes, is a metaphor taken from arithmetical and geometrical proportions. So that it signifies the great accuracy and exactness, with which he should consider the Author and Finisher of their faith, and especially the analogy between his case and their own.

b Resisted unto blood.] It has been justly observed by several commentators, that there are many agonistical terms in this context. In the phrase before us there seems to be an allusion to the pugils or boxers, who fought erect, with their hands stretched out, and were often smeared with blood. Mr. Smirin just observes, in his beautiful illustration of this text, (Ser. ix. p. 90,) that sometimes men were killed by the blows of the cestus. See also Dr. Whitley in loc.

c Ye have forgotten the exhortation.] Beza, and some others, choose to read this clause with an interrogation, Have ye forgotten the exhortation?

d Whom
Correction is a proof of adoption:

ceiveth, to peculiar favour. It is evident therefore, that if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as wise and affectionate parents deal with their beloved sons; for what son is there whom the father chasteneth not, more or less? There are scarce any children, who do not sometimes need correction, and no wise and good parent, who will always forbear it. But if ye are without chastisement, of which all the genuine children are partakers, then are ye treated as men often treat bastards about whose education they are often careless as being ashamed of them, and looking upon them as a scandal to their families; and not as they treat their legitimate sons, whom they intend to make their heirs, and concerning whom they are solicitous, that they may be happy themselves, and a credit and comfort to the family they stand related to; which a child left to himself, without correction, is by no means like to prove.

Now if when we had fathers of our flesh, who corrected us, we gave them reverence, and submitted patiently and quietly to their discipline, shall we not much rather, on the justest principles of filial duty, be in subjection to the great Father of our spirits, by whom that noble part of our nature was produced, in the production of which our earthly parents had no share? And indeed we know this to be necessary, if we desire

d When the Lord hath, he correcteth, and scarcegeth every son whom he receiveth.] There seems to be a beautiful gradation in these words. To receive, signifies here to have a particular regard for. Compare Isa. xxxi. 2. The sentence is quoted from Prov. xi. 12. and the last clause of the apostle's citation, which is, And scarcegeth every son whom he receiveth, is by our English version, and the old Latin, there rendered, Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. And this is agreeable to the modern manners. But without any change in the Hebrew letters, the clause may be translated as it is by the apostle, agreeably to the rendering of the Seventy, and some other ancient versions. See Mr. Halley in loc.

e Bastards.] In those dissolute ages there were among the heathen many base-born children. And it is highly probable, that as for such, their education, (like that of Jeptha, whose fatal error might perhaps be owing to it,) was much neglected, so as to come almost into a pro\n
9 Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits, and live?
For they verily for a few days chastened us, after their own pleasure: but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby.

Wherefore lift up the

And live.] This awful, yet tender intimation of the terrible consequences of rebellion against the Father of spirits, (in which there is an allusion to the capital punishment to be inflicted on a disobedient child, Dent. xxi. 18, &c.) is very remarkable; and an instance of the apostle's forcible manner of suggesting the most weighty thought, sometimes in an oblique manner, and in very few words. Compare Rom. xii. ult. 1 Tim. iv. 16, Tit. ii. 15. Phil. i. 29. Heb. xii. 28. And many passages to be found in all his writings.

For a few days.] This is to be applied both to our earthly parents, and our heavenly Father, and it contains a beautiful and comfortable intimation, that this whole life, when compared with our future being, is but as a few days: indeed infinitely less than the days of childhood to those of the longest life of man upon earth.

Peaceful fruit of righteousness.] Possibly alluding to the crowns of olive given to the victor in the Olympic games, which was also an emblem of peace. The learned Bos would translate the word อ่ร้ผัท, pleasant, joyful, it being usual to express pleasure and happiness by peace: Wolfius is of opinion, that the expression refers to that peace with God which we obtain by faith. See Cure Philolog. Vol. IV. p. 783.

Exercised therewith.] Not only corrected, but instructed and edified; setting themselves to search out the proper lessons which afflictive dispensations are intended to teach.

Therefore rally your languid spirits, lift up the hands
Wherefore they should be steadfast and courageous:

hands that hang down, that they may exert themselves in this glorious combat, and strengthen the feeble luttering knees, that they may hold out to the end of this important race. And by the proper exercise of discipline in your Christian societies, and by all the other offices of true and faithful friendship, make strait paths for your feet. Regulate matters so, that the way of duty may be as obvious and easy as possible, that the firm, the lame, and the decrepit, may not, by discouragements and temptations, be turned out of the way, or thrown down, but that every such feeble traveller in the way to Sion, may rather be healed, recovered from falls or weakness, and strengthened to a course of more strenuous and persevering piety.

And while the jarring interests of the world so often occasion a constant contentment between men, and even between Christians, let it be your faithful and zealous care to pursue peace with all men, even when it may seem to flee from you. And at the same time remember, whatever the consequence may be, to cultivate universal holiness, in all its branches; without which, how ready soever men may be to flatter themselves with vain expectations, no man shall see the Lord. For it is his unalterable decree, for ever to exclude those mists in which sin reigns, from the sight of him in the celestial world, for which their tempers and dispositions render them altogether unfit, even to a degree of utter meanness.

Improvement.

Is what clearer words can these exhortations of the apostle be expressed! by what more powerful motives can they be enforced! Behold, the whole of our duty comprehended in one word: to follow peace and holiness! Behold the most awful engagements suggested, that no man, whatever his profession, or hope, or
or confidence may be, can possibly see the Lord without it! What a solicitude should it awaken to cultivate holiness in ourselves, to promote it in others, and to remove every obstruction as much as the possible. "Awaken our spirits, O Lord, by thy good Spirit, that the most languid hands, and feeble knees, may be strengthened and confirmed." And that they may be strengthened, let us look to our great Leader, to him who passed through so many years, in the midst of the most violent opposition, the most perverse contradiction. Surely we might see enough to animate us to maintain the combat, even till we left the last drop of our blood in the place, when we strive against sin, against his enemies and ours, to deliver us from the power of which, he assumed flesh and blood, and died.

He, the best beloved Son, was distinguished by his Father’s chastisement, though there was not the least degree of failing in him to deserve it. But the chastisement of our peace was upon him. And shall we who have merited to be chastised with scorpions, mourn at the rod? Let this scripture be attentively reviewed, and laid up in our mind, to dispose us to the most exemplary patience under affliction; and to guard against the opposite and dangerous extremes, of despising Divine corrections, or fainting under them. Would we wish to be excused from the tokens of God’s paternal love? Would we wish to be neglected, as if we were bastards, rather than cultivated with the discipline of beloved children? Were we submissive to our earthly parents, and shall we rebel against our Father in heaven? Shall we not be in subjection to the Father of our spirits, and live? May our souls remember the unanswerable argument and the awful motive to this subjection. In what would opposition end, but in death; and how unreasonable would that opposition be? Is God in these later ages of the world become an arbitrary and tyrannical being, that his proceedings should now be suspected and censured? Is he no longer concerned for the profit and advantage of his children? or is it no longer desirable to be partakers of his holiness? of that holiness, which is to fit us to see and enjoy him for ever. Lord, should each of us say, I bless thee, that thou hast made me partaker of thy providential bounties, of thy gospel, of thy grace, in any degree: but Oh, my soul longs to be partaker of thine holiness, to bear thine image more completely, as the great glory and blessedness of my nature. For this therefore would I submit to thy corrections, though for the present ever so grievous, and wait those peaceable fruits of righteousness which will be so rich an equivalent for all.
The Apostle solemnly cautions them against despising the blessings of the gospel, and sacrificing them to any secular views, or animal gratifications; and enforces the caution by representing the incomparable excellence of those blessings, and the wonderful manner in which they were introduced; which even the introduction of the Jewish economy, glorious as that was, did by no means equal. Heb. XII. 15-29.

It is earnestly exhorting you to cultivate holiness in your own hearts and lives; and I must farther press it upon you, that you endeavour to maintain a friendly and brotherly inspection over each other. Look to it, therefore, with the greatest attention and care, for yourselves and one another, lest any one, by apostasy from the Christian religion fall short of the grace of God, under the day of grace and dispensation of the gospel; lest any root of bitterness, and poison, springing up unheeded, occasion trouble to the society in general, and by it, before you are aware, many be disturbed and defiled, through the contagion of so bad an example.

16 For ye know, that when afterwards he would gladly have inherited the blessing, which was his most

a Root of bitterness and poison.  

16. Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right.

17. For ye know how that afterward when he

b Profane person.  

Dr. Barrow, I think, would render it, for one little eating bout; but that seemed not sufficiently grace.

d He
he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard, intreated, that the word should not be spoken to them any more;

most valuable attendant, he was rejected; for when he would have persuaded Isaac his father to have revoked and transferred that which he had just before pronounced upon his brother Jacob, he found no room for repentance, no possibility of changing his father's mind, by all his submissions and intreaties; though he sought it earnestly, and even with tears, yet still Isaac persisted in what he had done, and said, "I have blessed him yea, and he shall be blessed." Gen. xxvii. 33.

The inestimable privileges and prerogatives, which the gospel brings along with it, so superior to the Mosaic law, add great weight to these exhortations and cautions; for ye, who are proselyted to Christianity, are not come to Sinai again, to the awful mountain which was the object of touch, though the touch of it were prohibited on so high a penalty; and to the burning fire that surrounded it, and the thick cloud, and darkness, and dreadful tempests, which were the tremendous signals of God's descent upon it; And to the sound of the trumpet, which at length waxed exceeding loud, Exod. xix. 18, 19, and the voice of distinct words, spoken with a sound which reached all the thousands of Israel, and with which they who heard, were so powerfully affected, that they entreated the word might not be continued, or carried any farther to them, but that the remainder of what the Lord had to say to them, might be delivered by the mediation of Moses; For

d He was rejected.] From comparing the blessing of Jacob and Esau, Gen. xxvii. 28, 29, 39, 40, it will appear that there must be something spiritual in the blessing of Jacob; else Esau would not have been said to be rejected, considering what he obtained. See Dr. Goodwin's Works, Vol. I. p. 45.

e No room for repentance.] We render it no place for repentance. The meaning of this undoubtedly is not, that he would have repented and could not; but that there was no room for his repentance, it would not be regarded; or, in other words, that his father's mind could not be changed.

f Mountain, which was the object of touch: ἡ ἄκρα τοῦ ἀποστραγγίατος. Dr. Wall, in his note upon this place, declares himself inclined, if he had the authority of any manuscript or version to support him, to read ἡ ἀκρα κακαίωσαμαιν; which might not be touched, referring to the prohibition in Exod. xix. 13, and which the apostle mentions in the very next verse. But there is no necessity at all for this alteration. For it is not intimated by the expression, that the mountain might lawfully be touched, but that, as I have translated it, it was the object of touch, which indeed is implied in the very prohibition itself. And thus characterizing mount Sinai, it was his intention to intimate that it was an earthly mountain, not like mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

Moses
But to Mount Sion, the city of the living God:

For they were not able to endure that charge which was pronounced; so that there seemed little room for the caution given, and that with so much severity, that it was added, "If so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or struck through with a dart, if it escape immediate death from the tempest and the lightning.

21 (Exod. xiv. 12, 13.) And the appearance was so dreadful [that] Moses himself, who was happy in such unparalleled degrees of the divine favour, and accustomed to converse with God in so intimate a manner, when urged by the people to act as their mediator in this awful transaction, said, Though I consent to undertake the charge, I do nevertheless exceedingly

22 fear and tremble. But ye, my dear brethren, are so happy as to be come to a dispensation, the reverse of all these terrors, even to the mild and gentle discoveries which God makes of his presence on Mount Sion; and to the holy and joyous solemnities which grace the city of the living God situated there, even the heavenly Jerusalem, his sacred and everlasting abode; and to myriads of surrounding angels, whom it is

impossible to number. Ye are come to the great general assembly, and church of the first-born, the priests of God, who are written in heaven, where names are registered among the inhabitants of the place, the denomin of that city, and ministers of God's temple there.

Above

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.

21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear, and quake.)

22 But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.

23 To the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

The learned Alberti says, (Observ. Hebr. c. p. 344.) that this word properly signifies a stated convocation upon one day, and for that occasion; particularly that it is applied to the convocation at the Olympic games, in which view it expresses a very lively and elegant opposition to the case of the Israelites, who were struck with a general terror, when they were convened before Mount Sinai.
Above all, it is to be remembered, that ye are come to God, the supreme Judge of all, from whose sentence there can be no appeal; and to the spirits of the righteous, whose guilt being entirely expiated, they are made perfect, and complete both in holiness and happiness, so far as may consist with the separate state, in which they are joyfully waiting the appearance of their Lord. To this society you are related, and ye shall shortly arrive at that world were it holds its supreme residence; since you have happily drawn near to Jesus, the Mediator of the new and better covenant, far exceeding that established with Israel of old by the mediation of Moses; and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel; crying for pardon, whereas his cried aloud for vengeance.

And since this is the nature of the dispensation under which ye are now brought, let me solemnly charge it upon you, to see to it, that ye reject not him that speaketh to you, with these circumstances of endearment as well as solemnity for if they escaped not capital punishment who rejected him that, by Divine inspiration, gave forth oracles on earth, how much more [shall] we not be able to escape if we turn away from him [that speaketh to us] from his throne in the

Just men made perfect.] Justified before God, sanctified in their natures, and holy in their lives. Dr. Watts thinks the apostle here uses the expression just, or righteous, to intimate that he included the patriarchs, or Jewish saints; and that there was a peculiar propriety in doing it as he is writing to the Hebrews. Watts’s Death and Heaven, p. 79.—Mr. Baxter urges this as a proof of the distinct existence of the soul in a separate state.

[Blood of] Abel.] By this some understand the blood of sacrifices in general called the blood of Abel, because he is the first of whose animal sacrifices we read: But there is a harshness in that expression not easily paralleled; I should therefore rather understand it of the blood of Abel himself, as referring to the gentle and gracious character of Christ, and the blessings, instead of vengeance, drawn down by his blood. There is certainly some transposition of what one would have thought the most natural order here; but it must be ascribed to the rapturous manner in which St. Paul conceived of these things, and his fulness of matter when he touched upon them.

Him that gave forth oracles on earth.] This is generally expounded of Moses. Mr. Pierce refers it to God; since it is said, his voice there shook the earth, which he saith, must be the voice of God. And the argument of the apostle, according to him, is taken from the different manner of speaking; his speaking on earth being accompanied with earthly signs, &c. whereas his speaking from heaven means speaking by Christ coming down from heaven, and declaring heavenly things, (John iii. 12, 31, 32; 1 Pet. i. 12,) more glorious than the law. (2 Cor. iii. 6—11.) But it may be objected, that God spoke to them from heaven, when he gave the law at Mount Sinai, and that the words, whose voice, may refer to the latter clause, Him that speaketh from heaven. Yet even on this supposition, he that speaketh from heaven, must, I think, be God, since it is said, that his voice shook the earth, verse 26.
the heavens? If all indignities done to Moses, a mortal man, when speaking by Divine authority, were so severely avenged; how much more those offered to the Lord Jesus, who co-descended to come down from heaven, and lay aside the glories in which he there dwelt, to undertake the office of our Law-giver, and our Mediator?

And indeed the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom God has now spoken to us, is the Person that presided in that great solemnity of giving the law to which we have been referring. It was he whose voice then shook the earth, and whose spirit inspired the prophets: but now he hath promised, saying by one of them, (Hag. ii. 6.) Behold, yet once more I make so thorough a reformation, that I may be said to shake not the earth only, but also the heavens. For it is in such language that he hath chosen to represent the change of the Mosaic economy for that of the gospel. And it is evident, that this [expression] yet once more, or for the last time, not only signifies the renewal and change of the things there said to be shaken, that is, of the ordinances of Moses, as of things which were made and constituted only for a time; but also strongly intimates, that he would introduce thereby a dispensation to be changed.

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot...
Reflections on the privileges of the gospel state.

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom, which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear:

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

Ed no more, that the things not to be shaken any more, might be set up, and remain fixed on a perpetual basis; even that eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace, which God hath established by Christ Jesus his Son. As therefore we have received such an unshaken kingdom, which shall never be removed to make way for any different establishment, and which gives the assurance of a reign in eternal glory, let us see to it, that we have grace whereby we may serve God, from whom we receive it, in an acceptable manner. As that grace is so freely offered to us, let us not be so wanting to ourselves as to fall short of it. And while we feel our hearts inspired with all that gratitude and confidence, which suits the genius of so merciful a dispensation, let them be attempered with a becoming mixture of reverence and pious fear; that we may not, by an unworthy abuse of the gospel, deprive ourselves of its invaluable blessings, and sin beyond all possibility of farther remedy. For though our God manifests himself in the beams of such mild majesty, he [is] still possessed of that tremendous power, which was so awfully displayed at mount Sinai, and will break forth as a consuming fire against all those that presumptuously violate his laws, and despise his gospel. (Deut. iv. 23, 24.)

IMPROVEMENT.

The glories of the eternal Jehovah are indeed inconceivable and immutable. Still he is possessed of all that awful majesty which he displayed on mount Sinai, and able in a moment, as a devouring fire, to consume the transgressors of his law. But though he kindly reminds us of this dreadful scene, he does not limit and confine our views to it: he appears to us, not on that mountain, which was involved in blackness, and darkness, in tempest and fire: but calls us to the milder glories of mount Zion. Yet even there might our consciousness of guilt cause us to fear. How should we appear in the city of the living God, or presume to mingle ourselves with the general assembly and church of the

As grace is so freely offered.] This is strongly intimated in the words of the exhortation; else there could be no room for it. And this oblique intimation, in which it is, as it were, taken for granted that we may certainly have grace, if we take proper methods for obtaining it, appears to me peculiarly affecting.
The Apostle exhorts them to brotherly love.

Sect. 21. first-born? How should we hope for a place among myriads of angels, and the perfected spirits of the just, in the presence of God, the Judge of all, if it were not for the refuge and support, which we find in Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and in the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel? But being thus encouraged, let us draw near, with humble boldness, though with reverence and godly fear; while we hear the voice that once shook the earth, speaking to us in accents of love, and promising a kingdom that cannot be moved. That kingdom do we in some degree receive now, and we hope for the full possession hereafter. It shall indeed be obtained, if we learn so to value it, as in the expectation of it, to serve God acceptably, in the improvement of that grace, which awaits us, to make us equal to his service: only let us see to it, that we do not, by our own criminal negligence, fail of that grace, that we do not profanely

and foolishly follow the example of that wretched Esau, who stands recorded with so much infamy, as having for one sorry meal sold his birth-right, with all his sacred privileges. How many sons of Abraham, having followed him, have found, as he did, the impossibility of retrieving so fatal a bargain; found, as he did, that there was no place of repentance, though they may have sought it carefully with tears; with an anguish of heart, which none can conceive, but they who know what final and everlasting despair means. May God preserve all his churches from such roots of bitterness, as, alas! have too often sprung up among them! And since there is so much danger, that many may be deceived by them, let those that have a real concern for their honour and safety, be looking round, with a proper solicitude to guard against the first appearance of what may be so fatal to their honour, their purity, and peace.

Sect. XXI.

The Apostle exhorts Christians to brotherly love, purity, compassion, dependence on the Divine care, stedfastness in the profession of the truth, and to a life of thankfulness to God, and benevolence to man; from a consideration of the inestimable privileges derived to us from Christ, which ought always to encourage us boldly to endure any infamy and suffering which we may meet in his cause. Heb. XIII. 1—16.

Sect. XXI.

Hebrews XIII. 1. I shall conclude my present address to you, with some practical exhortations. And one of

Hebrews XIII. 1. Let brotherly love continue.
of the most comprehensive and important I can give you, is this: *Let brotherly love always continue* among you. And remember not only the common obligations of benevolence, by which all human creatures are connected with each other, but those peculiar engagements, which the Christian profession lays you under, to study the good of those, who by faith in the gospel are all the children of one Father, and heirs of one glorious inheritance. This should certainly engage you to relieve and accommodate such as are in necessity; and especially your christian brethren, in their travels from place to place, often undertaken for the service of their great Master. *Be not, therefore, forgetful of hospitality; for some have, by the practice of it, entertained angels, as common strangers, without knowing it*, and have found the hospitalities of many former years abundantly rewarded by one such favourable visit. And thus you know not, but they who come to you under a very mean appearance, may be as messengers from God to you, and the instruments of bestowing some extraordinary favours from him. You see many of your brethren suffering for conscience sake, and some thrown into prison; remember them therefore especially, who are in such bonds, as if you were yourselves bound with [them] and them that suffer any kind of ill-treatment in such a case, as being yourselves also in the same body with them, and so obliged to a tender sympathy; not now to insist on your sharing the same common infirmities of human nature with them all, which should engage you to carry your compassion to strangers, and even to enemies.

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*a* *Let brotherly love continue.* Diodate thinks this exhortation was peculiarly suitable to converted Jews as the prejudices against their Gentile brethren were in many of them so strong, that they were ready to disown them with abhorrence.

*b* *Entertained angels unaware.* It is possible that from the story of Abraham and Lot, who had the honour of entertaining angels, under the form of ordinary travellers, some tradition might reach the Indian Bramins, who tell their people that the gods sometimes descend in the form of poor indigent persons; and that when any of the children of men relieve them, they repay the charity with vast advantage. See Millar's *Propagation of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 217. I can lay no stress upon Mr. Price's reasoning against our supposing that Christ was one of those angels, that then the apostle would have urged the argument in a stronger view, by observing that they had entertained Christ himself. (See his notes on chap. i. ver. 2, and Mr. Halley on this verse.) For the apostles were under no obligation, on all occasions, to use the strongest argument that could possibly be thought of; and as there might perhaps be some room to debate this matter, it was great prudence to build an argument upon a principle, in which all that believe the authority of scripture, must agree.

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*c* *Marriage*
I know that some, who pretend to more than ordinary chastity, say many reproachful things of a conjugal life; but I assure you they are much to blame; for marriage is to be held honourable in all, and the proper use of the marriage bed is to be esteemed as undefiled, since none can imagine, that God would make an action in itself morally evil, absolutely necessary for the support of the human race in future generations. But as for whoremongers and adulterers, who either despise or pollute it, God will undoubtedly judge them; however they may escape human punishment.

[Let your] conversation be free from every degree of covetousness, and contented with such things as ye have, without eagerly or impatiently desiring what Divine Providence may see fit to withhold. And though being so slenderly provided for, as most of you are, it may seem very probable you should soon come to want, even the necessities of life, especially after the late ravages you have suffered from your enemies, who have plundered your goods, (chap. x 34.) be not anxiously solicitous about that; for he who hath all the stores of nature at his command, and who owns the relation of a Father to us, hath graciously said, (Josh. i 5.) I will not, I will not leave thee, I will never, never, never forsake thee. And though these emphatical words were at first spoken to Joshua, yet it was not under a personal character only, but considering him in his relation to the Israel of God, and as acting for its support; so that all God's people, as his love to them is in all ages the same, may take a just encouragement from it, and we in particular may take courage to say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not

4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not...
They should remember their deceased pastors: hence fear what man shall do unto me; thus comforting ourselves, not only in the seeming uncertainty of future supplies, but in the midst of the greatest dangers, and when threatened by our enemies with the severest sufferings.

And let me now urge you to remember those dear and venerable persons who having formerly presided over you in holy things, have spoken to you the word of God, whose course is now finished. Though all your intercourse with them is for the present cut off, do not however forget their instructions and their examples; but be mindful of that faith which they taught, and which they exercised. And let it be your great care to imitate them, considering the end of their conversation. Reflect on the happy manner in which they quitted life, on that support which they found, in their latest moments, from the truths they had taught you, and on that heroic resolution with which some of them were animated to meet even martyrdom itself in that sacred cause; and let the remembrance of these things engage you steadfastly to retain their faith and courageously to follow their steps. And remember for your farther encouragement, that though the most faithful ministers of the gospel die, yet as that sacred dispensation still continues immutable, so Jesus Christ, the great Guardian of those who faithfully adhere to it, in the tenor of his declarations, as well as in the glories of his Divine nature, [is] the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and therefore can well support you, by whomsoever you may be forsaken. And let this be a powerful engagement for the improvement of the Old Testament, upon this great and solid principle, that God, who is no respecter of persons, intends, that expressions of his favor to this or that eminently good man, should be used for the encouragement of all others of the like character. The emphasis of the original is so well known, that I shall not insist upon it.

[f. Presided over you.] Bishop Lloyd, (Funeral Sermon for Bishop Wilkins, p. 7, 8,) thinks this may refer to James the Apostle, and to James, commonly called the first Bishop of Jerusalem; both of which had been put to death there before this epistle was written. Our English version here is very far from being justifiable.

Remember them which have the rule over you; whereas they were now dead. It should have been, Who have presided, or had the rule, over you; or as I have rendered the two clauses in connection, Who having presided over you, have spoken to you the word of God.

g Christ the same.] I think this makes a much nobler sense, if explained of the immutability of Christ's power and grace, than if merely understood of his doctrine; though I have given a hint of the latter sense, out of regard to some great expositors, who have urged Acts v. 42; 2 Cor. iv. 5. 1 Cor. i. 24; as instances in which Christ signifies not his person but his word.
ment to adhere to his gospel, and to preserve it uncorrupted. In this view, see to it, that ye be not carried about by various and foreign doctrines, disagreeing with each other, and with the great standard of truth in the Divine revelation. Many are zealous for such, and particularly Jewish teachers; but remember, [it is] a good thing that the heart be established in an adherence to the order of the gospel, and yet zealous in those distinctions between various kinds of meats, and repose one confidence in those ritual observances which some are ready to lay so much stress upon, but by which they, who were most concerned in them and regarded them with the greatest exactness, have not dwelt, so as to make any real attainment in religion, by all that stipulancy and mortification. They boast indeed of many of their privileges, in which they think they receive superior to us, but it is infinitely more than a balance to all, that we have an all of a spiritual nature, even that disposed by the sacrifice of the Son of God, of which they have no authority in any, who pretend divine operations in the tabernacle.

For it is well known, that the bodies of those animals, whose blood (being offered) for sin is carried by the high Priest into the holy place, are according to the appointment of the law, as instituted in the wilderness, to be burned without the camp, and afterwards without the city of Jerusalem; no part of them being eaten by the people. Now methinks there is something in this circumstance which may suggest to us matter of praise and comfortable meditation, when we compare it with what we know of the great High Priest of our profession. We may therefore methinks say, that Jesus also, that under his grand sacerdotal character he might sanctify the people, not by animal victims, but by his own blood, which he offered up as a sin-offering for us, to some particular, and can effect it to God, suffered not within the wall of the temple, or the city, but upon mount Calvary, which you well know lies without the gate of

9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

10 We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of those beast, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for us, are burnt without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.
13 Let us go forth therefore unto him, without the camp, bearing his reproach.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.

16 But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Sacrifice of praise.] To suppose that this refers to the eucharist, and the following verse to charitable collections made at the celebration of that ordinance, seems very fanciful.
IMPROVEMENT.

SECTION XXI. Those other expensive sacrifices which the Mosaic law required, are now entirely abrogated. Let us consider this as an additional engagement upon us, to abound more and more in those of unfeigned benevolence and real charity; rejoicing, that the God of our lives, who gives us all, will condescend to have any regard to them. And let our brethren in Christ be remembered with that distinguishing affection which suits the relation in which we stand to them; and in whatever bonds of affliction they may be bound, let us endeavour to make their lot lighter upon them, by every thing which our compassionate assistance can do for that purpose; considering ourselves as in the body.

That we may be ready to all such kind offices, let us endeavour to overcome the love of money, which is the root of all evil. Let us learn, (and Oh that Divine grace may effectually teach us!) to moderate our desires, to be contented with what Providence allot us, whether more or less, and to trust in God, as to the supply of our future wants. Well may we not only trust, but even boast in him, when we consider in how endearing a manner he hath declared, with such reiterated assurances, that he will never never leave us; that he will not, yea, he will not forsake us. Surely the language of the most cheerful and courageous faith well corresponds to that of so gracious and soul-reviving a promise. Let faith then put a reality into it, or rather glory in that certain reality which there cannot but be in every promise; especially as Jesus Christ, in whom this, and all the promises are confirmed to us, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

And let this thought support us under those breaches which may be made on the church by death. Christ ever lives to guard and protect it, and to maintain those great truths which in every age have been the joy and confidence of his people. Let our attachment to him therefore, be preserved inviolable, and the purity of our souls unspotted. And let us never fear to share in his reproach, in whose glory we have such a security of sharing; but cheerfully go, as it were, out of the camp to him, who suffered crucifixion for us without the gates of the city. Were we called to endure martyrdom for his sake, he would only lead us out of a mean and precarious tabernacle: for we have here no continuing city; but then he will conduct us, if we are faithful to him, to a city, so durable, that its foundations are represented by rocks of solid gems, so glorious, that its pavements are described as gold, and its gates as pearl. May our faith be daily beholding it as near; and
and may we feel every day more of its attractive influence, to render us superior to all that earth can promise, and to all it can threaten, while we are passing thither. Under his guardianship, let us daily be offering the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name, as well knowing, that while we are on our journey to the New Jerusalem, no mountain can be so steep and rugged, no valley so deep and gloomy, as not to admit of the songs of Sion.

SECT. XXII.

The Apostle concludes with recommending to them some particular regards to their pious ministers, and intreats their prayers; adding some salutations, and a solemn benediction. Heb. XIII. 17, to the end.

Hebrews XIII. 17. 

OBEY them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may

Hebrews XIII. 17. 

I HAVE been urging you to an affectionate remembrance of those who were once your teachers, but are now dismissed from their labours, and received to their reward. And I must on the same principles, press upon you a due regard to those faithful ministers who still survive. Obey them, therefore, who preside over you, in those rules and directions which they are authorised by Christ to give you, and submit yourselves [to them] with a becoming respect; even though their office should sometimes oblige them to make such addresses to you as may for the present be disagreeable. For they are solemnly appointed to watch for your souls, for their everlasting safety and happiness. And well knowing that the trust is of infinite importance, they would execute it as those that must render an awful and strict account of their office, and of the fidelity with which they have discharged it. Behave towards them, therefore, while

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a Preside over you.] Lord Barrington imagines, that he refers to the apostles of the circumcision, to shew that he would not in any respect derogate from their authority; (Essay I. p. 87;) but I cannot think the word πρισματεύομαι, should be thus limited. I rather apprehend, with Mr. Bayse, (Serm. Vol. I. p. 415,) that it refers to those who immediately presided over them in their religious affairs, that is, the ministers of the several particular churches. The application of it to diocesan bishops is merely arbitrary.

b Watch for your souls.] Chrysostom says, he never read these words without trembling, though he often preached several times in a day.
while they are pursuing the several duties of it, in such a manner, that they may do it with joy, and not with inward grumbling; under discouragements arising from your unkind treatment, or from such other irregularities of your conduct as may require them to interpose by any methods of severity; for that [is] most unprofitable and dangerous for you, and will on the whole be much more for your own detriment than it can possibly be for theirs.

18. Among the rest of your Christian ministers, we persuade ourselves that you will not forget us. And we indeed, that while absence may render as many other instances of affection impracticable, you would not fail however to pray for us. And indeed we may very cheerfully ask, and very reasonably expect this: for though our enemies may mainly maintain the contrary, we are confident that we have a good conscience, and have conducted ourselves, so as to have a testimony to our integrity in you, that we are determined, whatever it may cost us, in all things to behave honestly, to converse in the most fair and respectable manner, according to the obligations of our sacred profession and office, though we should sacrifice every thing to that resolution. And I especially beseech you to do this; that is, to pray earnestly and affectionately for me, both in your private retirements, and in your public assemblies, that I may quickly be restored to you from this confinement, and may have an opportunity of rendering you those services which were prevented by this unjust imprisonment, occasioned by the fury of the populace when I was last at Jerusalem.

20. And now to draw towards a close, may that great and blessed Being, who condescends in his gospel to reveal himself to us under the endearing character of the God of peace, whose reconciling us unto himself by his Son, becomes the author of eternal blessings, cause his choicest favours...
The Apostle concludes with his salutations, and a solemn benediction. 201

our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant. favours to descend upon you. May he, who to confirm these gracious purposes, hath brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, who is constituted that great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and by his blood sealed the everlasting and unchangeable covenant, which appoints him to stand in that amiable relation to his people; May he, I say, make you perfect in every good work, that you may cheerfully and constantly do his will, exerting an holy readiness and alacrity in the discharge of every duty; himself producing in you that temper and disposition of soul which is most pleasing and acceptable in his sight, through the powerful influences of his Spirit, given you by Jesus Christ, who hath procured this invaluable favour for his people: to whom [be] glory in all the churches, for ever and ever: Amen.

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation; for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

23 Know ye, that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

\[d By the blood of the everlasting covenant.\] There is an ambiguity in the connection of these words. Some think they refer to God's bringing again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, according to that engagement or covenant which was sealed by his blood. Beza and others connect the clause with the words immediately preceding, namely, that great Shepherd of the sheep, which our Lord was constituted by the blood of the everlasting covenant. And this sense seems to be far preferable, Compare Acts xx. 28; and John x. 11.
my Christian brethren, [be] with you all. I put my hearty amen to it; and you assuredly know, that I can wish you nothing better. I hope therefore, that you will with all your hearts put your own amen to it.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let those, whom God, in the course of his Providence, hath provided over the souls of others, remember to watch over with a becoming diligence, considering that an impartial scrutiny will shortly be required; considering, that if they do not conduct themselves in this important office, their blood, perish by their neglect, must be required at their hands. And as people committed to their care be concerned, that the faithful servants of Christ may discharge their office with joy, and not with grief, that they may not from time to time be sent with grumblings, and with tears, to the presence of their great Master, to lament the obstinacy, perverseness, and rebellion of those over whom God hath made them watchmen and shepherds. The grief would now sensibly affect the minister; yet, on the whole, as he would be to God a great discom to Christ, in them that perish, as well as in them that believe, the greatest detriment would fall on those who have made such ungrateful returns to the Divine goodness, and to their fidelity.

That all other duties may be more regularly and properly discharged, let private Christians be engaged to pray earnestly for their ministers; for those especially, who make it apparent, that they desire to maintain always a good conscience; and that whatsoever sacrifices they may be called to make to it, they are determined in all things to live comfortably and honourably, so that their ministry may not be blamed, but the Christian profession in general adorned. And God grant, that none but persons of such a character may be introduced into the ministry, or supported and countenanced in it!

Let pastors, and people, be often looking to him, who is the great Shepherd of the sheep, and whose relation to the flock is established on the blood of the everlasting covenant. Ever may the thoughts of that blood engage us to regard him with all due veneration and love; ever may we be looking to him, who through this blessed Saviour, appears as the God of peace, for every blessing we respectively need.

We all need his gracious influence, to implant the first principles of the Divine life; and we need them, to make us perfect to do...
Reflections on the duties of pastors and people.

To do his will, and to work in us those things which may render us more completely pleasing in his sight. And therefore let an humble dependence on his grace be daily maintained and expressed; considering of how great importance it is to be acceptable in the sight of God, and to approve ourselves at all times to him.

That it may be so, may grace be with us all, and continue with us, from the first entrance on the Christian life, through the whole course of it, till it present us blameless in the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Amen.

The end of the Family Expositor on the Epistle to the Hebrews.
THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR, A

PARAPHRASE

ON

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE JAMES.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.
American Way
of Life
A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

The epistle of St. James, and the six following epistles, have been commonly distinguished by the appellation of catholic or general, because most of them are inscribed, not to particular churches, or persons, but to the body, either of Jewish or Gentile converts over the whole world, or at least dispersed in several countries.

The first of these, I mean that of St. James, was from the earliest times received by the Christian church, though not so universally as most of the epistles of St. Paul. But a precise detail and examination of the several arguments relating to the question, would bear too large a proportion in the space allotted to these introductions. It may however be right to observe, in support of the authenticity and authority of this epistle, that considerable stress hath deservedly been laid upon its antiquity, which appears both from internal and external evidence; and also, upon the correspondence of the sentiments it contains, with the tenour of the Christian doctrine; and though this hath been called in question by some through an attachment to particular hypotheses*, yet it is evident, I apprehend beyond all controversy, to those who read the epistle with suitable candour and attention. And it appears to me, that the authority of this, and some other parts of the New Testament, having been early questioned by some primitive churches, affords an argument of their particular caution, that no other writings should be admitted into the sacred canon, however excellent,

* It is well known, that at the beginning of the Reformation, Luther apprehending the doctrine delivered by St. James concerning justification, to be inconsistent with that of St. Paul, opposed the authority of this epistle, in the preface to his German translation of the New Testament, published in the year 1522; though he is not followed in this point by those who at this day are distinguished by his name; and indeed he himself, as we are informed by WOLFUS (Cursus Philolog. Vol. V. p. 6.) and by Fabricius, (Biblioth. Graec. Lib. iv. cap. v. § ix.) afterwards changed his opinion.
excellent, besides those which had an undoubted claim to that distinction; and justly challenges our deference to their judgment, who doubtless were most capable of deciding, and gave sufficient evidence of their care as well as their capacity. The epistle before us having passed through a severe and accurate scrutiny, appears to have been at length universally received, and accordingly hath been transmitted down to the present age, as an authentic part of those oracles of God which are able to make us wise to salvation.

If any particular arguments were to be suggested to second the force of those observations it might be this, that this epistle is found in the Syriac version, and was received by the churches in Syria. This version is undoubtedly ancient, and is apprehended by most learned men to have been made as early as the beginning of the second century. And besides the authority connotated to the epistle of St. James by the antiquity of the version, it should be observed, that the version was made for the particular service of the converted Jews, to whom the epistle itself was originally written; and it should therefore seem, that its authenticity and authority were from the beginning acknowledged by those for whom it was intended: and I think it can hardly be doubted, that they were better judges of the question than the Gentiles, to whom it was not written, among whom therefore it was not likely to be propagated so early, and who at first might be prejudiced against it, because it was inscribed to the Jews.

If any are disposed to examine the several testimonies of the Christian Fathers, as to the authority of this epistle, they may find them collected with great fidelity and accuracy, by the learned Dr. Lardner, in the second part of his valuable work, The Credibility of the Gospel History.

As to the author of this epistle, some have imagined it to be James the less, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John. But in this they are evidently mistaken. James the elder was beheaded by Herod, in the year of our Lord 44; whereas this epistle was not written till a very considerable time afterwards. So early as the year 44, the gospel does not seem to have been propagated far beyond the bounds of Palestine; and it cannot be supposed there was any very large number of the Jews of the dispersion, who were then converted to the Christian faith: and though the epistle seems to have been intended in some measure for the general benefit of the twelve tribes, yet more especially for those among them who were converts to the Christian religion. Besides, it is intimated in the epistle itself, that the Jewish Christians were at this time sunk into very remarkable degeneracy, both in doctrine and practice, which is not likely to have been the case while they were under the first impressions of their conversion. And indeed to this epistle, there are some plain intimations that the destruction of Jerusalem was near at hand, chap. v. 1—8, which event was accomplished about the year 70; and from this circumstance we may reasonably conclude the date of this epistle to be about the year 60 or 61.
It therefore appears, that this epistle was not written by James the Elder, but must have been the composition of another James, called James the Less, who was the son of Alpheus, or Cleophas, and is said to be the brother, that is, according to the latitude in which the Jews were accustomed to understand this expression, the kinsman of our Lord. See Mat. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3. And who is expressly numbered among the twelve apostles. See Mat. x. 2, 3; Mark iii. 17, 18; Luke vi. 14, 15; Acts i. 13. And though the time of this James being put to death is not absolutely certain, it is supposed by many learned men to have happened in the year 62, before St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Hebrews, which was in the year 63. And if this account be right, the date of his epistle cannot be later than I have already assigned it.

James the Less stately resided at Jerusalem: whence he hath been stiled by some ancient fathers, bishop of that city, though without sufficient foundation, as we observed, (Vol. III. sect. 34, note.) Now James being one of the apostles of the circumcision, while he confined his personal labours to the inhabitants of Judæa, it was very natural for him to endeavour by his writings to extend his services to the Jewish Christians, who were dispersed abroad in more distant regions. For this purpose there are two points which the apostle seems to have principally aimed at, though he hath not pursued them in an orderly and logical method, but in the free epistolary manner, handling them jointly or distinctly, as occasions naturally offered. And these were—"To correct those errors both in doctrine and practice, into which the Jewish Christians had fallen, which might otherwise have produced fatal consequences; and then to establish the faith, and animate the hope of sincere believers, both under their present and their approaching suffering."

And in prosecution of this double view, after inscribing the epistle to the twelve tribes in their dispersion, the apostle enters on his subject, by endeavouring to fortify their minds under those trials wherein they would be exercised, by suitable representations of the benefit of those trials, of the readiness of God to communicate all necessary supplies of wisdom and grace in answer to the fervent prayer of faith, and by exposing the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, which often prove the means of ensnaring and ruining their possessors; chap. i. 1—16. And then as a means of their steadfastness notwithstanding the most powerful temptations to apostacy, he exhorts them to remember and acknowledge the manifold goodness of God in the various blessings bestowed upon them; more especially in that of his regenerating grace, which should constrain them to the exercise of every virtue, especially to an ingenuous and candid reception of his word, and a concern resolutely and constantly to adhere to his directions; particularly by bridling their tongues, and surmounting the failings, as were afflicted, ver. 17, to the end. And then the apostle, by an easy transition having glanced at some of their particular failings, takes the occasion of introducing cautions on sundry
dry other articles in which they needed reprehenion; particularly against showing an undue respect to men's external circumstances, and nsfeeling satisfied in a partial observation of the Divine precepts, especially when the royal law of charity, or universal benevolence, was in question; chap. ii. 1—13. After this, as several of the Jewish Christians discovered a disposition to rest in an external and empty profession of religion, probably from an abuse of the doctrine of justification by faith, he largely descants on the inefficiency of a mere historical faith, and evinces, by most striking instances and illustrations, the utter insufficiency of it for our justification. and eternal salvation, ver. 14, to the end. And as such a barren profession is apt to inspire men with conceited and vain glorious sentiments of themselves, while they are destitute of every Divine habit and attainment, he deems it expedient to subjoin a caution to these Jewish Christians, against their being too forward in assuming the office and character of teachers; and as spiritual pride tends to inflame men's unbridled passions, and to set on fire their licentious tongues, he resumes and expatiates on a subject which he had before only slightly touched upon, recommending a strict government of the tongue as a matter, though of great difficulty, yet of the highest importance; chap. iii. 1—12. And in close connection with such a topic, it was very natural to inculcate, as the apostle does, a candid benevolent disposition, guarding them against censoriousness and animosities, and that love of the world which tends to excite them; to restrain which, he recommends a humble application to God for Divine influences, ver. 13—chap. iv. 10. Suggesting particular cautions against evil speaking, and vain confidence in the events of futurity, or in any worldly possessions, which often prove a temptation to luxury, and an occasion of ruin. And then, as to afflicted and oppressed Christians, he encourages and exhorts them to wait patiently for the coming of the Lord, ver. 11—chap. v. 5. And concludes the epistle, with condemning profane and vain swearing, with recommending moderation, fortitude and prayer, a ready acknowledgment of our faults, and a solicitous concern for the common salvation, ver. 9, to the end.
The Apostle James endeavours to fortify the Christians to whom he writes, under those trials wherewith they would be exercised, by suitable representations of the benefit of those trials, and of the readiness of God to communicate all necessary supplies of wisdom and grace, in answer to the fervent prayer of faith: and by exposing the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, which often prove the means of ensnaring and ruining their possessors. James I. 1—16.

This epistle is written by James, who esteems it his honour to be a faithful servant and constant worshipper of the true and living God, and of his Son the Lord Jesus Christ; and is addressed with the sincerest affection to the twelve tribes of Israel in this their state of dispersion on the death of James the great, beheaded by Herod. Acts xi. 2, 17.

a James.] That is, as we have already observed, the apostle James, the less; whom antiquity, (I know not on what pretence,) calls bishop of Jerusalem; perhaps because he resided there more than most of the apostles. He was the brother of Christ: and it is said he was exalted to this office,
St. James inscribes his epistle to the twelve tribes;

1 Thess. 4. 10.

James 1. 1.

2 The twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbiddeth not; and it shall be given from a letter of Agrippa to the Emperor.


If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbiddeth not: but this Boase, Mr. Howse, and see his Homer, Vol. i. p. 207, is one of those limited interpretations which I cannot fully approve.
6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord, while he continues in such a situation, and dares not trust in him for those supplies of grace which he professes to seek. These unworthy suspicions, as they wrong the Divine goodness, may in many instances prevent the communication of those favours which might otherwise be obtained. Such a double-minded man, whose schemes are divided between God and the world, and who cannot cheerfully and resolutely commit himself, in confidence of Divine support, to be led whithersoever Providence shall please, 'is unsettled in all his ways; he will perpetually be running into inconsistencies of conduct, and those imperfect and undetermined impressions of religion which he feels, will serve rather to perplex and torment, than guide and secure him.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

e Like a wave of the sea.] Mr. Saurin paraphrases it thus: "He ought not to resemble the waves of the sea, which seem to offer to the spectator, that is upon the shore, the treasures with which they are charged; but soon plunge in the abyss from which it cannot be recovered." Saurin's Serm. Vol. IX. p. 438. But the interpretation given in the paraphrase, appears to me much more simple and natural. He elsewhere paraphrases it, "Like a wave which moves on, and seems to come to the shore, but immediately returns with impetuosity into the gulph from whence it came." Ibid. Vol. V. p. 56, 57.
Blessed is the man who endureth temptation.

1. "Blessed is the man who endureth temptation." Mr. Peter ise, in that he is made less, because as the flower of the grass all shall pass away.

2. But to one, in that he is made less, because as the flower of the grass all shall pass away.

3. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord Jesus Christ hath promised to them that love him, and express their love by such fidelity and zeal. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God is himself, by virtue of his boundless knowledge and almighty power, capable of being tempted by evil, and such is the perfect rectitude

4. But to one, in that he is made less, because as the flower of the grass all shall pass away.
No man when he is tempted, is tempted of God.

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

Improvement.

Let us learn this holy caution, and guard against those baits of lust under which death is concealed; remembering that God has made us with a power of determining our own actions, that he tempts none to evil, nor appoints to any such temptations as he knows to be in their own nature irresistible. Be our spiritual enemies ever so powerful, or ever so artful, they cannot do us any hurt, till we betray ourselves into their hands. Yet certain it is, that their artifice and their power, in conjunction with the advantage which the corruption of our own hearts gives them, make it requisite, that conscious to ourselves of our deficiency in wisdom, we should ask it

h Being allured and ensnared: εὐδοκίαν, θέμα. The original words have a singular beauty and elegance, containing an allusion to the method of drawing fishes out of the water with a hook, concealed under the bait, which they greedily devour.

i Finished, or perpetrated: σπέρματος. The word is used in this sense by Polybius, in a passage quoted by Raphaelus in loc.

j Therefore be not deceived. This is agreeable to the reading of the Alexandrian manuscript, which after θεία inserts γε, therefore; by which the connection is rendered more apparent.
it of God. Let the liberality with which he gives it, and the royal
freedom with which he has promised it, encourage us to ask it
with such constancy, that we may receive daily supplies; and with
firm confidence in his goodness, that we may not waver, and be like
a wave of the sea tossed with the wind.

Trusting in that supply of grace we receive from him, let us go
forth calmly and cheerfully to meet such trials as the infinite wis-
dom of God shall appoint for us, how various and pressing soever
they may be; remembering they tend to improve our patience, and
by patience to perfect every other grace; and that if we be not
overcome, we shall be approved, and made more meet to receive the
crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him.

And O, that the love of this blessed Lord, who has procured as well
as promised it, may always render us superior to every trial, and
more than conquerors through him that hath loved us, and thereby
hath acquired to himself so true a claim to our supreme affection.
With hearts faithfully engaged to him, and established in the firm-
est resolutions for his service, let us look with indifference upon
those worldly circumstances, about which they who have no sense
of a higher interest are exceedingly solicitous; and let us regulate
our value of all the good things of life, by a regard to their aspect
upon our religious characters and hopes.—If these circumstances may
improve these, let us look upon them as true edition; and if
wealth and dignity, and applause, may endanger these, let us rather
from them, than aspire to them. Whatever we have obtained of
those things which the men of the world are most ready to covet
and admire, is transitory and fading as the grass, or even as the
flower of the field, and sometimes like those beautiful, but tender
productions of vegetable nature, is consumed by the exess of those
causes to which it owes its existence and its beauty, "Give us,
O Lord, durable riches, and righteousness, and that honour which
cometh from thee, and is immortal, as its great Original."
Sect. II.

The Apostle exhorts them to remember and acknowledge the manifold goodness of God, in the various blessings bestowed upon them; more especially in that of his regenerating grace, which should constrain them to the exercise of every virtue; especially to an ingenuous and candid reception of his word, and a concern resolutely and constantly to adhere to its directions; particularly, by bridding their tongues, and succouring such as were afflicted. James I. 17. to the end.

James I. 17.

That ye may be fortified against every temptation, and may be animated to behave in a manner becoming your christian profession, remember, that every good gift, and every perfect gift which the children of men can receive, is from above; and the more compleatly excellent the benefit is, the more reason have they to acknowledge it, as descending from the great and eternal Father of lights, the blessed God, from whom reason and light and joy are derived. The sun itself is but a feeble image of his glory, with whom there is no variableness, nor so much as any shadow of turning, whereas the sun is continually varying, and has no sooner arrived to its meridian, but it begins to descend to the

Father of lights.] It is the opinion of Glassius that this phrase only expresses the majesty and glory of God, as if the apostle had said, The most illustrious and glorious Father. But the accurate Bos most justly imagines, that the allusion to the sun which there is in the following words, begins here; and, that the phrase refers to the heathens calling that glorious luminary, the Father of light, and the author of light; some instances of which he produces. See Exercit. Philolog. in loc. The learned Albert cites a passage from Macrobius, by the same title is applied to Jupiter. Other. Philolog. in loc.

b Every good gift, &c.] It is observable that the apostle makes use of two different words to express gift; the one of which is more poetical and sounding than the other; and he has placed the words in such an order that they make an heurc verse. So that were they to be rendered, "Every good gift, and every boon complete," it might perhaps give the English reader a more exact idea of the original; but as there is all imaginable reason to believe this was quite an accidental thing, I thought it might have the appearance of affectation to have endeavoured to retain it. As neither boon, nor presents, would have been proper in this connection, I know not how to render δωρον and ευφρας by different words: such is the poverty of our language, or the defect of my acquaintance with it. But the words, a completely excellent benefit, are inserted in the paraphrase, to preserve some little imitation of the original. As some learned men have observed that τρητος επιθυμησα is something of an astronomical phrase, and refers to the different aspects of the sun, as it approaches one or the other tropic, (see Dr. Hale's Works, p. 757.) I have been careful to express that sentiment. It hath been the opinion of some persons that this is intended to oppose some heretical notion of the influence of the stars in the affairs of human life; but I know not that any such ridiculous conceit had so early a footing in the church.
the west, or to its summer height, but it verges towards the winter again; causing the direction of the shadows it occasions, proportionally to vary. But the immutable and everlasting God has condescended to multiply those favours upon us, as Christians, which should bind our souls to him in the bonds of unchangeable love; for of his own sovereignty will he impregnate us with the powerful word of his Divine and evangelical truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures, more excellent than others, and in a peculiar manner separated and consecrated to him from among the rest of mankind. Let us be conscious of the honour he has hereby done us, and take heed that we do not sacrilegiously alienate ourselves from his service. Therefore, my beloved brethren, that we may be thus religiously sacred to him, and ever employed to the purposes he has directed, let every man be swift to hear the instruction of his word, and all the good advices which may be given him agreeable to the tenor of it, but he slow to speak, guarding cautiously against every rash and especially every proud and detestable expression; and slow to wrath, not easily yielding to provocations, how injuriously soever he may be treated; For the wrath of man, even where it may be most readily to assume the title of religious zeal, verily not, but on the contrary greatly obstructs the righteousness of God, instead of promoting the cause of true religion in the world, it is a reproach to it, and a means of exciting the prejudice of mankind against us. Endeavour therefore to regulate your passions by these great maxims, and laying aside all unseemly outward display on the one hand, and all unwelcome imposition on the other.

18. Of his own will he impregnate us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

19. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

20. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21. Wherefore lay aside all malice, and despise not an any one, but be merciful, gentleness, humble, patient, 18 Of his own will he impregnate us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

15. Of his own will he impregnate us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.
meekness and ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But he that doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass;

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whose looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

26 But meekness and ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

malignity on the other, compose yourselves with all meekness and gentleness of mind, to receive the ingrafted word; that word, which when implanted in your minds by the influence of Divine grace, is able to save your souls, and will effectually form them to a meekness for a happy immortality. But then you must remember 22 to be doers of the word, and not hearers only, sophistically deceiving and imposing upon yourselves with an unprofitable attendance while it has no inward efficacy upon your hearts. For 23 if any one be merely a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like a man carelessly beholding his natural face in a mirror, or glass, who sees some accidental spot upon it, which it would be convenient to wipe off. For his looking into 24 the glass, and taking notice of it for the present, will signify nothing if he beholds himself and goes away, and immediately forgets what manner of person he was; forgets what rendered him disagreeable, and required to be corrected. But he is the wise and happy man, who bends 25 down as it were his whole attention to this important matter, and is so set upon his own reformation and improvement, that he looketh into the gospel, that perfect law of liberty, by regarding which, the truest and noblest liberty is obtained, whatever confinement it may seem to lay us under: he, I say, who not only takes a transient view of its contents and designs, but continues therein, deeply reflecting upon it, and charging his own soul with its important doctrines.

[Ingraved word: ἐνσυνάλειον λόγῳ.] Some have translated this phrase, the natural, the innate, or internal word, referring to what hath been sometimes called, the light within; and it must be acknowledged that ἐνσυνάλειον hath frequently this signification. But the version here given is undeniable justified by Bos and Elderer in loc., who illustrates this whole clause by some apposite and elegant quotations from the classics. The word of God is frequently compared to seem, or to a plant; particularly 1 Pet. i. 23; 1 John iii. 9; in which sense it is here said to be ἐνσυνάλειον, ingrafted, or implanted in their minds.

[2 Hearers only, deceiving, &c.] The Jews did indeed place much of their religion in going up at proper times to the synagogue to hear the law read; and there may possibly be an allusion to that disposition. The exact signification of ἐνσυνάλειον, is imposing upon any by a sophistical shew of argument; and here it is used with great propriety, as Mr. Superville has observed, Serm. Vol. IV. p. 124. Yet Dr. Edwards tells us the Jewish writers have a proverb among them, that “he who hears the law and does not practice it, is like a man, who plows and sows, but never reaps.”

Bends down his whole attention, and looketh, &c.] I have endeavoured in the paraphrase to express the emphasis of the original διὰ ἐνσυναλάειον. Compare 1 Pet. i. 12, where there is an evident allusion to the bending posture of the cherubim, who overshadowed the mercy-seat in the holy of holies.

i Not
and bridle our tongues, or our religion is vain.

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridle not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and orphans.
and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. their affliction, with a tender regard to their calamitous circumstances, and endeavouring to oversee them, in such a manner as to provide for their relief, performing to others in distress suitable offices of kindness and charity; at the same time, taking a prudent care to keep himself unspotted from those bad practices, and irregular indulgences, which so generally prevail in the world about us, where so little either of religion or morality is to be found.

IMPROVEMENT.

With all gratitude let us direct our eyes and our hearts to the Ver. unchangeable Father of lights, and acknowledge every good and every perfect gift, as descending from him; but above all, the invaluable gift of his regenerating grace, to which, if we are the first fruits of his creatures, we are certainly indebted, and are thereby laid under the strongest engagements to consecrate ourselves continually to his service. Let us therefore listen with a most obedient regard to every intimation of his will, and set a guard upon all our passions, that they may move in sweet and harmonious subjection to it. Especially, let us be slow to wrath, and not imagine that we can be justified in the exorbitances of our angry transports, because they may possibly arise in the cause of religion. The righteousness of God is not to be promoted, but on the contrary, will be disgraced and obstructed, by such outrageous ungovernable sallies. Let every im- pure and malignant affection be therefore banished from our minds, and let us pray that the word of God may be so ingrafted into our souls, as to become the effectual means of our salvation. Let us not rest in a mere forgetful hearing, or indeed in an ineffectual remembrance; but having looked into the gospel, that perfect law, which by binding the soul, gives it the truest liberty, let us by Divine assistance continue therein, and improve to the immediate purposes of reformation, whatever knowledge we thereby gain; correcting whatever we observe amiss in ourselves. Particularly, let us study a proper command over our tongues and cultivate those charitable dispositions and offices, in which true and undefiled religion is here said to consist; that widows and orphans may give us their

\[\text{Note: } \text{To take the oversight of, &c.] So properly signifies, and may import, entering into measures for their subsistence, as well as sometimes going to them, and conversing with them in their distresses. See the note on Mat. xxv. 30, Vol. II. \S 166, note d.\]

\[\text{a The}\]
They are exhorted to avoid respect of persons.

their blessing, as their guardians and friends; and that an unspiritual life, untainted with the vices of a degenerate age, may bear wit-

ness, that though in the world, we are not of it, and that we act in consistency with those sublime and holy ends to which we profess as Christians to aspire.

SECT. III.

He cautions them against showing an undue respect to men's external circumstances, and resting satisfied in a partial observa-
tion of the Divine precepts; especially where the royal law of charity or universal benevolence was in question. James II. 1—13.

JAMES II. 1.

MY brethren, let me now caution you, that you hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the great Lord] of glory, in a partial respect of person, so as to give undue preference to any upon account of their external circumstances, where the relation in which the mean-
est of your fellow Christians may stand to him, who is so glorious a personage as the Son of God, should certainly recommend them to your regard and esteem. For I have observed some-
thing of this kind among many, which seems to require such an admonition as this; and have seen, that if a man come into your syna-
gue, when you are met for religious worship, with a gold ring, best, or other parts of a splendid dress, and at the same time there come in also a poor man, who would render it in praise, that their faith was in Christ, they prevented the same, and thereby, that the person who related, to that person, who had causes to try, when the mind was secretly gathered, in the sitting him in a more honorable place than he, would tend to per-
vert justice to his favour, and which may, and says the law precepts particularly mind. But the representing both the parties as such, does not suit

James II. 1.

MY brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.
3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen them poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and man in mean and sordid raiment; you are apt to show an undue regard to the former, and to put a visible slight on the latter, at his first appearance, without considering what may be the real character of the one or the other. And whatever may be said in excuse for this, it is often blame-worthy; for if ye have a respect, as ye naturally have, for him who wears a splendid dress, and say to him, Sit there in an honourable place; and say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool; And distinguish not in yourselves according to the different characters of these two men, but only regard their outward appearance, you even become judges, who reason ille; you seem by such conduct to determine, that external circumstances are chiefly to be considered; which certainly is wrong, and if it were to be pursued, would produce very iniquitous and unjustifiable sentiments and practices. By such a conduct as this, you court the favour of the rich, and strongly intimate your contempt of the poor, as poor; but hearken, my beloved brethren, and consider, for it is peculiarly worthy of your most attentive regard; Hath not God apparently chosen many, who are among the poor of this world, [to be] rich in faith; and does it not appear that they are so? Are they not heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him; and just upon the point of being carried to a glory, that will eclipse that of the greatest monarchs on earth? And does it become you, believing this, to despise those who for any thing you know, may in a few days be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, and placed in the most distinguished rank among the guests at the celestial banquet? But this indeed is the case; you have often dishonoured the poor man, though God may have condescended to visit him with such a gracious regard, and have enriched him with such inestimable mercies. On the other hand, do not the rich whom you court with so much respect and assiduity, tyrannize over you.

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And distinguished not in yourselves: ... This I take to be the exact rendering of this clause, as the verb is of the middle signification, and that it should not be read as in our English version, with an interrogation.

Judges who reason ill: Our English version in this place is literal, but at the same time very obscure and ambiguous.

Beza's observation is a just one, that the phrase in the original is an Hebraism, and it is accordingly rendered by him, Judges made Introcinantes, Judges who reason ill.

1 To be rich in faith. The ellipsis in these words of ετι τον επιγαζ οι γινομενοι, is common; as Beso, and after him, Albert hath observed. Accordingly I have rendered it, to be rich in faith.
you, and draw you to their tribunals? Are not most of the rich your persecutors, rather than your friends? Do they not blaspheme the honourable name of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which you are called? And do they not often compel you to blaspheme it, and inflict the severest penalties upon you if you refuse? So that on the whole, they often prove themselves the vilest of men. And can you think, that when this is the case, and you see so many poor saints courageously enduring these extremities, that you ought to fix your eyes so much on a glaring outside, and overlook that heroic worth which so often appears under a veil of poverty? I beseech you, learn to think more reasonably at all times, and especially to bring better sentiments into your assemblies for public worship. And not only in such instances, but in all others, endeavour to act equitably; for if ye fulfil the noble and royal law, which, according to that expression of the scripture ought with a kind of imperial authority to govern all our sentiments; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; ye do well: that would be in every thing a rule to you, and particularly here; for none of you if you were reduced to poverty, would wish to be treated with marks of slight and contempt on that account, without any regard to your character in other respects. But if ye do in this partial manner, accept the persons of men, ye work iniquity therein, being convicted by the law I have just now mentioned, as transgressors of it. And give me leave to say, that whatever zeal you may shew for any other precepts, if convicted here, you become guilty before God, and forfeit your acceptance with him. For whoever shall keep the whole law in every other instance, but allow himself to offend in one [particular] he is in effect guilty of all; as he that committed but one capital crime, would as surely suffer death, as if he had committed all that ever were prohibited in that light. For it is certain, that he disregards the authority of the Lawgiver, which has established every precept equally; as it is evident, he that says, Thou shalt not commit adultery, hath also said, Thou shalt do no murder. If therefore thou art not an adulterer, but committed murder, then art evidently a transgressor of the law. Hence it appears, that it is not by a regard to the Divine authority and draw you before the judgment seats?

7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name, by the which ye are called?

8 If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

10 For whatsoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.
ty that thou abstainest from the former crime, since that would equally have preserved thee from the latter. Let it therefore be your care, that ye so speak and so act as those that shall be judged by the law of liberty, by the glorious gospel, which is a dispensation that sets us at liberty from the bondage of the Jewish ritual, and directs us to all the branches of that virtue and holiness, which is the truest liberty of the mind, and which being so excellent, must subject us to severer punishment if we presume to contemn it. And especially remember to maintain a regard to it, where the rules of charity are concerned. For you know a particular stress is laid upon this branch, as of the highest moment in the sight of God; as we are warned by our compassionate Lord himself, that on the one hand, he shall have judgment without mercy, who hath not exercised mercy; and on the other hand, mercy rejoiceth against judgment and emboldens our hopes when we stand before that merciful Being, whom we have resembled in that amiable part of his character.

IMPROVEMENT.

The apostle could not intend to condemn those civil distinctions which are founded upon the different relations and circumstances of mankind in the present world; but surely God intended to teach us, how little esteem he sets upon riches, by bestowing them on many of the most undeserving of mankind, while he withholds them from his dearest children; and to admire them, and others, on account of their riches, while we pour contempt on the poor, as poor, though so many of them are distinguished by the riches of the Divine favour, must be highly unreasonable, and to God highly offensive. As for those who are poor in this world, but rich in faith, let them adore the Divine munificence to them, and think with pleasure of those durable riches, and of that everlasting kingdom, which God has prepared for them as their inheritance.

Whatever our stations be, let us pray that the royal law may be inscribed upon our hearts, and that we may love our neighbour as ourselves; guarding against that mean and prohibited respect of persons, which would expose us to conviction, as transgressors of the law. Let us also learn to guard against that partiality in our obedience to it, which is utterly inconsistent with sincerity. Let us remember,
member, that the Divine authority equally establishes every precept of it, and the generous nature of the gospel-dispensation, as a law of liberty, will be a sad aggravation of our presumptuous violation of it. A consciousness of those many defects and imperfections, which the best of men may see reason to charge themselves with, should certainly engage our most earnest applications to God for mercy; and as we desire to obtain it, let it be our care to exercise mercy to others, both in the censures of our censures on the one hand, and the readiness of our liberality on the other.

SECT. IV.

The Apostle largely dwells on the insufficiency of a mere historical faith; and, in the most striking instances and illustrations, the utter insufficiency of it for our justification and eternal salvation. James II. 14, to the end.

JAMES II. 14.

It is with real grief that I perceive many of you seem highly to value yourselves upon the profession you make of the Christian religion, without being suitably impressed with a practical sense of its important principles, and inclined to a life agreeable to them. But what advantage [is there] my brethren, if any one say, he has faith, but has not suitable works, to support the justice of that pretension? Can such a faith, as may be separated from good works save him? Consider the case, when men make professions of charity, without producing the proper fruits of it, and you will easily see how vain such a pretension is. If, for instance,

JAMES II. 15.

What does it profit my brother though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?

If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

[If any one say he has faith, but has not suitable works.] I am surprised at the immense pains improperly have taken to reconcile St. Paul and St. James; and the many hypotheses they have formed for that purpose. Whereas to me nothing is more evident, than that the ideas they affect to the words faith, and works, are entirely different. St. James, by the word faith, means simply an assent to the truth of religious principles, without determining whether it be, or not, effectual; and then declares, that in case this assent does not produce good works, that is, the solid virtues of the heart and life, it cannot be accepted by God. Whereas St. Paul by the word faith means a cordial and entire devotion to Divine truth, which influences the heart to a holy temper, and according to the great turn of the gospel, entitles a man to Divine acceptance, without any regard at all to the Mosaic law, and previous to the production of any of those good works, which will naturally be the fruit of it. Had Luther calmly considered this, he would not have denied the inspiration of St. James, out of regard to his supposed hierarchy in the business of justification; nor would one of his followers have presumed to charge him expressly with lying, as Lamburgh tells us he did, Memoriae eit Jacobum in epistula. Lamburgh. Theol. 1. iv. 16.

b Faith
16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warm-ed, and filled; notwithstanding, ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead being alone.

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost well: the devils

Abraham’s faith was perfected by works. 227

James 11. 16.

\[\text{Faith, if it have not works, &c.}]\ From this passage it appears, that we should not confuse the idea of the word \text{faith}, as used by St. James, to a mere assent; for it would be an absurd supposition, that a mere assent should have any works. By this word therefore St. James, (as we observed in the former note,) means simply an assent, whether it be or be not effectual. Nor is it indeed the assent that saves when accompanied with works. So that the apostle’s assertion is more critically and correctly true, than many of his commentators have apprehended.

\[\text{Show me thy faith, &c.}]\ This version is so very different from our own, that many of my English readers will be much surprised at it.—But I have followed the most and best copies, which read it, as in the margin of our bibles, \text{καὶ τὰς εργαν της}—and—and τὰς εργαν της, though some copies read the first clause, \text{καί καὶ τὰς εργαν της} which our translators have followed.
But remember, it is a principle common to those who are entirely destitute of religion; for the devils also firmly believe it, and cannot withhold their assent; they are persuaded by dreadful experience of his existence, and of the terrors of his wrath, so as even to tremble in the expectation of that full display of it, to which they know they are inevitably doomed. But will thou know, O vain empty man, who restest in that which might be found in equal, or in higher degrees, in the infernal spirits, that faith without works, a persuasion of the truths of Christianity, if it produces no solid fruits of holiness, is really dead as to any valuable purpose that can be expected from it. Take an instance of this in the most celebrated of all the patriarchs; I mean, the instance of Abraham, our great and illustrious father, was he not plainly justified by works, when, in consequence of that full persuasion he had of a Divine commission and command to do it, he offered his son Isaac upon the altar, intending, in obedience to what he apprehended the will of God, actually to have slain him, and to have trusted in God to accomplish the promise of a numerous seed to descend from him, by raising him from the dead. Thou seest then in this instance, that faith co-operated with his works; and animated him to zeal and self-denial in them: and faith was perfected by works; the integrity of it was made fully apparent to himself, to angels, and to God. And thus the scripture was fulfilled, which says, (Gen. xv. 6,) referring to what passed long before this, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and in consequence of this he was treated by God with such peculiar endearment, that he was even called the Friend of God; as it is said, (Isa. xli. 8.) the seed of Abraham my friend. This proved the sincerity of his faith, and that he was in some degree worthy the honour of the Divine friendship. You see then by this instance of the great father of the faithful, if the characters of the children are to be such a faith as includes good works in it, as a certain principle of them; and consequently, establishes what was said above for reconciling these two apostles in the easiest manner.
be estimated in the same manner as those of the father, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only: it is by no means enough, that the great principles of religion be credited, if they have not also their practical influence on the heart and life. In like manner also, if

25 Likewise also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way?

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let this great and important lesson, which the apostle here teaches so plainly, and inculcates so largely, be never forgotten. It is true indeed; (as St. Paul elsewhere fully proves,) that we are justified by faith in Christ, without the works of the law. The works of the Mosaic law, are by no means necessary; and it is not by our obedience to any law, but by embracing and resting upon the mercy of God in Christ, for our salvation, that we obtain it. Nevertheless, it is vain to pretend to such a faith, if good works are not produced by it; and we might as soon expect the guardianship and counsel, the offices and consolations of friendship, from a dead corpse, as happiness from a mere assent, even to the most important doctrines. Let us therefore endeavour to shew our faith by our works. Let us be ready, with Abraham, to offer up our dearest comforts to God. Let us, with Rahab, be willing even to expose our lives in the defence of God's people, and his cause.
They should not be forward to assume the office of teachers:

cause otherwise our faith being of no better a kind than that of the devils, will leave us the companions of their misery and de-
Ver. pair; even though the conviction should now be so powerful as to make us tremble; or a false persuasion of our enjoying privileges 19 to which we are utter strangers, should give as strong an emotion to any of the softer passions.

Let faith then be active and influential. Let love be without dis-
simulation. Let us not love merely in word, but in deed, and charge it upon our conscience to be ready to authenticate by the most substantial offices of humanity, the professions we at any time make of friendly wishes, or kind intentions. Otherwise such professions will be worse than unprofitable, as, by encouraging only a false dependence and expectation, they will make the disappointment proportionably grievous and afflicting, to those whom we hypocritically, or lightly pretended to compassionate or succour.

SECT. V.

The Apostle cautions them against being too forward in assuming the office and character of teachers; and recommends a strict government of the tongue, as a matter, though of great difficulty, yet of the highest importance. James III. 1—12.

AND now, my brethren, give me leave to caution you against another evil which I have seen some reason to apprehend, and to press you, that ye be not many teachers: that none of you rashly undertake the office of teachers, which many are ready to intrude themselves into without due qualifications, or a regular call; but I would urge you to be cautious against such an assuming disposition, as knowing that we who bear that office, must expect that we shall undergo greater and stricter judgment than others in a more private station of life. The many infirmities to which the best of us are subject, may indeed teach us to think with awe of that exact

a Not many teachers.] Our translators render it matter, as 21:12: so frequently rendered; and it is generally explained of improper and concessive doctrine, as many of the Jewish sects were. But when he formed many to be such, he seems to allow that same way, and consequently I think teachers ought to be explained in an innocent and inoffensive sense, as in the passage. And though the word again, in the following clause, may usually carry condemnation, yet sometimes it must be meant in the general; particularly Matt. vi. 2; Acts xxiv. 23; Rom. v. 19; where it is evidently distinguished from the deed, 1 Cor. xvi. 7; Heb. vi. 1; Rev. xi. 9; as on the other hand, we, which generally signifies judgment, sometimes includes condemnation in its, Matt. xxii. 20; Mark iii. 12; Heb. x. 26.

b All
in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue amongst our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of exact trial we are then to undergo: for in many things we all offend; we are too ready to trip and stumble in our walk. And it is peculiarly worthy our attention here, that if any one offend not in word, [he is] a perfect man arrived at so high a pitch and improvement in virtue, that it may be concluded, that he is able also to bridle the whole body: as it is frequently much more difficult to govern our tongues in a becoming manner, than to avoid enormities in our actions. Behold, we put bridles into the mouths of horses, that they may obey us, according to their direction; and strong, and sometimes furious, as those creatures are, we turn them hither and thither, so as to influence the motion of their whole body. Behold also how the ships, though they be many of them so large, and sometimes agitated by violent winds, are turned by a very small helm, whithersoever the steersman pleaseth, and the waving of his hand determines their direction. So also the tongue, though it is but a little member, yet boasteth great things, pretends, and that not unjustly, to have a great deal of influence upon the world. Behold, and observe, how great a quantity of materials a little fire kindleth into a blaze. And thus the tongue is a fire, which often produces a great conflagration: it is a little world of iniquity of itself. The tongue is so set among our members, holds such a rank and place, [that] indeed it defiles the whole body, and inflames the whole course and circle of nature and is, itself also a matter of small importance. I know not how well to express in English the force of τον ἄστιγμα τοῦ ὀρθορηχοῦ, which admirably represents the impenitence with which, in a storm, a man at the helm on a critical occasion turns his hand. See Dr. Owen on the Spirit, p. 57.

b All offend.] The word ἀστίγμα, properly speaking, signifies, we trip; and Dr. Barrow (see his Works, Vol. I. p. 129.) has justly observed, that as the general course of life is called, a way, and particular actions, steps; so going on in a regular course of right action, is walking uprightly; and acting amiss, tripping or stumbling.

c Perfect man. ] It is certain a man whose words are offensive, may possibly have some imperfections; it shows therefore in how limited a sense the word perfect is to be taken: and the observation may be applied to many other passages.

d Whithersoever the steersman pleaseth.] As the word is, ῥηχεῖν, which signifies any person that sits at the helm, and not necessarily the pilot, who is called by way of eminence, ῥηχοῦρηχοῦ, I thought it best to render it steersman; though I confess the remark and distinction to be a matter of small importance. I know not well
Blessing and cursing should not proceed from one mouth.

It is observable, that every species of wild beasts, and birds, of reptiles and fishes, though some of them take shelter in inaccessible deserts, and others bury themselves in the earth; though some mount the air, and others have their abode deep in the watery element; yet still every sort is subdued, and has in some instances or other been subdued, by men, and many, whose natures are fiercest, are so tamed as to do the human species no harm. But the tongue no man can entirely subdue, neither the tongues of others, nor his own, so that it shall not in some instances be hurtful; for [it is] an insuperable evil, and like a serpent, or an adder, full of mortal venom, by which sometimes death, and even damnation itself is occasioned. By it we sometimes bless God, even the Father; and it is our glory, when we make use of it in that sacred and honourable employment; and yet sometimes this noble instrument is degraded to the vilest purposes, and by it we curse and revile men, our brethren, who are made after the likeness of God, and honoured with his image. Out of the same mouth proceedeth the blessing and the curse, and the same tongue is the instrument of expressing both; and too frequently when the act of deviation is over, the act of slander, or outrage and insult commences. Alas! my brethren, these things ought not to be: it is a shame to human nature, and it is surely a much fouler reproach to a Christian profession. Does a fountain from the same opening send forth alternately, and at different times, sweet [water] and bitter? It is not known in the natural, and it ought not to be known in the moral world.

Can a fig-tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine, figs. No, but every tree has its own proper fruit of the sea, in seals, sheaths and whales; of which it seems less proper to say they are tame, in that generally implies a kind of harmlessness similar to which some savage beasts are indeed brought; but of which type, those are in their nature insensible, and it may be questioned whether some other animals are not as likewise; and such it was most to the apostle's purpose to mention.

7 For every kind of beast and of fowl, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

8 But the tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father: and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

11 Both a fountain sendeth forth at the same place sweet water and bitter:

12 Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-
IMPROVEMENT.

Let this pathetic discourse of the apostle concerning the difficulty and importance of governing our tongues aright, engage us to the strictest care on this great article of practical religion, of which so many are careless, in which the most are so far deficient, as to entitle those to the character of perfect men, who do not here offend. Ver. Let us intreat the assistance of Divine grace, that we may keep our mouths as with a bridle; (Psal. xxxix. 1:) that we may steer this important helm aright, lest by the mismanagement of it, we shipwreck even our eternal hopes. Let us be cautious of every spark, where there are so many combustible materials; and take heed, lest we, and others, be defiled, and infernal flames kindled and propagated. It is indeed a difficult, but in consequence of this a glorious toil, far more glorious than to subdue the fiercest animals, or the haughtiest enemies: let us therefore resolutely make the attempt, and learn to employ our tongues, as indeed the glory of our frame, to bless God even the Father. And let the remembrance of that similitude of God, in which men are formed, make us tender of all their interests; and especially careful, that we do not injure them by unkind reproaches, or detracting speeches; and so much the rather, that we may maintain a consistency between the words of devotion addressed to God, and those of converse with our fellow-creatures. So shall the well-spring of wisdom, rising up in our hearts, and streaming forth from our lips, be as a flowing-brook. Let those, who are by Providence called to be teachers of others, set a double guard upon their words, not only in public, but in private too, as peculiar notice will be taken of them; and the honour of religion, one way or another, be greatly affected by the tenour of their discourses. And let the awful account which such are to give, the greater judgment they are to expect, prevent any from intruding themselves into such
The wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle; an office, without suitable qualifications, and a regular call. May God enable them to judge rightly concerning that call; and where it is indeed given, may his grace furnish them for their work, and 2 his mercy cover those many imperfections, which the best will see room to acknowledge and lament.

SECT. VI.

The Apostle urges a candid benevolent disposition, guarding them against censoriousness and animosities, and that love of the world which tends to excite them; to restrain which he recommends an humble application to God for Divine influences. James III. 13.

IV. 10.

JAMES III. 13.

MANKIND are naturally desirous of the reputation of an understanding superior to others; consider what is the best display of it. Who [is] wise, and a man of sense among you? let him shew himself to be possesst of the most valuable kind of knowledge, by exhibiting out of a good, holy, and useful conversation, his honourable and beneficent works. And let him do this, not with vain ostentation or rigorous zeal, but with the meekness and gentleness of true wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter zeal against each other, and uncharitable contention in your hearts, boast not of your improvements in Christianity, and lie not against the truth by such groundless presumptions. This is not the wisdom that cometh down from above, and which that religion that our Divine Master brought from heaven teacheth us; but it [is] on the contrary, earthly, sensual, and even diabolical. It takes its rise from considerations relating to the present world, objects which gratify only our senses, the inferior part of our nature, and which are the busts of the devil's temptations, by which he endeavours to dishonour our profession, and ruin our souls.

15 For it is evident in fact, that where uncharitable zeal and contention [is], there [is] wild confusion and disorder and every other evil and per-

4 Earthly, sensual, diabolical.] Dr. Butler, supposes this refers to the three grand temp- tations of the world, vanity, a love of plea- sure, and ambition; the first of which is earthly, the second sensual, the third diabo- 

6 The
There is confusion, and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace,

IV. 1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of the fruit of righteousness? James IV. 17.

b The fruit of righteousness.] Possibly it might have been rendered, The fruit of righteousness in peace is sown for them that make peace. As it had been said, they who shew a peaceful temper, (supposing it to proceed from right principles,) may assure themselves, that they shall reap a harvest, in a world where righteousness flourishes in eternal peace. A seed is sown, and it will spring up, and make them ample amends for all the injuries they have sustained in a contentious world.

c Wars and fightings.] The contentious spirit of the Jews was very apparent, and drew on them speedy destruction; as many writers have justly observed on this text. Plato says, 'Nothing but the body, and its lusts and appetites, kindle sedition, quarrels, and wars in the world. But Mr. Blackwall observes, that the sentiment is here expressed with greater vivacity; and another beautiful metaphor is added, Your lusts which war in your members, intimating, that there is a state of civil war in the soul, either between sensual inclinations and conscience: or between one lust and another. Blackwall's Serv. Class. Vol. I. p. 212.

d 2
They received not, because they asked amiss:

and public wars occasion; even all the carnage of a field of slaughter, and the barbarous attempts which human creatures and brethren make to destroy one another? [Is it] not hence from your sensual lusts and appetites, which first war in your members; that is, do first as it were give battle to your rational powers, and then turn the several members of your bodies into 2 weapons of mischief and destruction? Ye covet this and that pleasure and gratification, and in your present circumstances, ye find that ye have not the means of procuring it; and therefore ye are ready to kill another, because you stand in each others way, and one possesses what another would be glad to possess, even though it were at the expense of the owner's life. Because ye thus earnestly desire for yourselves, and envy each other the possession of what ye cannot obtain, ye quarrel and fight, make one injury beget another, till ye come to wage a confirmed war with each other. Yet after all, ye miss the surest way of obtaining the most desirable blessings, which would be earnestly to seek them of God in prayer; but this is omitted, and so ye have not the blessings ye might otherwise easily obtain, because you 2 ask not. Or if ye do pray, it is with little devotion, and so little purpose; ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss; without a becoming faith and fervency, or without that regard to the glory of God, which ought to animate all your desires. Whereas ye seek these things only, that ye may squander away them upon your lusts, and indulge yourselves in the height of luxurious pleasure, while your poor brethren are in the last necessity; and surely the dearer any man is to God, the less likely will he be to succeed in such petitions as these.

Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye have not, because ye ask not, ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may continue it upon your lusts.
Ye adulterers and adulteresses, for I cannot give you a milder name, while guilty of this spiritual whoredom, while you are lavishing away your best affections upon objects so far beneath him to whom you have vowed them, know ye not that the friendship of the world, which you so much court and care, is enmity against God? Whoever therefore will be a friend to the world, and resolves to pursue it as his chief good, is by a necessary consequence declared and adjudged to be an enemy of God, as he will be led into that rebellion against his law, which makes up the grand character of that enmity. Do you think the scripture speaks in vain in all the passages in which it guards us against such a temper as this, and leads the mind directly to God, as the supreme good; teaching us to abandon every thing for him? Or does the Holy Spirit that dwells in us Christians, lust to envy? does it encourage these worldly affections, this strife and envying which we have reproued? or can it be imagined, that we who appear to have so much of the Spirit, have any interested views in the cautions we give, and would persuade you from the pursuit of the world, because we should envy you the enjoyment of it? No; But we rather pity such fond and wretched attachments; for he gives us greater degrees of grace, than to leave us the slaves of so wretched a disposition; as it is said in those ever memorable words, (Prov. iii. 34,) God sets himself in battle-array against the proud but to the lowly he giveth grace and favour. Subject yourselves therefore to God; and being listed in his army, keep the rank which he has assigned you; resist the devil steadily and courageously, as the great enemy of your eternal salvation; and though he may for a while combat you with his varied temptations, he will at length flee from you, and your progress in religion

5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

6 But he giveth more grace: wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

[Is adjudged to be an enemy.] So Dr. Barrow, (see his Works, Vol. I. p 228,) justly observes, that the word אָנַיָּה signifies; and there is a considerable emphasis in the expression; it is now declared and adjudged beyond controversy, that he is an enemy of God.

[Does the Spirit—lust, &c.] This rendering, (with Dr. Whitby,) I prefer to our own, which intimates the latter clause to be a quotation. Bishop Patrick supposes it is borrowed from Numb. xi. 29. But I think it would be doing great violence to that text, to suppose this an intended quotation from thence.

h Keep the rank.] So the expression נָצָה properly and exactly signifies.
clemency, and your victory over your spiritual adversaries, will grow daily more easy. Draw near to God with humble submission and earnest prayer, and he will draw near to you with mercy. Cleanse your hands, O ye sinners, from all the pollution with which they are stained; and rest not merely in a freedom from evil actions, but labour to purify your hearts as much as possible, from all irregularities of affection. O ye double-minded, who continue but wavering between God and the world, and have as yet learned to exert so little resolution in religion, that it is matter of doubt, whether you have any principles of it at all. And when you reflect upon the former part of life, as unprofitably and so unworthily spent, honest the guilt of such a conduct; and more and more for the miseries which you have exposed yourselves to by it. And instead of these vain indulgences, let your heart be turned into mourning and [your] sorrow-jet, into expressions of the deepest sorrow. On the whole, humble yourselves in the very dust before the Lord, whom by your sins you have offended, and you may hope he will return to you in the methods of his mercy, and raise you up again from that prostrate condition.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. 16. 18. In we desire the character of wisdom, let us learn from the oracles of eternal truth, how it is to be obtained—by meekness and a good conversation. Let us avoid that infernal wisdom, here so severely and justly branded, which consists in knowing the most effectual methods to distress others. On the contrary, let us pray, and write, and labour for that which is from above, and of which so amiable a character is here given. And so far as it can be obtained without injuring conscience, let us cultivate universal peace, and let a gentle and placable temper, an impartial and sincere disposition, be ever inviolably preserved, even when we are obliged to contend with others, about matters of the highest importance; remembering that the more sacred the cause is, the more prudent we should be that we do not injure it by a passionate or injurious management of it. Thus let us see the fruits of righteousness in peace, and wait the promised harvest, leaving wars
They should not speak evil of one another;

Wears and contentions to others, lamenting them, and praying that God would cause them entirely to cease. And that we may be less obnoxious to those temptations, whereby others are betrayed into them, let us endeavour to guard against those lusts and passions which give a disproportionate value to the objects about which those contents arise. Does God brand them with this character of adultery? Let us preserve our souls pure from such affections, as ever we desire that our prayers should be acceptable to God. May his grace subdue all the workings of pride, of luxury, and of envy; and produce in our hearts more and more of that humility, to which he will give more grace; engaging us, when thus invited, to draw near to him, to ask aright what we need from him, trusting his promise that he will draw nigh to us, and that when we humble ourselves before him, he will raise us up. Cleansing our hands, let us endeavour to purify our hearts too. So may those who have hitherto been double minded, hope to attain an establishment in religion, in conjunction with that established peace, which no carnal affection, even when most fully gratified, can neither afford or admit.

SECT. VII.

The Apostle suggests particular cautions against evil-speaking, and vain confidence in the events of futurity, or in any worldly possessions which often prove a temptation to luxury, and an occasion of ruin; and concludes the section with encouraging and exhorting afflicted and oppressed Christians to wait patiently for the coming of their Lord. James IV. 11.—V. 8.

James IV. 11.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

a Speaketh evil of [his] brother, &c.] Dr. Whitby explains this of the unbelieving Jews reproaching their Christian brethren for their non-observation of the Mosaic law; and thinks, the apostle intimates, that as the ceremonial law was not originally intended for the Gentiles, this conduct was a reflection upon the wisdom of God in giving it. But I choose the more extensive explication.
the great Governor of the universe will pass, when it comes under his final review, it well becomes you seriously to consider. For it is certain, there is one great Almighty Law-giver

who is able abundantly to assert the honour of his own government; and as he can save his faithful and obedient subjects from the greatest extremity of danger and calamity, so he is also able to destroy the most obstinate and audacious rebel, and to smite him with irrecoverable ruin in the full career of his crimes. Who art thou therefore that judgest another? and darest to invade the office of this supreme and universal Law-giver, and thereby exposest thyself to his condemnation?

13 But to insist no further upon this; let me now turn myself to those who are quite immersed in their worldly schemes, and promise themselves assuredly an opportunity to accomplish them. Come now, ye that say, To-day or To-morrow, we will go to such a city, and spend a year there, and traffic, and get gain by our merchandize, and then return and enjoy the fruits of our labours. Alas! upon what an uncertainty do you proceed in such a supposition as this! whereas, instead of being able to count on a year to come, ye know not even what [shall be] on the morrow, and much less, what the days and months of a year may bring forth. For what [is] your life, upon the continuance of which all your worldly projects depend? For it is only like a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanishes away, and is seen no more; how gay soever its form might be, and how wide soever it might have extended itself. Whereas ye [ought] to say in consideration of this, If the great Lord of our lives will please to lengthen them, we shall live, and do this or that, intimating even by your manner of speaking, the sense that you have, of his being able at pleasure to cut you short in all your purposes and appointments. But now you rejoice in your boastings; you take pleasure in this arrogant and confident manner of talking; whereas, all such rejoicing is evil, and ought to be corrected: And so much the rather, as you have been better instructed than many others, and therefore ought to shew the good effect of these instructions. For to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is aggravated sin; and it would have been

12 There is one

Law-giver, who is able
to save, and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

13 Go to now, ye

that say, To-day or
To-morrow, we will go
into such a city, and
continue there a year,
and buy and sell, and
gain:

14 Whereas ye

know not what shall be
on the morrow; for
what is your life? it is
even a vapour that
appeareth for a little
while, and then vanishes
away.

15 For that ye ought
to say, If the Lord will,
we shall live, and do
this or that.

16 But now ye re-
joince in your boast-
ings: all such rejoicing
is evil.

17 Therefore to him
that knoweth to do
good, and doth it not,
to him it is sin.
The rich are reminded of their oppression and luxury.

V. 1. Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries, that shall come upon you.

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh as it were fire; ye have heaped treasures together for the last days.

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, is which of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and been much better for him, that he had wanted that degree of knowledge he had, than that he should thus abuse it.

I direct these things especially to those who have the advantage of the Christian revelation and institutions; but I confine not myself wholly to them. Let others pay them regard, in proportion to the degree in which they have opportunities of attaining Divine knowledge. Let them take the greatest care, that they do not abuse it. And let those especially be careful, whom Providence has distinguished by the fulness of their circumstances; which often proves a temptation to vice, though it should in all reason and gratitude be an engagement to virtue and piety. Experience will soon teach many such the vanity of those things in which they pride themselves, and which embolden them in their transgressions of the Divine law. Come now therefore, ye rich men, weep, and even howl over the miseries that are speedily coming upon you, in those days which are nearly approaching. You have been solicitous to lay up abundant stores for your future subsistence and security; but your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold, and your silver, which should have been brightened by a generous circulation, have been hoarded up, till they are cankered, and their rust shall be a witness against you in the sight of God, and so bring upon you such awful rebukes from him, that it shall; as it were, eat into your flesh, with an anguish as piercing and corroding as fire itself. Ye have laid up treasures for the last days; for the last days are now coming, and the enemy shall seize and dissipate them all to your infinite vexation and distress. Behold the wages of the labourers, who have reaped your fields, who have been defrauded by you of their due reward, cry for vengeance against you; and

b Ye rich men, &c.] Josephus, (Bell. Jud. v. 20, 30; iv. 19,) particularly observes how much the rich men suffered by the Romans in the Jewish war. I have rendered ταλαιπωροντες τως τρεχοντως, miseries which are coming upon you, and I think it more agreeable to the original than our English version; τρεχοντως being a participle of the present tense.

c The last days.] This phrase does not merely signify, for the time to come, but for that period, when the whole Jewish economy was to close, and when those awful judgments threatened in the prophets to be poured out upon wicked men in the last days, are just coming, Acts ii. 17; Heb. i. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 3; and the like. Compare Mat. xxiv. 33, 34; 1. Cor. x. 11.

d For...
and the out-cries of those who have gathered in your harvest, have come into the ears of the Lord of hosts. Ye have lived delicately and luxuriously upon the earth, indulging yourselves in every desire that rose in your minds, without restraint. Ye have pampered your hearts, as beasts are fed for a day of slaughter; and truly to you it is much nearer than you are aware. And well has the vengeance been deserved by you; for ye have condemned [and at last murdered] the righteous one, the Son of God himself; [and] he doth not yet resist you with that display of power which he can easily exert to your utter destruction; but the day willspeedily come, when God will avenge his cause, and pour out the judgment he has threatened, on those who have treated him in so base and unworthy a manner.

Since this is the case, since our Divine Master has met with such rigorous treatment, and borne it with such steady patience; be ye therefore, my brethren, long-suffering and patient, even till the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth; [and] though it does not immediately appear, when sown, or ripen when it appears; yet he continueth patient with respect to it, till he receive the former rain, to produce it, and the latter, to bring it on to perfection.

Be ye also patient; and strengthen your hearts in every good resolution, for the appearance of the Lord is near; he will quickly come, and reward all your long-suffering, and take vengeance on your implacable enemies, for all the outrages they have committed against you.

**Improvement.**

Let the law of that one great Legislator, who is able both to save and to destroy, be always seriously remembered and considered; that we may not afront his authority in pretending to judge others.

d For a day of slaughter: see in these essays. There are some who render this, as in a sacrifice, when many sacrifices are slain. But Walton observes, that the word is always used in the Sacrifices to signify not a day of fasting, but a day of slaughter.

c Nurem. see. Instead of see, Dr. Bentley would read se, for a ye. & the Lord; and would render it, and the Lord require you; that is, you have brought the vengeance of his almighty arm upon you. Memoirs of Luther. Vol. VI. p. 175. — Others interpret it of the mere sufferings of the disciples of Christ, in conformity to the example of their Master.
others, nor set up for judges, and in effect condemners of the law, by the severity of those censures which we pass upon our brethren. We are happy in knowing that sacred rule of life, if we obey it; Chap. iv. otherwise, that knowledge of it which adds an aggravation even to 11 sins of omission, will much more aggravate every presumptuous 17 opposition to it.

Let us look on this world as a scene of great uncertainty; and 14 on life, as flattering vapour, which vanishes while we are beholding it; and let a sense of its shortness and uncertainty, and of our own ignorance what shall be on the morrow engage us to be very careful, that we do not presume upon the future, as if it were in our own power; but set ourselves with all possible diligence to improve 15 the present time, referring the disposal of all future events, to the wisdom of that God on whom it depends to determine whether we shall live, and do this, or that.

Let rich men read the address of the apostle to persons in their Chap. v. circumstances, with holy awe, and with a jealousy over themselves, 1 lest their present prosperity be succeeded with misery, and their joy with weeping and howling; as it undoubtedly will be, if wealth be unjustly gotten, or sordidly hoarded up, or luxuriously employed to pamper their appetites, while the truest and noblest use of it, the 2, 5 relief of the poor, and the benefit of mankind, is forgotten. Especially have they reason to tremble who abuse wealth and power as the instruments of oppression; soon will all their stores be wasted, soon will they become naked and indigent, and find a terrible ac-6 count remaining, when all the gaieties and pleasures of life are utterly vanished. In the mean time, the saints of God may be am-7 mong the poor and the oppressed: but let them wait patiently for the day of the Lord, for his coming is near. They saw in tears, but let them comfort their hearts with the view of the harvest; in like manner as the husbandman demands not immediately the fruits of that seed he has committed to the furrows. Adored be that kind Providence, which gives the former and the latter rain in its season. To him from whom we have received the bounties of nature, let us humbly look for the blessings of grace, and trust him to fulfil all his promises, who without a promise to bind him, in particular instan-8 ces, gives us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. Acts xiv. 17.
SECT. VIII.

He concludes the epistle with inculcating moderation and fortitude, cautioning them against profane and vain swearing, and recommending prayer, a ready acknowledgment of our faults, and a solicitous concern for the common salvation. James V. 9, to the end.

JAMES V. 9.

AND now, to draw to a conclusion, be not inwardly incensed against each other, brethren, so as to grudge or envy one another any superior advantages in life, or to harbour even that malignity of disposition which should groan in secret; while it wants opportunities of mischief, that ye yourselves be not condemned, for behold the judge is standing before the door; he is now present, and sees all the irregularities of your tempers, as well as actions; in consequence of which he will quickly bring these inward disorders of mind into judgment, as well as the 10 enormities of the life. And that you may be fortified against such trying circumstances, my brethren take for an example of enduring adversity, and of bearing under the greatest provocations, the holy prophets of old, who spoke to our fathers in the name of the Lord, and gave such convincing evidences of their Divine inspiration. (Heb. xi. 37.) Behold, in this respect we esteem them happy, who endure steadily and patiently the trials which God appoints for them. In this view, ye have heard of the celebrated patience of Job, with how much honour it is proclaimed from generation to generation; and ye have also seen the end of the Lord, how much to his honour, and how much

10 Take my brethren the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. 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.

a (Gr. in secret.) Thus I have paraphrased the words, because it is well known, that the original paπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαпапανα

b We esteem them happy, &c.] The Apostle speaks of this, not only as his own judgment, but that of all Christians who judged right, and understood the nature of trials. And it is indeed a judgment in which all Christians should be agreed.

c See the end of the Lord.] It is observeable, that in Job xliii. 7, &c. God excuses the cause in his favour, and calls him
to his comfort, his various and heavy afflictions concluded; *that the Lord is full of compassion, and of tender mercy*, and it is with the bowels of an affectionate Father, that he corrects his beloved children, not for his own gratification, but from a view to their advantage.

Among other effects of that impatience, against which I am cautioning you, may be reckoned the irreverent use of the name of God, and profane oaths and execrations, into which in the transport of their criminal passions, some unhappy wretches are ready to fall; *but be you above all things, my brethren, careful, that ye swear not, upon such occasions, or on any other, lightly and profanely, neither by heaven the throne of God, nor by earth, his footstool, nor by any other oath; but remember the command of our blessed Lord, (Mat. v. 37,) and let your yea be yea, and [your] nay nay; content yourselves with a simple affirmation or negation, and take care to maintain such constant integrity in all your words, that nothing more may be needful to gain them credit; that ye may not fall under condemnation for profaning the name of God, and lessening the regard due to an oath, when used on the most solemn and necessary occasions.*

Accustom yourselves to the frequent exercises of devotion, as what will have the surest tendency to promote the comfort and happiness of your lives in every circumstance. *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray;* or, *Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*

*14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.*

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**Exodus viii.**

James v. 11.

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12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.


14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

* eBook Version *
to hope for an extraordinary cure: And the prayer of faith, in such a circumstance as this, shall save and recover the sick; and the Lord shall, in answer to prayer, raise him up, and if he hath committed sins, which have brought this sickness upon him by way of extraordinary punishment, they shall be forgiven him; and the Lord shall have mercy upon him, and recover him according to the words of his servant.

16 When you are conscious of having been really to blame, do not perversely vindicate a conduct which your own hearts condemn, but be frank in acknowledging it. Confess your faults one to another; for we are all too ready to stumble in the way of our duty; and pray for one another, especially when your brethren are under God's affliction hand, or have been under any visible declension in religion, that you may be healed, and recovered. The earnest prayer of a righteous man, the effect of good affections wrought in his heart by the energy of the Holy Spirit, is of great efficacy. Many instances of this you know are recorded in scripture; and among others, that of Elijah, who was a man subject to the like infirmities with us, (compare Acts. xiv. 15,) and had himself no greater command over the clouds and the rain than any of us; yet he prayed with a prayer, that is, with great faith and fervency, that it might not rain; which was not the effect of any resentment he had.

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed: The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17 Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: And it
it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

h Three years and six months.] Elijah is said, 1 Kings xviii. 1, &c. to have showed himself to Ahab in the third year; that is, from his going to live at Zarephath, 1 Kings xviii. 9, 8, 14, but from the beginning to the end of the famine was three years and six months, according to the account given by St. James, as also in Luke iv. 25.

i Save a soul from death, &c.] This way of expression intimates in the strongest manner, the infinite importance of such an event; as to save a soul from death is yet more than hiding the sins of the convert. As to the latter clause, Bishop Atterbury, and Dr. Scott, urge the interpretation given in the last words of the paraphrase. See Atterbury's Serm. Vol. I. p. 46–48; Scott's Christian Life, Vol. I. p. 368. And I have not seen reason, on the most attentive enquiry, to disallow the force of their arguments. Compare 1 Pet. iv. 8, and the note there.
IMPROVEMENT.

May it ever be remembered by all, and especially by the ministers of the gospel, of how great importance it is to be instrumental in saving a soul from death, an immortal soul from everlasting death; that so they may be animated to the most zealous and laborious efforts for that blessed purpose; and think themselves richly rewarded, though it were for the otherwise unsuccessful labours, of a whole life, by succeeding even in a single instance. In this view, may there be a care to bring them to the truth, that so they may be converted from their wandering ways that their understandings being convinced of the truth and importance of the gospel, their conduct may be practically influenced by it; and that upon such steady principles, as may effectually prevent their return to their wanderings again. Thus may a multitude of sins be hidden, and the glory of God, and the salvation of men, be effectually promoted.

Whatever trial we may meet with in these charitable efforts, or in any other path of duty, may we take the prophets of old, and the apostles of our Lord, for examples of suffering adversity and patience; especially remembering their Lord and ours; remembering how abundantly the patience of good men has been rewarded, the end of the Lord with respect to holy Job, and many others, who have trod in his steps in succeeding ages; and remembering especially, that the judge stands at the door, that in a very little time he will appear, not only to put an end to the trial of his servants, but to crown their virtues and graces. In the mean time the bowels of his compassion are abundant, and he will not be wanting in communicating all necessary consolations and supports.

May we be so happy, as to be acquainted with those of devotion. That in our afflictions we may pray, and in our cheerfulness, sing psalms, that we may know by blessed experience the efficacy of such a temper to often the sorrows of life, and to sweeten its enjoyments. And as we desire to be visited of God in our afflictions, may we with Christian sympathy be ready to visit and relieve others in their sickness, or other kinds of distress. It is indeed the special office of the elders of the church, who should be sent for upon such occasions with readiness, and who, if they be worthy of their office, will attend with pleasure. But it is not their office alone. Let us all be ready to pray for each other, in faith and charity; and where offences have been committed, let there be a frank and candid acknowledgment of them on the one side, and
and as hearty a forgiveness on the other. In a word, let the efficacy of the fervent prayer of the righteous be often reflected on, to excite fervour, and to engage to righteousness, and to lead us to honour those who maintain such a character, and who offer such petitions and supplications; that God may in answer to their requests, shower down his blessing upon us, that our land may yield its increase, that righteousness may spring up out of the earth, and that in every sense, God, as our own God, may bless us. (Psal. lxvii. 9; lxxxv. 11.)
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

THE TIMES

A DAILY PAPER

S.F. 7-11-1913

THE LATINO

ARMS
THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR, A

PARAPHRASE

ON

THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE PETER.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.
FAMILY EXPOSITION

OF THE REVELATION OF THE SAVIOUR

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL

WITH NOTES BY THE REV. MR. HODGE
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION
TO THE PARAPHRASE AND NOTES ON THE
FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

THE Apostle Peter makes a very eminent and illustrious figure on the theatre of the evangelical history, and was, on several occasions, favoured by our Lord with peculiar and distinguishing marks of honour. One instance, which I shall alone recite, among the many which might be recited, if it was needful, and which happened very soon after our Lord's ascension, is, that he was deemed worthy, under the impulse and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to open the gospel-dispensation, and first to preach salvation through a crucified Redeemer to the Jews, (Acts ii.) and Gentiles (Acts x.) And I the rather suggest this instance, because it affords some colour to my own opinion, that this epistle was written both to the Jewish and Gentile converts, who were dispersed in various regions of the world.

The sentiments of learned men upon this question—To whom was this epistle written?—are very various. The principal and most remarkable are these—That it was to the converted Jews of the dispersion—Or to the converted Gentiles—Or lastly (which is the opinion of Lord Barrington, embraced and defended by Dr. Benson) to the converted proselytes of the gate. It is not necessary in this place*, to enter into a particular confutation of the last mentioned hypothesis; especially as I apprehend what is suggested in my notes on several passages of the Acts, may convince an attentive reader, that there is no sufficient ground to suppose there were ever any such persons as proselytes of the gate. And as to the two former opinions, when the several arguments by which they are

* The learned author intended, had Providence prolonged his valuable life, to have published a distinct dissertation on this subject. But this, and many other designs he had projected, for the benefit of the church and the world, were prevented by his justly lamented death.
are supported, are duly considered and examined, we shall perhaps be inclined to imagine that the apostle rather designed his epistle for the Jewish and Gentile converts both, than for either of them distinctly and separately. Without discussing the reasons for the opinion I have adopted, I shall leave the reader to form his own judgment, after he hath perused my paraphrase and notes on those passages of this epistle on which it is founded.

It is not very easy to assign the date of this epistle with exactness. The most commonly received opinion is, that it was written in the year 61, the seventh of the emperor Nero; and this seems to be a medium, between the sentiments of those who place it some years higher, and those who place it lower, which bids fairest for the truth.

It is evidently the design of this epistle, "To induce the Christian converts, in various parts of the world, to maintain a conversation, not merely inoffensive to all men, but in all respects worthy of the gospel; and to support them under the severe persecutions, and fiery trials they already endured, or were likely to endure, by the noblest considerations which their religion could suggest."

The first branch of this design the apostle seems to keep particularly in view from chap. i.—iii. 7. And in pursuance of it, after having congratulated his brethren, who were dispersed abroad through various countries, on their happiness in being called to the glorious privileges and hopes of the gospel, which was introduced into the world in so sublime a manner by the prophets and apostles (chap. 1—12,) he exhorts them to watchfulness, to sobriety, to love, and to universal obedience, by an affecting representation of their relation to God, their redemption by Christ's invaluable blood, and the excellence and perpetuity of the Christian dispensation, and of its glorious fruits and consequences, compared with the vanity of all worldly enjoyments. (ver. 13, to the end.) Urging them, by the like considerations, to receive the word of God with meekness, to continue in the exercise of faith in Christ as the great foundation of their eternal hopes, and to maintain such a behaviour as would adorn his gospel among the unconverted Gentiles (chap. ii. 1—12.) For the same end, he exhorts them to the exercise of a due care as to relative duties; and particularly, a subjection to civil governors, and to masters, even when their dispositions and injunctions might be harsh and severe; enforcing all by the consideration of that patience with which our Lord Jesus Christ endured his most grievous sufferings. (ver. 13, to the end.) He likewise exhorts Christian wives to submit themselves to their husbands, and to study the ornaments of their minds rather than of their persons; and husbands to treat their wives in a becoming and honourable manner, from a tender sense of those infirmities to which the sex is peculiarly liable. (chap. iii. 1—7.)

In the ensuing part of the epistle, the apostle's arguments and exhortations more immediately and directly refer to those dreadful
ful sufferings and persecutions to which the Christian converts were exposed, or which they actually endured, from the malevolence and rage of their implacable enemies. And here, well knowing that such treatment, unmerited and unprovoked, is apt to embitter and narrow men's spirits, and inflame their resentments; in which case the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus would be greatly dishonoured, and its spread and influence in the world retarded by the indiscreet behaviour of its friends and advocates; therefore St. Peter urges many arguments on the Christian converts, in order to engage them to an inoffensive, benevolent, and useful life, and conversation; and to a steady, courageous adherence to their religion amidst all opposition. (ver. 8—17.) And then animating them to endure their sufferings with patience and resignation, from the endearing consideration of what their Divine Saviour had suffered for them, he expatiates on his atonement, resurrection, and exaltation; on the obligation of their baptismal covenant, and on the awful solemnity of the last judgment, as powerful arguments to a life of mortification and holiness, whatever discouragement and opposition they might be called to encounter, (ver. 18—iv. 6.) And as eminent vigilance, fidelity, and courage, would be requisite for rightly improving their talents, and for discharging the duties of their respective stations in the church, at all times, but especially in times of imminent danger and persecution, he distinctly inculcates these several virtues; and by way of inference from the trials to which good men were exposed, he observes, that a tremendous, inevitable destruction will overwhelm the inimical and unbelieving. (ver. 7—19.) And at the close, he addresses some particular cautions both to ministers and private Christians; urging on the former, humility, diligence, and watchfulness; and exhorting the latter to a steadfast and faithful discharge of their several duties, animated by this sublime consideration, that the God of all grace had called them to his eternal glory, and would, after they had suffered awhile, make them perfect, according to the apostle's earnest prayer for them; chap. v. throughout.

From this imperfect delineation of this admirable epistle, the production of another eminent apostle, it is no unnatural or improper remark, that all the principles of our holy religion, as here represented, are perfectly consistent with the analogy of faith, and with the whole tenor of the New Testament, that they are directly levelled against all manner of corrupt affections and immoral practises, as well as urged in the light of motives to all those virtues and graces, in which our conformity to God, and the true glory of our nature consists. And (which, if it were the only circumstance that could be pleaded, would exalt our religion to an infinite superiority to the institutions of the most renowned heathen philosophers and law-givers, and in connection with its amazing progress, is a demonstration of its Divine original) Christians are here instructed to encounter outrageous violence
Irene and persecution only with the hallowed weapons of patience, meekness, and charity, and to silence the cavils, and blast the machinations of their own and their Master's bitterest enemies, with the lustre of a pure and holy life, and the fervour of a generous and invincible benevolence. How amiable, how elevated, how divine, how worthy of all acceptation is the religion of Jesus!—In delineating, as we have seen, the grand and essential branches of which even Peter and Paul, notwithstanding all their contention about things of inferior moment, or of a personal and private nature, are perfectly consistent and harmonious.
The Apostle Peter begins his address to his brethren, who were dispersed abroad, with congratulating their happiness in being called to the glorious privileges and hopes of the gospel; and takes occasion to expatiate upon the sublime manner in which it was introduced both by the prophets and apostles. 1 Pet. I. 1—12.

1 Peter I. 1.

Peter, who has the honour to be invested with the office of an Apostle of Jesus Christ, inscribes and addresses this epistle to the elect strangers who are scattered abroad, to those Christians.

3 Scattered abroad.] Lord Barrington (Misc. Sacr. Essay II. p. 84—88) strenuously maintains, that St. Peter wrote only to the converted proselytes of the gate; and in favour of this opinion he urgeth their being called strangers; which he thinks is the style peculiar to those who having renounced idolatry, and receiving the seven precepts of Noah, were yet strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. He supposes they must have been Gentiles, because they are said, once not to have been a people, chap. ii. 9, 10, and to have been ignorant, verse 14, and to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, chap. iv. 3; and he also pleads, from chap. i. 22, where they are said to have purified their souls by obeying the truth, that it is likely they were proselytes of the gate, because a parallel expression is used by St. Peter concerning Cornelius and his friends, (Acts xv. 9. See Vol. III. § 33, note b,) whom he supposes to have been such. He likewise argues from their being addressed in these words, If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, (chap. i. 17,) by St. Peter, who had himself addressed Cornelius in almost the same terms, (Acts x. 34, 35. See Vol. III., sect. i.)
Christians whom Providence has dispersed through various countries, and whom Divine grace has taught to consider themselves, wherever they dwell, as strangers and sojourners on earth; and particularly to those who inhabit the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and those in the provinces of Asia and Bithynia. I call you [elected,] because you are indeed chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, who has projected all his schemes with the most consummate wisdom, and perfect discerning of every future event. He has been pleased, according to the steady purposes of his grace, to bring you by means of the sanctification of the Spirit, by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost operating upon your souls, to evangelical obedience. He has subdued all your prejudices against the gospel, and effectually engaged you to submit to it; and thus you are interested in the pardon of sin, and in all the other blessings which proceed from the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, whereby forgiveness is obtained for us Christians as it was for the Jews under the law upon sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices; and may this, and every other instance and degree of grace, and all the peace consequent upon it, be multiplied unto you all, wherever you are, and whatever your condition and circumstances in life may be. Whatever your afflictions are in this variable and troublesome world, I hope you will never forget, how indispensably you are obliged to thankfulness on account of your Christian privileges; and to such thankfulness let me now excite you and myself: blessed therefore [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath regenerated us to a great, important and lively hope of future happiness by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; upon whom indeed, throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

III. § 23, note e.) He pleads in support of the same opinion, their being called Christians, (chap. iv. 16,) a title which he supposes was first given to the converted, i.e. of the catechumens, of which the church at Antioch, where they were first called Christians, in his apprehension, consisted. (Acts vi. 26. See Vol. III. § 25, note f.) But all this appears to me to be utterly inconclusive; it is in part obviated already in my notes on the Acts; and as for the force which may seem to remain in his lordship’s arguments, arising from the phrases in which St. Peter addresses those to whom he writes, it is, I think, entirely annihilated, by supposing that the epistle was written both to the converted Jews and Gentiles; of which the reader will be able to form a judgment, by observing whether my paraphrase of the several passages in question be natural and easy.

b Unde}
To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away; reserved in heaven for you.

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7 That the trial of your faith being much more

deed, and upon whose resurrection all our hopes depend. And by whom we are brought to the cheerful and confident expectation of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, which nothing can spoil, which nothing can pollute, and which is incapable of any internal decay, as well as external violence. This inheritance is reserved in the heavens for you, and for all true believers; Who, though now surrounded with many apparent dangers, are not left defenceless, but are guarded, as in a strong and impregnable garrison, by the almighty power of God, through the continued exercise of that faith which this almighty power wrought in your hearts; and he will still maintain it unto that blessed hour, when you shall receive the complete and eternal salvation which is already prepared, and though now kept as under a veil, is to be revealed in its full radiance of glory, in the last time, the grand period, in which all the mysteries of Divine Providence shall beautifully terminate. This is the blessed state and condition to which by the gospel you are brought, in which, and in the glorious hopes which it inspires, you cannot but rejoice, though now for a little while, if it be necessary you are grieved, and distressed amidst various trials. You know they are all under the direction of the infinite wisdom of your heavenly Father, who would not subject you to them, did he not see them to be subservient to your truest happiness; and they will ere long be brought to an everlasting period. His intention in all is most kind and gracious, namely, that the little trial

b Undefiled.] That is, into which nothing that polluteth can enter. The land of Canaan was said to be defiled by sinners; to which perhaps there may here be an allusion. Compare Rev. xxi. 27.

c Are guarded, &c.] The original word, εκτησιν, is very emphatical, and properly signifies, being kept as in an impregnable garrison, secure from harm, under the observation of an all-seeing eye, and protection of an almighty hand. Blackwall's Sacred Classics, Vol. I. p. 196. Compare 2 Cor. xi. 32, in the Greek.

d In the last time.] This plainly refers to the second appearance of Christ, called the last time, because it will be the concluding scene of all the Divine dispensations relating to this world. For the same reason it is called the last days. John vi. 39; and xi. 24. And the design of the passage before us confirms this interpretation, since the apostle is here speaking of the full manifestation of the future happiness reserved in heaven for them. Some would connect, in the last time, with their being kept by the power of God; and understand it, as if the apostle had said, Though our lot is cast in the last time, when the temptations to apostasy are so great and powerful, we are, notwithstanding, preserved from all the dangers to which we are exposed.
trial of your faith, which is far more precious and valuable than that of gold which perishes and wears out in time, though it be tried with fire, and purified to the highest degree; may be found to praise and honour and glory, in the great day of the revelation of Jesus Christ, the Divine Author and Finisher of our faith, who having endured yet sorrier trials, will rejoice to applaud and reward the fidelity of his servants in his cause: I say, in the revelation of Jesus Christ, that glorious Redeemer, whom not having seen with your bodily eyes, nor personally conversed with him, ye nevertheless love, and in whom, though now you see [him] not, yet assuredly believing, ye rejoice, as your almighty Saviour, Friend and Protector, with unutterable and even glorified joy, with such a joy as seems to anticipate that of the Saints in glory; 

Receiving with unutterable delight, as a full equivalent of all your trials, the great end of your faith, even the complete salvation of [your] souls; a prize of infinitely greater importance, than all you can be called to sacrifice for its sake! Concerning which salvation the prophets, who predicted the grace of the gospel [which was appointed] to you, sought and diligently inquired: Searching with the deepest and most attentive reflection, to what period or to what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them, did refer when he referred long before they came to pass, the various sufferings which were to come upon Christ, and the exalted and permanent glory which was to succeed them, and render him and his kingdom so perpetually illustrious, and his servants so completely happy. To the memorable testimony of these prophets it becomes

* Not having seen | It is very possible that among those dispersed Christians, there might be some who had visited Jerusalem whilst Christ was there, and might have seen, or even conversed with him, but as the greater part had not, St. Peter speaks according to the usual apostolic manner, as if they all had not. Thus he speaks of them all as loving Christ, though there might be some among them who were destitute both of this divine principle, and of that joy which he speaks of, as 1 Peter 1.8., (1 Peter 2.12.)

1 Spirit of Christ which was in them, &c.] It is well worthy our notice, that the Spirit which dwelt towards the prophets, is called the Spirit of Christ, which (as Mr. Fleming observes, Christ. Vol. 1. p. 180) both proves his existence before his incarnation, and illustrates the full view he himself had of all he was to do and suffer under the character of our Redeemer; the particulars of which therefore must have been comprehended in the revelations between him and the Father.—The apostle in discussing so largely concerning the prophets, seems to have a special reference to the converted Jews, who would enter more thoroughly into this part of his reasoning than the converted Gentiles.

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now you see him not, ye believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;

9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto
To whom the prophets, and the Holy Ghost bore witness.

unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

comes us to pay a sincere and profound regard, to whom such extraordinary discoveries were made, as no attentive reader can view without conviction and astonishment; and it was revealed to them among other things, that [it was] not to themselves, but to us, that they ministered these things: they knew that we, when the events arose, should have a more complete understanding of these oracles, than any who declared them, had. Consider then, how happy you are in that dispensation under which you now live, when those Divine mysteries, which were only in a more obscure manner hinted at by the prophets, are most clearly and expressly declared to you, by those who have published the glad tidings of the gospel among you, by the evident authority and attestation, as well as by the assistances of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, with such visible glory, and testifying his continued residence amongst us by such wonderful effects. And indeed, the doctrines which they preach, as things of so great excellence and importance, are to be well worthy the regard of angels, as well as men; and accordingly, (as the images of the cherubim on the mercy-seat, seemed to bow down, to look upon the tables of the law laid up in the ark, so those celestial spirits do, from their heavenly abode, desire to bend down) to [contemplate] such glorious displays of Divine wisdom and goodness, and attentively to survey those important scenes that are opening upon us here on earth; which is become so much more considerable than it would otherwise be, as it is honoured with being the theatre of such glorious events.

IMPROVE-

\[\text{g To whom it was revealed, &c.} \] I think this text plainly proves, that the prophets had some general intimation, that their prophecies referred to the Messiah; but that they did not understand every clause of them in their full force, nor so well as we understand them, who are capable of comparing them with the event.

\[\text{h Angels desire to bend down, &c.} \] Thus it is in the original ἐπιθυμοῦν ὑπέρποντο, desire to look down in, in allusion no doubt, (as Mr. Sanrin, Dist. Vol. II. p. 266, has beautifully illustrated it, and many others have remarked,) to the bending posture in which they were represented on the mercy-seat. And Mr. Blackwall observes, (Sacred Classics, Vol. I. p. 431.) that it may denote, not only the attentive curiosity with which they may inquire into the gospel, but the humility of their adoration, whereas it is very probable that their apostate brethren refused to stoop to such a scheme.
IMPROVEMENT.

Are we desirous of rendering it apparent to ourselves, and all around us, that we are indeed the elect of God? Let it be, by humble application to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, on the one hand, and by the evident fruits of the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, on the other.

The abundant mercy of God, hath begotten real Christians to the lively hope of an incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance, reserved in heaven for them; let us keep it steadily in view, and earnestly pray, that God would preserve us by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. Whilst we are waiting for this salvation, it is very possible, yea, probable, affliction may be our portion; but let us remember, it is if need be, that we are in heaven's through manifold temptations. Our faith, and our other graces, are as it were thrown into the furnace, not to be consumed, but refined; that they may be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearance of Jesus Christ. Even at present, may this divine faith produce that love to an unseen Jesus, which is here so naturally expressed by the apostle, and though now we see him not, yet may that love be eminently productive of joy, even that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory; and in the lively and vigorous exercise of these graces, may we all receive the end of our faith, even the everlasting salvation of our souls.

Let what we are told of the prophetic writers be improved as it ought, to confirm our faith in that glorious gospel, of which these holy men have given in their writings such wonderful intimations and predictions; writings which we have such excellent advantages for more distinctly and clearly understanding, than even they themselves did. What exalted ideas should we entertain of a dispensation introduced by such a series of wonders, preached by the inspired prophets, and by the Holy Ghost in his miraculous gifts and salutary influence sent down from heaven: a dispensation into the glories of which the angels desire to pry; how much more worthy then, the attention of the children of men, who are so nearly concerned in it, who were redeemed from everlasting destruction by the blood of the Son of God? O! let us review it with the closest application, and improve it to the infinitely gracious and important purposes for which it was intended. Then will grace and peace be multiplied to us; and however we may now be dispersed and afflicted, pilgrims and strangers, we shall ere long be brought to our everlasting home, and
They should gird up the loins of their mind:

and meet together in the presence of our dear and condescending Saviour; where having a more lively sense of our obligations to him, and beholding his glory, we shall love him infinitely better than at this distance we have been capable of, and feel our joy in him increased in a proportionable degree.

SECT. II.

The Apostle enforces his general exhortations to watchfulness, to sobriety, to love, and to obedience, by an affecting representation of our relation to God, our redemption by the invaluable blood of Christ, the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, and the excellence and perpetuity of the gospel-dispensation. 1 Pet. I. 13, to the end.

1 Peter I. 13.

WHEREFORE, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance;

15 But as he which hath called you is holy,
be ye yourselves also holy in the whole of [your] conversation, in every thing you say and do; aspiring after this as your greatest honour, to bear the image of God in the moral perfections of his nature; for it is written in several passages of the Mosaic scriptures, (Lev. xi. 44; xxvi. 2; xvi. 7.) be ye holy, for I am holy. There is the same force in the argument now, respecting us Christians, which there was with regard to the Jews; yea greater force, in proportion to the degree in which the sanctity of the Divine Being is now more illustriously displayed; and accordingly let me exhort you, it ye call upon the God and Father of all, who without respect of persons, or any kind of partiality, whether to Jews or Gentiles, judges every one according to [his] works, to converse during the time of your sojourn here, with all becoming reverence and humility, in the religious fear of God;

And so much the rather, knowing, the price of your redemption to have been so rich and invaluable. This is an important article of Divine knowledge, of which no Christian can be ignorant, that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as with silver and gold, which however regarded by men, have no value in the sight of God; this, I say, was not the price which bought you from your vain, trifling, and unprofitable conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; from those hereditary superstitions, follies, and vices, which had in succeeding generations assumed the name and the garb of religion, and from the guilt which they had brought upon your souls. Instructed by all the treasures of the earth been to purchase help for us under so sad and deplorable a circumstance. But God was pleased to find out the only ransom, and has redeemed us with the precious blood of Christ his Son, as of a lamb unblemished and unspotted, free from the least degree of

16 Because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourn here in fear;

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

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 commentator notes:

a Redeemed with corruptible things, with silver and gold, &c. Some think here is an allusion to the lamb, which made an atonement, and was bought at the common expense furnished by the contribution of the self-willed, as an atonement for their sins. Compare Exod. xxxi. 11, &c. As for those that think here is a reference to the stamp of a lamb on the Jewish coin, I am neither sure of the truth of the fact, nor can I perceive the elegance of the supposed allusion. Compare Wet's Geog. of the Old Test. Vol. I. p. 273.

b Received by tradition, &c.] Some think this refers to the Jewish traditions; but perhaps it may express those vain rites of worship which for successive ages had been delivered down from parents to their children in the Gentile world.

e Who
of moral pollution, and therefore properly represented by those lambs, free from all corporeal spots and blemishes, which the Jews were required to offer as an expiation for their souls. And as the pascal lamb was chosen, and set apart some time before it was sacrificed, so the Lord Jesus Christ, who was indeed typified by it, was known, approved, and fore-appointed from the foundation of the world, but made manifest in these latter times, by the clear preaching of the gospel, for your sakes, that ye might obtain redemption and salvation by him; Even ye all, who by him, and the manifestations of the Divine grace and mercy in him, are brought to repose your trust and confidence in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him such exalted glory and majesty in the celestial world; that so your faith and hope might be in God, and ye might be encouraged to commit all your concerns to him with cheerful confidence, when he has appointed you such a Saviour; and to expect all blessings from that friendship with him which is founded upon the incarnation, atonement, and blood of his own Son. Let it be your care, therefore, that having purified your souls by an application to this fountain which God has opened, and by that obedience to the truth which will through the assistance of the Spirit be the result of such an application; and since the whole genius and design of this religion, which you have imbibed and professed, leads to an undissembled brotherly love; let it be your care, I say, to enter affectionately into its design and tendency; and to love one another out of a pure heart; operating fervently and intensely, and not to rest merely in those deceitful forms and professions of affection, with which the men of the world amuse themselves and each other; or in those trilling instances of friendship which can do little to approve its reality and sincerity. The temper and conduct which I recommend, may justly be expected from Christ's resurrection, and the power with which God invested him on his ascension into heaven.

20 Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you;

21 Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren; see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, that ye may escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

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c Who by him trust in God.] This phrase is remarkable, and I think with Mr. Hallett (see his Notes and Discourses, Vol. I. p. 58.) that the meaning is, that Christians, who before their conversion were ignorant of the true God, learnt his Being and Providence from the great fact of

d Intensely.] So I think the word properly signifies; according to the sense in which it is used by Polybius and Herodotus. See Raphelius Anot. in loc.

e The
from you, considering your relation to God, and to each other, as having been regenerated, not by corruptible seed, not by virtue of any descent from human parents, but by incorruptible, not laying the stress of your confidence on your pedigree from Abraham, if you had the honour to descend from that illustrious patriarch; for that descent could not entitle you to the important blessings of the gospel. It is by means of the efficacy of the word of God upon your hearts, even that powerful word which lives and endures for ever e, that you are become entitled to these glorious evangelical privileges. For as the prophet Isaiah testifies, (Isaiah xl. 6,) all flesh [is] as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass, which is yet more frail than that; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth: quickly deprived of its blooming honours, it drops, blasted and dying, to the ground. And thus precarious and uncertain are all the dependencies which we can have on perishable creatures; But the word of the Lord abideth for ever in undiminished force and vigour, nor can ten thousand succeeding ages prevent or abate its efficacy. Now this, which the prophet refers to in the oracle I have just been quoting, is the word which is preached to you in the gospel, shew therefore your regard to it by such a temper and behaviour, both towards God and man, as it was intended to inculcate and produce.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Let it be matter of our daily delightful meditation, that while we clearly discern the uncertainty of all human dependences, which wither like the grass, and fall like the flower of the field, the word of God is permanent and immutable. Let us cheerfully repose our souls on this stable, unfailing security; gratefully acknowledging the goodness of God, that he hath condescended to lay a foundation for our hope, so firm and durable as his own infallible word, and to make that word the incorruptible seal of our regeneration. If we have indeed experimentally known its

1 The word of God, which lives and endures for ever.] This is rendered by some, "word ever lasting for ever," referring it to God himself. But it is more agreeable to the design of the passage, and is well

but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

3. 1 Peter 1. 23.
its efficacy and power, so that our souls are purified by obeying the truth, let us carefully express our obedience to it, by undissembled, fervent brotherly love; and animated by our glorious and exalted Ver. hopes as Christians, even that Divine and illustrious hope of the grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, let us set ourselves to the vigorous discharge of every duty, as knowing that we should be children of obedience, having the excuse of ignorance no longer to plead for the indulgence of our lusts, but by a holy God being called with a holy calling, and instructed to invoke him, at once, as our gracious Father and impartial Judge.

It is worthy of our special remark, that the blessed apostle urges us to pass the transitory and limited time of our sojourning here in fear, from the consideration of our being redeemed by the blood of the Son of God, which is a price of infinitely more value than all the treasures of the universe. And certainly there is a mighty energy in the argument; for as it is a very amiable, so it is also a very awful consideration. What heart so hardened, as not to tremble at trampling on the blood of the Son of God, and frustrating, as far as in him lies, the important design of his death? Frustrating the design of a scheme, projected from eternity in the councils of heaven, and at length made manifest with every circumstance to convince our judgments, and engage our affections. And while we are reflecting on the resurrection and exaltation of our Redeemer, as the great foundation of our eternal hopes, let us dread to be found opposing him, whom God hath established on his own exalted throne; and with the utmost reverence let us kiss the Son, in token of our grateful acceptance of his mercy, and cheerful and humble submission to his authority. (Psal. ii. 12.)

SECT. III.

The Apostle urges them, by representation of their Christian privileges, to receive the word of God with meekness, to continue in the exercise of faith in Christ, as the great foundation of their eternal hopes, and to maintain such a behaviour as might adorn his gospel, among the unconverted Gentiles. 1 Pet. ii. 1—12.

1 Peter ii. 1.

WHEREFORE, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypo-
And should desire that rational unmingled milk:

all malignity, and all deceit, and hypocrisies, and errors, and all evil-speaking, which are so contrary to its benevolent design. With all simplicity, as new-born babes, who are regenerated by Divine grace, desire that spiritual nourishment, that rational and unmingled milk, if I may so call it; that so ye may grow thereby to a state of adult Christianity. And this may reasonably be expected of you, since you have so experimentally felt and tasted that the Lord [is] gracious, since you have known the sweetness there is in Christ, and how suitable he is to the necessities and desires of an awakened sinner;

To whom coming (as to) a living stone, who is capable of diffusing spiritual life into those who are united to him, though disallowed indeed and rejected of men, yet chosen of God, [and] inexpresibly precious and valuable: Ye also as living stones, united to him, and deriving life from him, are built up as a spiritual house, consecrated to his service; and in another view, ye may be considered as a holy priesthood, destined to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of prayer, praise and obeisance, which are all acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, who is the great High Priest over the house of God, whose intercession alone can recommend to the Father such imperfect services as ours. Therefore it is contained in a well-known passage of the scripture, (Isaiah xxvii. 16,) Behold I lay in Zion a stone, even a chief corner stone, chosen, precious; and he that believeth in it, shall not be ashamed; which words undoubtedly refer to the Messiah, as the great hope and confidence of his church. To you therefore who believe [it is] precious: you, who rest your salvation on this corner-stone, know by blessed experience its value, as infinitely beyond all that can be compared with it. But as for those who are disobedient, these words of the Psalmist are accomplished with regard to them, and may well be recollected in the present connection, (Psalm cxviii. 22,) The stone

Hypocrates, and en-

As new-born babies
desire the sincere milk
of the word, that ye
may grow thereby;

If so be ye have
tasted that the Lord [is]
gracious;

To whom coming,
as with a living
stone, disallowed in-
deed of men, but
chosen of God, and
precious;

Ye also as lively
stones, are built up
a spiritual house, an
holy priesthood to of-
fer up spiritual sac-
rifices, acceptable to
God by Jesus Christ,

6 Wherefore also it
is contained in the
scripture, Behold I lay
in Zion a chief corner-
stone, chosen, precious;
and he that believeth
in it, shall not be ashamed; which words undoubtedly refer to the Messiah, as the great hope and confidence of his church. To you therefore who believe, [it is] precious: you, who rest your salvation on this corner-stone, know by blessed experience its value, as infinitely beyond all that can be compared with it. But as for those who are disobedient, these words of the Psalmist are accomplished with regard to them, and may well be recollected in the present connection, (Psalm cxviii. 22,) The stone

5 If so be ye have
tasted that the Lord [is]
gracious;

4 To whom coming,
as with a living
stone, disallowed in-
deed of men, but
chosen of God, and
precious;

3 If so be ye have
tasted that the Lord [is]
gracious;

2 To whom coming,
as with a living
stone, disallowed in-
deed of men, but
chosen of God, and
precious;

1 To whom coming,
as with a living
stone, disallowed in-
deed of men, but
chosen of God, and
precious;
which the builders dis-allowed, the same is made the head of the corner:

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereas to also they were appointed.

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

d They being disobedient, stumble, &c. A learned writer, I think, very well observes, that it is doing violence to the text, to read it as one continued sentence, as it is in our translation. The truth is, the apostle runs a double antithesis between believers and unbelievers: 

\[ \text{ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;} \]

which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner; all their opposition to it is in vain: they can never pretend to prevent the honour to which it is destined in the Divine purpose; and to themselves, it is also, as Isaiah expresses it in the preceding context, a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; they who would attempt, as it were, to remove it out of the way, find it an over-match for their strength, and are dashed in pieces by it. They being disobedient to the Divine revelation, stumble at the word of the gospel, which contains this awful testimony, and bring inevitable ruin upon themselves; to which also they were appointed by the righteous sentence of God long before, even as early as in his first purpose and decree he ordained his Son to be the great Foundation of his church. But you, on the contrary, who unfeignedly believe in him, [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, who bear at once the dignity of kings, and sanctity of priests: a holy nation, set apart in a special manner for the service of God; and a peculiar people. When these titles were given to Israel of old, it was in an inferior sense; and it is in a much nobler signification, that these words may be applied to you. Consider it therefore as the wise intention of Divine Providence, that you should declare and proclaim all abroad, the virtues of him who has called you out of that darkness, in which you originally were, into his marvellous and glorious light; that clear light of the gospel, which opens so many illustrious scenes of Divine wonders

f The virtues.] We render it praises; but the word \( \text{προσευχής} \) is well known commonly to have the signification here assigned it.

g Marvellous and glorious light.] A most beautiful expression of the wonders the gospel opens on the enlightened eye. But perhaps no interpretation was ever more unnatural and servile to an hypothesis than that which the author of Miscellanea Sacra gives to these words, when he explains their being called out of darkness, by their being first made proscylices of the gate from their state of heathen idolatry, and then being brought into the marvellous light of the Christian religion. Miscell. Sacra. Vol. II. p. 85.

h Were
1 Peter

II. 10.

They should abstain from fleshly lusts.

10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy; but are now obtained mercy.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul:

12 Having your conversation honest, fair, and honourable among the Gentiles, particularly in an exemplary discharge of all social and relative duties; that wherein they speak against you as evil doers, in separating from the worship of their gods, and joining yourselves with what they presumptuously call the impious sect of Christians, they being eye witnesses continually of your good works, may not only lay aside those blasphemous reproaches, but exchange them for commendations and praises; and so may glorify God in the day of visitation.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us examine our own hearts seriously and impartially, with respect to those branches of the Christian temper, and those views of the Christian life, which are exhibited in this excellent portion of holy writ. Let us, especially, enquire, in what manner, and in what measure we are possessed of them.

II. 10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy; but are now obtained mercy.

II. 11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul:

II. 12. Having your conversation honest, fair, and honourable among the Gentiles, particularly in an exemplary discharge of all social and relative duties; that wherein they speak against you as evil doers, in separating from the worship of their gods, and joining yourselves with what they presumptuously call the impious sect of Christians, they being eye witnesses continually of your good works, may not only lay aside those blasphemous reproaches, but exchange them for commendations and praises; and so may glorify God in the day of visitation.
Reflections on our dignity as a peculiar people.

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to what purposes we receive the word of God? Is it with the simplicity of babes, or children? do we desire it, as they desire the breast? do we lay aside those evil affections of mind, which would incapacitate us for receiving it in a becoming manner? And does it conduce to our spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace? have we indeed tasted that the Lord is gracious? do we experimentally know, that to the true believer the Redeemer is inestimably precious? have we indeed come to him, as the living stone; and notwithstanding all the neglect and contempt with which he may be treated by many infatuated and miserable men, by wretches who are bent on their own destruction, do we regard, and build on him as our great and only foundation? and do we feel that spiritual life diffused through our souls, which is the genuine consequence of a real and vital union with him?—If these be our happy circumstances, we shall never be ashamed or confounded: for this is that foundation which God hath laid in Zion; and the united efforts of earth and hell to raze or overturn it, will be scattered as chaff and stubble, and by the breath of God be rendered utterly vain and ineffectual.

Are we conscious of our high dignity, as we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people? are our hearts suitably affected with a sense of the Divine goodness, in calling us to be a people, who once were not a people; and us beloved, who were not beloved; in leading us from the deplorable darkness of ignorance and vice, in which our ancestors were involved, into the marvellous light of the gospel; yea, in dissipating those thick clouds of prejudice and error, which once veiled this sacred light from our eyes, that its enlivening beams might break in upon our souls! And are we now shewing forth his praises? are we now offering to him spiritual sacrifice, in humble dependence on Christ, our great High Priest, who continually intercedes for our acceptance with God? Then shall we indeed make our calling and our election sure, and shall ere long appear in his heavenly temple, both as kings and priests unto God to participate of our Redeemer’s glory, to reign with him, and minister to him for ever.

Let us be careful, in the mean time, to remember, that we are strangers and sojourners on earth, as all our fathers were; and that our days in this transitory life are but as a shadow that declineth; and let us learn to regard the appetites of our animal nature, and the interest of this mortal life, with a noble superiority; reflecting for how little a space of time they will solicit our attention. And as for fleshy lusts, let us consider them as making war against the soul; arming ourselves with that resolution and fortitude which is necessary to prevent their gaining a victory over us; which would be, at once, our disgrace and our ruin. There is
is an additional argument to be derived, for a strenuous opposition to them, for our circumstances and situations in the present

Ver. world, where there are so many enemies to our holy religion, 12 who cannot be more effectually silenced than by our good conversation. Let it be, therefore, our principal care to cut off from them the occasion of speaking against us as evil-doers: and by exhibiting a clear and unexceptionable pattern of good works in our daily conversation, let us invite and allure them to improve the day of their visitation, and glorify their Father who is in heaven.

SECT. IV.

In order to adorn the gospel, the Apostle urges upon them the exercise of a due care as to relative duties; and particularly a subjection to civil governors, and to masters, even where their dispositions or injunctions might be harsh and severe; enforcing all by the consideration of that patience with which our Lord Jesus Christ endured his most grievous sufferings. 1 Pet. II. 13, to the end.

1 Peter II. 13.

HAVING been already urging you to set a good example before those who are without, for the further illustration of that general precept, let me exhort you to be particularly careful to be subject to every human constitutions of government, under which you are providentially placed, for the Lord's sake, and that ye may not bring any reflection upon the religion of Jesus; whether it be to the king or emperor, 14 as supreme: Or whether it be to governors and presidents, as sent and commissioned by him from Rome, in order to the punishment of evil-doers but to the praise of them who do well: for this is indeed the true intent of magistracy, and this will be the care of them who rightly understand the nature and honour of their office.

For

a Every human constitution.] The whole course of the apostle reasoning in this place so plainly shows how very important it is to apply this to the injunctions of men in matters of religion, that one cannot but wonder that any rational writer should ever have mentioned the argument which has been drawn from it.

b In order to the punishment of evil-doers.] The Roman governors had the power of life and death in such conquered provinces as those mentioned, chap. I. There is therefore, the exactest propriety in the style, as Dr. Lardner hath observed, Cre-

c The
For so is the will of God in this respect, that by doing good ye should bridle in the ignorance of foolish men, which might be ready to cast reflections upon you. As those who are indeed in the noblest sense free, in consequence of your relation to Christ, and your share in the purchase of his blood, yet not using your liberty as a veil and covering for the practice of wickedness, as the Jews too often do; but behaving continually as becomes the servants of God, as those who are now more than ever his property in consequence of your having been bought with such a price. Honour all men; maintain an esteem for human nature in general, and observe with pleasure whatever is truly honourable in the meanest and most undeserving of mankind. Love the Christian brotherhood with a peculiar and distinguishing affection, suitable to that fraternal relation into which you are brought by your joint adoption into the family of God, and insertion into the body of Christ. Reverence God at all times with the sincerest and profoundest humility; and let a sense of the honour and favour he has conferred upon you increase, rather than diminish that reverence. Honour the king whom God hath set over you, and all the subordinate governors who derive their authority from him; paying obedience to all their just commands, and taking heed that there be nothing rebellious or factious in your behaviour, which would turn to the hurt of society, and bring a reflection upon your holy profession. Ye who are domestic servants and slaves be in subjection to your own masters in all things lawful, with all reverence and submission; and remember to pay this regard not only to the good and the gentle, whose moderation, clemency, and benevolence make your yoke easy; but also the froward and perverse. For this is] graceful indeed, and deserves applause; if any one for the sake of conscience
science towards God, and a desire of performing his duty to him, patiently endures grief and sorrow, though he suffer unjustly: For after all, what glory [is it,] or what you can possibly value yourselves upon, if when you have committed an offence, and are buffeted and corrected for it, ye endure [it?] How can you indeed do otherwise? or if you could, how shameful were it in such a case, to rise against the band of your injured masters? But if when you have done good and yet suffer through their tranny and perverseness, ye endure [it] meekly and patiently, this [is] acceptable and grateful before God; his eye, which always judges of the true beauty of characters aught, is even delighted with such a spectacle, though exhibited in the lowest rank of human life. And I would particularly urge this meek and patient temper upon you; for to this you were called, when you were brought into the profession of the Christian faith; because Christ himself, pure and spotless as he was, suffered not only buffettings and stripes, but deep and mortal wounds, for you, bearing you, an example and copy, that you might with certainty trace, and with constancy and diligence follow his footsteps, and by observing them as lils, he charmed to an imitation, even where it was most difficult and painful. We cannot expect indeed to arrive at a perfect resemblance of it; but let us endeavour to approach as near as possible, even to the amiable character of him, who did no sin, neither was found in his mouth. What being reviled, reviled not again, and suffering the most grievous insults and injuries, threatened not the vengeance which he had it in his power to have executed; but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously, and who in his own most proper time will make the righteous and innocent triumphant over all their enemies. Yet we know this spotless and Holy Person, was as much distinguished by the grievousness of his sufferings, as by the integrity of his character. For

worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

13 For what glory is it, if when ye are buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, then acceptably, with God.

3:2. Who did no sin, neither was found in his mouth; 3:3. Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; 3:4. Who in his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we

Heb. 10:9, 'suffered for you, bearing you, &c. I here prefer the reading of the Alexandrian and other MSS. as most agreeable to the sense and connection.
Reflections on our obligation to relative duties.

For it is He, who himself bore the punishment of our sins in his own body, when he hung in the agonies of crucifixion on the accursed tree; that we being freed from the guilt of our sins, and the misery to which they exposed us, might live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye are healed of evils infinitely greater than the cruelty of the severest masters can bring upon you; according to the well-known phrase of the prophet, (Isaiah liii. 4, 5, 6.) For ye were like sheep going astray, exposed to want and danger, and wandering in the way to destruction; but now ye are by Divine grace recovered, and turned again to him who bears the important and tender character of the great Shepherd and Bishop of your souls, who has graciously received you under his pastoral care, and will maintain that inspection over you which shall be your continued security from returning to those fatal wanderings; and the sense of this may cheer and comfort you under any oppression or injuries to which you may be exposed.

IMPROVEMENT.

As the honour of God is eminently concerned in the regard shewn by his people to their relative duties, let us out of a due respect to that, pay a very careful and diligent attention to them; that the ignorance of foolish men, of those who reproach our good conversation in Christ, may be utterly silenced. Let magistrates especially be reverenced, and in all things lawful, obeyed. And if they desire to secure reverence to their persons and authority, let them remember the end and design of their office, namely, to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise and encouragement to the regular and virtuous. And let us, who rejoice in our liberty, that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, be very careful, that it be yours cruel masters may inflict upon you; that is, it may so delight your minds as to raise you above an undue regard to and concern about such corporal sufferings. (Acts Hist. p. 407.)

b That being freed from sin: παραστασας αποκρασιαν.] That our common translation is agreeable to the frequent signification of the original word, is certain. But so is the version I have chosen, which is approved by Beza, and is preferred and adopted by that judicious and learned critic Erasmus Schimidius.

i By whose stripes, &c.] Mr. Cradock supposes the meaning of this is, as if he had said, The blood of Christ, by which your souls are saved, may be a sufficient balm for those wounds and bruises which your cruel masters may inflict upon you; that is, it may so delight your minds as to raise you above an undue regard to and concern about such corporal sufferings.

k Bishop of your souls.] This is an instance of that duplicity of design which is often to be found in the epistles. The apostle urges these things peculiarly upon servants: yet does it in general language, as well knowing that many of them were the concerns of all Christian readers.
be not abused as a cloak of licentiousness; but as we would manifest our fear and reverence of God, let us remember to 
16 king; yea, to render every man, and every station and character, the esteem and respect which he justly claims; feeling at the same time, the constraints of a peculiar affection to all those who are united to us by the endearing character of our brethren in the Lord.—Should men who fill superior stations and relations in life, not be so regular, and without exception, in their private and 
18 public department as they ought, let us perform our duty, not only to the gentle and obliging, but to the perverse and stroward; remembering our Lord's example, which was set before us that we 
21 might follow his steps. And let his marvellous love in bearing our 
24 sins in his own sacred body on the tree, endear both his example and his precepts to our souls, and constrain us to a holy conformity to him.

Since he who is the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, came on the most gracious and condescending errand of seeking and saving that which was lost, of gathering us into his fold, who were wandering 
25 in the way to perdition; let us shew so much gratitude and wisdom, as not to wander any more; but as we regard our security and our very life, let us keep our Shepherd in our eye, submit ourselves to his pastoral inspection, and cheerfully follow him, in whatsoever path he shall condescend to conduct us.

SECT. V

Christian wives are exalted to submit themselves to their husbands and to obey the command of their mind, rather than of their present, and the same husbands are exalted to treat their wives in a becoming and honourable manner, from a tender sense of those informations to which the sex is particularly liable. 1 Pet. III. 1—7.

1 Pet. III. 1.

I HAVE been discoursing of the duty of a servant; let me now here be consider those of some other relations; and particularly urge it upon you, O ye Christian wives, that ye [be] in subjection to your own husbands, in all things just and lawful; that if any of them be disobedient to the word of the gospel, and have refused to yield to all the other mighty arguments by which Christianity is supported, they may, without attending upon the word, be gained over, to the love and practice of it, by the amiable and 
2 edifying deportment of [their] wives. Particularly,
And should study internal ornaments.

your chaste conversation coupled with fear:

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel:

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God great price.

5 For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

6 Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daugh-

larly, beholding your chaste and spotless conversation, in the fear of God, and with a due reverence to your husbands, for his sake, and not merely on constraint. Be careful to behave in every respect as becomes those whose happiness it is to be acquainted with the great principles of Christianity; and particularly consider, how they should influence your conduct in the adorning of your persons. And as to this, let it not be merely external nor consist in the plaiting and braiding the hair, or in putting on chains of gold about the neck, or ear-rings, or bracelets of gold on the arms, or in wearing of sumptuous and splendid apparel: But let your ornament be of a much more glorious nature; let it consist in a well-regulated temper of mind, in having the hidden man of the heart rightly formed: let it be seated in what is more incorruptible by far than gold, or gems, which, stable as they are, may in time wear away, and are liable to a variety of accidents; I mean, in the beautiful and harmonious disposition of a meek and quiet spirit, silently submitting to the conduct of your husbands, and gently accommodating yourselves to them as far as reasonably you can; which argues an inward wisdom and goodness, that is highly precious in the sight of God himself; who looks with comparative contempt on those little artifices by which the notice of vain men is often attracted. This has long been the prevailing fashion in God's family; for so the holy women also, who hoped in God, and served him in the integrity of their hearts, long since, adorned themselves, being, agreeably to the exhortations I have been giving you, in subjection to their own husbands: As you may particularly recollect in the instance of Sarah, who you know obeyed Abraham her husband, calling him constantly, when she spoke of him, her lord, though she was

\[1\text{ Peter \textit{III. 3}}\]

\[a\] Whose adorning, &c.] Plutarch quotes a passage from Crates, in which he observes, in words greatly resembling these, "That neither gold, nor emeralds, nor pearls give grace and ornament to a woman; but all those things, which clearly express, and set off her gravity, regularity, and modesty." \textit{Praxeit. Cong.} p. 86. But St. Peter's precept is enriched with a variety of much more noble and agreeable thoughts; especially when recommending virtue as the ornament of the hidden man, incorruptible, and precious in the sight of God, the truest judge of beauty and perfection.

\[b\] Let it not be, &c.] This is not to be interpreted as absolutely prohibits the ornaments of dress, but only the making these things our chief concern. Compare \textit{John vi. 27;} with \textit{1 Tim. v. 8.} 

\[e\] Not
Husbands should treat their wives honourably.

was not only of the same family with him, but was herself in so peculiar a manner dignified by God, and had her name changed in token of her being a mother of many nations, and of the veneration in which she was to be held in all succeeding ages. Remember therefore the character of this excellent woman, whom those of you, who are of Jewish extraction, are so fond of calling your mother; and whose daughters ye indeed are, so long as ye do well, and preserving, by such a conduct, your inward tranquility and fortitude, are not meanly terrified, so as to act out of character, with any amazement, or danger, which may meet you in the way of your duty. The want of a becoming and necessary fortitude in this case, would indeed be attended with fatal consequences, and render you unworthy of an honourable a title. And that the duty of the wife may be rendered more easy and agreeable, and ye husbands may have more reason to expect it to be cheerfully performed, let it be your care likewise that ye dwell with your wives according to knowledge, and in such a manner as becomes those who have been instructed in that great system of wisdom and duty, the gospel of Christ. And particularly he careful so to order your affairs, that you may not be prevented from allotting an honourable and comfortable subsistence to the woman; for this is a piece of respect which is due to the tenderness and infertility of her sex, as being upon the whole, the weaker vessel, less able to endure the
difficulties and burdens of life, and subject to more weaknesses and infirmities than men.


e Not terrified with any amazement. Many have apprehended the word amazement as suggested as an argument to persuade them to dwell, that they would be prevented from those alarms and terrors which a perversive and rebellious conduct with a power might bring along with it, and which would indeed prove as noxious to their peace as to their character. But the structure of the Greek sentence makes it evident, that he speaks of the omission on which they were to preserve the characters of daughters of Sarah. Possibly the apostle might have in his mind the instance in which Sarah acted herself the usual character, when through fear and sudden amazement she denied her having laughed. Gen. xxm. 15. And if he had, it is the design of this sentence to intimate, that though in that instance she failed she generally acted in a very different manner, but as the hint is very old, I chance not to express it very strongly in the paraphrase, though I have indeed glanced at it.

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid without amazement.
the fatigue of labour, and subject to various indispositions which peculiarly require succour and accommodation. See therefore that this duty be properly and carefully performed, that your hearts may be endeared to each other; and upon the whole, converse together, as [those who are] joint heirs of the grace of eternal life, and are solicitous, that your behaviour may be correspondent to so exalted a hope, and may be so ordered in every respect that your joint prayers may not be hindered, nor the pleasures of devotion impaired by any secret alienation of heart, but rather be increased by the strictest union and sincerest affection.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us observe with a pleasing attention, how greatly solicitous all the apostles are, not only to establish the doctrines of Christianity, but to inculcate its precepts; particularly those, which refer to the relative duties of life. The comprehensive argument by which St. Peter enforces those of one peculiar relation, may be considered also as enforcing all the rest; I mean, the tendency of our exemplary behaviour, to win over those who are without the word, or are disobedient to it. In this manner let us all plead the cause of our Lord and Master. And this silent, this winning eloquence will, by the Divine blessing, be powerful and effectual.

The veil of modesty is decent in all, and an humble caution, and fear of offending, are to be considered as duties of universal obligation. But if the weaker sex are commanded to aim at a noble superiority to the concerns of this animal life, and to the parade and vanity of dress, it may with greater reason be expected from men who boast of their superior understanding and larger experience. They, not only from Christian humility, but, one would think, even from a manly pride, should be raised above such childish ornaments, in contriving and adjusting which, many who are stiled rational creatures, spend much too large a portion of their precious time, and for the sake of which they neglect the cultivation and embellishment of their intelligent and immortal part, and the securing a happiness that will never have an end: as if glittering in the eyes of our fellow-worms were so desirable a thing, that it were worth while, for the sake of it, to expose ourselves to condemnation from

e That your prayers may not be hindered.] These words seem strongly to intimate the great importance of social prayer; as, when we shortly expect to unite in acts of domestic devotion, a concern not to be notoriously unfit for it, will be a guard upon our general behaviour,
The Apostle exhorts them to be unanimous.

1 Peter III. 8.

1 To conclude this head; my brethren, let all unnecessary exceptions be given; let us be sympathetic, full of brotherly love, and amongst all Christians, compassionate to those that are in distress, and friendly to all those that need your assistance; Not rendering evil for evil, nor reproach for reproach: But as the contrary, rather blessing, even to those that curse you, according to our Lord's precept; knowing this is that purpose, we are called to the profession of Christianity, that you might inherit a blessed immeasurably and eternal; the expectation of which, (considering its infinite importance,) may well keep your spirits calm and composed, whatever be the injury and ill-usage you may meet with from your fellow-men. For this you know is the language of the Psalmist, and it ought never to be forgotten, (Psal. xxxiv. 12, 13.)

2 Peter III. 8.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing, knowing this, that ye have been called to a holy calling, an inheritance that is incorruptible and eternal; the expectation of which, (considering its infinite importance,) may well keep your spirits calm and composed, whatever be the injury and ill-usage you may meet with from your fellow-men. For this you know is the language of the Psalmist, and it ought never to be forgotten, (Psal. xxxiv. 12, 13.)
days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always.

13) What man is he that would love life, in the truest sense of loving and enjoying it, and would see good, prosperous, and happy days? let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit: Let him turn away from the practice of all that is evil, and do good to the utmost extent of his power; let him seek after peace, and resolutely pursue it, even though it may appear to fly away from him. For the favourable eyes of the Lord are continually set upon the righteous, to watch over and protect them; and his ears are ever open to listen to the voice of their supplications; but the face of the Lord, his countenance full of wrath and resentment, is set against them that do evil; insomuch that he will even blot out their names from the book of the living, and cause their remembrance to perish from the earth. These are the things which on the one hand may be hoped for, and on the other, dreaded as the consequence of practising, or neglecting religion.

And now reflect with yourselves, who shall hurt you? who shall have the ability, or inclination to hurt you, if ye imitate him who is supremely good, if you copy after the benevolence of the Divine Being, and of your great Master, whose whole life was so illustrious an example of the most diffusive generosity and goodness to his followers? But if you should suffer on account of righteousness, ye are still happy in spite of all the malicious and outrageous efforts of your enemies to render you miserable: therefore fear not their terror, neither be troubled, as they are, under the various calamities of life, who are, alas! utterly destitute of your support. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; behave towards him continually with that reverence, with that dutiful and obedient regard, which his unrivalled perfections and glories demand; and always prepared, by a ready and familiar acquaintance with the contents and evidences of your holy religion, and by that cheerfulness and

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a He that would love life, &c.] The apostle here urges in favour of the virtues he recommends, that by these the comforts of life will be secured, ver. 10, 11; the favour of God engaged, ver. 12; and the malice of men in a great measure disarmed, ver. 13, &c. And these three arguments are indeed of very great weight and importance.

b Fear not their terror.] Mr. Joseph Mede understands it, as if he had said, Fear not the Jew, nor the Gentile; but sanctify, reverence, and worship the one living God, Dialer, on Luke xi. 2. But I think the interpretation given in the paraphrase is much more natural.

c That
and presence of mind which arises from a consciousness of your practical regard to it, to offer an apology to every one that demands of you an account of the exalted hope which is in you, and which enabled you to maintain such serenity and composure, under those troubles and persecutions to which the profession of Christianity may expose you. And that this noble defence may be rendered the more effectual, let it be made with meekness and reverence, the good fruit of your religious principles appearing in the piety and gentleness of your minds.

Let it be your constant endeavour, that, having a good conscience, you be always bold and courageous in the defence of that system of religion which gives to such a conscience so mighty and stable a support; that wherein they, who bitterly oppose your religion, speak against you as evil-doers, and lay to your charge crimes of the most detestable nature, they may be ashamed; they, I say, who reside your good, indifferent, and useful conversation in the profession of that religion which brings you into such an intimate relation to Christ. For it is certainly better to suffer, if it be the will of God, that you should suffer, for doing good, than for doing evil; the testimony of a good conscience, and the sense of the Divine favour, affording the noblest supports in the former case; whereas in the latter, the severest torments that can be endured, are those which the guilty mind inflicts upon itself: to which we may add, that while we suffer for the truth, we have the pleasure of reflecting, that we follow our blessed Redeemer; and this is another most powerful source of consolation, of which I shall presently have occasion to discourse more particularly and largely.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

How very astonishing, and lamentable is it, that when the way to happiness is so plainly delineated, so few should find it! always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

10 Having a good conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

11 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.

The Ten. they speak against you, they may be ashamed; I should the remarkably illustrated by the story of that exalted ho\,

The Christians; by which it plainly appears that he was ashamed of what he had required, when he considered how indifferent their behaviour was.
Reflections on our obligations to sincerity and candour.

it! What man is there, who does not desire life, and love many days, in which he may see good? Yet how few tongues are kept from evil, how few lips from speaking guile? How few decline from evil, Ver. 10 and do good! How few seek peace, and pursue it! On the contrary, how much low cunning and artifice, and what discords and contention reign among mankind! And they often issue in those bloody wars and fightings, which arise from those lusts that war in our members. How detestable, and how miserable, do these perverse and ungovernable passions render us! How sadly do they prevent the ascent of our prayers to God, and the descent of his mercies upon us! Mercies, which he is ever ready to impart to those who are meet and disposed to receive them.

There is notwithstanding a little remnant, who are righteous before him; and of them his gracious eye is continually directed for their good; to their cry, yea to the soft whispers of their supplications, his ears are ever open. Honoured and happy above all the children of men are they who have the favour and the attention of the great Sovereign of the universe. Who will be able to hurt or injure them, should they have malignity enough to wish and attempt it? And as this loving-kindness of the Lord is thus productive of security and happiness to his people, let it engage us to be followers and imitators of him, who is supremely good. We may then face all the menaces of a frowning world with an holy intrepidity, and sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts, making him our fear, and our dread, we need not have any terrible apprehensions of what men or devils can do unto us. Yea, we shall in that case, not only have nothing to fear, but every thing to hope, which can conduce to our real and everlasting felicity. Encouraged by these important considerations, let it be our care in the fear of God, to study and endeavour clearly to understand the foundations of our religion, and of our glorious hope, that we may be able to defend it against every attack, however formidable, and to give an account of our hope to all who shall demand it, in sweet harmony and complacency of soul, undisturbed with the disquietude, and untainted with the example, of those who render evil for evil, and railing for railing. On the contrary, let us greatly triumph over all ill usage, by repaying it with good; and may a sense of that important blessing, which by the gospel we are called to inherit, diffuse that pleasure and happiness, through our own souls, which may carry them above the resentment of the little injuries we receive from the unkindness of men, and dispose us to every genuine expression of that unlimited benevolence, which should fill and expand the hearts of
of those who are thus feasted with the Divinest hopes and con-
solations.

SECT. VII.

The Apostle Peter urges on the Christian converts the atonement, resurrection, and exaltation of their Divine Saviour, the obligation of their baptismal covenant, and the awful solemnity of the last judgment, to engage them to a life of Christian mortification and holiness, whatever opposition they might be called to en-

1 Peter III. 18.

I HAVE already observed, that if it be the will of God you should suffer, it is better it should be for doing well than for doing evil; and it is very evidently so, because hereby we are made conformable to Christ our Head and Leader, whom it cannot but be our glory and happiness to resemble; for he also once suffered for sin, he, who was so eminently, and perfectly the just, suffered for the unjust, for our benefit, and in our stead, that he might introduce us to God; and fix us in a state of acceptance and favourable intercourses with him, being indeed put to death in the flesh, by those enemies whom God permitted for a while to triumph over him; but quickened by the Spirit of God, which soon re-animated his body, and raised it to an immortal life; Even that Spirit, by the inspiration of which granted to his faithful servant Noah, going forth, as it were in that progress in which he employed him, he preached to those notorious sinners, who for their disobedience, have since experienced the just severity of the Divine vengeance, and are now in the condition of separate spirits, reserved, as it were, in prison,
20 Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

others of those in hell, whom he delivered, to grace his triumph. See Dr. More's Theolog. Works, p. 18. Bishop Pearson on the Creed, p. 228. Lord Barrington understands it of Noah's preaching to his own family, shut up with him in the ark, while Dr. Whitby and Burnet understand it of those who were in the darkness of heathen ignorance. Burnet's four Disc. p. 68, 69. Compare Limborch's Theol. 3. viii. 27, 28. Upon the whole, I think the sense given in the paraphrase is most easy; and next to that, know none more probable than that of Mr. Cradock, who explains it of Christ's preaching, while he was on earth, to those who were now spirits in prison; which might engage them to a holy caution, lest they also should trifle with the means of salvation which they enjoyed, and perish as the former did. Compare Mat. v. 25; Rev. xx. 7.

d Carried safely through the water: δια την κατακολουθησιν της θεωρησεως. Raphelius abundantly justifies this sense of the particle διε, when used with a genitive case. See Annal. ex. Xenoph. in loc.

e The antitype to which.] That is, the thing which corresponds, not with the water, but with the ark.

f Baptism, not the putting away the pollution of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience.] It is well known the Jews laid a great stress upon their lustrations. The apostle therefore very properly cautions them against such foolish dependencies. A courageous readiness in the performance of their whole duty, and even in suffering persecution for the sake of truth, was absolutely necessary, in order to maintain that good conscience, to which in their baptism they professed such a regard, and to the exercise of which they so solemnly engaged themselves. Archbishop Leighton has observed in this place, that the word ἔκτησις, here used, is a judicial word, and signifies interrogations used in the law for a trial, or executing a process, which is much preferable to the translation Dr. Barrow gives us, namely, the free and sincere stipulation. Barrow's Works, Vol. I. p. 335. It is a credible fact, supported by Cyprian, and other ancient writers, that the catechumen had certain interrogations put to him at baptism, concerning his faith in Christ, and his renunciation of Satan, and all the works of darkness, and the vanity of the world; and it is very probable the apostle may refer to that custom.

 SECTION IV.
1 Peter III. 20.
and spoken in such a language as he only is capable of hearing and understanding; and when this likewise is found, then we attain salvation, by that great event in which at baptism we declare ourselves believers: I mean the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead; 22 Who is now set down at the right-hand of God, being gone into heaven, there to take possession of the glory prepared for him, where he reigns supreme over all worlds, all the angels, and authorities and powers, which are there enthroned, being made subject to him, and humbly bowing before his superior dignity and authority.

IV. 1. As Christ therefore has suffered for us in the flesh such extreme and amazing sufferings as are not to be described, and even when their weight lay heaviest upon him, even in the agony of death, persisted in his generous design to accomplish all that was needful for our redemption and salvation; I beseech you, arm yourselves likewise with the same fortitude and resolution of mind in his cause, whatever extremities you may be called out to endure. And let this engage you, on the like principles to mortify all your irregular desires, and to die to sin; for he who hath, in conformity to our Lord Jesus Christ, suffered this crucifixion in the flesh, of which I now speak, he has ceased from the habitual practice of all sin whatsoever, and considers himself as absolutely and finally dead to it,

2 so as never to return to it any more! And no longer to be: [his] remaining time in the flesh whether it be shorter or longer, according to the lusts of men, those lusts by which they are too frequently and generally governed; but according to the will of God in a holy conformity and obedience to the Divine precepts, how contrary soever they are to his own carnal and sensual inclinations, or to his worldly interests. For surely the time of life that is past [may] appear to

23 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right-hand of God; angels, and authorities and powers, being made subject unto him.

IV. 1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin;

2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3 For the time past of our life may suffice

8 Being made partakers of Christ, &c.] When the apostle speaks of the resurrection and glory of Christ, he means not only to represent him as the object of our expectation, but to interest us, that if we remember him in his sufferings, we may hope to partake with him in his glory.

9 He was made in the flesh, hath suffered from one, &c.] It is plain, that suffering in the flesh, cannot signify suffering death; because the apostle in the very next verse mentions the remaining part of life as not to be spent in the lusts of the flesh. The sense, to be sure, is something obscure: and I have sometimes doubted whether it may not mean, that the consciousness of having endured sufferings for Christ, greatly confirms our motives to a good life.

2 Unmeaning
We should live according to God in the spirit.

We should live according to God in the spirit.

fice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banqueting, and abominable idolatries:

4 Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

6 For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be to [be] sufficient, and more than sufficient for us, to have forgotten the great end for which life was given, and to have wrought the will of the Gentiles; following those pleasures and pursuits to which the heathens that know not God, are addicted; when ye walked in all the variety of lasciviousness, inordinate desires, excess of wine, banqueting, drunkenness, and unlawful detestable idolatries: In respect to which abominable course of life, they who were once your partners in such enormities, now think it strange that you run not with them, as ye once did, into the same profusion of the most profligate riot, speaking evil of you, wretched creatures as they are. Who, though forgetful of the true honour and happiness of the human nature, shall nevertheless give an account of all this disorder and abuse, to him who is ready in a little time to appear, that he may judge the living and the dead: For it was to this purpose that the gospel was preached also to the dissolute Gentiles, who might truly be said to be dead in trespasses and sins, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh; that they might be brought to such a state of life, as their carnal neighbours will look upon as a kind of condemnation and death;

1 Unlawful idolatries.] Considering how very averse the Jews were, in the apostle's times, to idolatry, I cannot think in this passage he hath a respect to them, and therefore I look upon this as one argument among many, which might be urged, to prove that this epistle was written to Gentile, as well as Jewish Christians.

k Think it strange: ἐκφόβοισαν.] Kopileius (Annot, ex Polyb. in loc.) and others have observed that the original word is very emphatical, and expresses a perfect amazement and consternation of mind.—The same word is used below at the 12th verse.

The same word is used below at the 12th verse.

m That they might be judged, &c.] This interpretation, which is preferred by Brennius and Dr. Whitby, appeared to me, on a full examination, most probable; though the text must be confessed to be extremely difficult. Some have thought the apostle refers to those who then suffered martyrdom for Christianity; as if he had said, 'It was gospel indeed, good tidings, even to those who died for it; for though men condemned their bodies, yet the salvation of their souls, which is of infinitely greater importance, has been secured by it.' Dr. Whitby renders the latter clause, 'That they might condemn their former life, and live a better.' But this does not preserve the force of ἐκφόβοισαν, nor the opposition between ἐκφοβοσαν and ἔφοβος ἐν αὐτοῖς. Sir N. Knatchbull supposes it to be understood before κόλαξ, and renders it, 'That they who are according to men in the flesh, that is, live a sensual life, may be condemned; and they who live according to God in the spirit, (that is, a holy life) may live.' No interpretation seems more singular than that of Mr. Saurin; who seems to consider it as referring to chap. iii. 19. and understands it of the sinners of the old world, and founds upon this text some hopes of the salvation of some of them; as if the meaning were, God sent his message to them with a kind design, that though their bodies perished, their souls might be saved; and he fancies that for this reason the flood came gradually upon them. Saur. Diss. Vol. I. p. 112. If that interpretation be preferred, which refers it to those actually dead, it will be, (as Mr. Baxter observes,) a proof of the existence of spirits in a separate state. The chief objection against the sense I have chosen, is, that it changes the signification of the word dead so soon.
Reflections on the benefits we receive by Christ's death.

Let our devoutest meditations frequently dwell on the benefits we receive by the death of Christ, and the wonderful manner in which they are conveyed. The important end, for which he suffered, the just for the unjust, was to introduce us into the presence and favour of God: let us rejoice, that we are brought nigh to the Infinite Majesty of heaven, the indefectible source of perfection and blessedness! and always live as in a state of nearness and intimacy with him; dreading the most distant approach to that disobedience to the heavenly message, which even after the patient of God waited on them, proved fatal to the sinful inhabitants of the old world. That patience indeed waits upon us; but as their time was limited, so is ours.—For ever blessed be the Father of mercies, that by Christ he hath made provision for our salvation, as he did of old for Noah and his family, by commanding him to prepare an ark. But then let us remember, the baptism that saves, is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God. If we have this inward witness, let the resurrection of Christ, and his exaltation to supreme glory at the right hand of the Father, encourage our sublimest hopes; and let us triumph in him as our all-sufficient Saviour, who, though he were once crucified, now sits on the throne of his glory, principalities and powers being made subject to him.

Let the recollection of his bitter sufferings excite our zeal and courage in his sacred cause, and arm us with a conformity of sentiments and resolutions, to his own: that we may cease from sin; that we may spend the residue of our lives, not in following the lusts of the flesh, but in fulfilling, in all respects, the will of our God. Let us often reflect, that, perhaps, we were long insensible of his sacred authority, and in many instances were the sport of irregular appetites and passions: let the past part of our lives suffice, and be deemed more than sufficient, to be spent in this inglorious and detestable slavery. By mortification let us assert our liberty. And though others wonder at our abstinence, severity, and

be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.
and self-denial, let us not envy that excess of riot into which, with unbridled eagerness, they allow themselves to run. But seriously considering the awful account they must render, (though alas! so ill prepared for it,) to the great Judge of quick and dead; let us readily choose, and cheerfully submit to the severest mortification which God may require of us. Let us rather embrace a life which infidels would esteem death, than expose our immortal souls to the judgment of God, to his condemnation, from which there lies no appeal, and which will consign over impenitent sinners to an execution infinitely dreadful, beyond their utmost fears and apprehensions.

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle exhorts the Christian converts to watchfulness and to fidelity, that they might rightly improve their several talents, and discharge the duties of their respective stations in the church; and to courage and fortitude amidst their discouragements and persecutions; and by way of inference from the trials to which good men were exposed, he observes that a tremendous inevitable destruction will overwhelm the impenitent and unbelieving.—1 Pet. IV. 7—19.

I Peter IV. 7.

1 Peter IV. 7.

HOW strongly are vain and sinful men attached to the amusements and interests of this mortal life, and to the gratification of their lusts! But the important end of all things is at hand, when this earthly globe, and all things which are therein, shall be burnt up, when the eternal state of all its inhabitants shall be determined, and immutable happiness, or misery, shall be their final portion. Be sober therefore, and watch against all occasions of intemperance and of impurity, and endeavour to preserve your souls in so Divine a posture, as that you may be habitually qualified for joining in prayer and those other exercises of devotion, which have such

a The end of all things, &c.] I cannot think this signifies the destruction of Jerusalem; an event, in which most of those to whom the apostle wrote, were comparatively but little concerned. It must undoubtedly signify either death, which may be considered as the end of the whole world to every particular person; or the consummation of all things, which may be said to be at hand, in the sense in which our Lord, long after the destruction of Jerusalem, says to the church, “Behold I come quickly.” Rev. xxii. 7, 10.

b Love
They should perform the duties of their stations.

1 Peter iv. 8.

such an influence on our whole conduct. And above all things be careful to remember the distinguishing badge of your religion, having and maintaining fervent love towards one another; which as it will be very comfortable and honourable to yourselves, will be very pleasing and acceptable to God; for on the whole, as the wise man assures us, love will cover a multitude of sins; it will cause us to excuse them in others, and it will entitle us through Divine mercy to the expectation of forgiveness for numberless slips and failings. Be hospitable to each other, without grudging the expense which may attend the exercise of a virtue which in present circumstances is so important and necessary. As every one has received the free gift of God exercise it towards each other, as becomes those who know they are not themselves proprietors, but merely stewards, of what they possess, and who desire to approve themselves good stewards of the manifold grace of God, with which they have the honour to be intrusted. If any one speak in public assemblies, dis course on the great topics of the gospel, let him handle the subject with seriousness and reverence, and as becomes one who knows that sublime dispensation contains no discoveries of doctrine or duty, but what are indeed the oracles of God. If any one minister in any office of kindness to others, and particularly in the work of a deacon, let it be according to the utmost ability which God supplies; that God may in all things be glorified by Jesus Christ, who has called us to his service, and to the hope of enjoying him for ever; to whom, as our great Redeemer and Saviour, be glory and dominion ascribed for ever and ever. Amen.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God: if any minister, let him do it as of the ability which God hath given; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Beloved, think it strange concerning the

8

12 And now, my beloved brethren, let me seriously caution you, that you be not surprised at

such an influence on our whole conduct. And above all things be careful to remember the distinguishing badge of your religion, having and maintaining fervent love towards one another; which as it will be very comfortable and honourable to yourselves, will be very pleasing and acceptable to God; for on the whole, as the wise man assures us, love will cover a multitude of sins; it will cause us to excuse them in others, and it will entitle us through Divine mercy to the expectation of forgiveness for numberless slips and failings. Be hospitable to each other, without grudging the expense which may attend the exercise of a virtue which in present circumstances is so important and necessary. As every one has received the free gift of God exercise it towards each other, as becomes those who know they are not themselves proprietors, but merely stewards, of what they possess, and who desire to approve themselves good stewards of the manifold grace of God, with which they have the honour to be intrusted. If any one speak in public assemblies, dis course on the great topics of the gospel, let him handle the subject with seriousness and reverence, and as becomes one who knows that sublime dispensation contains no discoveries of doctrine or duty, but what are indeed the oracles of God. If any one minister in any office of kindness to others, and particularly in the work of a deacon, let it be according to the utmost ability which God supplies; that God may in all things be glorified by Jesus Christ, who has called us to his service, and to the hope of enjoying him for ever; to whom, as our great Redeemer and Saviour, be glory and dominion ascribed for ever and ever. Amen.

12 Beloved, think it strange concerning the

sprin from an inward principle of love to God, and faith in Christ, with that humble regard to his atonement and righteousness, which every true Christian will have, it cheerfully encourages our hopes of finding many merciful allowances from God in our final account with him, which those who are destitute of this Divine principle, in which so much of the image of God consists, must never expect, whatever faith or integrity they may pretend to. Compare Mat. vii. 1, 2; James ii. 13.

b Learn to open your hearts, for this is a remarkable instance of the interpretation given of the parallel text, James v. 11. For the further illustration of it, compare Eccles. vi. 17; Psalm xvi. 27; Prov. xvi. 11; Dan. iv. 27. It would be most unwise to imagine, that as of liberty, to the poor can procure the pardon of sin, while men continue in a course of ungodliness and unbelief; for by this the whole gospel would be subverted. But where soul of charity to the souls and bodies of men,
the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters.

c The fiery trial: πυρασία.] This is a metaphor, borrowed from chemical operations, and very emphatically expresses the nature of those trials, in the furnace of affliction, which were intended to refine their grace, and separate all the dross and alloy from the pure gold.

d When his glory shall be revealed.] There is no occasion with Mr. Fleming to interpret this of the glory of the Shekinah, appearing at the millenium, to excite the exceeding joy of the saints after the first resurrection. From Christ. Vol. III. p. 398. It probably refers to the great and glorious day of Christ's second appearance, which is so often spoken of as the grand jubilee of Christians, though not inconsistent with great joy to be received by the spirit of every good man, immediately on its entrance into the intermediate state.

e Spirit of glory and of God.] The Vulgate reading is, "The spirit of honour, and of glory, and Divine power, even the spirit of God, rests upon you." But I take the meaning to be in general, you shall have the Spirit of God in a very glorious manner to support you in proportion to the trials you are called out to; and this will spread a glory around you, even though you may be treated in the most infamous manner, as the vilest of malefactors, which we know many of the primitive Christians were.

1 As over-busy in the affairs of others.] Add, says the learned Dr. Lardner, cannot here signify merely a prying into the concerns of private families; which could not be ranked with such crimes as are here mentioned, nor expose a man to the punishment of the civil magistrate; but it may signify a man that affects to inspect or direct the affairs of others; perhaps that aspires to public authority, a temper which appeared much amongst the Jews, particularly at Alexandria, and Cæsarea, and which would naturally give great offence to the Romans, and
rule and determine them in a manner not suit-
ing your station in life; in consequence of which you may bring any degree of ill-will upon yourselves. But if it please Providence to appoint, that any of you should [suffer] as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, though the punishment, like that inflicted upon his Divine Master himself, should be ever so infamous; but rather let him glorify God in this respect, despising the shame, as well as resolutely enduring it the agony that may attend it; Because the time [is coming], and just at hand, when judging is to begin at the house of God; for he hath determined to exercise his own people with very severe trials, giving them up for a while to the influence of their enemies; that by this means their characters may be approved, and those who are hypocrites, may be separated from those who are sincere in their christian profession; and if [it begin] first with us, what [shall be] the end of them, who are obstantially and presumptuously disobedient to the gospel of God, and who not only reject it, but persecute its professors, and en-
and makes them very dangerous enemies. If therefore any thing of this kind might appear among Christians, it would be of particular bad consequence. In the meantime, Lord, God, Vol. I. p. 286. I have paraphrased the words so as to suggest this, yet so as to take in the most that could be imagined to be intended.

Time is coming when judgment is to begin at the house of God. As if he had said, "Do not think this a matter of unconceived speculation. No, the time fore-
told by Christ (John xvi. 2, 3.) is coming. I could not deny there is an allusion to that passage in Mark ix. 9, where it is said the sun was to be made to begin at the marriage; but this cannot be interpreted as of the Temple of Jerusalem, because it appears in connection with, that is, Christ's, immediately after. So that Graduates' criticism upon the word ἑαυτῷ in the latter clause of the verse, as answering to οὐδὲν, Dan. ix. 5. and 17. in Matt. xxiv. 6. seems quite foreign to the purpose.

If the righteous are to be saved with difficulty. The apostle seems to quote Prov. v. 31. according to the seventy, which is more, though not exactly in word, agree with the Hebrew. He cannot intend deliverance from the Roman invasions, in which so very few of those Christians were concerned; nor merely deliverance from any of their persecutors, because he takes it for granted, that in this sense the righteous would not be saved, though with difficulty; whereas multitudes fell by persecution, even of these Christians in Rhetra, as appears by Pliny's letter. It is necessary therefore to understand it more generally of the difficulty with which good men get to heaven, through this dangerous, and ensnaring world. Compare Acts xv. 18; xxvii. 7, 8, 16, where μετείχερα with difficulty; in which sense it is also used by Paul. (See Wolff's Prak. Patr., Vol. V. p. 161.)—The turn of the latter clause of the verse in the original, which I have endeavoured to preserve, is very lively; it seems as if the apostle were solicitous to lead the reader to consider, when he should hide his head; since wherever he was, he would find God immediately appearing against him as an irresistible enemy. Thus he might say by way of warning to persecutors, and to encourage Christians to hope that God would vindicate their cause, and preserve them from turning aside to crooked paths. And this the connection with the following verses favours.
Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Let us continually bear in mind the approaching end of all things; and then we shall neither omit the exercises of devotion, nor grow supine and careless in the discharge of them. Then shall we be engaged through a sense of our need of the Divine clemency and indulgence, to exercise forbearance and candour, and maintain the most fervent charity to all without distinction; and we shall then be more disposed to consider ourselves as stewards, and as such, be concerned to behave with all good fidelity, both in the use and enjoyment of our possessions, and in the exercise of those gifts and endowments with which God hath been pleased to entrust us. To this they should especially attend, who are called to speak in God's name; they should consider, that his oracles are committed to them; and though they cannot pretend, that the instructions they deliver from thence, are revealed to and impressed upon their minds by immediate inspiration, yet a reflection on the general nature of the glorious gospel, and on its important and everlasting consequences, may well dispose and form them to an humble awe and reverence in their manner of handling and dispensing it; and may remind them, that on the whole, in every ministration of the word of life, in every distribution of charity, and office of kindness, the main end to be pursued is, That God may be glorified.

If, in the cause of Christ, Providence shall call us out to en-


counter
counter the severest persecutions, and even fiery trials, let us not be astonished, as if some strange thing had happened to us; let Ver. us not be discouraged, nor think ourselves hardly dealt with in such Divine appointments; remembering that in this case we are only 13 partakers in the sufferings of Christ, that we only tread in the same rough and thorny path in which he walked before us; and that in due time, if we continue faithful to him, we shall also be made partakers of his glory. In the mean while, the Spirit of God and of glory will rest upon us; only let us be jealous of his honour with a godly 15, 16 jealousy, and be greatly concerned, that our sins and indiscretions may not throw a blinish on a profession which derives its appellation from him. Glorious are the privileges indeed which belong to the disciples of Christ; but they, notwithstanding, draw very 17 awful consequences after them. For judgment begins at the house of God, and even his dearest children are exercised with trials of their fidelity and patience. Let us prepare for them before they come, that when they do come we may bear them honourably, committing the keeping of our souls to him, as to a faithful Creator, in well-doing. But let the wicked and the ungodly meditate terror; for the vengeance of God will find them out; the great day of wrath will come: and who can be able to stand? May divine grace reclaim those who are now exposed to so terrible a condemnation; lest they know by experience, what no words can describe, no thought conceive, the end of those who obey not the gospel of God.

Sect. IX.

The Apostle concludes this epistle with particular cautions to ministers and private Christians; urging on the former humility, diligence, and watchfulness, and exhorting the latter to a steadfast and faithful discharge of their several duties, animated by this consideration, that the God of all grace had called them to his eternal glory, and would, after they had suffered a while, make them perfect, according to his earnest prayer for them. 1 Pet. V. 1, to the end.

1 Peter V. 1.

WOULD now in the most affectionate manner address myself to those who are the elders among you, or any other Christian societies into whose hands this epistle may come; and I would exhort them with the greater warmth and freedom, [as I also am] an elder with them, and an eye-witness of the sufferings of Christ, and as I also hope, through Divine grace, that I shall be

1 Peter V. 1.

THE elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ,
Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof; not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.

a Discharge the episcopal office.] This idea is so plainly suggested by the word ἐπισκόποις, that I thought it matter of duty, to translate it as I have done; that every reader might observe, what all candid people seem to confess, that those who are stiled bishops, from their having the oversight of others, and also presbyters or elders, are spoken of as the same persons. Compare ver. 1. And I hope the time will come, when good men will join their efforts to remove that very hard imposition, by which the ministers of some churches are obliged, in order to their entering into the ministry, to declare, not only that they are different orders, but that it is evident unto all men diligently reading the holy scripture, that they are so.

b Not by constraint.] It is true, that in the primitive church some were almost against their will forced into the episcopal office by dint of importunity. And one would hope, it was not an affected modesty with which they declined the office, especially as it was then attended with no temporal emoluments; but exposed them to distinguished labours and sufferings. It is difficult to see how any could in the strictest sense be constrained; but perhaps the apostle saw some good men too unwilling to accept the office, when the churches chose them to it, and when inspired teachers urged it upon them. And though little gain could have been made of it, and the temptation to lord it over God's heritage was not so great, as when ecclesiastical persons were invested with civil power (in which most of the honour and influence of their ecclesiastical character, as such, has been generally bought) yet foreseeing what would happen in the church, and observing perhaps some discoveries of such a temper beginning to prevail, the caution was exceedingly just, proper and important. Compare Luke x. 2, and the note there.

c Dishonourable gain.] See the note on 1 Tim. iii. 3.

d Those who fall to your lot.] The word God's is not in the original. I think therefore it is with abundant reason that the learned Mr. Boysc refers this to their not domineering over the particular congregations, or bishoprics, which were by Providence committed to their care; alluding to the division of Canaan by lots; Boysc's Serm. Vol. ii. p. 413. An interpretation much preferable to Dr. Whitby's who explains it of the possessions of the church. (Compare Col. i. 12, note k.) And yet after proposing this interpretation at large, he admits at the close of his note, that what is here stiled πλῆθος, being in the same sentence expressed by ἰδία, the flock of God, it seems to establish the common interpretation. What the learned Mr. Dodwell had offered in support of the sense Dr. Whitby mentions, is particularly considered and refuted, by Woffus, Cura Philolog. Vol i. p. 163.
such an entire freedom from the very appearance either of avarice or ambition, that your examples may be rendered worthy the imitation of the flock, and your conduct as instructive as any of your cautions and precepts can be: And if this be indeed your character and behaviour; you will render up your accounts hereafter with joy; for when he, who does you the honour to acknowledge himself the chief Shepherd of the flock, shall appear, to take the final survey of it, and examine into the conduct of those to whom he had partly committed it, you shall be most magnificently and nobly rewarded, and receive an unfading crown of glory, a crown which shall bloom in immortal beauty and vigour, when all the transitory glories of this world are withered like a fading flower.

But it is proper that I should likewise address some exhortations to others besides ministers; and particularly to you, O ye younger persons; and that I should urge you to be in subjection to those [superior] more advanced in age, and to pay a decent respect to their hoary hairs. You let all [of you] be subject to one another, endeavouring, by mutual condescension, to make each other as easy and happy as possible; and for this purpose be clothed with untaught humility; for God opposes himself to the proud, and draws up all his terrors, as it were, in battle array against him; but grace and favour to the humble soul. Humble yourselves therefore with that just reverence under the mighty hand of God; (under all the dispensations of Divine Providence, even though wicked men should be made the instruments of effecting its purposes,) that so he may exalt you in due time; for in his own most proper and well-chosen season, he will certainly raise you up, though for the present you may seem to be depressed to the lowest condition. In the mean while, whatever uncertainties and dangers may attend you, endeavour to live as easy as possible; casting all your anxious care, and all those burdens that might otherwise

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: you, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.
They should resist their adversary, the devil.

8 Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

9 Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, established, strengthened, settle you.

Be watchful.] St. Peter might well give such a caution as this, having himself received such particular and express warning from Christ his Master, (Luke xxii. 31, &c.) and so shamefully fallen immediately after, for want of the watchfulness he here recommends.

Walking about.] I chose to express myself with this exactness, that the force of its signification in this similitude might be observed. The word walking expresses more than devouring, even swallowing up; and so represents the indefatigable rage of the enemy of our salvation, with great advantage.

Make you perfect.] If any one please to peruse Archbishop Leighton's excellent discourse on these words, he will have a fine specimen of his commentary on this epistle; which I esteem to be among the most instructive and useful books our language affords, and cannot but consider it as a great honour conferred upon me by Providence, to have been an instrument of presenting it to the world in so correct a form; as well as of rescuing many other instructive
in every good disposition; in whatever improvements you are enabled to make, may he confirm, strengthen, and establish [you] upon a firm and unshaken foundation. To him, therefore, who of all beings is infinitely most worthy of it, [he] glory and dominion ascribed for ever and ever. Amen. I have written briefly unto you by the bearer Silvanus, in whom I place great confidence, as I suppose and conclude him to be a sincere Christian and faithful brother: one who hath the interest of Christ at heart, and on whose fidelity we may rely; and I send it, exhorting and testifying with the greater solemnity that this is the true grace of God wherein ye have hitherto stood, and urging it therefore upon you, that you steadily adhere to it in the midst of all your difficulties and persecutions.

The church, which is here in Babylon, chosen with [you] to partake of the privileges of the gospel, saluteth you; and [to doth] Marcus, whom I may call my son, as being my convert and believing to me with all filial tenderness and respect. Salute one another with a kiss of pure and unfeigned love in your Christian assemblies; and may grace and peace, and the truest happiness, ever [be] with you all who are in Christ Jesus, who is the corner-stone which God hath laid in Sion, and the great foundation of all our eternal hopes. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 This apostolic charge should be received with the profoundest regard and submission, by all those who profess to reverence the authority of Christ, who thus, by the mouth of his servants, be-

instructive pieces of that excellent and amiable author from the solution in which they had so long been buried.

k Silvanus, or I suppose, a faithful brother. Whether this was the same, or Silvanus, mentioned several times in the Acts as the companion of St. Paul, and by St. Paul himself, 2 Cor. 11: 1; 1 Thess. 1: 11; 2 Thess. 1: 1, we cannot certainly say. The phrase, as I suppose, does not seem to imply any doubt. Compare Rom. 16: 21, and ver. 28, in the original.

k As Barnabas, hence Bishop Cumberland and Mr. Clarke agree, that probably St. Peter wrote from the neighbourhood of Babylon, and found many Jews remaining there even since the Babylonish captivity, among whom he had preached the gospel with considerable success.

11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you (as I suppose) I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

13 The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

14 Great ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.
bespeaks their attention; and it should both regulate their con-
duct, and animate and exalt their hopes. Let us therefore at-
tend to this venerable elder, this witness of the sufferings of Christ, who on the mount of transfiguration had been favoured with an illustrious representation of that glory, wherein our Lord shall be hereafter revealed, and with which he will then invest all those, who, in his cause, have approved themselves faithful until death. Let ministers, especially, ever maintain a most affectionate and respectful regard for the flock of God, and take the oversight thereof with a ready and generous mind, and be examples to it, in the mild and condescending temper of their common Master, as well as in all other graces and virtues. It is indeed possible, they may pursue such a conduct as this, and meet with very little esteem or re-
compence, yea, with injurious and unworthy treatment, from their fellow-men. But a crown of glory, a royal diadem, incor-
ruptible and immortal, will be hereafter conferred on them by
their exalted Saviour, in the day of his triumphant appearance; and this crown, in itself so illustrious, will be a mark of still more distinguished honour, as it will be placed on their victorious heads in a season of such solemnity, in the view of the whole assembled world, and of the innumerable company of angels. — But in the mean time, while we are continued in so lowly a condition in the present world, let us all cultivate humility of mind, being clothed with that amiable virtue, which is certainly the most graceful ornament of our nature; an ornament of singular value in the eye of that God, whose approbation is the surest mark and criterion of excellence and honour. And that we may accordingly entertain the more humble and lowly conceptions of our-
selves, and the more grand and venerable ideas of the almighty Creator, Preserver, and Disposer of all things, let us often and seriously reflect upon his mighty hand; how gloriously it hath been displayed in the infinite variety of the works of nature, in the continual agency and operation of Providence, and in the wonderful scheme of redemption and salvation; how powerful and resist-
less it is in the execution of all its works; and yet how graciously its awful power is tempered and moderated, and to what kind and merciful purposes it hath been already exerted, and still is, in behalf of such degenerate and unworthy creatures as ourselves. By these considerations, let us be disposed to bow to every Divine dis-
pensation with all resignation and submission; fixing our depend-
ence upon a power so wisely and graciously exerted; rejoicing that we are permitted to cast our cares on God, and abhorring both the ingratitude and folly of fainting and sinking under our burdens, when we are favoured with the permission of relying on him; indeed, with a paternal command, as well as permission; which accordingly
Accordingly requires our obedience in point of duty, as well as of gratitude and honour.

Verse. Our great adversary the devil is still continually prowling round the fold of Christ; and therefore it behoves us to be constantly on our guard. And if we would escape both his wiles and his power, let us be especially careful, that neither our security, nor intemperance, give him an advantage over us: but, on the contrary, as it is nothing less than our utter and eternal destruction he aims at let us strenuously resist him, in the exercise of a steady faith, and with a firm resolution. Let us also remember, that trials and affections have been the lot of all the people of God in all generations; and that the God of all grace is able, if it seem good to his infinite wisdom, to shorten and contract the time of our sufferings and by means of them whilst they last, to strengthen and perfect our immortal souls. Let us, therefore, at the close of all, continue to stand fast in what is so authentically testified to be the true grace of God; and real substantial peace will be with us, will be our everlasting portion, in Christ Jesus. Amen.
THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR, A PARAPHRASE

ON THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE PETER.

WITH CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

THERE were some in the primitive church, who called in question the genuineness and authority of this epistle, though it expressly claims St. Peter for its author, and contains very strong internal characters of its authenticity. But this being no proper or convenient place to enter largely into the argument, if any are desirous to see it truly and accurately represented, as far as it depends upon the testimonies of the Christian fathers they may consult the second part of Dr. Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel-History. As to the internal evidence, there are some general observations, which having made already in the Introduction to the epistle of James, I think it unnecessary to repeat, though they are very applicable to the present occasion. But it is fit to observe, in particular, that the author of this epistle hath some allusions or appeals to facts and circumstances as relative to himself, which evidently refer to St. Peter; and, that besides, there is a remarkable coincidence between the sentiments of this and of the former epistle; insomuch that it is extremely probable, it was the production of the same author, intending to confirm the doctrines he had already advanced, in opposition to the scruples of honest men, and the objections of designing ones. St. Jerom, acquainting us with the dispute which had been raised concerning the author and authority of this epistle, informs us at the same time, that it was owing to a remarkable difference of stile, in this and the former unquestionably genuine epistle of St. Peter. But the truth is, there is, properly speaking, no difference of stile between the two epistles, but only between the former epistle, and a part of this, namely, the second chapter; which indeed is as different from the stile of the remainder of this, as it is from that of the whole former epistle. The fact therefore seems to be, (as the learned Bishop of London, Dr. Sherlock, supposes, in his first dissertation
eration, at the end of his discourses on prophecy, which is well worth the reader's perusal;) I say, the fact seems to be, that the apostle in the second chapter of this epistle, describing the character of such seducers and false teachers, as endangered the faith of the Christian converts, adopts the language and sentiments of some Jewish author, containing a very strong description, in the eastern manner, of the character and conduct of some false prophets of that, or earlier ages. And as St. Jude hath likewise described these false teachers as well as St. Peter, and there is a remarkable similitude in some respects, and variation in others, between the account of these two apostles, it appears extremely probable, that they both took the principle features of their descriptions from the same author. And if this be a just account; the foundation of all the doubts concerning the genuineness of this epistle, is exceeding feeble; and no other reasonable conclusion can be drawn from them, except the singular campus of the primitive Christians, what writings they honoured with the veneration due to the oracles of God.

This epistle was very probably written about the year 67; which was six years after the date of the former. For the apostle speaks of his death as very near at hand: I think it must, saith he, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me; (chap. 13, 14;) and ecclesiastical history informs us, that the apostle finished his race by martyrdom in the year 68, the 14th of the Emperor Nero.

The general design of this epistle is, To confirm the doctrines and instructions delivered in the former; 'to excite the Christian converts to adorn and steadfastly adhere to their holy religion, as a religion proceeding from God, notwithstanding the artifices of false teachers, whose character is at large described; or the persecution of their bitter and inveterate enemies.'

The apostle, with this view, having first congratulated the Christian converts on the happy condition into which they were brought by the gospel, exhorts them, in order to secure the blessings connected with their profession, to endeavour to improve in the most substantial graces and virtues. (chap. i. 1—11.) And that their attention might be the more effectually engaged, he reminds them, both that he spoke to them in the near view of eternity, it being revealed to him that he should shortly put off his earthly tabernacle; and that the subjects on which he discoursed, were not cunningly devised fables, but attested by a miraculous voice from heaven, and by divinely inspired prophecies, (ver. 12, to the end.) And that this exhortation might not fail of producing the most kindly and genuine effects, he cautions them against the false teachers, whose character he describes; reminding them of the judgments executed on the apostate angels, on the old world, and on Sodom; and at the same time, of the deliverance of Noah,
Noah, and of Lot; as suggesting considerations, which on the one hand, should terrify such ungodly wretches, and on the other, comfort and establish the hearts of upright and pious Christians. (chap. ii. 1—9.) He then further describes the character of these seducers; warning all true Christians of the danger of being perverted by them, and them of the dreadful destruction to which they exposed themselves. (ver. 10, to the end.) And that the persons to whom he was writing, might more effectually escape the artifices of those who lay in wait to deceive, they are directed to adhere steadily and closely to the sacred scriptures, and to consider the absolute certainty and awful manner of the final destruction of this world: and then the whole is concluded with several weighty and pertinent exhortations. chap. iii. throughout.
A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE

OF

St. PETER.

SECTION I.

The Apostle Peter, after his salutation, begins his epistle with congratulating the Christians on the happy state into which they were brought by the gospel; and urges them, in order to secure the blessings connected with their profession, to endeavour to improve in its most substantial graces and virtues. 2 Pet. I: 1—11.

2 Peter I. 1.

SIMON Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

a Of our God and Saviour, &c. The order of the original words rather favours this translation, though I confess it is not absolutely necessary, and it may be rendered as in our version, of God and our Saviour. It is observable, that the order in the next verse is different, and determines it to the translation there used.

b Life
through that atonement which our Divine Redeemer has made, and the perfect righteousness he has introduced for the justification of all his believing people.

2 For this purpose, that this invaluable blessing may be ensured to you, may grace and peace in all your concerns, temporal and spiritual, be multiplied unto you by the acknowledgment of the great God and Jesus Christ our Lord; by a faithful and courageous profession of whose name we put ourselves into the way of receiving the most important blessings. This we may cheerfully expect, as his Divine power has given unto us all things in such rich abundance, which [relate] both to life and godliness, whereby the present life is rendered much more comfortable to us, and the future and eternal life of our souls is secured. And thus we obtain, by the knowledge of him who has, by his gospel, called us by that glory with which he has now invested us, and that strengthening virtue, and energy of his spirit: By means of which illustrious seal, set to the declaration of the gospel, are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, relating to blessings infinitely more valuable than any present enjoyments or expectations. And the design of God, in bestowing this inestimable favour is, that by these you may be made partakers of the Divine nature, transformed into the image of God's moral perfections, having escaped the corruption [which

b Life and godliness. Some imagine this to be an Hebraism for a godly life; but the meaning is so much enhanced by understanding it more literally, that I choose to retain our version, and to paraphrase the words according to it.

c By glory and virtue, I say, not glory. This is the proper rendering of it with a greater ease, as several critics have rightly observed. Dr. Whitby supposes these words to be an headword, and understands them of the glorious and powerful effusion of the Spirit. It is remarkable that the word ἀρχαί is used so frequently in heathen writers, seldom occurs in the New Testament; and when it does, it does not always signify the whole of a right principle, but generally courage. (See note b below.) And therefore as the learned Albert observes, Observ. Philolog. p. 460.) some interpreters, apprehending the word αἰσχρός to be in no sense applicable to God, but only to men, have rendered this clause, contrary to the Greek idiom, to glory and virtue. But it may very properly be understood of that strengthening energy which God exerts on the human mind, which appeared in an extraordinary manner in the apostolic age.

d By means of which. Some would render it, as, for the sake of which; that is, as they understand the clause, that we might attain to this glory and virtue, God has made such precious promises, of the pardon of sin, the assistance of his Spirit, and at last, eternal happiness. Dr. Whitby would read it, οὕτω, by which, that is, by Christ, for which he hath the authority of some manuscripts.

e Partakers of the Divine nature. I cannot think the passages, which are produced from Philo and Josephus, as parallel to this, are sufficient to justify Dr. Whitby's interpreting this phrase of miraculous and prophetical endowments.

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord:

3 According as his Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the cor-
corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge.

6 And to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness.

7 And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.

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For this purpose: The learned Albert supposes the particle το in the original to be understood, and I have translated it accordingly.

Associate.] The word τελειομένη properly signifies to lead up, as in a dance, one of these virtues after another in a beautiful and majestic order. See Goodman's Parable of the Prodigy, p. 396; and Sir Norton Knatchbull in loc.

Virtue.] Virtue cannot here signify an universal regularity of mind and manners, (see Titus iii. 8,) because every particular afterwards mentioned, is a virtue in that sense; and the apostle speaks of each as additional to what went before. It must therefore here signify courage, as the original word αἰλων often does (Compare note e above.) And it is properly added to faith, in reference to the need faith has of a courageous defense, and of the advantage it gives us for that purpose. The knowledge to be added signifies not that general knowledge on which faith and virtue must be founded, but an acquaintance with the importance of the several principles and duties comprehended in that general knowledge; and by this courage would properly be directed, which might otherwise act at random. Nor can we imagine, that one of these good qualities can entirely subsist without another; but every one is to make up, as it were, a part of the chorus, appearing together in a lovely and venerable train.

Calling
And diligently to make their calling and election sure.

And py as to embrace, and even to those who are most unrighteously oppose it, and injure you for your profession of it; For if these excellents things which I have now described, exist and abound in you, they will permit [you] to be neither inactive nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; but as they must put you upon exerting yourselves in consequence of that knowledge, they will make these your endeavours delightful and effectual for that purpose. But he that is deficient in these things, is blind as to the most important objects of knowledge; at best he is very short-sighted, his views are limited to a narrow circle of low and mean objects, which he immediately before him, and cannot take in that enlarged and noble prospect which Christianity sets before him. He shows that he hath contracted a sad forgetfulness of [his] baptismal engagements, and of that purification from the sins of his former life, which he professed to be in search of, and hoped to find by that solemn ordinance which initiated him into the Christian church.

10 And as it would be very fatal to fall from these bright views and expectations into a state of such aggravating condemnation, therefore my brethren, endeavour so much the more diligently to make your calling and your election sure; and that having been called into the church of Christ, and chosen to such exalted external privileges, and such glorious hopes, you may not finally lose them; but may be assured upon the best grounds, that you are indeed effectually called by Divine grace, and chosen to the possession of life everlasting. And this important end will be secured, if you resolutely persist in your duty, according to the directions I have now

[Calling and election sure.] Mr. Breckel, the ingenious author of the Christian War- fare, hath taken pains to prove that calling and election alludes to the manner in which armies were raised; first, by calling together all of a proper age to bear arms; and then, choosing such as were reckoned most proper for the purpose. And he supposes that making the calling and election, ἐξομολογήσας, itself fast, was acting in such a manner that they might not be cast down and disbanded, as unworthy a place in the army into which they had been listed. He has indeed proved by a great number of learned quotations, that this was the case in the Grecian armies;

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things, is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather brent he give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things,
now given; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall: God will support you with communications of grace, suitable to any extraordinary trial, to which you may be called, till the whole is brought to a happy issue and conclusion. For so an entrance shall be richly and abundantly administered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; you shall not only be secure of obtaining happiness there, but shall be received into it with circumstances of solemn pomp and distinguished honour; and those graces which adorned your profession here on earth, shall, as it were, attend you in a radiant train to those mansions of everlasting felicity and glory, which the Divine mercy shall then assign you, through Jesus Christ, to whom the praise of all is to be ascribed, and with whom you shall reign through the endless ages of eternity.

IMPROVEMENT.

With all humility let us adore the Divine goodness, in making us partakers of the like precious faith with that which he bestowed on the primitive believers. And let it often be considered in this comprehensive and edifying view, as terminating on the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, on that method of justification by him and his gospel which Divine grace hath found out and proposed. With thankfulness let us own the abundant provision made for us, of all things pertaining to life and godliness; and above all, let the exceeding rich and invaluable promises, contained in the gospel, be reviewed with sincere delight, and be esteemed as our surest and most important treasure. May they actually have all that efficacy they are suited and intended to have, to procure and secure our escape from the pollutions which are in the world through lust, and to advance the Divine resemblance in our souls. How various, and how lovely, are the graces which are here recommended, as what we are with all diligence to add to our faith: courage and temperance, patience and godliness, brotherly kindness, and universal charity! These are the genuine fruits of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: these, while they honour him, and adorn our profession, will be no less honourable and beneficial to ourselves. Short-sighted indeed we are, if we perceive not on the one hand the happy and delightful consequences which they will finally produce; and, on the other, how utterly vain our baptismal honours and
St. Peter would remind them of what they had been taught;

and engagements, and all external privileges of church-communion, will be, if these \textit{acts of christianity} are wanting. In order to excite our indolent minds to pursue these Divine graces with a spirit in some measure proportionable to their excellence, let us frequently reflect on our speedy removal from this world, and all its vanities; how soon we must enter upon eternity. O, how desirable then to enter on the \textit{kingdom of Christ}, to be honoured with an abundant entrance into everlasting mansions, to be received as with a cordial welcome, to sail, as were, into that blessed harbour with a full sail of consolation and joy! Be not deceived: \textit{God is not mocked}, it is the invariable design of the gospel to produce and advance our \textit{holiness}, it is the invariable constitution of the \textit{kingdom of Christ}, that without it \textit{no man shall} be permitted to see the Lord. (Heb. xi. 14.)

\textbf{SECT. II.}

\textit{The Apostle, in the view of his own approaching dissolution, reminds his Christian brethren, that their religion was firmly founded, as it was attested both by the miraculous voice from heaven, which declared Jesus to be the Son of God, and by the divinely inspired prophecies, which also bore testimony to him under that character. 2 Pet. i. 12, to the end.}

\textbf{2 Peter i. 12.}

\textit{I have been exhorting you to cultivate the several graces of Christianity, and urging this as necessary for the security of your eternal salvation; therefore I will not neglect, always to put you in mind of these things, though I am aware, that you already knew them, and are well established by the instruction you have received in the present truth, relating to the practice of these virtues. But I account it right and expedient, yea, what by my office in the church of Christ I owe to you, and my other brethren, as long as I am in this tabernacle, and inhabit this frail mortal body, from which, God only knows how soon I may be dislodged, to stir you up by way of remembrance, and to endeavour to keep your hearts under as lively a sense of Divine things as I can; Knowing that all these opportunities of service are confined within very narrow limits; and that I must quickly put off this my tabernacle by death, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me by an express prophecy,}

\textbf{2 Peter i. 13.}

\textit{Wherefore} I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth.

12 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance:

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me.
For they had not followed cunningly devised fables.

15 Moreover, I will endeavour, that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these thin. s always in remembrance.

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.

17 For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son, in whom am well pleased.

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well, that ye take heed, as unto light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn,

phecy, and that memorable action of his, when just after his resurrection, he commanded me to follow him in token of my readiness to die for him, by the same kind of death which he suffered. (John xxi. 18, 19, 20.) But I will endeavour, to the utmost of my ability, while it pleases God to continue me among you, that you may have these things so familiar to your minds now, that ye may also every one of you have them in remembrance after my departure, when I shall have made my exit from the stage of mortality. For we have not been pursuing after a series of artfully devised fables, while we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; they were not fallaciously invented, nor rashly credited by us; but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty, and of the solemn pomp and grandeur with which he appeared at his transfiguration. For he then received from God the Father illustrious honour and glory; sublime honour was done him, and a resplendent glory was shed round about him, when such a voice was sent forth to him from the magnificent glory of the Shechinah, which then appeared so conspicuous and glorious, and made that ever memorable proclamation, This is my well-beloved Son in whom I acquiesce, (Mat. xvii. 5,) and in whom my soul is perfectly well pleased. And this voice which came down from heaven, we, his three distinguished friends, James and John, as well as myself, actually heard, when we were with him in the holy mount, which was, for the time, consecrated by the visible appearance of the Divine glory upon it. And we have a surer and firmer prophetic word, the evidence of which, on the whole, is far more extensive and important than that of any single miracle, how conspicuous soever: to which, therefore, ye do very well to adhere, and to take heed to its contents, as to a lamp shining in a dark, obscure,
obscure and gloomy place. Observe it therefore, and adhere to it, till the day dawn, and the morning star arise in your hearts, with resplendent beams, as the sure herald of an eternal day, whose sun shall no more go down, nor its moon withdraw itself: Knowing this first, as a matter of chief importance; that no prophecy of scripture is of private impulses, or original.

For prophecy was not brought of old, to the minds of those that uttered it, by the will of man: they could not work themselves up to the attainment of this extraordinary gift, nor divinely foretell what they themselves desired, and whenever they pleased; but holy men of God, whom he honoured with that important work, spoke [as they were] borne on by the Holy Spirit; and they were only his organs, in declaring to the people what he was disposed to suggest to them.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Ver. May that uncertainty, that frailty and brevity of human life, which the ministers of Christ are frequently meditating upon others, be seriously considered by themselves. Let them remember, that they must quickly put off this tabernacle, and be dismissed from their present state of service; and while they have opportunity therefore, let them stir up the minds of the people committed to their charge, by way of remembrance, and give diligence to make such impressions upon their hearts, that when they themselves are laid down in the silence of the grave, and sleeping among the cedars of the valley, by the recollection and improvement of the lessons they taught, successors, may be quickened in their preparation to quit

Lamp shining in a dark place.] Bishop Chandler supposes, prophecy is so-called, because it grows gradually brighter and brighter, as it approaches nearer and nearer to its accomplishment. Bishop Chandler's Defence of Christianity, p. 2.

No prophecy of scripture is of private impulse.] So I render, without any other interpretation, to shew that the apostles never gave themselves up into such agitations, as led them to utter the predictions and oracles recorded. And thus, I think, the original will very well bear, and the opposition justify. To interpret in opposition to the right of private judgment in the interpretation of scripture, is quite foreign to the apostle's purpose, as well as extremely injurious to common sense. See

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20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.
The Apostle cautions Christians against false teachers; quitting their dissolving tabernacles likewise, and to follow their pious leaders into the joy of their Lord. It must undoubtedly yield us an inconceivable satisfaction as Ver. Christians, that we have not followed cunningly devised fables; that the persons on whose testimony we rely as an authentic evidence to the truth of our holy religion, were eye-witnesses of the illustrious facts on which it is founded; and particularly, that important oracle, the voice from heaven, by which the true and living God declared Jesus of Nazareth to be his well-beloved Son, and recommended him to the obedient regard of all who reverence his own authority, was, on the mount of transfiguration, distinctly heard by Peter, James, and John; who at the same time were eye-witnesses of his glory. Yet are we bound to acknowledge the Divine oracles of the Old Testament, and the numerous and various prophecies they contain, to be to us a superior, and more sure and incontestible evidence: let us therefore take heed to it, as a glorious light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths. And let what is particularly said of the ancient prophets recommend to our regard the whole sacred volume; namely, that it was not written by private impulse, but by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Let us receive it with the profoundest humility, not as the word of man, but as it is indeed and in truth the word of God, which is able to make us wise unto salvation: and let us follow its sacred illumination, till at length it conduct us to the dawning of an eternal day, and to the rising of that bright and morning star, which will shine out hereafter with the full glory of the Sun of righteousness.

SECT. III.

The Apostle cautions Christians against false teachers; mentioning the judgments which God executed on the fallen angels, on the old world, and on Sodom, and the deliverance of Noah and of Lot, as considerations which should, on the one hand, terrify the ungodly, and on the other, comfort and establish the hearts of good men. 2 Peter II. 1—9.

2 Peter II. 1.

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in I HAVE observed to you, that it was by a Divine impulse that the prophets delivered and wrote their predictions in former times; but they were not always regarded in a becoming manner; for there were also false prophets among the
the people of the Jews, as there shall also be among you, the disciple of a greater Master than Moses; false teachers, who will make parties among you, and privately introduce pernicious and destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought and redeemed them; as those false prophets denied the God who had redeemed Israel from its bondage and misery; but they will at last be found in the same dreadful circumstances, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And yet many will persist to follow their pernicious courses, by means of whom the way of truth, the cause of genuine and uncorrupted Christianity, will by many others be blasphemed; as it the errors and madness of those members who are corrupted, were to be charged on those who are not infected with their disorders, or the views of a few, were to be imputed to all. And as for the false teachers I mention, they will ordain both their teaching and their conduct by views and maxims of carelessness, and with deceitful words will make merchandise of you, trafficking as it were for your immortal souls. These are wretches, whose judgment for a long time delays not, but advances apace; and their destruction does not slumber, how feebly soever they may dream of escaping it. But if they consider the numerous examples God has already given, of his righteous indignation, they must certainly take the

in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.
4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them to chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

the alarm: For if God did not spare the angels that sinned, but, having cast [them] down from heaven, and sunk them to the abyss of hell, delivered [them] to be reserved in chains of darkness, to be judged of the great and terrible day of account; we may from hence reasonably conclude, that he will find out a proper season to punish wicked men, the confederates and instruments of those rebellious spirits. And indeed the history of mankind furnishes us with many awful instances of this kind; and one, in which almost the whole human species was made the monument of Divine displeasure; for when God had been long insulted and provoked by their continued wickedness, we know that he spared not the inhabitants of the old antediluvian world. Nevertheless, it is worth our while at the same time to observe the favourable manner in which God interposed amidst the general ruin, for the preservation of the only good man that remained; for he kept Noah, the eight [person 2] who was a preacher of righteousness.

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eight person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

d Did not spare the angels, &c.] Some have imagined this to be an imperfect sentence: I think it complete in the 9th verse. But as the length of the sentence is so necessarily increased, by such a method of paraphrasing as I have chosen, (though brought into the narrowest limits, which were judged consistent with answering the end,) I have thought it proper here, and in many other instances, to divide what, in the original, makes one sentence, into several; else I must have left many passages of the sacred writings far more intricate than I found them.

c Cast [them] down to hell.] Mr. Mede would translate the words, When God had condemned the angels than sinned to the punishment of hell, he delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved to judgment. I cannot but think that the word ῥαγίνωτες is illustrated by the description given of Tartarus in Homer, {παιαδ. ο. Λν. 13—25.} as a deep gulf under the earth, where there are iron gates, and a brazen entrance. It is derived from a word expressive of terror, and signifies the doleful prison in which wicked spirits are reserved, till they should be brought out to public condemnation and execution.

f In chains of darkness.] It has been queried, how the confinement of these unhappy spirits in chains of darkness, is consistent with their wandering up and down in the air, and upon earth. I think we are to answer, not by saying, that the darkness is moral, or that the light is disagreeable to them, as some have suggested, (compare Reynolds's Inquiry concerning the Angelic world, Query xxx. p. 191;) but rather, that a general confinement may be reconcilable with some degree of liberty, yet still liable to restraint, as God shall see fit. Compare Luke viii. 31; Rev. xx. 1, 3. And this air, over which they seem indeed to have some power sometimes granted them, (Eph. ii. 2,) is to be sure darkness, when compared with the light in which they originally dwelt.

g The eight [person] a preacher of righteousness.] Bishop Pearson would render this clause, Noah the eighth preacher of righteousness, supposing that Enos was the first, (Gen. iv. 26,) from whom Noah was the eight; that all the intermediate persons bore the same office, and that Christ preached by them all. 1 Pet. iii. 19. Pears. on the Creed, p. 115. To which Bishop Cumberland assents, supposing God had a continued succession of extraordinary persons in the patriarchal church. Cumb. on Gen. p. 49. But I think it certain, that Enos could not be the first preacher of righteousness: Adam was in a wonderful manner fitted to perform that office in the first world; as Noah was in the second, and
cusness, and seven others, who were with him in the ark, when he brought the irresistible destruction of the universal deluge upon the whole world of the ungodly, and destroyed all the impious wretches who had derided the admonitions of that faithful patriarch.

6 And in a succeeding age, when the inhabitants of those places were sunk into the lowest degeneracy, he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, with the most dreadful destruction, reducing them to ashes, by raining down fire and brimstone from heaven upon them; setting [them] as an example and pattern of that final vengeance he will bring on those sinners who should afterwards be ungodly, that they might learn their own condemnation and misery from the memorial of the destruction of those once noble, pleasant, and flourishing cities of the plain. And by the miraculous interposition of his Providence, he rescue a righteous Lot, who was so long revered and allured by the beauties of nature, and hearing from day to day, the calamities of their neighbours and abandoned wickedness, to a burning fire and by [those] unlawful scandalous works, whose cry came up at length to heaven, and brought down upon them the flaming destruction. And thus on the whole, we discern in this memorable example, that on the one hand, the Lord know how to rescue the godly from temptation and danger, and on the other, to revenge the unrighteous in the day of judgment to be punished with a severity becoming their guilt and wickedness.

IMPROVEMENT.

There is no church so pure, but some false members, and even false teachers, may insinuate themselves into it; yet it is our duty to watch and pray, that the churches to which we respectively

and what excellent instructions both might give, Dr. Whittington has finely represented Bishop Horsley's Knowledge, Vol. I. p. 157, &c. p. 81-91. Dr. Pearson adds, that if we are not disposed to refer solely to express and translate, if, as in the case of eight, it may be understood as denoting, not the order in which Noah was ranked, but merely the number of persons that were with him, Noah with seven others, or Noah one of eight, and accordingly I have determined it to this sense in the paraphrase. The Bishop has produced several passages in the Greek classics in support of this sense of the word; and others may be seen in Rapinellus. Compare also 1 Peter iii. 20.
spectively belong, may be guarded against their pernicious insinuations, and especially against the destructive heresies of those who deny the Lord who bought them. As we regard the edification of the church, and the salvation of our own precious and immortal souls, let us guard against whatever may justly deserve such an imputation as this. Woe be to those teachers who are actuated with a Ver. covetous spirit, who teach things which they ought not for the sake of filthy lucre, and make merchandise of the souls of their hearers! How swiftly do's their damnation approach, though they perceive not the gradations by which it advances; and with what irresistible terror will at length overwhelm them!

That our hearts may be preserved under an awful impression of the Divine judgments, let us often meditate on those displays of them of which the scripture informs us. And let us, in particular, reflect on the fall of the apostate angels, who were for their first offence precipitated from heaven, and reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day: and while we contemplate this awful dispensation, let us adore that distinguishing grace and compassion which laid hold on apostate man, and provided an all-sufficient Saviour for him. Let us call to remembrance the dissolution of the old world, by a deluge of water, and the tremendous destruction of the cities of the plain by fire from heaven; and let us fear that God, who can at pleasure break open the fountains of the great deep and open the windows of heaven, and emit from these his various magazines, deluges of water, or torrents of burning sulphur, to execute his vengeance. Who can flee from his pursuing hand? or who can be secure and happy but under his almighty protection? Yet awful as the terrors of his indignation are, his eyes are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. What a noble sup- port and encouragement may it therefore be to the small remnant, who from day to day are vexing their righteous souls at the ungodly deeds of the wicked among whom they dwell, to reflect on the deliverance of Noah, and of Lot, from that general destruction with which they were surrounded. A more perfect and complete deliverance will be at length accomplished for all the faithful servants of God, and there will be no possibility of doubting any more of his ability, or his willingness to rescue them from every evil; for he will make the day of his vengeance on his enemies, a day of complete and everlasting salvation to his saints. And the Lord grant that we may all find mercy of the Lord in that important day.
SECT. IV.

The Apostle describes in very emphatical terms, the infamous character of some ungodly and seducing teachers, who were crept into the Christian church; and warns the Christian converts of the danger of being perverted by them, and of the dreadful destruction to which they expose themselves. 2 Pet. II. 10.—22.

2 Peter II. 10.

I HAVE been just mentioning the Divine vengeance which will be poured out on audacious and impudent sinners; but I would especially be understood to intend those who go after strange flesh, in the lust of uncleanness; for they are particularly detestable in the eye of God, and the crimes they commit so much resemble that of Sodom, that it is the less to be wondered if they share in its punishment: and with them I also comprehend those who despise dominion, of which there are many among the licentious wretches before described, daring and self-willed, uncontrollable in their own ways, and ready to face and withstand any opposition in the prosecution of them; they fear not to speak evil of those who possess the highest dignities; Whereas the angels, even those who are greater in strength and power than the rest of those glorious beings, bear not a reviling testimony against them before the Lord; but abhorring all similitude and violence of language, they with all calmness and decency declare matters as they are, as revering the presence of God, how much soever they may abhor the characters of ungodly men. (Jude 9.) But these men behave as if they were irrational animals, made by nature to be taken, and destroyed, and consumed: the fiercest savage beasts, whom men for their own security and preservation, hunt down and destroy, can hardly be more violent, and outrageous than they; blaspheming things which they do not understand, and the consequence will be

2 Peter II. 10.

BUT chuse them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

11 Whereas angels which are greater in power and might, being not ragging accusation against them before the Lord.

12 But these as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall

1a Irrational animals.] Dr. Whitby would render this, But these are natural brute beasts: referring it to their promiscuous existence of lust. And indeed it is evident, it must be explained as a general assertion, relating to some violence of temper; as no sin of the tongue, which is immediately afterwards spoken of, could be the resemblance of a brute. It may refer to their running headlong into extreme danger, which this licentious manner of speech, especially when attacking the characters of governors, might very naturally expose them to.
Who account it a pleasure to riot in the day:

shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day-time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin? beguiling unstable souls. An heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness:

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb

be, that they shall be utterly destroyed in their corruption; and many of them by their own

intemperance, rashness, and folly, will hasten upon themselves that irretrievable ruin; Receiving indeed the just reward of their unrighteousness, and irregularities; while they account it a pleasure to riot in the day; they are spots and reproaches to the society to which they belong, living luxuriously in other places, by means of

those deceits, which they conceal under the mask of Christianity, banqueting with you at the holy table. Many of them are as lewd as they are gluttonous, having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, even when the powers of animal nature are exhausted; but by

their words and gestures they endeavour to fan the flame; ensnaring unstable souls by their artful addresses, and having their heart continually exercised in avaricious schemes; on all which accounts they are the children of a curse, and they shall find that in the end it will indeed fall heavy upon them.

For, deserting the straight and upright way of truth and integrity, they have wandered in dangerous and destructive paths; following in the way of that infamous person Balaam, the son] of Bosor, who so loved the wages of unrighteousness, that he was willing to sacrifice every other interest to obtain them. But he received, in a very extraordinary manner the reproof

b Destroyed in their corruption.] The original phrase is ἔσται διωγμός αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ διώ-

γμός, and some would render it, are destroyed by destruction, that is, certainly, or utterly destroyed. Compare Chadwick's Apostolical History, p. 117. They boasted of being beyond the power of corruption and punishment, but are lost in both together.

c Living luxuriously, &c.] This is so good a wish to good the establishing of the reading of ἀγαθᾶς for ἀγαθῶν, which some have proposed, and so explain it of the riot of those pretended love-feasts, into which indeed it is not impossible that luxury might soon come, when persons of such a character were concerned in them; and probably that was the occasion of laying them aside.

d Banqueting with you.] It is not to be thought that luxury could be introduced into those feasts, which they celebrated

with the church, without detecting their own characters; and therefore I think it most reasonable to consider their luxury as practised elsewhere; and to refer this banqueting, of which the apostle speaks, to their attending the sacred banquet of the Lord's supper, as a cover for their licentiousness.

e Having eyes full of adultery: ὑπηρεσίαν ἀποθεωσάμενον.] There is a prodigious strength in this expression; it properly signifies, their having an adultery continually before their eyes.

f Balaam [the son] of Bosor.] Theris one manuscript which reads Beer, and this reading is confirmed by the Syriac version. Mr. Airsworth and Dr. Lightfoot suppose, that the apostle, in writing Bosor for Beer, used the Chaldee dialect, as he writ in the neighbourhood of Babylon. See Airsworth on Num. xxii. 5; and Dr. Lightfoot's Addenda to his Herod Hebraica, on 1 Cor. xiv. cap. 4.

g Scolling
reproof of his transgression: for the dumb beast
on which he rode, speaking with the voice of a
man, restrained the madness of the prophet, when
he would have pressed on to his own destruction.

17 These, notwithstanding all their boasted pre-
tensions, are fountains without water; they are
clouds agitated by a whirlwind, easily yield-
ing to every wind of persecution or temptation,
and themselves big with storms and tempests:
But after all their turbulence and mischief, they
will be found in the number of those to whom is
reserved blackness of darkness for ever, even the
judgment of eternal darkness and despair. They
sometimes indeed affect sublime strains of lan-
guage, which are often void of any real mean-
ing, and speaking swelling [words] of vanity,
they ensnare in the lusts of the flesh, which they
practise and promote in all variety of lasciva-
lessness, those who were, so far as we can judge by
their external behaviour, quite escaped from
them that have their conversation in error, and
they draw back into apostacy some, who appeared
to have set their faces in good earnest towards
the kingdom of heaven; by which means they
become partakers in the guilt of that aggravated
condemnation and ruin which these deluded
and unhappy persons bring upon themselves.

19 For promising them liberty, they are so far from
performing their engagements, that they are
themselves the despicable slaves of corruption,
and have not power and spirit enough to extri-
cate themselves out of that infamous bondage;
for by whomsoever any one is defeated and
conquered, by him he is of course also enslaved;
and it is too evident to admit of dispute, that
these wretched men are continually conquered
by sin.

20 And they ought certainly to be reckoned am-
ong the most miserable of mankind; for if,
having escaped the pollutions of the world, by the
knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

Sect. 
17. 
2 Peter. 
11. 16.
dumb ass speaking
with man's voice, for-
bad the madness of the
prophet.

17 These are wells
without water, clouds
that are carried with a
tempest, to whom the
mist of darkness is re-
served for ever.

18 For when they
speak great swelling
words of vanity, they
allure through the lusts
of the flesh, through
much wantonness, those
that were clean
escaped from them
who live in error:

19 While they pro-
mise them liberty,
they themselves are
the servants of cor-
rup tion; for of whom
a man is overcome, of
the same is he brought
in bondage.

20 For if after they
have escaped the pol-
lutions of the world
through the know-
ledge of the Lord and

Snelling words of vanity.] It is ob-
served, that here, and in many other
places, these heretical teachers are re-
presented as seducing their followers, not
by the power of miracles, but by the arts
of address.

20 Deceit escaped, &c.] The words
appearing, which is the received reading,
certainly signify, those who were thorough-
ly or entirely escaped. But the Alexan-
drian reading οὖν, which some other copies
in some degree imitate, where they do not
entirely follow, leaves a strong suspicion
on my mind, that the apostle might intend
those who had almost escaped. I have
therefore taken a medium, and retaining
the usual reading in the version, have
paraphrased the words in what I apprehend
the most natural sense, with some regard
to the other copies.
and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

They are entangled and subdued by them again, caught as it were in their nets, and so lying at their mercy to be wounded and destroyed by them, their last state is certainly much worse than the first:

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness at all, than having known it, and professed a desire and resolution of walking in it, to have turned aside from the holy commandment delivered to them; for by this means their guilt is so much the more aggravated, to their conduct is the more pernicious to others, and consequently to themselves. But indeed when the matter comes thoroughly to be considered, it will appear, that under all the external appearances of reformation, there was still an evil nature and principle remaining, which at length prevailed; so that it is happened to them according to the true proverb, The dog [is] returned to gorge up his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed from the filthiness she had before contracted, having still the same unclean nature prevailing, is returned to wallow in the mire, and so makes herself as filthy as she had ever been before. (Comp. Prov. xxvi. 11.)

IMPROVEMENT.

It is indeed matter of grievous lamentation, that such wretches as those who are here described, should be any-where found in the christian church. Let us be the less surprised, if any such spots and blemishes are discovered among us, on whom the ends of the world are come; but let the licentious character, here drawn, be noted with a just abhorrence, that if any such persons are found, they may with becoming indignation be put away. Many there are who seem to be as irrational and ravenous as brute beasts, and are far more pernicious to society than the race of savage or poisonous animals. They are indeed children of a curse, and they will inherit the curse, who thus contrive to make their lives one scene of iniquity, whose eyes, and lips, declare more wickedness in their hearts than they have power to execute. But it should be

From the holy commandment.] The learned Dr. Sherlock, the late bishop of London, interprets this of some directions drawn up by the apostle, relating to the conduct which Christians should maintain with regard to these seducing teachers they are here cautioned against. See his Discourses on Prophecy, Diss. I. p. 124. It is, however, certain, that it is capable of a larger interpretation, as many holy commandments remain upon record in the New Testament, which might guard them against the evils referred to in the preceding discourse.
be remembered, they are accountable to God, not only for all
they do, but for all they desire and wish to do; and they are in-
\(\text{Ver. 15, 16.} \) Balaam will surely receive his reward; those dark clouds will
17 quickly, if they continue thus to obscure with their eras the
horizon in which they ought to shine as stars, he doomed to black-
ness of darkness for ever. May persons of such a character, how
specious soever the form which they wear, be universally detect-
ed and disgraced; may none of their swelling words of vanity en-
tice and ensnare those who appear just escaping from the delusions
of error and the fetters of vice; and may none permit themselves
to be seduced by promises of liberty, from such mean and miser-
able slaves of corruption.

Finally, let us learn, by the awful conclusion of this chapter,
to guard against all temptations to apostacy; may we never, after
19 having long escaped the pollutions of the world, be entangled again,
and overcome by them. Better, far better, would it have
been for us, not to have known the way of righteousness, than,
having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment: our
last end, in this case, would be worse than the beginning; and
those expressive similes, taken from such loathsome and detestible
animals, would not be sufficient to paint out the degree, in which
we should ourselves be loathsome and odious, in the sight of that
God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look
upon evil. (Halak 1. 13.) May we therefore, with the righteous,
22 hold on our way, and taking care to preserve the cleanliness of our
hands and hearts, may we daily wax stronger and stronger, Job.
xvii. 9.) and shine with an increasing luster; for the path of the
just should be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto
the perfect day. (Prov. iv. 18.)

SECT. V.

That they might be effectually guarded against the artifices of those
who scoff at religion, or lie in wait to deceive, the apostle directs
them to a thare closely and steadily to the holy scriptures; and re-
presents to them the absolute certainty, and awful manner, of the
destruction of this world; concluding with several weighty and
pertinent exhortations. 2 Pet. III. throughout.

2 Peter III. 1.

T\(\text{HIS second epistle I now write to you, my}
\text{dearly beloved brethren, with the same pur-
pose}\)

2 Peter III. 1.

\(\text{This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto}\
\text{be a distinct epistle by itself. See his}
\text{locus or text, this last chapter to}
\text{Mark, Vol. II. p. 718. Beatus imagines,}\
\text{that}\
\text{II.} 1. 1.

\(\text{This second epistle,}\
\text{beloved, I now write unto}\
\text{be a distinct epistle by itself. See his}\
\text{locus or text, this last chapter to}
\text{Mark, Vol. II. p. 718. Beatus imagines,}\
\text{that}\
\text{II.} 1. 1.

unto you in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,

that it was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, and expresses the triumph of profane men, when they saw that Christ did not come to judgment, as it was expected he would then do. He infers from hence, that this epistle was written not by Simon Peter the apostle, but some other Simon. But I confess, I see no reason at all for any such conclusion; nor do I perceive these scoffers were then actually come, but only predicted.

b The commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. Some translate this clause, The commandment of us the apostles of our Lord and Saviour; and would from hence infer, that Simon, who wrote this epistle, was not an apostle himself; but the version I have given, is most agreeable to the order of the original words. The learned author, whom I mentioned above, (sect. IV. note g) observes, that the apostolic constitutions affirm, there was a council of the apostles called on the occasion of these teachers, whom St. Peter guards against, and that all in common delivered this advice, which he has admonished the Christian converts to regard.

c Mockers.] Archbishop Tillotson explains this of the Corruptions, a large sect of the Gnostics, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and the future judgment, and appeared quickly after the writing this epistle. See Tillotson's Works, Vol. II. p. 711.

d Since the fathers are fallen asleep.] Mr. Grove would render it, for except that the fathers are fallen asleep; that is, That the inhabitants of the world are continually changing, and new generations rising instead of the old, all other things continue as they were. See Grove's Adlitz. Posthum. Serm. Vol. I. p. 500.

e Whereby
The heavens and the earth are reserved unto fire.

2 Peter III. 4.

The times and seasons revolve as they did before and there is no such marvellous interposition of this Jesus, as to turn the sun into darkness, and the moon into blood, to cause the stars to fall from heaven, to bring down vengeance and destruction on all his enemies, and to confer an ample reward on his servants." But this they willingly are ignorant of, and they continue ignorant of it through auctification, plain and obvious as it is from the word of God, that all nature is in his hand, and at his disposal, and that he can in whatsoever time and manner he pleases, change and overthrow its universal system; they know and consider not, that by the almighty and ever-eficacious word of God, the heavens, with all their host, were produced of old, and the earth subsisting from the water, with which the mass of it was at first covered; till by the Divine command, it emerged from it, and the liquid element flowed to its appointed channel; and God ordained that the earth should be nourished and supported by water, which is the life of the vegetable creation. Yet that very element from which it had its original and support, became at length, by Divine appointment, the means of its destruction; whereby, that is, in consequence of which constitution of things, under a different direction and agency of God, the world that then was, being deluged with an irresistible inundation of water, perished, and every thing upon the face of it was destroyed; none of the human race, or other terrestrial animals surviving, but those who, by God's special Providence, were preserved in the ark. It appears from hence credible in reason, as well as certain from Divine revelation, that the earth may be dissolved, and its inhabitants removed. But we know that God has determined to effect this great revolution, by a method far different from that of the former; for the heavens and the earth, which now [exist] are treasured up, as it were, by the same word, and guarded from all dangers of a second deluge of water, being kept to be dissolved by a deluge of fire, on the day which God has

5 Far this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water.

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished.

7 But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store reserved

Whereby.] Very possible is as refers to a ark, the heavens, mentioned above, and may relate to the sunness of heaven being opened, and pouring forth upon the earth a destructive deluge of water.

5 On
reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing; That one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, (as some men count slackness;) but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away.

f One day as a thousand years.] This was, as many have observed, a proverbial expression among the Jews, to signify, that no finite duration bears any proportion to the eternity of God. Plutarch has a passage exactly parallel to it in his discourses on the slowness of the divine vengeance.

g The day of the Lord.] It has always appeared surprising to me, that Dr. Hammond should refer this context to the coming of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem. Mr. Ray has most solidly confuted him at large, in his three Discourses, p. 244, 245, urging the opposition between the deluge, and the day here spoken of in the preceding verses, and that a long delay was intimated in the word thousand years; whereas the destruction of Jerusalem happened, at farthest, about twenty years after the writing of this epistle. The day of judgment of ungodly men, mentioned ver. 7, does also, I think, afford a sufficient answer to this hypothesis; as well as the mention of a new heaven and earth, as what was immediately to succeed this important scene.
We should then be diligent to be found of him in peace:

11. therefore, be persuaded to lay this to heart, and seriously and daily reflect with yourselves, since all these things which are now so ready to engross your thought and your affection, shall be dissolved; what manner of persons ought ye to be in the exercise of holy conversation and piety. We, Christians, I say, who have the express revelation of these things, how should we be affected with them, looking for, and as it were hastening on with our ardent wishes, the coming of the day of God, though it be attended with so much terror, though it be the day in which the heavens being on fire, as I said, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

12. Nevertheless, we according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

13. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless;

14. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given


vers. 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.

h Hastening on, Sir.] This is the emphasis of the original expression, according to the version of Erasmus Schmidius, supported by several pertinent quotations.
of his people, and to afford to all who are willing to embrace it, an opportunity of securing this final and everlasting deliverance; as also our beloved brother Paul, whom I am far from honouring the less on account of his being sent to the Gentiles, according to the wisdom given to him, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has written. The passage to which I refer, is in a letter immediately directed to the Romans, but it may be considered as designed for you, and for the general use of all Christians: I mean that in which he expressly testifies, that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance; (Rom. ii. 4.) As also in all [his] other epistles; speaking in them of such persons as I have now described; for undoubtedly the words are peculiarly applicable to them: In which writings of his, and particularly in that from whence these words are taken, there are some things hard to be understood; which the unteachable and unstable torture and wrest, as they also do other scriptures, whether belonging to the Old Testament or the New Testament. It is very evident from hence, not only that Peter maintained a reverend regard for St. Paul, and looked upon him as a brother, but also, that he had seen his epistle before he wrote this.

k Has written to you.] Lord Barrington is of opinion, that this refers to some epistle not now extant, which St. Paul wrote to the proselytes of the gate; imagining the converting and edifying them to have been a mixed province, partly managed by the apostles of the circumcision, and partly by those of the uncircumcision. Missell Sacra, Ess. II. p. 110. But as I think the whole foundation of this distinction groundless, I look upon this passage as a very instructive admonition to all Christians, to consider St. Paul, and the other apostles, as writing to them in their epistles, so far as a similarity of circumstances would admit. In which view it is of infinite importance that we should consider them, as written to us, in like manner as St. Peter tells us, even the ancient prophets considered the great subjects of which these epistles treat as relating to them. 1 Pet. ii. 12.

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

i Our brother Paul.] It is very evident from hence, not only that Peter maintained a reverend regard for St. Paul, and looked upon him as a brother, but also, that he had seen his epistle before he wrote this.

k Has written to you.] Lord Barrington is of opinion, that this refers to some epistle not now extant, which St. Paul wrote to the proselytes of the gate; imagining the converting and edifying them to have been a mixed province, partly managed by the apostles of the circumcision, and partly by those of the uncircumcision. Missell Sacra, Ess. II. p. 110. But as I think the whole foundation of this distinction groundless, I look upon this passage as a very instructive admonition to all Christians, to consider St. Paul, and the other apostles, as writing to them in their epistles, so far as a similarity of circumstances would admit. In which view it is of infinite importance that we should consider them, as written to us, in like manner as St. Peter tells us, even the ancient prophets considered the great subjects of which these epistles treat as relating to them. 1 Pet. ii. 12.

1 Some things hard to be understood.] Some by ex συνιστάνονται not understand the epistles of Paul, but the things spoken of. But as these are plainly mentioned as spoken of in the scriptures, this interpretation will still leave us under a necessity of indicating the perspicuity of some part of scripture. Not to mention that there are several manuscripts of considerable authority which read το νόημα, which expressly refers to St. Paul's epistles. It is remarkable, that Barclay explains this of the ninth chapter of the Romans, in which there are some things which seem to be contrary to God's long-suffering to all, and which are very liable to be perniciously wrested. See Barc. Apol. p. 155. It is by many writers justly remarked, that the difficulty is said to affect, chiefly ερωτοδιοίσκοντα, unteachable and unsteady men, whose prejudices dispose them for admitting the truth, or whose levity prevents their due solicitude to retain it; but not persons of humble teachable minds, resolute in pursuing and maintaining the truth. And the remedy prescribed, is not lying aside the scriptures on account of their obscurity, as some would persuade us to do; but a concern to grow in grace, &c. ver. 18.) The expression τοσούτους, wrest, or torture, as on the rack, plainly implies, that violence is done, by these bad men, to some passages of scripture, to make them speak an unnatural sense, which may answer their own purposes. And truly he must know little of the history of theological controversies, who hath not observed many deplorable instances of this.
New, to their own destruction: putting such perverse interpretations upon them, with some show or colour of reason, as no candid man would on the whole have thought of, or will admit. You therefore dearly beloved knowing these things before, knowing especially, in how awful a manner the scene will close, and what dreadful vengeance will be executed on all wicked men, and especially on those that pollute the church of Christ, into which they have professed to enter; guard yourselves, that ye may not, being entangled with the error of the ungodly, fall from your own steadfastness, which by God’s assistance you have hitherto retained.

But grow in grace, more and more, advancing from one state of practical religion to another, and increasing daily in the knowledge of our Divine Lord and almighty and all gracious Saviour, Jesus Christ, to him [be] glory throughout all the churches, and all the creation of God, both now and for ever. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 5. Who is there, that can be so sluggish and lethargic, as not to be in some measure awakened and alarmed by the awful views here given, of the dissolution, as well as the creation of the world, by the word of God? Who must not even tremble, when he turns his eye back to the dreadful ruin brought on it by the universal deluge; when that element, which had been, and is, the means and instrument of life to the whole animal creation, at the Divine signal, became the means and instrument of death! Who can be unaffected, when he seriously reflects on the heavens passing away with a great noise, on the elements melting with fervent heat, on the burning up the earth, and all things therein?

Let scoffers, who walk after their own lusts, madly deride the promise of his coming; let them deliver over their taunts and insults to each other, through the succession of a thousand years; were his coming at the distance of ten thousand generations, or a yet remoter distance, they who have any just impression on their minds, of the eternity of God, or the immortality of the human soul, would discern the important day of final retribution, as immediate and present to their view. While they scoff and deride the tremendous reality, let us hear the declaration of its approach with the profoundest attention; and let our souls enter deeply into the alarming and important reflection. If indeed we look for such great
Reflections on the patience and long-suffering of God.

The end of the Family Expositor on the Second Catholic Epistle of St. Peter.
THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR, A

PARAPHRASE

ON

THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF

ST. JOHN.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PARAPHRASE AND NOTES ON THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

The Apostle John, to whom the unanimous suffrage of the ancients hath ascribed this epistle, is the same with John the evangelist, who is said to have written his gospel in extreme old age; and, as Eusebius informs us, with a view to record some particulars concerning our blessed Lord, which had been omitted by the other evangelists, though he explicitly acknowledged the truth of their history, as far as it went, and confirmed it by his own testimony. (See Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. xxiv.) According to the title of this epistle in the old Italic version, and the account which is given us by St. Austin and others, it was written to the christian converts in Parthia, which was a part of the Upper Asia. But in the opinion of the learned Dr. Mill (see his Prolegom. p. 18, § 150, Edit. Kuster,) this notion had its sole original from a tradition, that the apostle John had preached the gospel in that country; whereas, if we may credit the report mentioned by Eusebius, it was St. Thomas who exercised his apostolical office among the Parthians. Others have conjectured, from some passages in this epistle, in which the persons, whom St. John addresses, are represented, as having known Christ from the beginning, (see chap. ii. 13, 14, and other places,) that he writes only to the Jewish Christians, who inhabited Judea and Galilee. But I very much question, whether these expressions will support the stress which hath been laid upon them; and accordingly, in my paraphrase, I have assigned them a more general interpretation.

And as we find nothing but conjecture and uncertainty concerning the persons to whom this epistle was addressed, so there is very little precision to be expected, in our enquiries concerning the time when it was written. From the apostle's saying, chap. ii. 18, *It was now the last time*; and chap. iv. 1, *that many false prophets are gone out into the world*, compared with Mat. xxiv. 24, where this is mentioned as a sign of the approaching dissolution of the Jewish commonwealth; some have indeed inferred this epistle was written a very short time before the destruction of Jerusalem; whereas,
whereas, several others, (and in particular Dr. Mill) are of opinion its date should be assigned to the year 91, or 92.—It was probably written before the *apocalypse*, as I shall have occasion to observe hereafter, in sect. iv. note b.

In the *sile* of this *apostle* there is a remarkable peculiarity; and especially in this epistle. *His sentences, considered separately, are exceeding clear and intelligible; but when we search for their connection, we frequently meet with greater difficulties than we do even in the epistles of St. Paul.* The principal signature and characteristic of his manner, is an artless and amiable simplicity, and a singular modesty and candour, in conjunction with a wonderful sublimity of sentiment. *His conceptions are apparently delivered to us in the order in which they arose to his own mind, and are not the product of artificial reasoning, or laboured investigation.*

His leading design is, "To demonstrate the vanity of faith separate from morality, to soothe and refine the warm and over-zealous tempers of the Christians to whom he writes, into that amiable charity and love for which he himself was so eminent and illustrious, and to guard and arm them against the snares and efforts of anti-

Christ, the grand apostate and the seducer of the Christian church; and of all who were endued with his spirit.

In pursuance of which pious and benevolent intention, he first testifies the Divine purity and holiness, and the grace and mercy which is exhibited in Jesus Christ, to all who lament and confess their sins with sincere desires of reformation and amendment; (chap. i. 1, to the end.) And then he urges the propitiation and intercession of Christ, as arguments to that obedience, that brotherly love, and that victory over the world, which are the genuine fruits of Divine love. (chap. ii. 1—17.) And that they might not be perverted from their course of fidelity and holy obedience, he forewarns them of the many *antichrists* who were springing up in the world; directing them to the best preservatives against their seducing and ensnaring doctrines. (ver 18—25.) With the same intention of awakening a generous ambition in their breasts, to attain the Divine resemblance, he discourses of those exalted privileges, to which Christians, as the children of God, are entitled, and urges the necessity of holiness, both in heart and life, to prove that we are in that blessed number, (ver. 29—iii. 10.) In this view, namely, as the grand characteristic of the children of God, he further enforces brotherly love, (ver. 11, to the end.) Cautioning them more particularly against being deceived by seducing spirits, and directing them in what manner they might distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error; (chap. iv. 1—12;) Drawing to a conclusion, with declaring his general design to be the confirmation of their faith; reminding them of the ground they had to hope their prayers should be heard for themselves and others, who had not sinned unpardonably; and at the close, adding a reflection on the happy difference, which their knowing God in Jesus Christ had made between them and an ignorant and ungodly world, ver. 13, to the end.
A PARAPHRASE AND NOTES
ON
THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE
OF
ST. JOHN.

SECTION I.

The Apostle John opens the pious and charitable design which he had in writing this epistle, and lays the foundation of what he has further to say, in bearing his testimony to the holiness of God, and to the mercy which he exhibits in Jesus Christ to all who are truly sensible of their sins, and confess them with sincere desires of reformation and amendment. 1 John I. 1, to the end.

1 John I. 1.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon,

and

My Christian brethren, I am now going to address you on a very important subject; to speak of that which was from the beginning of the gospel-declaration, and indeed from the beginning of the world, and previous to its existence; of that which we have heard most credibly attested by authentic witnesses, and that which we have not taken merely on their credit, but have seen with our own eyes; we are going to treat of that which we have attentively looked upon and viewed so near and so long, that it is

a That which we have attentively looked upon: o θεασάμεθα. Mr. Blackwall observes, (in his Sacr. Class. Vol. II. p. 152,) that it is by no means synonymous with the
is impossible we should mistake in it; and which, in allusion to the condescension of our blessed Redeemer in submitting himself to be examined by our touch and feeling, I may venture to say, that even our hands have handled of the word of eternal life. And well may it be styled the word of life; for even Jesus, who himself is the living word, and eternal life, was graciously manifested, in human flesh for the redemption of sinful men; and we saw [it] in its full evidence, and we cheerfully bear our renewed testimony, and declare unto you that eternal life, which from the foundation of the world was with the Father, most intimately conversant with him, and united to him; but in due time, by assuming the human nature into an union with the Divine, was manifested to us with all the genuine characters of the promised Messiah.

And in consequence of this, what we have seen and intimately conversed with, and have not only heard of, but have ourselves heard speaking to us, we declare unto you, that ye also may have common union with us in that dignity and felicity to which we are, by Divine grace, exalted: and truly it is a glorious privilege well worthy your most ready acceptance and earnest pursuit; for our common union with God the Father, and with his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, as we are happy in an intimate and inseparable union with each. And these things we write to you, that the Divine life may be so improved in your souls, and your meetness for the heavenly inheritance, may be so apparent, and so advanced, that your joy may, as far as possible, be fulfilled, and no circumstance, which this mortal state will admit, may be wanting to complete it.

And this is the great declaration which we have heard from him, upon which our faith most cheerfully centers, and which we again declare unto you, that God is perfect light; consummate and our hands have handled of the word of life.

(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.)

That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

And these things we write unto you, that your joy may be full.

Thus then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him after ages. Dr. Burnet supposes these words were particularly levelled against the Menonites, who denied the real existence of the flesh of Christ, and asserted that it was only a visible appearance: they were therefore called Zadisci, and so translated. See his Hist. of the Tm. p. 77.

God is light] This expresses his most clear and perfect knowledge, for light discovers
him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make mate knowledge and holiness; and in him there is no darkness at all, not the least mixture of ignorance, or of sin. And if we pretend to say, that we have communion with him, and walk in darkness, that is, go on in the practice of sin, which is as contrary to his holy nature, as darkness is to that of light, whatever professions we may make of our acquaintance with Christianity, and of being zealous for its interest, we lie, and do not the truth, but act in direct opposition to it. But if, on the other hand, we walk in the light of it, and surrounded with it as his brightest glory, we have then communion with him, and with one another in him; and though we are indeed conscious to ourselves of many past offences, for which so holy a God might for ever banish us from his presence, and of many remaining imperfections, which might discourage our approaches to him, we have this grand consolation, that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all our sins, be they ever so numerous, or ever so heinous. And indeed it is a consolation which we absolutely need; for if we say, that we have no sin, it is too evident that we grossly deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; we must be destitute of every good principle, if we are utterly insensible of our own guilt and imperfection. But if we confess our sins to God, with a becoming lowliness and contrition of spirit, he is not only merciful and gracious, but faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, in consideration of his engagements to our great Surety, and to us by him, and effectually to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, by his atoning blood, and the influence of that sanctifying spirit which it has purchased for us.

This is our ground of confidence, and our refuge as sinners; and let us often renew our applications to it: for as on this foundation we are indeed secure, so on the other hand, if we are so rash and presumptuous, to say, that we have covers all things; his unspotted holiness, and not to the priest, that one could hardly forbear being astonished, that it should ever have been urged in behalf of auricular confession; if it were not for the many examples we have of such shameful and preposterous reasoning in the arguments which are pleaded in favour of popery.
have not sinned, we not only lie ourselves, which in every instance must be displeasing to the God of truth; but we, in effect, make him a liar, who in the constitution of the gospel, which he hath sent to all, goes on a supposition, that every soul to whom it is addressed, is under guilt and condemnation. And consequently, if we assert and maintain our own personal innocence, we shall show, that his word is not in us, that this humbling message of his grace has never been cordially received by us, nor hath produced its genuine effects on our hearts.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. How seriously should we attend to the word of life, when addressed to us by those who were so intimately acquainted with it, and with him who brought it and revealed it to the world! In like manner may all concerned in dispensing it, be able to say that it is what they have heard, and as it were, seen and handled; yea, tasted and let in all its sweetness and energy. Jesus Christ is in deed that life which was with the Father, and is now manifested unto us: may we ever regard him as such, and have communion with John, and the other sacred writers, in their communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Surely they, who by experience know the delight and benefit of that communion, will desire that others may be partakers of it with themselves. Their own joy, instead of being diminished, will be rather rendered more complete and intense, by being in this manner imparted to others.

Nothing can be of more importance than to form right and worthy conceptions of God; and that we may do so, let us reflect on him, as the purest and even unmingled light, without any the least shade of darkness; as truth in perfection, without any mixture of falsehood or evil. And let us be particularly concerned, that as we desire to have fellowship with him, we allow not ourselves to walk in darkness of any kind, but put off all its works, that we may put on the whole armour of light, and walk in the light, as he is of the light. Let every action of our lives, every thought of our hearts, be brought to the light of the gospel, and tried and proved according to it. And as it would be very vain and criminal in us, to deny our having any sin, as it would be self-deceit to imagine it, and self-confusion to affirm it, let us, with humble thank-

* We make him a liar. This text plainly implies, that Christianity does in effect assert, that we are all in a degenerate state, and consequently is a clear proof of the corruption of human nature.
thankfulness, apply to that blood, which is able to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Most freely confessing our sins, in all their aggravations, so far as our weak and limited thoughts can attain, to the view of them, let us humbly plead his promise, and his covenant; and then fidelity and justice will join with mercy, to insure our deliverance from the punishment they merit: so that instead of being, as we have deserved, companions in condemnation and ruin, we shall share together in that complete freedom from all the penal consequences of sin, which will be the portion of all those who truly repent, and obey the gospel.

SECT. II.

Further to promote that holiness of temper, which it is the great design of this epistle to recommend, the Apostle urges the propitiation and intercession of Christ, and the necessity of shewing our love to God, by obedience, by brotherly love, and by overcoming the immoderate love of the world. 1 John II. 1—17.

1 John II. 1.

PERMIT me now to address myself to you, with all tenderness and endearment, as my little children, and to assure you, that I write these things concerning the readiness of God to forgive sin, not to encourage you to offend, but with a contrary purpose, that you may not sin. And I hope you will consider it as your highest interest, to guard against that greatest and most formidable of all evils. But if any man, through the surprise of a violent temptation, and remaining infirmity of human nature, do fall into sin, let him not absolutely despair, as if his case were hopeless; for we have still this great and important consolation, that if we are true believers, we have an advocate with the Father, a to plead

a An Advocate with the Father.] The word, advocate, in our language commonly signifies one who is to plead for a person in a court of judicature; but Dr. Samuel Harris hath taken great pains to show, that it properly signifies the same with patron amongst the Romans, or πρότατος in the Hebrew, a great person, who used to patronize the cause of some of inferior rank, and who was also a sponsor for their good behaviour. By this he imagines several scriptures may be illustrated, and particularly Isa. I. 7—9; Job. xxix. 12; Psal. lxxii. 12; Job. xxxiii. 23, &c. And in confirmation of this sentiment he brings some remarkable quotations from the ancients. Harris's Observ. p. 49—61. Perhaps there is nothing that illustrates the matter more, than the residence of some eminent persons from distant provinces, in the courts of great princes or states, whose business it was constantly to negotiate with them the affairs of those whom they represented, to vindicate them from any unjust aspersions, and to advance their interest to the utmost of their power.

b For
plead for our pardon and renew our peace, even Jesus Christ, the righteous one; that great exalted Saviour, who was himself, by way of eminence, and in such a degree, as no other person dwelling in human flesh ever was, so perfectly righteous, that his obedience absolutely answered the demands of the Divine law in all its extent and purity. And he is the great propitiation for our sins, to whom, under that character, we have fled with cheerful confidence; and it is a joy to us to reflect, that he is not only the propitiation for ours, but also [for the sins] of the whole world: no nation under heaven is excluded from a share in the blessings he hath purchased, nor shall any person whatsoever be excluded, let his iniquities have been ever so great and aggravated, if he be disposed to make a proper application to him. And by this certain mark and evidence, we know that we are acquainted with him to the most happy and effectual purposes, even if we faithfully and uprightly keep all his commandments. For he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar; he falsely pretends to a knowledge of him, of which he is quite destitute; and therefore in this respect the truth is not [in him.] But whosoever uprightly and impartially keepeth his word, in him certainly is the love of God perfected: it is plain he has it in his heart, and does not, like those who regardless of the Divine authority, make a hypocritical pretence to it. And by we know, that we are interested in the Son of God, and united to him by this influence of our faith upon our practice. He that saith, he abideth in him, and pretends a claim to his saving benefits, ought himself so to walk, as he, whom he calls his Divine Master, walked, when he was here on earth. He ought in everything to trace, and endeavour to imitate his example.

And

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whosoever keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

b For the sins of the whole world. Mr. Kezner has urged this as a proof, that the merit of Christ's death shall extend, not only to believers, but to many others; and I do not see that Christianity can receive any prejudice by our acknowledging that, if there are those in whom a true sincere temper prevails, they may be accepted of God, in consideration of the statement which Christ hath made. But this will by no means prove the doctrine of universal redempt., in the sense in which some persons have stated it. But it seems to me, that the apostle is to be understood, as speaking only of all those who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, over the whole world.
7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

And this is so obvious and natural a truth, that I persuade myself, brethren, ye already know it; for herein I write no new commandment to you, but the old commandment, founded in nature, recommended by the Mosaic law, and that which ye had especially inculcated from the beginning of your acquaintance with the gospel, the great practical intent of which was, doubtless, presently made known to you by whomsoever it was preached. I may therefore well say, it is the old commandment; for it is the word which you heard from the beginning of your acquaintance with Christianity. Yet considering its peculiar obligations, and the new motives with which it is enforced upon us continually, I may say again, a new commandment I write to you, which expression is true in him, and in you, for he has laid us under new engagements to observe it, by his admirable love declared and exhibited to us; because the darkness of heathenism, and twilight of the Jewish state, is now passed away, and the true light now shineth, and in proportion to our knowledge, he may reasonably expect that our care to act suitably should be awakened. He that saith, he 9 is in the light, that he enjoyeth, that he understands and receives the gospel, and hateth his brother, and does him any designed injury, is in the darkness even till now. And his ineffectual acquaintance with some principles of religion, which do not influence his heart to charity and beneficence, will, as to his real and final happiness, stand him in no stead. But he that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

10 He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness;
They had known him who was from the beginning:

tation, on account of his knowledge and profession, is really ignorant of his own state, because darkness hath blinded his eyes; and so he is in the utmost danger of falling, before he is aware, into the bottomless pit, from whence there is no redemption.

12 These things I say unto you, and they are of universal concern; I hope therefore you will all attend to them, and improve them for your own advantage. I write unto you, little children, amongst the rest, to guard the least and weakest of you against sin: because by his name, even the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has made an atonement for them, your sins are forgiven you, and I am very solicitous that you may make all due return for so inestimable a favour, as a pardon purchased at the expense of such sacred blood. [I write to you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning; because ye have heard of his divine dignity and glory, who was in the beginning, who was with God, and himself God; that ye may behave aright towards that Divine Saviour, who submitted to such abasement for us, though originally he was so exalted and glorious. I write to you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one, have bravely bid defiance to his allurements and terror, in taking upon you, in so solemn a manner, the Christian profession; and I would by no means have you disgrace the victory you have already gained. I write to you, little children,] because even the youngest of you have known God, as the Father of his people, have been taught

c. To ye, little children, &c.] There is such an apparent discrepancy in these three verses, as cannot, I know of, be equalized in any other part of scripture. Some have imagined that the explanation of little children here, (in the original manuscript, which Wiclif says is used to signify Christians in general,) where and it refers either to those who were young in years, or lately converted to Christianity. (See Gene. Por. Vol V. p. 233.) And they have supposed the meaning of the apostle's exhortation here is, that as one of the first persons of a child become acquainted with, is their father, so they should know God, and improve more and more in a practical acquaintance with him: and each of these commentators contains a tacit exhortation to go on in that which he commends them for, or congratulates them upon. But on the whole, comparing the beginning of the 12th with the 14th verse, where the same words are repeated, I am ready to conjecture, that if they were written in the original, they were left out again, and were written more perfectly afterwards in the 14th; and consequently, that all that should be retained, is the last clause of it, in connection with the 12th. Your sins are forgiven — because ye have known the Father. Thus all tautology is avoided, and every sentiment and expression, in either of the verses, is preserved. I have therefore included in a parenthesis all that part, both of the text and paraphrase, which may be left out without taking away any thing from the sense, or burdening it with an unnecessary repetition.
And therefore should not love the world.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And this may the rather be expected, as the word of God abideth in you, as you have been instructed in the principles of Divine truth by your pious parents, and other teachers; and many of you have given noble specimens of the good effects of their instructions, in that ye have already overcome the wicked one in many of his attacks; for otherwise ye could not have assumed the profession of the Christian faith in these circumstances; nor have retained it for such a length of time.

And now whatever your age, station, and circumstances may be, suffer me to address to you one farther word of exhortation; which is this, Love not the world, nor the things [which are] in the world, in an irregular and excessive degree; for any one love the world with too great an attachment, and have his heart chiefly set on its interests, or its pleasures, it may justly be concluded, that the love of the Father is not in him; for there is a real inconsistence between the love of the world in this sense, and that of God: which will easily appear, when we consider what we may justly understand by the world: For all that is in the world, when it comes to make up the largest catalogue of good things, which it can promise to those who eagerly and idolatrously pursue it, [is] to be comprehended under these three well known particulars, the lust of the flesh, that is, the pleasurable indulgence of our carnal appetites; and the lust of the eyes, that is, the acquisition of money, which if not expended for other purposes for which it is designed, only serves us to behold and count over; and

d In an irregular and excessive degree.] It is plainly necessary to attend to such a limitation; for otherwise there is a degree of love to worldly enjoyments which is rational, and which we must have for them, or we cannot in a proper manner attend to the duties of life.
Reflections on the advocacy of Christ, &c.

and the pride of life, some ambitious pursuits in consequence of which we may make a parade in the eyes of our fellow-creatures for a little while, in our way to the grave, which is to strip us of it all. Now it is evident, that [these things] considered as the food of luxury, avarice, and ambition, are not of the Father, but of the world. It plainly appears, that God, considered as the author of all good, cannot be pleased with such affections and pursuits; and it would be profane to suppose that they are produced or excited by him, or that the prevalence of them can be acknowledged by him, as consistent with his love in the heart. Endeavour therefore, my brethren, to get more and more above such snare and entanglements as these; and so much the rather, as the world and all the luxury of it, and whatever belongs to it which can serve to the gratification of our desires, passes away like a glaring pageant, which only amuses the eye for a few transient moments, and then disappears. But he that doeth the will of God faithfully and steadily, abideth for ever; he hath built his happiness upon a basis which nothing can remove, and accordingly finds it secure, even when he quits this momentary world, and enters on an eternal and unalterable state.

IMPROVEMENT.

O let us be lifting up our eyes and our hearts to him who is our great Advocate with the Father: too frequently do the infirmities of our lives demand our application to him under that character. Let us rejoice that he is, Jesus Christ the righteous, that he is the Lord our righteousness. While we joy in him as the propitiation for our sins, let it comfort our heart to think, how wide the efficacy of his atonement extends. O, that all the world might be engaged to apply to him under this important consideration!

1 John ii. 16.

16 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.
He reminds them that Antichrist was coming. 347

O, that all those who profess so to apply to him, might remember how necessary it is, that if they would shew they indeed know him, they should keep his commandments; this, rather than any of those Ver. passionate transports of mind, on which some are ready to lay 3, 5 so great a stress, is the perfection, of love to God. May the spirit of Christ impress upon us more of our Master's image, and teach us with greater care and exactness to order to our walk and conver-
sation by his example. Since we have an illustrious light to direct our path, let us make use of it to this purpose, lest eternal dark-
ness come upon us. Let us learn the Divine lesson we are here taught, to love our brethren, and gradually to rise higher above that 9 love of the world, that attachment to temporal and present interests, which is inconsistent with the love of the Father! When we are tempted too fondly to admire, or too eagerly to pursue this gaudy pageant, let us survey the inventory here given of its boasted trea-
sures. Let us compute the most it can even pretend to confer upon us, and impartially weigh all that can gratify the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, against those solid 16 pleasures which arise from the love of God, against those infinite benefits which will finally result from it. They who do his will abide for ever, nor is their removal from this empty and transitory world any objection against it. Yea, rather, how would it be pos-
sible, or how desirable, they should abide for ever, were not a re-
moval from such a mutable, such an unsatisfying, and in many re-
spects allueting world, to make a part of the plan, formed by Divine Providence and grace in their favour.

SECT. III.

The Apostle discourses of the antichrists which then began to arise in the world, and directs Christians to the best preservatives against their seducing doctrines. 1 John II. 18—23.

1 John II. 18.

LITTLE children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby

1 John II. 18. A
n now, my beloved, dear to me as little children to the most affectionate parents, attend to my caution against those many sedu-
cers, with which not only the world, but even the church abounds. It is indeed the last time, the

a Little children.] Mr. Cradock has ob-
served, that little children are not so apt to
love the world; but seem by reason of the
weakness of their understanding, more
likely to be seduced by artful and design-
ging men: and therefore he imagines that
in this place there is a peculiar propriety
b The last time.] Some explain this of
the last age of the Jewish church and
commonwealth, because it was the period in
the last dispensation God will ever give to the world, is now promulgated; and it is no wonder if Satan endeavour to the utmost to adulterate a system from which his kingdom has so much to fear. And as you have heard, that one great seducer, from his opposition to Christ called antichrist, is coming, so I must assure you, that even now there are many aspiring and interested men, who act in such opposition to the Redeemer's cause, and the whole purpose of his appearance, that though they profess his name, they may not improperly be called antichrists, by which indeed we may know that this is the last time; for when we compare this event with the predictions of our Lord, it is so far from contradicting them, that indeed it is a great accomplishment and illustration of them. Once indeed they pretended to join themselves to us; but that it was only an hypocritical pretence to Christianity which they made, appears from the issue of it; they went out from among us, and yet they were not upon the whole of us, nor did truly belong to our number, while they seemed to adhere to us. For if they had ever been sincerely of us, so as to feel the inward power of our gospel on their hearts, they would doubtless have continued with us; upright men would never have seen any cause to leave us, and Divine grace would have preserved such from the temptations by which these artful deceivers have been ensnared. But [this hath happened] that they might be made apparent, and that we might also reap an advantage from the detection of their hypocrisy, because it would thereby appear that all who join with us in external forms, are not indeed of us; but that even in the purest churches, there may be a mixture of tares among the wheat, which it will be prudence to remember, and to guard against. And as for you, I hope and trust you will not be seduced by thereof we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us. 20 But ye have an inquisition from the Holy One, in which our Saviour had foretold the rise of many false Christs; and this observation, to be sure, is material; but the expression of the last time, from comparing other scriptures, seems to be more extensive.

c Many antichrists Dr. Willyby explains these antichrists of unbelieving Jews opposing Christianity. I rather understand them to be apostates, who had once professed themselves Christians, and brought in pernicious heretical notions.

d That they might be made apparent, because all are not of us; and [such "so many antichrists," Dr. Willyby explains, which oppose Christianity. I rather understand them to be apostates, who had once professed themselves Christians, and whose opinions and ideas are utterly contrary to the revealed truth of the gospel.] Thus, I think, these words may be rendered; and the meaning is, that as there are some, who only pretend to be Christians, when they are not, and for some secular end mingle themselves with us, God has suffered these to be discovered, to save and alarm others who may yet be concealed.

e Denieith
by them; for ye have an inward anointing of the Holy One, even the spirit of purity and joy, which Christ the Holy One of God, hath poured forth upon us; and ye know all things relating to Christianity, in such an experimental manner, as will effectually preserve you against those snares of this vain world, which have been ruinous to those unhappy apostates I have just mentioned. And as to what I have now said, 21 I have not written to you, because ye know not the truth, nor have I entered so largely into the discussion of this matter, as would then have been necessary; but on the contrary, have contented myself with these short hints, because ye know it, and I am desirous to confirm you in it, and to awaken your zeal to join with me in testifying it to others, and opposing the many false doctrines which are taught in opposition to it; for every lie is not of the truth; there is an irreconcilable inconsistence between truth and falsehood, and the more you are confirmed in the one, the more faithfully will you guard against and oppose the other. And who is a liar and a seducer in the most dangerous sense that can be imagined, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the most pernicious of all errors, and tends most directly to overthrow all virtue and religion in the world, and utterly to subvert and destroy men's souls; and he who maintains this detestable doctrine, is in a sense antichrist, who in effect denies both the Father and the Son: For however some may pretend a zeal for the honour of God, while they are crying down that of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet so it is, that every one who denieth the Son, hath not any real regard to the Father, nor any interest in him: for God hath declared with an evidence which all who sincerely love and honour him will not fail to receive, that no man cometh to the Father but by Christ; that he is well-pleased in him as his beloved Son, and maintains a favourable intercourse with sinful men only by him. [But he who acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also] and taketh the most

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21 I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth; but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also.

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e Denieth that Jesus is the Christ.] Some are of opinion this was written against Cerinthus, who in his doctrine separated Jesus from Christ, maintaining them to be two distinct persons, and denied him to be the Son of God. See Dr. Berriman's Hist. of the Trin. p. 38. Compare Dr. Whitby's Preface to this epistle. Mr. Baxter also takes in the Symonians, Manadrians, and Carpocratians, with other heretics in those early ages. Baxter's Works, Vol. III. p. 218.

f He who acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also.] These words, which I have included
That they might be entitled to eternal life.

sect. iii.
I John
11. 24.

most effectual method to secure the continuance of his favour.

As for you therefore, to whom I now address myself, let what I here say be improved by way of caution to yourselves; be on your guard against the numerous artifices of those who would ensnare and seduce you, and let that word which ye have heard from me, at the beginning of the gospel, abide in you so steadily, that no man may ever wrest it from you. And if it be indeed so, and that word which ye have heard from the beginning, thus abide in you, you also will abide in that state of blessed union, in which you are, with the Son and the Father; you will dwell under their united protection, and find a source of delight springing up in your souls from communion with them, to which there is nothing comparable in any of the enjoyments of the present world. And this will readily be acknowledged, if you only consider, with what exalted hopes you will then be supported; for this is the promise which he hath promised to us; (which while I mention, I cannot but exceedingly rejoice in the consideration of my own interest in it,) even the possession of that invaluable treasure, eternal life, in comparison of which, whether we consider its excellence, or its duration, all the glories of the world, and even the world itself, are lighter than vanity, and unworthy the reflection of a single moment.

25 These things therefore I have written unto you concerning those who would deceive you, and rob you of that inestimable treasure, that you may guard against them with the utmost vigilance.

26 And, I trust, this will indeed be the case, for as for you in general, I esteem you sincere in the profession of your religion, and therefore may reasonably say, that the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which you have received from him, who

cd, from the commendations given them elsewhere, that it signifies no more than an endeavour to reduce; and there are many passages, both in sacred and profane authors, in which a person is said to do a thing, which he attempts. See Mr. Blackwell's Sacr. Class. Vol. p. 121.

b The Anointing which ye have received from him, &c.] The Spirit of God is compared to an anointing, because of his precious and cheering gifts which rendered Christians more fit to encounter with their
who hath given you the promise of eternal life, 
abideth in you perpetually and powerfully; and 
in consequence thereof you have no such neces-
sity as others, that any one should teach you the 
first principles of true religion. But let it be 
your care uprightly and humbly to yield up 
your souls to the superior instructions of this 
Divine Spirit; and as this same unction from 
him teacheth you concerning all things, and it 
is true, and has no mixture of falsehood in it, even 
as that has taught you, abide in him to whom by 
that spirit ye are thus vitally united. Yea, let 28 
me now repeat it again, as a matter of the high-
est importance, comprehending in one word the 
whole of our duty and happiness; my dear 
Christian friends, dear to me as little children 
to their affectionate parents, abide in him, that 
when he shall appear; as he assuredly will, in all 
his pomp and glory, we may have humble bold-
ness, and may not be put to shame and confusion 
before him at his coming; but may welcome him 
with cheerfulness, as those who have approved 
their fidelity to him, and expect by his grace, 
an abundant reward.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us not be surprised, if there are are some who revolt from Ver.
Christianity in our days; evinced thereby the insincerity of their 18, 19 
former professions; since even the apostolic age produced some 
instances of this kind. But notwithstanding this, the foundation of 
God standeth firm, and the Lord knoweth them that are his: (2 Tim. 
ii. 19.) They will continue united with his church in faith and 
love, and no temptation will be able entirely to separate them 
from it.

Vain

their spiritual enemies; as wrestlers were 
amointed with oil to make them fitter for 
their various exercises, and to prevent 
the advantages which might otherwise be 
taken against them. Whether this 
passage will be less capable of yielding sup-
port to the popish doctrine of chrism, or that 
of the Quakers, which asserts such an ins-
piration of all Christians as renders the 
office of a stated ministry unnecessary, it is 
hard to say. Compare Limborch's Theol. 
v. 77, 4, and Barclay's Apology, p. 52. 
With relation to the latter, it may be of 
some moment to observe, that the Chris-
tian ministry was in the highest repute in 
the church, when the gifts of the Spirit 
were poured down upon it in the greatest 
abundance.

1 1.unction teacheth you all things.] It 
seems manifest from hence, that every 
Christian is supposed to have been anointed 
by the Holy Ghost. But as it would be 
most absurd to pronounce it impossible, 
that a man in any degree of error should 
be a true Christian, it plainly shews, in 
how restrained a sense many general ex-
pressions, occurring in scripture, may be 
taken, and in that view is well worth our 
attentive regard.
Vain are all pretences to adhere to the Father, if we desert the
Son. To his gospel therefore let us stedfastly cleave, animated
by the infinitely important promise of eternal life. Can we go
22, 23 to another Saviour? Can we expect from any other hand a nobler,
or even an equal reward? May we all, who profess a relation to him,
receive an anointing from above, which may teach us all those things
it is of importance for us to know, and which may engage us to
abide in him with inseparable fidelity. Yet a little while, and he
will again come, will appear with a glory which will warrant, and
will reward the firm attachment we have manifested to his interests.
May we not, at that important period, have reason to be ashamed
before him; may he not be ashamed of us; but having confessed
before men, may we be confessed by him before his Father, and
his holy angels. (Luke xii. 8.)

SECT. IV.

The Apostle discourses concerning the exalted privileges of the chil-
dren of God, to which all true Christians are entitled, and urges
the necessity of a holy temper, and of a holy life, in order to de-
monstrate that we are of that happy number. 1 John ii. 29.—
III. 10.

I HAVE before been discoursing of the Divine
holiness and purity: now the consideration
of this may enable you to judge, whether you
are, or are not, in the happy number of the
children of God. For since ye know, that he is
perfectly righteous, ye may know, that every one
that practiseth righteousness, is born of him; as
the production of righteousness in the mind
argues a Divine agency upon it, therefore he,
in whom it is produced, is by regeneration, the
Son of God.

III. 1 Now on this view I would intreat you atten-
tively to dwell; as indeed no subject can be
more worthy of your serious regard. Behold,
my brethren, behold with delight and holy ad-
miration, what manner of love, what immense,
umutterable, inconceivable condescensions of
love, the Father of universal nature, the Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath bestowed upon us,
sinful mortals, that we should be honoured with
so sublime an appellation, should be called the
chil-
And should hereafter be like him, seeing him as he is.

be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and 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.

a We should be called the children of God.] The original word is γενετοί, not γενεταί, and therefore should be rendered children rather than sons. It is worth observing upon this text, that when the Danish missionaries appointed some of their Malabarian converts to translate a catechism, in which it was mentioned as the privilege of Christians to become the sons of God, one of the translators was startled at so bold a saying as he thought it, and said, It is too much; let me rather render it, They shall be permitted to kiss his feet. Let. of Don. Miss. No. 7, p. 56.

b It doth not yet appear, &c.] It is observable that these are the words of John, of him who had not only so familiarly conversed with Christ on this sublime and delightful subject, but had seen his transfiguration, when Moses and Elias appeared in such regalent glory. He also, as Mr. Baxter observes in this connection, (see his Works, Vol. III. p. 16,) saw a most glorious vision of the New Jerusalem. But it may be doubted whether this epistle were not of an earlier date than the apocalypse; and it seems most probable that it was, both considering the great age of the apostle, when banished to Patmos, and how naturally some things on which he touches in this epistle, especially relating to anti-christ, might have been illustrated by what he saw there.

c If he be revealed.] This is one of the many places, wherein the particle σαυτός, which is nearly equivalent to it, does not imply any uncertainty of the event, but is put for when.

d We shall see him as he is.] Archbishop Tillotson well observeth, and proves at large that the sight of God is put to express the knowledge and enjoyment of him, because of its excellency and dignity, its largeness and comprehension, its spirituality and quickness, its evidence and certainty. (See his Works, Vol. III. p. 194.) Seneca has some most sublime passages in his, 102d epistle, relating to that Divine light which good men should behold in a future state; the very thought of which, he says, will prohibit any thing sordid, base or malevolent, from settling in the mind that entertains it.

2 Cor. vi. 18. It is true indeed, this is a dignity which only attracts the observation of very few, and in this respect the world knows us not, and doth not acknowledge us for what we really are; because it knoweth not him, who is God's eternal and first-born Son, the Head of the family, through whom we have received the adoption. Such are the unhappy prejudes of apostate men against the Divine will, and the Divine image, that Christ himself was unknown while he dwelt in human flesh; and therefore it is no wonder that we are so, in that respect in which we resemble him. Nevertheless, my beloved, it is a most certain, and a most joyful truth that now we are the children of God, and a truth which draws after it a long train of glorious consequences; for it doth not yet perfectly appear what we shall be; the inheritance we expected is far beyond what we can at present conceive. But this we know in the general, that if he, by whom we have received the adoption, be revealed, as he will certainly at length be, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; we shall have so clear and distinct a view and

1 John III. 1.
Therefore Christians should be pure, as he is pure.

and discernment of him, as shall transform us into his image, even the image of his holiness, the brightest and most illustrious of the various glories with which he is invested.

4 But let not any imagine this is an expectation indiscriminately to be entertained by all who stile themselves Christians, or in any measure consistent with an unprofitable and wicked life. No, it is of the most generous tendency, and produces the most happy effects; for every one who hath this hope in him on a solid foundation, purifeth himself from every pollution, with a sincere desire to advance daily in every branch of moral perfection and excellence, till at length he becomes pure, even as he is pure, so far as the Divine holiness can be resembled by any creature in this mortal and imperfect state. On the other hand, every one who practiseth sin, practiseth also the violation of the Divine law, for this is the very nature and essence of sin, and what is common to every kind, and every act of it, that sin is the violation of the law, either natural or revealed. And ye know, that he who is so familiar to our thoughts, and our discourses, even our Divine Master and Saviour, was manifested, that he might take away the guilt and power of our sins, by his atonement, and by the sanctifying influences of his Spirit; and there is no kind or degree of sin in him, nothing but what is of the most opposite nature. It is plain, therefore, that every one who abideth in him, sinneth not, cannot make a trade and practice of it; and that every one who thus habitually and allowedly sinneth, hath not seen him nor known him: his views and knowledge of him have been so superficial, as that they deserve not to be mentioned, since they have not conformed the love and prevalence of sin, and brought the man to a holy temper and life.

My

and there sin no kind or degree of sin in him, nothing but what is of the most opposite nature. It is plain, therefore, that every one who abideth in him, sinneth not, cannot make a trade and practice of it; and that every one who thus habitually and allowedly sinneth, hath not seen him nor known him: his views and knowledge of him have been so superficial, as that they deserve not to be mentioned, since they have not conformed the love and prevalence of sin, and brought the man to a holy temper and life.

My
He that is born of God, doth not commit sin.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous:

My dear little children, let no one deceive you on this important matter by vain words, with whatever pomp, or solemnity, or plausibility, they may be attended. A being himself immutably holy, can never dispense with the want of holiness in his reasonable creatures. He who practiseth righteousness is righteous, even as he himself is righteous: it is his own image, and he must invariably love and delight in it, and must as invariably abhor sin, as utterly contrary to his nature. For indeed he who practiseth sin, is of the devil: he imitates his character, and complies with his instigations; for the devil sinneth from the beginning: he introduced sin into the creation of God, and he continues still to promote it ever since, to the utmost of his power and influence: whereas the appearance of the Son of God was to a quite different and contrary purpose; for he was manifested in human flesh, that he might dissolve and destroy the works of the devil, that he might recover mankind from the apostacy into which they were seduced by the temptations of Satan; and delivering them from the bondage of sin, might restore them to the practice of universal righteousness, and thereby to the favour and enjoyment of God. Every one who is born of God, who is regenerated by Divine grace, and adopted into the number of his children, doth not practise sin, because his seed abideth in him; and all which he certainly knows, he has farther to endure.

8 He that commiteth sin, is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.

For certain it is, that the devil sinneth from the beginning. See Linn. Theol. lib. ii. cap. xx. sect. 4. But it seems, that the use of the present tense implies a continuance in a course of sin; which is indeed the case with respect to this malignant and unhappy spirit, who continues in horrible, notwithstanding all he has already suffered, and all which he certainly knows, he has farther to endure.

9 Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth.

[Destroy the works of the devil.] Difex.

This expressive word leads us to look on sin and misery as a fabric, of which the devil is the great architect, and which Christ is come to overthrow and demolish. Accordingly he has already broken, as it were, the compages and strength of it; and we may hope it will gradually be levelled, and its very ruins removed. He has certainly done what has a most powerful tendency to produce such an effect. But it seems driving matters to a very unjustifiable extremity, to argue from hence, as some have done, the utter extirpation of all moral and penal evil from the universe. And were not the judgment so palpably biased by the effects, as we see it to be in many instances, it is not to be conceived that men of penetration should have laid any stress on so precarious an argument.

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there is an immortal principle implanted by God
in the heart, which will not suffer a man, who
hath received it, entirely to over-hast it; and he cannot sin, in such a manner, and to such a
degree as others, because he is thus born of God.

In this therefore, and by this, as the grand cha-
characteristic, are the children of God manifested on
the one hand, and the children of the devil, on
the other. Every one who doth not practise righ-
teousness, is not of God; and I may add, as a
matter of great consequence, that he who loveth
not his brother, as he cannot practise rightous-
ness, a great part of which consists in brotherly
love, is not of God; neither can he, without
great presumption, pretend to claim a place
amongst his children.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. How inestimable a privilege is it to be born of God! What
infinite reason have those that possess it, to rejoice and be ex-
ceeding glad! With what astonishment should we reflect upon
the Divine condescension, in admitting us to such an endear-
ning relation! Let us behold with admiration and joy, what manner of
love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we sinful wretched mor-
tals should be called the sons of God! Let us behold how high
it rises, how wide it diffuses its effects; How glorious the inhe-
ritance, to which in consequence of this we are entitled! The
world indeed knows it not; nor do we ourselves completely know
it. Even John, the beloved disciple, who lay in the bosom of our
Lord, and drank so deep out of the fountain-head of knowledge
and holiness, even he says, it doth not yet appear what we shall be.
But let us, in sweet tranquility of soul, depend on our heavenly
Father, that he will do whatever is becoming his perfect
wisdom and goodness, in respect to the advancement and felicity
of his own children. During our state of minority, let us be
contented to be at his allowance, and rejoice, that we are in the
general told, that when Christ, the first-born of the family, shall
make his second triumphant appearance, we shall also appear with

[k He cannot sin.] It is certain these words must be taken in something of a
qualified sense, or they would prove not only the utmost perfection of every child of
God, but also the improbability of every such person, or the impossibility of his sin-
ing, which none have been wild and en-
thusiastical enough to assert. It must
therefore, I think, be understood only as
expressing a strong disadmission to sin, in
the kind and degree referred to before.—
And it is certain, there are many passages of scripture, in which the word, cannot,
must be taken in such a latitude. Compare Luke xiii. 33; Heb. ix. 5; Neh. vi.
3; Num. xxii. 18. And this phraseology
Hophnius well illustrates by similar pas-
sages from the classics. See Annot. ex
Polyb. in loc.
with him in glory, new dressed from the grave, to adorn his train, and transformed into his illustrious image, not only with respect to the glories of the body, but the brighter glories of the immortal spirit. With him we shall have an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom, and for ever experience the efficacy of that near and intimate vision of him, which we shall there enjoy, to transform us into the same likeness from glory to glory. O, that in the mean time, we may all feel the energy of this blessed hope to purify our souls, that our hearts and dispositions may correspond to our expectations! When Christ came in human flesh, it was with this important purpose, that he might take away sin, that he might destroy the works of the devil, and reduce to order and harmony that confusion and ruin, which Satan by his malicious insinuations had introduced into the world. Blessed Jesus! may this thy benevolent design be more and more effectual. May the empire of sin and corruption, which is the empire of hell, be entirely subdued, and thy celestial kingdom of Grace and holiness advanced. And may none deceive themselves, nor forget, that he alone is righteous, who practiseth righteousness. By this let us judge of ourselves, whether we are the children of God, or of the devil. And instead of flattering ourselves that though we do commit sin with allowance, yet there may be some secret seed of God still concealed in our hearts; let us judge of our having received this regenerating seed, by its tendency to preserve us from sin, and the victories it enables us to gain over its destructive wiles and insufferable tyranny.

SECT. V.

The Apostle discourses of the necessity and importance of brotherly love, as a distinguishing mark and characteristic of the children of God. 1 John III. 11, to the end.

1 John III. 11. FOR this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

1 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one,
rously slew his own innocent and pious brother. And for what cause did he slay him? Truly for this, because his own deeds were evil, and those of his brother righteous; in consequence of which he was disapproved, and his brother approved by God; and this excused not his repentance, but his envy and hatred, which at length settled into the most rackenous malice, and produced that horrible effect. And as there is a great deal of the same malignant temper remaining in the world, and there are many, in that sense, though not by natural descent of the seed of Cain, wonder not my brethren, if, under this influence, the world hate you. But, on the other hand, know that we are passed over, from the boundaries and territories of death, to those of life, because we unforgivably hate our brethren; as they are the children of God as well as ourselves, and the members of one body with us. He that hath not (his) brother, can have no good principle, but necessarily abideth in spiritual death, and must for ever continue in that miserable state, if the frame and temper of his mind be not entirely changed.

15 And this you may easily apprehend, if you consider, that every one who hateth his brother, is a murderer, and were it not for the restraint of human laws, that private malice which is harboured in his thoughts would produce, as it did in the instance of Cain, actual murder. And we assuredly know, that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him, nor can any person of that detestable character enter into the celestial kingdom, the region of perfect love.

16 Jesus Christ, who reigns in that blessed world, has given us various and numberless proofs of an unparalleled charity; and it is in this, above all the other instances of it, that we know by experience the greatness of his love, as he hath laid down his life for us; and as in imitation of one, and slew his brother. Therefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

14 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

15 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren, he thatloveth not his brother abideth in death.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought a Pamphlet from the Bible. Then on and even of the best of men, which applies by a strange resemblance, that they are, as it were, born on the land and territories of death, so that the soul could them in such a condition, as to be liable to condemnation and destruction, to the extremity of a capital sentence. And it seems to me, that such deep and painful speech hath not here, in a manner peculiarly touching and affecting.
They should not love in word, but in truth.

17 But whose hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him.

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.

where the relative evidently refers to a remote antecedent. Compare Heb. vii. 2. note a.

c Lay down our lives for the brethren.] That is, when the life and happiness of many are concerned, we ought to be willing to sacrifice our own. If one only were to be rescued on such terms, the argument would in a great measure fail, unless that one were of so great importance that in dying for him we died for many; and the heathens themselves saw the obligation to submit to death in such a case, though they were unacquainted with that noble motive to which the apostle here refers. Compare Cicero de officiis, lib. 1. cap. iii. p. 34.
and conversation, [then] have we that confidence and freedom of speech before God, in our addresses to him, which nothing else could give us, and which it is impossible we should have, while we know that we deal deceitfully in any instance, either with him or our fellow-creatures.

And we know, that whatever we ask, we shall receive of him, if subservient to our truest good, because we are conscious of a prevailing care to keep his commandments, and to do the things which we have reason to apprehend are pleasing in his sight; which he, as the righteous God, will be pleased with, when proceeding from a sincere principle of faith in Christ, and attended with those humble regards to him, which the imperfection of our own obedience, in its best estate, will require. And this is his great command. That we should believe in the name of his dear Son Jesus Christ, and endeavour to grow more in that blessed principle of faith in him; and that we should unfeignedly and cordially love one another, as he hath so strongly and affectionately charged us to do.

And this is the true way to have that communion with God, to which I expressed, in the beginning of my epistle, such a desire to introduce you; for he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he, that is, God, abideth in that man: and in this we farther know, that he abideth in us by such an intimate union, even from the spirit which he hath given us, and which is the token and effect of his habitation in us; producing in our souls by his gracious operation, the image of God, and forming us to an intimacy with, and nearness to him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. O That the Divine Spirit which God hath given to dwell in believers, and by which he himself resides in them, may teach us more effectually this great lesson of love, which is so agreeable to the purposes for which he was conferred! Let us abhor the temper of Cain, as much as we abhor the actions it produced, and dread the doom they incurred. As for that hatred of the world, which in a steady adherence to our duty may probably fall to our lot, let it by no means surprise or discourage us. It is surely enough to support our spirits under the malice and outrage of
of a wicked world, that if we are steady and consistent Christians, we may know, that we are passed from death to life. O blessed transition! O the adorable riches of Divine grace to which it is owing! May the ardour of our love to our brethren render this happy change more and more apparent; and may this Christian benevolence be so ardent in our hearts, as to make us willing when certain duty requires it, even to lay down our lives for them; having been ourselves distinguished with the like token of the love of our Divine Master, who spared not his own life for us; and O, what are even thousands of our lives in comparison of his! And shall we then, while our brethren in the Lord are in necessity, be tenacious of our substance? When we are surrounded with plenty, shall we be unwilling to impart a little of our abundance for their relief, or content ourselves with the charity of words, which cost us nothing, while we with-hold the things that are needful for them? How will such shameful, destable hypocrisy disgrace all our pretensions to the love of God: but let us treat all hypocrisy either towards God or man, with detestation and abhorrence. Let us love, not only in word and in profession, but in deed and in truth, and rather chuse that our actions should exceed our engagements, than disappoint in any instance the expectations we have raised.

Of what infinite importance is it to have confidence towards God in all our addresses to his heavenly Majesty! And if we desire this to be the case, let us reverence our consciences; avoiding everything which would cause our hearts to condemn us, in the presence of him who is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. And while we rejoice in this, that they do not condemn us, let us be very careful that we examine them thoroughly, that we be not imposed on by a false answer, as it is to be feared many, through a superficial inquiry are, whose expectations are the most sanguine, and whose pretensions are the loudest. Let us remember this great summary of Christian duty, that we believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in the sight. An obedience, springing from such a faith, a faith verified by such an obedience, will give us a comfortable hope, that our prayers shall be accepted of God now, and our persons accepted hereafter to eternal life. Amen.
SECT. VI.

The Apostle cautions the Christian converts against being deceived by seducing spirits; and directs them how they may distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. 1 John IV. 1-12.

1 John IV. 1.

It is necessary, my beloved, that in the circumstances in which we are placed, I should caution you against credulously submitting to every one who pretends a Divine inspiration for what he says; believe not therefore every pretended spirit: but make trial of the spirits, whether they be indeed of God or not: for it is certain, that many false prophets are gone forth into the world, bearing a Divine mission, and thereby laying snares for the souls of men, with such artifice, that might, as our Lord expresses it, Mat. xxiv. 24, deceive the very elect if it were possible.

2 Now in this we know and may distinguish the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of truth, from that of error: every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ, who is come in the flesh, that pays a becoming deference to his authority, and the Divine discoveries which he hath made, is of God; there cannot, in the general, be any better attestation of any spirit than this, that it tends, in its agency and operations, to promote the honour of the great Redeemer. And you may, on the other hand, be sure of this, that every pretended spirit of revelation, that doth not confess and do homage to Jesus Christ, who is come in the flesh, is not of God: and indeed this is on the contrary the very [spirit of antichrist],

a Believe not every spirit. Many pretend to the character of the Messiah, and others, in an extraordinary manner to be sent and inspired of God; and this they did with a view of turning away Christians from their faith and hope. The article here, by a short turn of argument demonstrates that they were indeed impostors from this very attempt.

b That confesseth Jesus Christ, who is come in the flesh. So the words εἴλεισθε δὲ καὶ γνῶτε ἃς νῦν ἰησοῦς Χριστός ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου ἐστιν, may very well be rendered; and indeed they must be so in this connection, for the bare confession of Christ’s incarnation would not have been sufficient to have cleared them from the suspicion of being impostors. To confess Jesus Christ, seems to mean, not barely professing some kind of regard to him, but yielding a regular consistent homage, and, as it were, harmonizing and falling in with his design.

c This is the spirit of antichrist. From hence some have argued, that the Pope cannot be antichrist, because he confesses Christ; and that it must necessarily be some.
of whom you have heard in the Divine oracles and predictions which our blessed Lord delivered concerning this last time that he is coming, and is now in some measure already in the world. But, my dear children, ye are of God, and have overcome them in all their snares and delusions, because greater and more powerful by far is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. The Son of God, who stands at the head of that interest in which you are embarked, and who aids you by the mighty communications of his Spirit, is infinitely too strong for Satan, the great head of the apostacy, and for all his confederates. They of whom I have now been speaking, are of the world, and they know how to manage their affairs in a manner which will be pleasing to it; therefore they speak as of the world, as taking their instructions from it, they give their followers worldly hopes and expectations, and the world greedily hears them, and drinks in their fallacious maxims, to the unspeakable detriment of the interests of true religion. Whereas we are of God, and have approved ourselves to be so, by such irresistible evidence, that I may now venture to say, that he who knoweth God, and experiences the governing influence of Divine fear and love, heareth and regardeth us; but he who is not of God, doth not attentively and obediently hear us; and by rejecting our testimony, attended with such evidence, proves himself destitute of all true religion.

Bishop Bull thinks, the meaning of this is, "Regard our temper and conduct, and compare it with that of those who oppose us, and you will find a carnal principle continually prevailing in them, and a spiritual principle governing us; in consequence of which you may know assuredly that we are of God, and they of the world." Compare Bull's Sermon i. p. 11. I rather think, as Archbishop Tilston has stated it, (Vol. III. p. 501.) He considers the Christian religion as now so abundantly demonstrated, that it might be made a test by which other doctrines and pretences might be tried; and to those who have received it upon full evidence, it must be so. Thus the Jews were directed to judge, and obliged to condemn, a pretended prophet, as ipso facto, proved an impostor, if he attempted to turn them aside from the revelation which God had given by Moses. Deut. xiii. 1-3.

4 Let
Every one who loveth, is born of God.

1 John iv. 6.

10 But think it not enough speculatively to admit its authority. Let it be your great care particularly to acknowledge; and especially to the purposes of mutual benevolence. Yes, my beloved, let us love one another; for love is as really from God, as truth itself; and every one who loveth, every one in whose heart this Divine principle reigns and triumphs over the selfish and contrary passions, shews by it that he is born of God, by his regenerating and transforming grace, and that he truly knoweth God; he makes it appear, that he judges rightly of God's nature and will; and that his acquaintance with him has made deep and powerful impressions on his heart. Whereas he who loveth not, whatever he may pretend, hath not truly known God; for God is love, its great fountain and exemplar: he recommends it by his law, and produces and cherishes it by his influences; and the due contemplation of him will naturally inflame our hearts with love to his Divine Majesty, and to our fellow-creatures for his sake, whose creatures they are. And in this great instance is the love of God, of which I now speak, when I say that God is himself love, in the most illustrious manner manifested, and displayed in and towards us, that God sent Jesus his only-begotten and well beloved Son into the world, that we, condemned and miserable sinners, might live through him, that the sentence of death to which we were obnoxious, might be reversed, that we might be quickened to a principle of spiritual life, and so conducted to the possession of life everlasting. Yes, Sirs, I must repeat it again, that your hearts, and my own, may be the more deeply affected with it, herein is love, not indeed that we loved God, for we were, on the contrary, in a state of enmity to him, in which,

6 Let us love one another. It is reported, that when the apostle John was grown old, and past preaching, he used to be led to the church at Ephesus, and only say these words to the people, Little children, love one another. And the importance of the argument by which he enforces love, justifies the repetition of it so frequently.
and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

which, unsolicited and untouched by his love and grace, we should have persisted and perished; but that he loved us, and in boundless compassion to our necessities and our miseries, sent his Son [to be] a propitiation for our sins; to make atonement to his injured justice for our offences, and so to introduce us on honourable terms to his favour. And let me make this important inference from it, my beloved, if God so loved us, how ought we to love one another, in imitation of his Divine example, from a sense of the happy state into which we are brought, and in gratitude to him for so inestimable a favour? And the inference has the greater weight, as no man hath ever seen God, or can see him, since he is in his own nature invisible, and possessed of such essential perfections, that it is impossible that any expressions of love and duty from any of his creatures should in the least degree increase his happiness. But as he is the great fountain of benevolence, if we love one another, it appears that God dwelleth in us, and that his love is perfected in us, for this is the best proof we can give of our love to him, and of the prevalence of his grace in our hearts, transforming us into his image.

THE spirit of error has been working, in some measure, in all ages of the church; nor are we to wonder, if having infested that of the apostles, it be transmitted to our own. It is necessary therefore to try the spirits, whether they be of God; and we may safely try them by the homage they pay to Christ; and this not merely to his name, but to the genius of his religion, and to the great standard of it, which he had left upon record in his word, that it might not be that uncertain thing which the fancies or traditions of fallible men might have rendered it. Antichristian principles and powers have arisen, but God has enabled, and he will enable the remnant of his people to conquer them, for the spirit in them is greater than that which is in the world. That may hearken to seducers as they accommodate their doctrine to its prevailing lusts and passions; but let us remember that the gospel is now established as a test, and may we admit, or reject, all human teachings, as they agree, or disagree with it.

If we read and hear it to any valuable purpose, it will teach us to love one another: that great lesson of our Divine Master, with relation
relation to which we have line upon line, and precept upon precept. If we value ourselves in any degree upon knowing God, let us give Ver. this proof of it, without which all our most subtle speculations or debates concerning his nature and perfections will be utterly vain.

And that we may attain to this, let us frequently contemplate that incomparable display of his love towards us, in sending his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Let us daily consider our love as derived from that great act of mercy and grace; and that it is through Christ alone, as thus given us of God, that we can obtain and secure life eternal, since in him we receive the only appointed propitiation for those sins, which would otherwise have obstructed the passage of all good to us, even from the great eternal fountain of felicity. He hath prevented us with the blessings of his goodness: we did not love him, but he first loved us. O that this love on his part, may produce the warmest return on ours! and let us testify the sincerity of this affection, by remembering how it ought to influence our hearts to benevolence as well as devotion. And as we cannot see God at any time, nor extend any act of beneficence to him, let us see his image with due regard in every Christian, and in some degree in every human creature, that we may express our love to him, by doing good to them for his sake.

SECT. VII.

The Apostle further urges the excellence of love, as a substantial proof of our knowing God, and dwelling in him; and as bringing the greatest honour to God, and affording the truest composure and confidence to the soul. 1 John IV. 13, to the end.

1 John IV. 13. I HAVE been mentioning love as an argument of our union to God: and I must now add, that in this also we know, that he dwelleth in us, and that he dwelleth in us, because he hath given to us the communication of his Spirit, which operating in us by its gracious influences, sets as it were, the mark of God upon us, and thereby assures us that he owns us as his, and is become our God: And animated and sealed by this Spirit, as we have seen and known by undoubted evidence ourselves, so we courageously testify to others, how hazardous soever the bearing that testimony may be, that the great almighty Father of all hath sent Jesus the Son, under
under the high character of the Saviour of the world, and that it is in, and by him alone, how
profoundly soever the infidel world may reject and disdain him, that eternal salvation can be
obtained. Whosoever, in a steady and uniform manner, shall confess, that Jesus is the Son of
God, maintaining this profession of faith with resolution and zeal, and acting in conformity to it,
gives the happiest proof that God dwelleth in him, and that he dwelleth in God: there is a
blessed union between God and his soul; so that it is in the language of scripture, (Isa. lvi. 15.) the
habitation of God, and he may be said to be as to his affections and hopes, with God in heaven,
and shall ere long, in his complete person reside there. And we have known, and firmly believed the love which God hath unto us: for as we have again and again taught you, and know
not how to cease inculcating it, God is himself love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God,
and God in him; this is the bond of union, and the pledge of its perpetuity. (Compare ver. 8,
and 12.) And herein is love perfected in us, that notwithstanding all our acknowledged and la-
mented imperfections, we may have boldness and confidence in the great day of universal judg-
ment, in that as he our Father and our God is, so are we in some prevailing degree, even while
we reside in this world, so far as the imperfec-
tions of that mortal life, to which we are here
confined, will admit.

And happy are they, who are arrived to such a temper and character as this; for there is no
servile and abject fear in love, but perfect love casteth out such fear from the soul, in which it
resides.

a Whosoever shall confess, &c.] Bishop
Hopkins, accounts for this, and such passa-
ges, by observing, that in the primitive
times there were no temporal inducements
to embrace Christianity; and consequently
most of the professors of it acted open
conscience, and it might be charitably hoped they were indeed regenerate. See
his Works, p. 520.

b Dwelleth in God, and God in him
Perhaps when John wrote this epistle, he
might refer to that excellent prayer of our
blessed Lord, which he has recorded in his
gospel, and to such passages of it as John
xvii. 22, 23.

c In the day of judgment.] Some by
this phrase understand the day in which
Christians were judged: as if it had been
said, The perfection of love is, when it
induces us to maintain the cause of Christ
before judges and persecutors, that we may
be conformed to him, whose life was in a
manner a continued series of sufferings;
whereas the violent fear of death, which
where it prevails, is a tormenting passion,
is inconsistent with the perfect love of
Christ. This is the sense which Dr. Bates
gives to this passage. Bates's Works, p.
iv. 24. But the day of judgment was genera-
ally a different signification from what this
explanation gives it; and therefore I chose
to paraphrase the words after the manner
in which they are usually understood.

d Here
resides. And this is a very desirable effect; because fear hath torment, it throws the mind into a most uneasy situation; but he that feareth, is not made perfect in love. Study therefore to increase more and more in that noble affection of love to God, and you will find your self-enjoyment rising in proportion to it. And reflect upon this with all humility, that if we do indeed experience any thing of that Divine principle in our hearts, we must freely acknowledge, that we love him, because he first loved us. He hath not only given us natures capable of these sublime acts, and poured in upon us, from their firstoriginal, numberless providential bounties, but hath also appointed his Son, to lay a foundation for our happiness in his own blood, and his spirit, to diffuse that grace in our hearts, by which they are formed to every sentiment of pious gratitude.

20 And let this also be remembered, as of the last importance, that if any one say, I love God, and hateth his brother, how high soever his pretences to devotion may be, and to whatever fervour he may carry his zeal, he is a liar; for it is impossible, that the love of God should be sincere in the soul, which is destitute of this brotherly affection; as will appear, if you consider what peculiar advantages we have for engaging our hearts towards those with whom we are conversant; for how can he, who loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, love God whom he hath not seen? The invisible nature of the Divine Being, is in this respect, an obstacle, which our weak and carnal minds cannot be expected easily to conquer. And it is certain, that the neglect of this benevolent disposition would be an high instance of disobedience to him, since we have this express commandment from him, that he who loveth God, and professeth himself religious, should also love his brother. And God hath hereby in effect declared, that he

because fear hath torment. He that feareth, is not made perfect in love.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also.
he will treat those as his enemies, who pretend to devout zeal, while they are destitute of brotherly love.

IMPROVEMENT.

That all these repeated exhortations may not be entirely in vain, let us now call our hearts to a deep and affectionate contemplation of the astonishing love of God, that he hath sent even his Son to be the Saviour of the world, according to the testimony of this Divine herald, who beheld his glory, and witnessed it to be such a glory, as became the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John i. 14.)

Let us think of the world as lost, of the whole race of rational creatures in it as perishing, as going down to eternal perdition. But a Saviour is provided: And O, what a Saviour? The Son of God, that almighty Deliverer, to whom our salvation was dearer than his own life. So dear, that he was willing to be invested with mortal flesh, in order that he might be capable of enduring pain and death for our redemption. Have we not herein seen and known the love of God to us? That love, wherewith he has so graciously prevented us; for surely nothing can be more apparent than this, that if we do indeed love him sincerely and faithfully, it is because he hath first loved us. And therefore, instead of boasting of our love to him, as if we could make him our debtor, let us humbly acknowledge that he is the great Original and support of that beautifying affection of the human mind; and that our obligations to him are great, in proportion to the degree in which we feel it working in us. Let us be encouraged boldly to confess Christ as the Son of God. Let us seek after more perfect love to him, and to the Father, as that which tends to make the mind happy by casting out every tormenting passion, and to establish it in an humble boldness amidst the most awful prospects. It is matter of deep lamentation, that our spirits should be so degenerate, as that while we are strongly impressed by sensible objects, we should be the less inclined to love the blessed God, because he is an invisible being.

Let us adore his goodness, that in condescension to our weakness, he hath made himself visible in the person of his Son; and as Christ has constituted our brethren, in some degree his representatives, to receive as in his name, the tokens of our kindness and affection, let us be studious, by our love to them, and particularly to the poor among them, who have peculiarly this honour; let us I say, be studious to approve the sincerity of that love to him,
him, which we do universally profess, and the absence of which were so inexusably criminal.

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle further discourses of the character of those who are born of God, particularly describing them as lovers of Christ, as conquerors of the world, and as courageously maintaining the gospel, on the witnesses to which, both in heaven and on earth, he more especially enlarges. 1 John V. 1—12.

1 John V. 8.

HAVING been discoursing of the privileges of the children of God, let me a little farther illustrate, and remind you of the great essentials of their character, that you may judge the better of your own concern in what is said. And here nothing is of more importance than to observe, that every one who truly believeth that Jesus is the Christ, so as to have his heart duly affected with the belief, without which faith does not deserve its name, is born of God: he is brought to that Divine temper by the influences of the Spirit of God upon his heart, and in consequence of this he may be assured of his adoption. And every one who loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten by him: we naturally love the children of our common friends, and much more will the children of our heavenly Father be dear to us, if we bear a becoming affection to him. And we may take the same truth likewise the other way, and say, that in this we know that we love the children of God, if we love God, and keep his commandments.

1 John V. 17.

WHOSOEVER believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: and everyone that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

For
For certainly if our love to the children of God arise from truly religious motives, it will be an uniform thing, and all the other precepts of God will have a suitable influence upon our hearts and lives; whereas any pretended benevolence of temper, which leaves us rebels to the authority of the common Father of the family, is a mere natural impulse, and deserves not the noble name of brotherly love. Wonder not, that I insist so much on the influence of religious principles on the life and conversation. For this is the love of God, this is the great evidence we are to give of it, that we impartially keep all his commandments, without allowing ourselves in the violation of any one of them. And to a mind influenced by true love, his commandments are not grievous; as they are all most equitable, reasonable, and gracious in themselves, all adapted to promote the true happiness of our lives, so we shall find, that fervent love will make them all pleasant and delightful to us. Because, whereas the great obstruction to keeping God's commandments is the influence of worldly motives and considerations on the mind, whatever is born of God, every son and daughter of his, not excepting even the feeblest, conquers the world, and would despise and trample upon all the glories of universal empire, if opposed to the favour of his heavenly Father. And this is the great victory that conquers the world, the grand triumphant principle which accomplishes things which appear so incredible, [even our firm faith in the great articles of the Christian religion; particularly, that Christ is the Son of God, that he came into the world to redeem us from its lusts and vanities, and that he will assuredly conduct all his people to seats of infinitely greater and nobler felicity. And indeed, as this is the happiness of true Christians, so only of them; for who is he that conquers the world, except it be he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? The great principles peculiar to our Divine religion, a sense of redeeming love, and the prospect of such a sublime and perpetual happiness as the gospel opens upon us, can alone be sufficient to teach us to triumph over these transitory vanities, and to establish an uniform character, superior to the variety
variety of temptations with which we can be assaulted: while the boasted triumphs of others, upon meaner principles, have been very partial and imperfect, and they have evidently been subdued by one vanity, while they have gloried in despising another.

6 This Jesus, of whom we have now been speaking, is he who came by water, and by blood, even Jesus the Christ, whose great design it was both to cleanse and purify his people, and to make an atonement to God, for their sins. He came not by water only, did not only instruct men in the present morals, or set them the most perfect and complete example; but by water and blood. He shed his most precious blood to expiate our offences, and God gave as it were, a sensible intimation of these united purposes, when there came out of his wounded side, a stream of blood and water, which descended in such a manner, as that each might evidently be distinguished from the other. And the Spirit is that which with truth, the extraordinary communication of the Spirit to his servants is the most glorious attestation of all; for we well know, that the Spirit is truth; and when we consider the wonderful manner of its interposition, we can no longer doubt of the truth of whatever shall be attested by such an authority.

7 And indeed, when I consider this, I may say, that whereas the law admitted the concurrent testimony of two witnesses as valid, we have, as it were, a double trinity of witnesses, one in heaven, and the other on earth, to support this most momentous truth. For there are three, who bear witness to it, [in heaven, the Father, by whom the scheme of our salvation was originally projected, and who revealed it so early to the church by the prophets; the Divine Word, whose great business it was, by such humiliations, labours and sufferings, to bring it into

There are three who bear witness in heaven: life, and he, and the Lamb: and these three are one.

6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

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For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.
If we receive the witness of men, much more that of God.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son,

10 He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the

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The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.] The Father, Mat. iii. 16, 17, xvii. 5; John xii. 28. The Word himself, Acts vii. 53, 55; ix. 3, 4; Rev. i. 10, &c. The Holy Ghost, John iii. 32, 35.

The water and the blood.] By the water, Mr. Jeffries understands the baptism of Christ, and the miracles which were wrought on that occasion, as the descent of the Spirit, and the voice from heaven; and by the blood, the death of Christ, which he willingly suffered, and demonstrated thereby that he was no impostor, especially as he predicted so many extraordinary circumstances attending it. See his Review of the Controversy with Collins. Others

interpret the blood here spoken of, the blood of the martyrs shed in confirmation of Christianity, and the water, of the purity of the lives of Christians. I confess it is a difficult text; but on the whole, prefer the sense given in the paraphrase.

Hath the witness within himself.] Some have considered and explained this, as if the meaning were, that every Christian did in those days receive some miraculous proofs of his religion, by some communication of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; in consequence of which he might by looking within himself, know the certainty of the gospel. But I think this assertion
whole state of his soul, manifests the excellence and reality of its object. But he that believeth not God, offers him the grossest and most insufferable affront, for he in effect makes him a liar; charges him with attesting the most notorious falsehood in the most solemn manner; because he hath not believed in the testimony which God hath testified concerning his Son, by so many prophecies, and other miraculous interpositions, to demonstrate the truth of his mission. So that if this may be rejected, it cannot be conceived how he should ever be able to give any convincing proof, that he testifies any thing at all.

11 And this is, in one word, the substance and abridgement of this testimony, that the blessed God hath, in his infinite condescension and bounty, given unto us the promises of eternal life; and this life is in his Son; purchased by him, and laid up in him, to be bestowed according to his pleasure; and therefore only to be obtained through him. So that he who hath an interest in the Son by a lively and operative faith hath this eternal life, in the sure pledges and beginnings of it in his own heart, and shall shortly enter on the complete enjoyment, though in himself acknowledged to be ever so unworthy of it; and he who hath not an interest in the Son of God, hath not life, whatever proud conceit he may entertain of his own merits and excellencies; but on the contrary, remains exposed to the righteous displeasure of God, and under a sentence of eternal death.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us regard the grand question, on which our life, our eternal life, is suspended! I mean, whether we have, or have not, the Son of God? Let us then examine into this important matter with the greatest attention. Let us hearken to, and receive the testimony of God, as comprehended in this one word, that God hath given even to us, dying, perishing men, eternal life; and this life is in his Son. Let us receive this transcendent gift with all humility and thankfulness; and so much the rather, as it is given

section incapable of being proved, either from the passage or any other; and can prefer no sense of this celebrated text to that which Dr. Watts has so largely established and illustrated in his sermon upon it; to which therefore I refer my readers with the utmost satisfaction Watts's Sermon, Vol. i. Ser. i.—iii.
Reflections on the testimony which God hath given us.

By firmly believing this, we shall conquer the world, and gain a victory of an infinitely different and more exalted nature, than they who are strangers to Christ, or who reject him, Ver. 4. ever have done, or can possibly do.

May our steadfast faith in him furnish us with a substantial attestation that we are born of God; and may we prove it to be sincere, by loving the children of God, and by keeping all his commandments. We must surely acknowledge, that his commandments are reasonable; and if we have a genuine love to God existing in our hearts, it will render the observance of them pleasant and delightful. And if we are not possessed of that evidence of love, which arises from a disposition to obedience, let us remember, he hath fairly and frequently warned us, that no other expressions of love, how fervent and pathetic soever, will be accepted or allowed by him. That our faith may be confirmed, and our love awakened, let us often look to Christ, as coming by water, and by blood. Let us mediate on that mysterious stream of blood and water, which came forth from his wounded side. Let us solemnly remind ourselves of the baptismal water, in which we were washed, and of the sacred cup, the communion of the blood of Christ, referring to this great important event. And while we are contemplating the memorial of his humility, let us also consider him as one with the Father and the Holy Spirit; and as each of the sacred three join their testimony to the truth of the gospel, and join their kind offices for supplying to us the invaluable blessings of it, let us joyfully ascribe glory to each, world without end. Amen.

SECT. IX.

The Apostle concludes his epistle; declaring its general design to be the confirmation of their faith; and reminding them of the encouragement they had to hope, that their prayers should be heard, for themselves, and for others, who had not sinned unpardonably. And he then adds a reflection on the happy difference which the knowledge of God in Christ made between them, and an ignorant and wicked world. 1 John V. 13, to the end.

1 John V. 13.

And now, to draw towards a conclusion; these things have I written to you, who believe in the name of the Son of God, to confirm your faith, and establish your joy, that ye may know, that, if your attachment to him is of the right kind, you have, in consequence of it, an interest in eternal life; and that, this hope operating...
St. John wrote, that they might believe the Son of God.

rating to produce the substantial fruits of genuine and universal obedience, ye may yet more fully and steadfastly believe on the mighty and Divine name of the Son of God. Then you may be assured of the certain truth of his religion, in proportion to the degree in which you inwardly experience its noble effects; and may in consequence of this, keep your hearts continually fixed upon him, in the many important views in which faith exhibits him. And this is the confidence which we have towards him, as our most trusty Intercessor and mighty Saviour at God's right hand: that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us graciously; that he observes and takes notice of all our petitions. And we are sure his is not an ineffectual notice; for if we know that he heareth us, whatever we ask, we know as a farther consequence since he is ever able to carry all his gracious purposes into immediate execution, that we shall certainly have an accomplishment of those petitions which we have asked of him; supposing, as I said before, that they are agreeable to his will; and it is always his will, that his people should be truly happy, and be supplied with every necessary good.

And let me now add one precaution, with regard to the cases, in which it may be proper to remember offenders in our prayers: if any one say to his brother commit a sin, [which is] not unto death, that is, any sin, but that which is marked out eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we desired of him.

16 If any man see his brother sin which is not unto death, he should pray, and God will give him life.
out in the awful words of our Lord Jesus Christ as unpardonable; he shall ask, and may hope that, through the Divine goodness, he shall give him life: he may cheerfully expect that God will return in mercy to those who sin, not unto death. There is indeed a sin, [that is,] unto death, I mean such an apostacy from Christianity, as is attended with blaspheming the operations of the Spirit of God, and ascribing them to Satan; and I say not, that he, whose aid may be requested on such a sad occasion, should pray concerning that; for Christ has told us it shall never to be forgiven in this world, or the next. And as nothing but a miracle of Divine grace, never to be expected, can recover a person in such circumstances, it is better to wave the petition, how much sooner we may be disposed to lament the misery of the unhappy creature who is fallen into it. Every instance of unrighteousness is indeed sin, and every breach of his law must be displeasing to God, and be esteemed matter of just censure and lamentation; but there is a sin, not unto death, in the sense just assigned. There are indeed many, from which it evidently appears, that persons may be recovered; and in all such cases, Christian charity will require you to pray for your brethren. And from this dreadful evil Divine grace will preserve every good man; for we know that whoever is born of God, does not sin, in this terrible and ruinous manner; but he who is born of God, diligently keepeth himself from it, and Satan the wicked one, who is the great abettor of all evil, doth not touch, or come near him, but is immediately repelled in his first assaults.

17 All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death.

18 We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

d I say not that he should pray concerning that. It seems to be intended as a brand set on a person who had been guilty of the sin here specified, that he was not to be prayed for by his converted fellow-Christians. Some indeed would interpret this sin of the more heinous kind of offences punishable with death by human laws: but I can see no sort of reason for refusing the charity of our prayers to persons in such circumstances. Others think it refers to the case of illness; but there is no express mention of it here; and it seems to have been taken for granted without reason, that this text is parallel to James v. 14, 15. It is certain, that illness in case of a capital crime, would not delay the execution. The popish distinction between mortal and venial sins will however appear to have no foundation in this text upon the interpretation we have given, or indeed upon any we have mentioned. The chief difficulty remaining is, how it could be known, that the apostacy in question was attended with such circumstances as made it the unpardonable sin? Where it was most difficult to distinguish, the gift of discerning spirits, might infallibly decide; where it was dubious, charity would incline to the milder extreme; and conditional prayer might however be offered.

e The
sults. We Christians do indeed know, that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness: it is in subjection to the wicked one, and lies wounded and slain under him. But we know, that when the whole human race was in this helpless and miserable condition, the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in the Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ: he is the true God and eternal life; he partakes with the Father in proper deity; and our immortal life is supported by union with him.

21 See to it, therefore, my dear little children, that you adhere to the worship of this true God alone, and keep yourselves from idols of every kind; whom the jealous God will not suffer to share with him, either in the offices of religious worship, or in the supreme affection of the mind. Amen, may you be so kept and preserved to eternal life!

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us thankfully own the Divine goodness, in giving us so many helps for the confirmation of our faith, and learn the importance of its being thus confirmed, from that variety of provision made

19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true; even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.
made for its establishment. The declared end of the apostle in writing this epistle was, that they who believed in the name of the Son of God, might more firmly believe in it. Lord, increase our Ver. faith, and with it our zeal for him, in whose name we believe, and our love to each other, for his sake: then shall we have eternal life the gift of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord; and in the mean time 14, 15 may address the throne with cheerfulness, and present our petitions in a pleading and confident hope, that asking what is agreeable to his will; and all that he knows to be subservient to our truest interest is so, he will hear us, and we shall receive the things that we ask. Encouraged by this promise, with what boldness may we come to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and grace to help in every time of need! (Heb iv. 16) Let his compassion to us teach us to have compassion on our brethren, on our afflicted brethren; yea on those, whose miscarriages have evidently brought their afflictions upon them. Let us not too soon pronounce the case of a sinner hopeless; but rather subject ourselves to the trouble of some fruitless attempts to reclaim him, than omit any thing where there may be a possibility of succeeding. May Divine grace awaken all to stand at the remotest distance, not only from the un-pardonable sin, but from whatever might dishonour God, and endanger our own souls: for every sin is deadly and malignant, though every one be not the sin unto death. May we keep ourselves, and be kept by Divine grace, in such a manner, that the wicked one may not touch us; but all his attempts be turned into his own shame and confusion!

And O, may God excite our pity to a world which lies in wickedness; and animate us to use our utmost endeavours, to recover those out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him at his pleasure. (2 Tim. ii. 26.) May we be made sensible of the rich and distinguishing grace of God, if we can say that we are, not only by an external profession, but an inward union, in him that is true in the Lord Jesus Christ. Him let us adore, as with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, the true God. Him let us seek, as eternal life; and let us keep ourselves from all those idols, which would alienate our regard from God, and by the pursuit of which our eternal life might in any degree be endangered.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN,
THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR, A

PARAPHRASE

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

ST. JOHN.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.
EASTERN EXPEDITION

BY

[Name]

[Date]
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN.

These epistles have been both very improperly ranked under the denomination, general or catholic; since each is inscribed to a single person; one to a woman of distinction, styled here the elect lady; and the other to Gaius; probably the same person with Gaius of Corinth, who is styled by St. Paul his host, and is celebrated for his hospitality to the brethren; a character very agreeable to that which is here given of Gaius by the apostle John.

There is no fixing the date of these two epistles with any certainty. It in a great measure depends on the date of the first epistle: soon after which, it is generally agreed, both these were written. And this indeed appears exceeding probable, from that coincidence both of sentiment and expression, which occurs in all these epistles; and from hence it is inferred, that the state of things in the Christian church, referred to in these smaller epistles, was very much the same as it was at the time of writing the first epistle, and that the apostle having lately written it, had it now particularly in his view, and the sentiments and expressions of it present to his mind. And possibly about the same time that he sent his first epistle to Christians in general, he might send his second to this honoured lady, and his third to his friend Gaius in particular, as a mark of peculiar regard. I shall not here enter into the debate concerning the authenticity of these two epistles, especially as I have already suggested on some former occasions, such general sentiments as are very applicable on this.

The brevity of these epistles renders it needless to give any other analysis of them than I have done in the contents prefixed to each respectively; to which I refer the reader.
A PARAPHRASE AND NOTES ON THE SECOND EPISTLE OF St. JOHN.

SECTION I.

The Apostle John, addressing himself to a worthy Christian lady, expresses his joy in her good character, and that of her children; exhorts to continued love, and to guard against deceivers, whom it would be dangerous to countenance and encourage; referring what he had farther to say till he should make her a visit.—2 John throughout.

2 John 1.

The letter is addressed by John, well known in these parts by the name of the Elder, called under that character, to preside in the churches.

2 John 1.

a The Elder. The concealment of the name of the author can be no objection against ascribing it to St. John; since his name is also concealed in the first epistle, which is universally allowed to be his. Nor was it customary with this apostle, in any of his writings, to be free in mentioning his own name. His styling himself the Elder in this and the following epistle, is probably the reason why they were ascribed by some of the ancients not to the apostle John, universally acknowledged to be the author of the first epistle, but to John, an elder or presbyter of Ephesus. He who would see the testimonies of the fathers, that the apostle John was the author of these two epistles, may consult the second part of Dr. Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History. There can hardly be stronger internal arguments, that the three epistles, now commonly ascribed to St. John, were the production of the same author, than may be derived from that very remarkable similarity of sentiment and phraseology which appears in them all, on the slightest attention.

b The
churches, to the elect lady 1, whom I need not name, as her excellent christian graces render her so gloriously distinguished: and to her children whom I love in the truth, on those principles which the gospel, the great system of truth, requires with respect to those who so remarkably support and adorn it. Nor indeed do I only love her and them, but they are beloved also by all those who know the truth, and who have had any opportunity of forming any intimate acquaintance with them. These amiable persons are justly dear to us all, because of the truth which dwelleth in us, and I doubt not shall be in us for ever. And particularly so deeply is it grounded in your mind and heart, that I am persuaded the relish of it will never be lost, be the remaining years of life ever so many, or the events of them ever so trying. May a rich assemblage of every desirable blessing, grace, mercy, and peace, be with you all from God the Father of all, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father; and may it animate you to walk in truth, and in universal love, according to the tenor of that glorious gospel with which he hath favoured you.

1 I rejoiced greatly, when, in some of those excursions which I made for the service of the gospel, I found some of thy children walking in a manner agreeable to the system of Divine truth, and according to the commandment which we have received from God the Father. And now I beseech thee, my dear and honoured lady, not as writing to thee a new and unknown commandment, but that which we had from the beginning of our acquaintance with our Divine Master, and the religion he came to introduce, that we may all love one another. And this is that love which alone can prove acceptable to him, that we should constantly walk according to his commandment; and this is the commandment, as ye have heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it; this was the great end of the gospel, to give us proper directions for our conduct in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth.

2 For the truth’s sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that ye walk after the commandments. This is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

The elect lady. Lord Harrington is of opinion, the lady here spoken of is the church at Jerusalem, refer to that at Epistles Bar. Miscell. Ser. p. 51, and the notion seems to have been taken from Dr. Whitby. Compare Isaiah xiv. 1; Galiv. 34, &c. But the arguments are by no means convincing: and verse 10, seems a strong objection against it. It is probable that this lady (stated here καταγωγή, from whence some have fancied her proper name was Eucharia, and others, Euchia,) was a person of considerable distinction.

c Cure
And desires her to beware of seducers.

7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiv-
er and an antichrist.

8 Look to yourselves that you lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed.

11 For he that biddeth him Godspeed, is partaker of his evil deeds.

c Come in the flesh.] The Apostle here alludes to the rise of those heretics who affirmed that Christ only came in appearance.

d Wish him good success.] Thus the Jews, as Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Whitby observe, were forbid to say ἐξωκομισίν, or God-speed, to an excommunicated, person, or to come within four cubits of an heretic. But the apostle must not be here understood, as excluding the common offices of humanity to such persons: for that is contrary to all the general precepts of benevolence to be found in the gospel. But to have received a seducing teacher into their houses, and have given him suitable accommodations, would have been showing him such regard, and affording him such support, as indeed, in some measure would have made them answerable for the mischief he might do in the church; such favours being not merely offices of common humanity, but of patronage and friendship; and in the general, at least a testimony of their approbation, as well as kindness.

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engage himself to labour in it, is partaker of his evil deeds, and in the sight of God and man, necessary to the damage, which such a seducer may, in consequence of such encouragement, bring upon the church.

12 Having many other things to write unto you, which might have employed my pen in a much longer epistle, I would not [do it] with paper and ink; but break off here, as I hope ere long to open my mind much more largely when I come to you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be fulfilled, and we may have mutual reason to acknowledge, that we have received much greater satisfaction than this imperfect method

13 of converse can afford. In the mean time, I shall only add, that the children of thine elect sister salute thee, and I join with them in the kindest wishes which the sincerest friendship can form. And may God accomplish them. Amen.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.


IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 Let us observe this delineation of a love truly Christian; the love, which the apostle, and all who knew the truth, are said to have had towards this elect and excellent lady, for the truth's sake which dwelt in her. Adored be that grace, which preserved her in so high a rank of life, from temptations which could not fail to surround her! that grace, which rendered her an example of wisdom and piety, great and eminent in proportion to her exalted situation!

Nor can we forbear reflecting, how happy, in consequence of this, she herself was, possessed of grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord, in truth and love! What were all the secular honours by which she was distinguished! What the possession of riches, which in their own nature, and unimproved to the pious and charitable purposes to which she improved them, are very empty and unsatisfactory! what are these, when compared with such important blessings! We cannot but rejoice, at this distance of time, and ignorant as we are of the name, situation, and history, of this worthy lady, that her children walked in the truth. It was a singular joy to Joan, and may be so in a degree to all; and may teach us to lift up our hearts to God in prayer, that all Christian parents, especially pious mothers, and more particularly those whose character in life is so eminently distinguished, may enjoy this happiness, and see the seed they are with such commendable industry sowing
sowing in the minds of their tender offspring, growing up, and bringing forth much fruit.

We have, in the beloved apostle, an excellent pattern of becoming care, to make a correspondence with our Christian friends which we shall do, if like him, we are exhorting them to the cultivation of mutual love, and to a constant uniform care in keeping the commandments of God; if we continue warning them against the prevailing sins and errors of the day, and urging them to a holy solicitude, that they may not lose what they have already attained, but may receive full reward for every work of faith, and labour of love in consequence of a course of resolute and persevering piety.

Persons of the most distinguished goodness have need to be cautioned against that excess of generosity and hospitality, which might sometimes make them partakers with seducers in their evil deeds, by giving them their audience, and wishing them good success, while by their fair speeches, they impose upon the simplicity of open and upright hearts, who, because themselves are void of fraud, are often void of suspicion too. But there is a prudent caution to be observed upon this head; and it is the part of faithful friendship to suggest it; for many deceivers are come out into the world. For our security against them, let us be always upon our guard, and take care to continue in the doctrine of Christ: that so we may have the Father, and the Son; and if we are interested in their favour, we shall stand in need of nothing, and shall have nothing of which to be afraid. Amen.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.
THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR, A

PARAPHRASE

ON

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF

ST. JOHN.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.
A PARAPHRASE AND NOTES
ON
THE THIRD EPISTLE
OF
St. JOHN.

SECTION I.

The Apostle John, in this short epistle to Gaius, expresses his concern for his prosperity, and his joy in the honourable character he maintained for Christian candour, hospitality, and zeal; cautions him against the ambitious and turbulent practices of Diotrephes; and recommending Demetrius to his friendship, refers what he had further to say, to a personal interview. 3 John, throughout.

3 John 1.

3 John 1.

THE elder addresses this epistle to the beloved and hospitable Gaius, whom I love in the truth, and hold as dear in the bowels of Christ, from a regard to the advancement and honour of his gospel.

Beloved, I pray, that in every respect, thou mayest

a Gaius.] We read of one Gaius, of Corinth, Rom. xvi. 23. who hospitably received the apostle Paul, when he went out to preach the gospel gratis; and if this were, as he seems to have been, the same, he was St. Paul's convert: nor is St. John's calling him his child an argument to the contrary; since in the general he addresses all Christians in the same tender and affectionate stile, agreeable to the sweetness of his temper, and suitably to his advanced years. Compare Dr. Whitby in loc.

b In every respect: πάντα περὶ γὰρ.] Our English translation is, above all things Mr. Hallet would render it, above all persons; as if he had said, you are the person, for whose temporal and spiritual advantage I am concerned more than any other. Hallet's Notes and Discourses, Vol. I. p. 61, 62. But the words may so justly bear the translation I have given them, by which all
St. John inscribes his epistle to Gaius.

3 John 2.

mayest prosper; and particularly that thou mayest be in health, as I have reason to believe, that thy soul prospereth; for I doubt not but that religion flourishes in thy heart, and abundantly justifies my wishing thee as healthful and prosperous as thou art good. For I rejoiced greatly when the Christian brethren came from that part of the world in your neighbourhood, and testified concerning thy truth, as thou walkest in the truth, and adornest the gospel by an exemplary behaviour. For indeed I have no greater joy, than this thing gives me, that I may hear my Christian friends, whether converted by me, or others, whom I look upon as my dear children, are walking in the truth, and according to those directions which our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, has given us. And, beloved, I must declare my entire approbation of thy conduct, and can openly bear my testimony to it, that thou didst faithfully, whatsoever thou performed towards the brethren, and towards strangers; thy behaviour to thy fellow-Christians known to thee, and to those with whom thou hast little acquaintance, yea, to all who have occasion to cast themselves upon thy hospitality, is much to the credit of the gospel, and I doubt not but it proceeds from a principle of true faith, and overflowing love to our common Redeemer. And indeed many of the Christian strangers, who have been thus generously entertained by thee, have testified very honourably concerning thy love before the church, whom thou dost well in bringing forward in their journey, in a manner worthy of God, proceeding from a principle of above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

5 Beloved, thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the brethren and to strangers.

6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church, whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well.
of Divine love, and correspondent to the relation in which you and they stand to him. And whatever thou dost for them, our great Lord will take as done to himself; for it was on his account, and out of zeal for his honour and interest, that they went out, abandoned their habitations, possessions, and callings, that they might spread his gospel; receiving nothing of the Gentiles, among whom they laboured; that they might take off all suspicion of those mercenary views, above which divine grace had so far raised them. We ought therefore, all of us, who have any habituation of our own, hospitably and respectfully to receive such; that, if Divine Providence do not give us an opportunity of laying ourselves out, as they do, in the ministerial office, we may become, as it were, fellow-labourers with them in the service of the truth, and through Divine grace, may be entitled to a part in their reward.

I have lately written to the church, about which I know you are so much concerned; but I sometimes fear, lest it should not be with so good success as I could wish; for Diotrephes, who affects the pre-eminence among them, even above the apostles of Christ themselves, hath not received us with becoming regard; and his interest with some of the members is much greater than it ought to be. Therefore if I come, as I hope I quickly shall, I will be mindful of the works which he does; many of which are very irregular, while he is continually prating against us with idle, petulant, and malicious words; and

7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles.

8 We therefore ought to receive such that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.

10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us.

1 They went out, receiving nothing of the Gentiles; Eμεθεν, _μεν _λαμβανοντες _αιτια _των _Εβραων._ Beza refers _αιτια _των _Εβραων _to _εμεθεν, _and understands it, that the persons here spoken of, went out from their respective countries and native places, (αιτια _των _Εβραων,) leaving all their worldly possessions, (μεν _λαμβανοντες,) to go and preach the gospel. And in support of this construction, he observes, that _αιτια _should have been used after _λαμβανοντες, _and not _αιτια. But Mat. xix. 25, 26, and I John ii. 27, are evident confutations of this remark. And whereas he thinks it absurd to imagine, the unbelieving Gentiles would contribute to the support of the preachers of the gospel, it is an obvious reply, that _αιτια _may mean the believing Gentiles, as it is certain the word frequently does, Wolfius, who agrees with Beza, in referring _αιτια _των _Εβραων _to _εμεθεν, _understands it of their being driven and forced out by the Gentiles, having been strait of their possessions, which would render them the more proper objects of kindness and hospitality. But there is nothing of this in the idea suggested by the word _εμεθεν, _and the more common signification of it is to go out voluntarily. See Wolfius Curia Philolog. Vol. V. p. 334. [g Diotrephes.] It is uncertain who he was. Grotius thinks he was a Gentile convert, who would not admit the Jews; but it seems rather more probable that he was a Jew, who opposed the admission of the Gentiles, and set himself up as the head of a party, in opposition to the apostles.

h Prating: _φαναρον._ Compare 1 Tim. v. 12, note l.
and not content with this, goes yet further in his opposition; for he receiveth not the brethren himself, though he knows they come from us, and hinders those who would receive them, from doing it: and casteth them out of the church, forbidding them either to officiate, or communicate where his influence extends; than which nothing can be more tyrannical or intolerable.

11 As for thee, my beloved brother, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good: behold such a conduct as his with a just abhorrence; and act according to that model of humility and condescension which you have seen in others, who may justly claim an authority much superior to his. He that doeth good is of God; he knows him, and he imitates his most amiable and spotless pattern; but he that does evil, that harbours such malignant passions, and behaves in so injurious a manner, whatever high notions he may pretend to, has not seen God, but is plainly ignorant of his perfections and of his will.

12 Demetrius, on the contrary, is a most excellent person, who has a good testimony from all men, and even from the truth itself; and we have also, upon all occasions, borne and do bear [the same] testimony; and ye know that this our testimony is true.

13 I have many other things which I should be glad to write to you; but I will not write them to you by ink and pen, as it would take up too much time, and I should not be able, after all, fully to express myself. But I hope quickly to see thee, and to speak face to face, with all the freedom we could desire; till that time therefore, I refer what I might now further say; and only add, Peace [be] to thee, and every desirable blessing from God our Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord. The Christian friends, who are here with me, salute thee; and I desire, that thou wouldst salute the friends that are with thee by name, and assure them of my most cordial and entire respect.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. How happy was Gaius in the friendship of that apostle, whom Jesus had honoured with such a distinguishing degree of his friendship.
ship. How much happier still was he, in a soul so thriving and prosperous, that even such a friend, who could not but hold flattery in detestation, should be able to make the good state of his soul, a standard by which to adjust his wishes in relation to his temporal affairs. O what a curse would this be upon many, that they might prosper even as their souls prospered! And yet what is all other prosperity without this, but like that of fools, which destroys them, (Prov. i. 32.) How agreeable is it to a true Christian, to hear well of the behaviour of those who are dear to him in the bonds of peculiar friendship; to hear of their walking in the truth; and especially when these are our own children, or those whom God has made us the means of converting, or those whom we have been concerned in training up for him. O that those especially, to whom the education of many has been committed, may have this great happiness. “Visit each of our children, and young friends, O Lord, with thy mercy; animate them to walk in thy truth; and entail thy blessing upon them, when nothing remains, of all the offices of love we have betowed, but the memory of our exhortations and examples.”

May sentiments of true generosity fill and expand our hearts more and more. May we act toward strangers, and especially our brethren, in all the instances in which they need our assistance, in a manner worthy of God, worthy of the relation in which we and they, have the honour to stand to our heavenly Father; and especially, let our love abound to those who have a desire to spread the gospel. And O, that it were more universal! O, that Divine grace would excite more to quit the indulgence of their homes, or their countries, if there be no bond of duty to detain them there, that they may go and preach to the Gentiles? And though there be no prospect of any requital from them, God will open to them the inexhaustible stores of his celestial treasure, and they shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the just. Let them but see to it, that their intentions are pure, that they do it for his sake: and their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

But alas! how much more common even to this day, and that among the ministers of the gospel, is the character of Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence! How has the spirit of opposition and ambition prevailed in the church, as well as in the world! How does it still prevail! and in this view, how many malicious words have been uttered against those who have with the greatest simplicity desired to follow the apostles! With what contempt have they often been cast out of the church! Yea, in a thousand instances, with what savage cruelty hunted out of the world! How long, O Lord, holy and true! Let us not however be impatient, but glorify God, in the most humble or painful station he shall
shall allot, by doing, or suffering all his will: still imitating that which is good, as becomes those who are of God, who hope to see him, and enjoy him for ever.

12 Let us endeavour, like Demetrius, to secure to ourselves a good report of all men; but especially, let us see to it that we reverence our own consciences, and that we secure their testimony, which will be agreeable to that of the truth itself. So will our honour, and our happiness be secured; and if any vapour should now rise to obscure it, the day is near, when the Sun of righteousness shall undoubtedly chase it away.
THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR:
OR, A PARAPHRASE
ON THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

WITH CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

JUDE, or Judas, the author of this epistle, is often mentioned as one of the apostles of our Lord, and the brother of James the Less. The canonical authority of this epistle hath been disputed; but it is not the business of these commentaries to enter largely into such questions. Probably its authenticity would never have been doubted, had it not been for an imagination, ill-grounded indeed, that the author had quoted a spurious book, called the prophecy of Enoch. The reader may consult what learned men have written upon this argument, particularly Dr. Lardner, in his Credibility of the Gospel History; Dr. Whitby and Dr. Twells, in the second part of his critical examination of the New text and version of the New Testament. The latter hath collected the principal materials with accuracy, and set them in a clear and convincing light.

There is a remarkable similarity between this epistle and part of the second epistle of St. Peter, which, as we observed in the Introduction to that epistle, was probably owing to this, that both the apostles drew their character of the false teachers, against whom they cautioned their readers, from the character given of the false prophets in some ancient Jewish author; and it is very possible too, (as Bishop Sherlock observes,) that St. Jude might have the second epistle of St. Peter before him.

Dr. Mill fixes the date of this epistle about the year 90, (see his Prolegomena, p. 17, sect. 145, edit. Kuster,) and his principal argument is, that the false teachers, which St. Peter describes as yet to come, St. Jude mentions as already come. But, on a comparison, there does not appear that remarkable difference in their phraseology, which will be sufficient to prove that St. Jude wrote his epistle so long after St. Peter's second epistle as is here supposed, though I acknowledge, it will prove that it was written after it.
The design of the apostle is plainly, "by describing the character of the false teachers, and pointing out the Divine judgments which persons of such a character had reason to expect, to caution Christians against listening to their suggestions, and being thereby perverted from the faith and purity of the gospel."

For the analysis of the epistle, I refer my reader to the contents prefixed to the two sections, into which I have divided it.
A
PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

on

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE

of

St. JUDE.

SECTION I.

The Apostle Jude after a general salutation, exhorts the Chrisians to whom he wrote, strenuously to assert the purity of their common faith; reminding them of the destruction which came on God's professing people, yea, on the apostate angels for their sins; as well as on the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; and then he begins the description of some seditious and abandoned persons, from whom he imagined them in peculiar danger. Jude, ver. 1—11.

Jude 1.

YOU receive this epistle from Jude, who like his brethren the other apostles, cannot but rejoice and glory in the title of a servant of Jesus Christ, and who is the brother of James, so well known by his distinguished services and sufferings in the cause of our Divine Master; and he inscribes it to those who are sanctified in God the Father, devoted to his service through the influence of his grace; who are also the called and preserved in Jesus Christ, brought into the fellowship of his religion, and guarded by his grace, in the midst of a thousand snares, which

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which might have tempted them to have made shipwreck of their faith. *May mercy, and peace and love, from our heavenly Father, and our compassionate Saviour, be multiplied to you: and may you increase in all the happy fruits of Divine favour and mercy; and especially, in that spirit of candour and charity which is to be num-
bered among the most precious of them. My
beloved, giving all diligence to write to you con-
cerning the common salvation, I, to the hope of which we are brought by the profession of the gospel, I judged it necessary to direct my pen, particularly with respect to those unhappy at-
ttempts that have been made, to adulterate Chris-
tianity, by some who continue to profess a re-
gard to it. I now therefore write to you, exhort-
ing and beseeching [you] to strive earnestly for
the faith which was once for all delivered to the
saints, for the instruction of every future age;
and not to suffer any by violence or by fraud to
rob you of so inestimable a treasure. For some
crafty and pernicious men have, as it were, with
a serpentine art glided in among us, who were
of old, as it were, described and registered to this
condemnation, by God's righteous sentence de-
nounced against crimes like theirs, long before
they appeared in the world. Impious and un-
grateful men, who presume to turn even the
grace of our God itself, which ought to be an
everlasting

2 Mercy unto you, and peace and love, be
multiplied,

3 Beloved, when
I gave all diligence to
write unto you of the
common salvation, it
was needful for me to
write unto you, that
you should earnestly
contend for the faith
which was once deli-
ered unto the saints.

4 For there are cer-
tain men crept in un-
awares, who were be-
fore of old ordained
unto this condemnation, un-
godly men, turning the
grace of our God into
lustfulness, and
deny ing the only Lord
God

a Giving all diligence to write to you con-
cerning the common salvation, [N.] Some
have supposed the meaning is, That whereas
as he intended to write them a practical
letter, he was compelled to go into some
controversial subjects. I rather think he
intended to declare by this expression, that
the exhortation he now gives them, to
contend earnestly for the faith, was indeed
subservient to promote that common salva-
tion; he designed to lead them to the pur-
suit of. Bishop Sherlock thinks the faith
delivered to the saints, is the same with
the holy commandment delivered, 2 Pet n.
21, that is, with the directions and in-
structions which the counsel of the apostles
had sent them, with regard to those pestil-
ent teachers. Sherlock on Proph. p. 292)
5th Edit.

b They were registered to this condemna-
tion.] The word was registratum may
well signify recorded and put upon record;
that is, whose character and condemna-
tion may be considered as described in the
punishment of other notorious sinners
who were a kind of representatives of
them. Which interpretation I prefer to
any other, as it tends to clear God of that
heavy imputation which it must bring
upon his moral agents, to suppose that
he opposes men to men against him, and
then condemns them for doing what they
could not but do, and what they were,
independent on their own freedom of choice,
fated to. A doctrine so pregnant with
gory, and as I should fear, with fatal
consequences, that I think it a part of the
duty I owe to the word of God, to rescue
it from the imputation of containing such
tenet. Bishop Sherlock thinks, the
word refers to the description given of
such kind of persons by an ancient writer
of the Jewish nation, cited as he supposes
in this epistle, and in the second chapter
of the second epistle of Peter. Sherlock
on Proph. p. 161 5th. Edit. Compare ver. 14,
5, 7, 8.

c God
God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

everlasting source of love, and engagement to sanctity and obedience, into an occasion of lasciviousness; as if they thought they might with impunity go on to sin, that grace might abound; and denying God the only original Saviour and our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he has invested with universal dominion, to be acknowledged by all who would not be found rebels against himself! But I would remind you, as you once knew this, that having been taught it, you may never forget it, even that the Lord, having saved the people of Israel from out of the land of Egypt, and rescued them by so glorious an interposition of his almighty power, afterward destroyed those that did not believe, though they had once experienced so wonderful a deliverance. And thus should we have reason to fear, that notwithstanding our Christian profession, he would destroy us, if we adulterate and pervert his religion, after a manner contrary to its original design. The angels also who kept not their first state, but suffering their minds to be transported with ambitious and irregular passions, were discontented in that high rank of being which Providence assigned them, and left their proper abode in the region of glory, instead of permitting them to advance themselves by their rebellion, he has by his righteous vengeance precipitated into the pit of destruction, and reserved in perpetual bonds, under darkness, in the infernal prison, to be brought forth at the judgment of the great day, and then to receive their final sentence. And earth has produced many awful scenes, in which the Divine vengeance has had its triumph over sinful mortals; as particularly Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves to the neighbourhood of this earth, that they might seduce mankind to join with them in their revolt. But this does not seem to suit the phrase of their being cast out, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Mr. Boyse would translate it, their own head, that is, Christ. Boyse's Serm. Vol. III. p. 406. Compare Hos. i. 11, in the Seventy.

a God the Sovereign, and our Lord, &c.] Some would render it, our only Master, God and Lord. See Dr. Watts on the Trin. p. 113. But it seems most agreeable to the general doctrine and phraseology of scripture, to retain our translation. Compare John xvii. 3.

d Their first state: τὴν πρὸς τοὺς ναόν.] Some translate these words, the government of themselves. But Dr. Scott interprets it of that place in heaven which was assigned them, and which they were not content with; and their leaving this first habitation he takes to have been a voluntary thing, and that they chose to come down to the neighbourhood of this earth, that they might seduce mankind to join with them in their revolt. But this does not seem to suit the phrase of their being cast out, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Mr. Boyse would translate it, their own head, that is, Christ. Boyse's Serm. Vol. III. p. 406. Compare Hos. i. 11, in the Seventy.

e Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner with them: τοὺς ἐκαστὸς τῶν ναῶν.] Some have pleaded, that this seems to imply, that the sin of the angels was fornication; and consequently that this epistle is not authentic. But there seems no necessity for interpreting the
cities about them, in like manner with them committing fornication, and by yet grosser and more unnatural licentiousness, going after strange and detestable gratifications of their pampered and indulged flesh, are set forth for an example to other presumptuous sinners; suffering that, which really appears a most lively emblem of the vengeance of eternal fire, having their love- sly and fruitful country turned into a kind of hell upon earth. So these dreamers also, in their luxurious indulgencies, suffer their thoughts to be amused with vain and polluted imaginations, whereby they dishonour the flesh, which ought to be sacred, together with the spirit, to the service of God. They make light of dominion, and authority derived from the Supreme Sovereign, and speak evil of dignities, of persons in the most honourable stations: Whereas we have heard in tradition, that Michael the archangel, when contending in dispute with the devil, concerning the body of Moses, which the angel was to bury privately, and he would have revealed, did not presume to bring against him a railing accusation but the expression with such extreme violence, as if it were from that voice it was of the same kind. It is evident that the comparison holds in that, that they were both guilty of very great wickedness. There are some who refer these passages, verses, in the same sense with them, to the same persons, who sinned in the same manner with Solomon and Jeremia; nor is it any subject in this, as some have supposed it is, that we cannot agree with some. But, for in reality, these names are of the master gender, see Luke xvi. 18; Mark vi. 11; Gen. viii. 1.) in this sense. And if they were not, nothing is more common than an example of gender, in such a case as this, where the most refer to the men who inhabited their cities.

(Vengeance of eternal fire.) Dr. Whately has brought many arguments to prove, that the vengeance here spoken of must be the last of their days, rather than their death, and produces instances to show, that the word is used in a sense consistent with this interpretation.

g Dreamers: meaning. Our translators render this, filthy dreamers. The context shows they deserve the epithet; but as the Greek does not express it, I judge it must faithful to the original to omit it.

h Body of Moses.] Archbishop Tillotson, see his Works, Vol. ii. p. 139.) and many other good writers, think this illustrated by Deut. xxviii. 6. He supposes that had the devil been able to discover to the Jews the place where Moses was interred, they would afterwards have paid an additional honour to his remains, and it would have gratified his malice exceedingly, to have made him an occasion of idolatry after his death, who had been so great an enemy to it in his life. To prevent this, he thinks that Michael buried the body secretly. This proves by the way, that evil angels are sometimes concerned in limiting the power of devils, which must not be doubted, a great vexation to these malignant spirits. But Mr. Baxter suggests it as a doubt, whether it were about the dead body of Moses, or Moses exposed on the water, that there was this contention. Baxter's Works, Vol. ii. p. 341.

i A railing accusation.] Archbishop Tillotson suggests, that the archangel was afraid the devil would have been too hard for him at railing. The words seem to me to intimate, that the angel thought it a part of the reverence due to God, not to mention his name and judgment, in a furious passionate manner, but mildly and gently. Whiston thinks the devil blasphemed, and that the angel did not accuse him but referred the matter to the judgment of the great day. Whiston Miscel. Vol. ii. IV. i, § 28. See also the Commentary of this learned
but had so much reverence for the Divine presence, as to speak with moderation and gentleness, even to that great enemy of God and men; and said, the Lord rebuke thee for this outrage, and teach thee to restrain such shocking expressions. (Compare Zech. iii. 2.) But these daring and impious men blaspheme what indeed they know not; and what they naturally, as the irrational animals, know, the things which tend to the gratification of their inferior part, the low circle to which their knowledge and care is confined, in these they are corrupted, by the gross and scandalous abuse of them, to the dishonour of God, and to their own infamy and destruction. Woe be unto them, and woe will attend them; for they have gone in the way of Cain, that persecutor and murderer, while like him, they have despised the appointed method of God's mercy; and they have run on with prodigious eagerness in the description of Balaam's reward; enslaved like him, to mean secular views, they have abandoned themselves to sin and ruin, till at length they have perished in the contradiction of Korah; like him they have opposed God's appointed messengers, and his Son, to whom he has devolved the conduct of his church; and methinks, like him and his company, I see them already struck by the lightning of God's wrath, and overwhelmed with remediless destruction.

10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core, and of Korah their company, and were swallowed up with Korah and his company, and perished in the destruction of Saul and his sons. (Compare 2 Pet. ii. 4.) He describes the character of these deceivers. Learned author in loc. whose remarks on all the verses are framed with great erudition and accuracy. Perhaps καταδιωκοντιν επιστευτην blasphemy may signify, that he did not pass judgment upon his blasphemy, but referred him to God.

k The Lord rebuke thee.] It is highly probable the apostle refers to some ancient book, in which this fact was thus mentioned, and speaks upon the supposition of its truth, which the persons he reasoned against, did not dispute. And the argument does not lie in any regard shown to the devil as a dignitary, and one who exercises dominion over subordinate evil spirits; for to be a leader of a band of such inexcusable rebels could entitle him to no respect; but it seems to arise from the detestable character of the devil; as if he had said, If the angel did not rail even against the devil, how much less ought we against men in authority, even supposing them in some things to behave amiss: To do it therefore when they behave well must be a wickedness, yet much more aggravated.

l Naturally know.] Compare the notes on the parallel texts in 2 Pet. ii. for the illustration of this and other passages which occur here.

m Have perished.] This is a genuine trace of a prophetic spirit, which speaks of things certainly future, as if they were past. And as such I thought proper to illustrate it in the paraphrase.
How happy are the people of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in him are called, sanctified, and kept by the Divine omnipotence, through faith unto salvation! For mercy and peace shall be multiplied upon them, till mercy hath, as it were, finished his commission, and conducted them to eternal peace. We learn from this example of the apostle before us, of how great necessity it is, in some circumstances, if ministers would promote the common salvation of their hearers, to guard them against the prevailing errors of the day, and to excite them earnestly to strive for the faith once delivered to the saints, as for a prize of the highest importance. May we rightly discern its nature, and be very careful, that while we are attempting to exert a Christian zeal, we do not mingle with it our own mistakes, and our own irregular passions, in such a manner as to tear in pieces what we are so eager to preserve. In short, let us learn from scripture, what that faith is, and what the importance of its respective articles are; and let us always be endeavouring to maintain it in the spirit of love.

May all who would disturb the church by pernicious doctrines, or scandalous practices; and especially, they who would ungratefully turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, and thereby deny the only true God, and our Saviour, reflect upon the awful judgment of God on the rebel-angels, and on sinful men, not on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha only, but even on his own people, whom he had delivered from Egypt, when they proved obstinate and unbelieving; and as we dread an exclusion from the heavenly Canaan, yea, as we dread the chains of darkness, and the vengeance of eternal fire; let us avoid and abhor the character described in the following verses: the dream of lewdness, the brutal indulgence of sensuality, the contradiction of Korah, the covetousness of Balaam, and the malignity of Cain. God has written down their condemnation and destruction in the eternal records of his word; that they might be for a sign, and that others may hear and fear, and take heed that they do not so wickedly.
These persons were spots in their love feasts:

SECT. II.

The Apostle pursues the character of the scandalous professors he had mentioned before; and concludes with exhorting the Christians to whom he wrote, to endeavour to secure their own edification in faith and love, and to do their utmost for the preservation and recovery of others. Jude, ver. 12, to the end.

JUDE 12.

I MUST further proceed to caution you, my brethren, against those wicked and seducing men, who are so desirous of insinuating themselves into the Christian church; and whose attempts to corrupt it are so unwearyed, and in many instances, so fatal. These are spots in your love-feasts, which tend to expose them to the reproach of the adversary; [who] when they banquet with you, feed themselves without fear, and will run into excesses, which if they be not resolutely suppressed, will be imputed to the whole body. They make indeed a great profession of their designs of usefulness in the church, but they are clouds without water, from which no refreshment or fruitfulness is to be expected; borne about by the winds of temptation, hither and thither, without any command of themselves; and if when they first took upon them the Christian profession, they gave some better hopes, as many of them perhaps did, they are like trees, whose early buddings are withered, and so now remain without fruit; yea, not only so, but are twice dead: successive summers and winters have passed over them, and they have been continually growing more fit for fuel, and so are now good for nothing but to be utterly rooted up, to be taken away from the plantation, which they only cumber, dishonour, and deform,

a Love-feasts.] So I chose to render εγκαταστασις, as it is well known the primitive Christians had such feasts, though it seems that from the abuse of them by persons of a character like those here described, they were soon laid aside. See Mr. Hallet on the subject, Notes on Disc. Vol. III. Disc. 6. Dr. Lightfoot, and Dr. Whitby, who follows him, are not for referring the εγκαταστασις here mentioned to the Christian's feasts of charity; in opposition to whom, the learned reader may consult Witsius' Commentary on the place.

b Whose early buddings are withered.] We render this, whose fruit withereth; but it seems to me, that φοινικηωται is much more exactly rendered, as in this version, and the appearance of a tautology avoided.

c Twice dead.] Some explain this of natural corruption and apostacy; but the gloss in the paraphrase seems much more easy and genuine. There is an admirable strength and spirit in the description given in the following verses.

d Wits.
deform, and cast into the fire. Their passions are violent and impetuous, like as many fierce waves of the sea, furiously foaming out the irregular tumults of their hearts; and in them, their own shame; wandering stars, which though for a while they may glitter, will soon have ended their course, will be found, notwithstanding all their blaze, destitute of any real and permanent light of their own, and in the number of those to whom blackness of darkness is reserved for ever, and will soon be driven to an eternal distance from the great Original of light and happiness, to which they shall never return.

And indeed, when I consider their characters and their actions, I may say, that according to the ancient tradition, Enoch, also the seer, in ineffable descent from Adam, prophesied against them, and described their crimes and their condemnation, when he said, Behold, the Lord comes with myriads of his holy ones, attended with legions of angels in his descent for this important purpose: For he comes to execute judgment upon all according to their respective works; and by witnesses that cannot be confronted, particularly to convict all the unrighteous among them, of all their impious works which they have impiously committed, and he will then be munificent, not only of their cruel and oppressive acts, but of all the hard and irreligions things which impious sinners have spoken against him and his people; and certain it is, that these words are as suitable to their case as if it had been

Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

And Enoch also, the seer, from Adam, prophesied of their, saying, behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of saints,

To execute judgment upon all, and coming with all their unrighteous judgments, of all their unrighteous deeds which they have impiously committed, and of all their hard speeches which impious sinners have spoken against him,

55 The Jews are said to have called their temples stars, and they are represented under that emblem, Hebrews 11:1, 13; and as philosophers to have a very regal opinion, being sometimes similitudes, and sometimes similitudes, they are proper emblematics of particular persons in their principles, and so properly in their behaviour, as these men were.

Eustathius.] A precious fragment of an unknown history is here preserved to us, as seems by the special providence of God, that the apostle Jude to this purpose between what was preserved and scattered in the tradition. It can by no means be proved, that this is a quotation from that book, which is called Enoch's prophecy, a bishop, and so very delicately, nor would it praise the translator of the book from whence it was taken but only the truth of this precious passage.

Sivated in Prop. p. 168, 169, 17th Edit. London. T. 1, 2, 3, and the subjoined, Τέλος η μονή ημών, Mr. Luskel. (See Cant. i. cap 1.) p. 164, "as shown by adequate authorities, that esp. because, may be rendered, prophesied against them. Perhaps this may explain what was and before, of their being registered in the appearing of the Lord, there have thoughtless, without being attended with anger, to bring on the place. If it refers to its coming in the universal judgment, it is a most remarkable testimony to a future state, not indeed in the Mosaic economy, but previous to it. And perhaps Moses omitting this, (as I think it almost certain he knew it,) is to be regarded into the transition under which he wrote, not applied to the principles which the learned Dr. Wetstein has so largely stated in his Deixe Legem, &c.
13 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. Particularly intended. These are murmurers, that can never be contented with the allotments of Providence, or with the conduct of any about them; that find fault continually with their lot, walking according to their own unbridled lusts; and their mouth speaks extravagant things; some, by way of exclamation against those they disapprove, and others in the height of encomiums and panegyrics, on those who are their favourites, and the leaders of their party; having [such] persons in admiration, not so much for the sake of their real excellencies, as of some present gain which they meanly propose to themselves as the reward of their servile flattery.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

19 These be they who separate themselves, having not the Spirit.

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, to think, that St. Jude had the text in Peter before him, and omitted what hath a peculiar reference to the former part of St. Peter's epistle, and to which there was nothing in his own to answer. See his Thessalonians on Proph. p. 193. 5th Edit.

h Apostles of our Lord, &c.] The resemblance between this text and 2 Pet. iii. 2. is very remarkable. Bishop Sherlock observes it to be such as would incline one

Jude 16.
They were therefore to keep themselves in the love of God.

ing its articles more clearly, and feeling their happy efficacy to promote the work of holiness in your souls, you may be more and more established against the attacks of these deceivers: especially, praying in the Holy Spirit, and under his influence, vouchsafed in answer to your prayers, making swifter advances in the Divine life. And be careful thus to keep yourselves in the exercise of that sacred affection, the love of God, which ought always to rule in your hearts: looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life, to which this compassionate Saviour will assuredly conduct all those who confide in him.

And while you are yourselves animated with this cheerful hope, do your utmost for the preservation of others; and in this respect, on some have tender compassion, and apply to them with the softest and most endearing offices of Christian friendship; making a great difference between them, and the case of others, who have drank deeper of the poison, and are become active in the mischief. It may seem to have an unkind appearance, but it is most certain, there are some, whom if you would save at all, you must attempt it with fear and trembling, by severe methods; as alarmed yourselves, and terrifying them, with the apprehensions of God's judgments; as if you were snatching [them] with eagerness out of the fire, into which they are fallen, or just ready to fall. And if you desire, that your efforts, in either of these cases, should be successful, you must take great care to preserve your own purity, hating even the garment that is spotted with the flesh, lest by the touch of it you yourselves be polluted. I am sensible this will require strenuous vigilance and resolution; but I hope the grace of God will animate you to it. To this therefore now I solemnly commit you; even to him who is able to keep you from falling: rugged and dangerous as the ways of life are, and feeble as you know yourselves to be, he is able at length to present [you] blameless, and

faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his

Garment spotted with the flesh.] Mr. Cradock interprets this of the caution with which a man would avoid a garment, which had been worn by one who had a plague: but perhaps there may be a reference to such passages in the Mosaic law, as Lev. xv. 4, 10, 17. See Witsius on the place, who well defends this sense against Erasmus; whose opinion it was, that the apostle alludes to the white garment, which those who were newly baptized, put on in token of innocence.
his glory with exceeding joy,

25 To the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

and in the full perfection of holiness, before the presence of his glory, in his final appearance; with exceeding great and unutterable joy. To him, as the only wise God, who is now become our Saviour, our Guardian, our Friend, and our Father, [be] glory and majesty, dominion and power, ascribed; and obedience, reverence, and love rendered, through Christ Jesus, both now and through all ages, world without end. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let those, who have the honour of being numbered among the disciples of Christ, stand at the remotest distance from the evil with which these unhappy creatures are branded by the apostle in this epistle. And may Divine grace preserve all his churches from such spots in their feasts of charity! May our horizon be secured from those dark and gloomy clouds without water; the plantations of God among us be free from the incumbrance and disgrace of those withered and fruitless trees, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots! How illustrious was the prophecy, with which Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was inspired; and how precious is that fragment of antediluvian history, which is here preserved, and which shall surely be accomplished in its season! The day is now much nearer, when the Lord will come with ten thousands of his saints: may the ungodly remember it, and suppress in time the speeches which will then assuredly be reproved, and repent of the deeds, which if unrepented of, however forgotten now, will be brought into open view, and draw down upon their heads the destruction which at present seems to linger. That we may have confidence before him at his coming, let us remember the words of the apostle, and implore the influences of the Divine Spirit, which sensualists who walk after their own lusts, quench and stifle, and which they mock and deride. Let us, however, be concerned to edify ourselves in our most holy faith, and to pray in the Holy Ghost, under his influence, direction, and assistance. The security of the heart amidst so many temptations, and its richest cordial in all its afflictions, is the love of God; but how soon does the celestial flame languish and die, if it be not constantly fed with new fuel! Let it then be our care in humble dependence upon Divine grace, to keep ourselves in the love of God: which will be cherished in proportion to that degree of faith and hope, with which we look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Christ unto eternal life: for what can so powerfully excite our love to God as such a consideration?

Ver. If we do expect it, let us express our regard to the salvation of others, as well as to our own; and apply ourselves to those who seem to be in danger, with such different addresses of awe or tenderness, as their different circumstances and tempers may require.

But some way or another, let us exert ourselves to pluck them out of the fire, who are in danger of falling into it, and perishing for ever.

A care to preserve our own characters and conscience unspotted, will be necessary to our courage, and hope of success, in such efforts as these. Let us therefore be more frequently looking up to him, who is able to keep us from falling, and to improve as well as maintain the work he has wrought in us, till we shall be presented blameless before the presence of his glory. Then shall our hearts know a joy beyond what earth can afford, beyond what heaven itself shall have given us in the separate state; then shall God also rejoice over us, and the joy of our compassionate Saviour be completed, in the seeing the full accomplishment of the travail of his soul. To him who has so wisely formed the scheme, and will faithfully and perfectly accomplish it, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.
THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR, A

PARAPHRASE

ON

THE REVELATION OF

ST. JOHN.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.
A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

THOUGH the authority of this book was called in question in the beginning of the third century, yet this is no reasonable objection against receiving it into the sacred canon; for perhaps no part of the New Testament, though of unquestionable authenticity and credit, was more universally acknowledged, or mentioned with higher respect, during the two preceding centuries. Dr. Mill observes, that in a few years after it was written, it was numbered among the apostolical writings, by the churches of Asia, the neighbouring churches of Syria and Samaria, the more distant ones of Africa, Egypt and Rome, and the other churches of Europe. Accordingly Mr. Loman, citing this remark of Dr. Mill, makes the following additional observation, "that hardly any one book hath received more early, more authentic, or more satisfactory attestations. Its canonical authority being debated so late as the third century, when it had been universally admitted before, appears to have arisen, from the opposition made to those absurd opinions, which it is well known were entertained by several fathers concerning the millennium. These being entirely grounded upon an injudicious and mistaken interpretation of some prophecies, contained in this sacred book. Caius, with some others, to end the controversy as speedily and effectually as possible, weakly and indiscreetly ventured to deny the authority of the book, which had given occasion to it. If the reader would see this argument handled at large, and the sentiments of the ancients represented fully and distinctly, he may consult Dr. Mill's Prolegomena, Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on the Apocalypse, Dr. Twell's third part of his Critical examination of the new text and version, and Dr. Lardner's second part of the Credibility of the Gospel-History, passim.
This prophetic book is entitled, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* which he sent and signified by *his* angel to *his* servant John. There is, in my opinion, very little reason to doubt, that the John here mentioned was the evangelist of that name, and the author of the three epistles. For concerning this John antiquity agrees; that he was banished to Patmos in the reign of Domitian, for his adherence to the Christian faith. And the author of this book informs the churches of Asia, (chap. i. ver. 9.) that he, their brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, received these revelations, when he was in the isle called Patmos, for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. And if, with some learned men, we apprehend, that the tradition of the evangelist John being banished to the isle Patmos, was occasioned by this passage of the revelation, it shows at least, that it was the most early, as well as most generally received opinion of the ancients, that the author of this book was the same with St. John the evangelist. This book is commonly called, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine.* But this appellation of its author is not of canonical authority; it was first given to St. John by Eusebius, not to distinguish him from any other person of the same name, but on account of those mysterious and sublime points of divinity, with the knowledge of which he seems to have been favoured above his fellow apostles.

If the account of Eusebius is to be credited, that St. John was banished into Patmos, and there received his revelation, in the last year of the reign of Domitian, we may fix the date of this book, with great probability, about the year 96. I am aware, that some authors of very distinguished character, and particularly the great Sir Isaac Newton, place it earlier, and even before the destruction of Jerusalem. The learned Wolfius, (in his *Prolegomena* to the Revelation, in the fifth volume of his *Curae Philologicae*) hath examined and refuted this opinion; I shall here only observe, that perhaps the seven churches of Asia were not founded so early as this opinion supposes; or at least they were not then become so considerable, much less had undergone such changes and revolutions, as the respective epistles to them recorded in this book represent them to have done.

At the close of the magnificent description of our blessed Lord's appearance to St. John, contained in the first chapter, he is ordered to write the things which he saw, (that is, the glorious vision he then beheld,) and the things which are, or the state of the churches at that time, and the things which shall be hereafter, or the future state and condition of the church, to the end of the world. Accordingly this book may properly be divided into three parts.

The first containing the introduction, or a preface and dedication to the seven churches in Asia, and an account of the glorious vision of our Lord, with which St. John was favoured during his banishment into Patmos, where he also received a Divine revelation, concerning the state of the church. (Chap. i. throughout.)

The second part, containing the epistles which Christ command-
ed him to write to the seven churches of Asia, relating to their present circumstances, and to the duties resulting from them. (Chap. ii. and iii.)

The third part, which describes the condition of the church in after-times, from the third chapter to the end of the book, begins with a sublime description of the Deity enthroned in glory, surrounded with angels, and with the heavenly church; and then proceeds to represent a scaled book, or the volume of God's decrees, given to the Lamb, who only was worthy to open it, and who, on that account, receives the acclamation of the whole choir of saints and angels. (chap. iv. v.) After this sublime apparatus, the Lamb is represented as opening the seals of the book, one after another; and with this the scene of prophecy begins; which may very properly be divided, (as it is by the learned Mr. Lowman, who is undoubtedly the best commentator extant, on this part of the New Testament,) into seven periods.

The First Period is that of the seals.

The first seal represents a white horse, his rider having a bow in his hand, and a crown of gold on his head, going forth to conquer.

The second represents a red horse; and to his rider is given a great sword, and power to take peace from the earth.

The third represents a black horse, whose rider hath a pair of scales in his hand, to weigh corn and provision.

The fourth represents a pale horse, whose name is Death, to whom is given power to slay the fourth part of the earth with the sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and with wild beasts of the field.

The fifth represents, under the altar, the souls of those who were slaughtered on account of the word of God; and the final reward of their constancy.

The sixth represents an earthquake, the darkening of the sun, the moon becoming as blood, and the stars falling from heaven.

After the description of the opening of these six seals, and of the consequent visions, an angel is represented as sealing one hundred forty and four thousand with the seal of the living God; after which is introduced the choir of the heavenly church blessing the Almighty; and one of the elders shews St. John, the happiness of those who had patiently endured tribulation. (Chap. vii. throughout.)

The Lamb is then represented as opening the seventh seal, which is succeeded by silence in heaven for the space of half an hour; introductory to the

Second Period, which is that of the trumpets, given to the seven angels, already mentioned. And upon the sounding the

First trumpet, there is hail and fire mingled with blood cast down.
upon the earth, representing bloody and destructive wars. On the
sounding of the

Second trumpet, a great mountain, as it were burning with fire,
is cast into the sea; by which a third part of it becomes blood,
and a third part of the creatures in the sea die, and a third part
of the ships are destroyed. On the sounding of the

Third trumpet, a great burning star falls from heaven upon a
third part of the rivers, and of the fountains of waters, and a third
part of the waters become bitter. On the sounding of the

Fourth trumpet, a third part of the sun, and of the moon, and
of the stars, is darkened. And a woe is denounced by one of the
angels against them that dwell on the earth, for the trumpets of the
three angels who are yet to sound. On the sounding of the

Fifth trumpet, the bottomless pit is opened, and from thence
issue forth locusts in great multitudes, not to destroy the fruits
of the earth, but to torment its inhabitants. These locusts are
described like horses prepared for battle, with crowns on their heads
like gold, and their faces like the faces of men, their hair like the
hair of women, their teeth like lions, their breast-plates like iron,
the noise of their wings like that of chariots and horses, their tails
like scorpions, and armed with stings, having the angel of the
bottomless pit for their leader. On the sounding of the

Sixth trumpet, the four angels which were bound by the great
river Euphrates are loosed, and lead up mighty armies of horse-
men for the destruction of mankind. (Chap. vii. 9.)

After the sixth trumpet had sounded, St. John relates the mar-
vellous vision of an angel who appeared to him in great glory, and
brought him a little book, which he is commanded to eat; and
then he is ordered, again, to prophesy to many people, and na-
tions, and tongues, and kings. (chap. x. throughout.) And thus the

Third Period is introduced, which is pointed out by various
representations:

1. By the measure of the Temple, part of which is given to,
foot by the Gentiles; and two witnesses are
represented as prophesying in sackcloth 1260 days, and then, hav-
ing been put to death, are raised again from the dead; and upon
the sounding of the trumpet of the seventh angel, their triumphs
over their enemies are celebrated by the heavenly hosts! (chap.
xi. 1—19.) And the temple of God being opened in heaven, and
the ark of the covenant displayed, the state of the church in this
period, is described

2. As a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her
feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and while she was
in travall, assaulted by a fiery dragon, with seven heads, and ten
horns, and on his heads seven crowns; and when she is deliverer,
her child is caught up to God; and she flies into the wilderness to
avoid the dragon, where she is supported 1260 days; and the dra-
gon
To the Revelation of St. John.

gon is vanquished by the angels; chap. ii. 19.—xii. throughout.

The deplorable condition of the church in this period is described further.

3. By the faithful being exposed to the ravages of wild beasts, whom St. John saw in a vision rising out of the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns, that is, ten diadems, and on his heads names of blasphemy, to whom the dragon gave his power and authority; so that the inhabitants of the earth worshipped the beast, as well as the dragon; and the beast had power to make war with the saints 42 months, or 1260 days; (which is the same space of time, during which the woman, in the preceding vision, is said to have been supported in the wilderness, and during which, in the first vision, the two witnesses are said to prophecy in sackcloth: a circumstance which plainly demonstrates these visions to be descriptive of the state of things in the same period, and not in successive periods.) And the power and authority of this beast is supported by another beast, which arose after it, and which is also particularly described. And the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name, which is also said to be the number of a man, is six hundred and sixty six.—After which follows a sublime description of the Lamb standing on mount Zion, surrounded with the one hundred and forty four thousand, who have the name of his Father written in their foreheads, while the heavenly church celebrates the happiness of those who had continued faithful, and persevered to the end.—The next vision is of an angel flying through the midst of heaven, with the everlasting gospel in his hand, denouncing the judgment of God to be approaching on the beast, and on them who worship him: which is likewise set forth by some succeeding representations:——And particularly,

By an order given to the seven angels to pour out their vials, full of the seven last plagues, in which the wrath of God is completed on the beast and his votaries.

The first vial is poured out upon the earth, and produces a grievous ulcer on them who had the mark of the beast.

The second vial is poured out upon the sea, which becomes blood, and every living thing in the sea dies.

The third vial is poured out on the rivers, and on the fountains of water, which also become blood.

The fourth vial is poured forth on the sun, which hath power given to it to scorch men with fire.

The fifth vial is poured out on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom is darkened, and his votaries gnaw their tongues, and blaspheme the God of heaven for their pains and their ulcers.

The sixth vial is poured out on the river Euphrates, and the water of it is dried up, so that a way is prepared for the kings of the east; against whom the worshippers of the beast are drawn up in order of battle. And then upon the pouring out of

The seventh vial, a voice is heard from heaven, accompanied with thunder and lightning, saying, “It is completed;” that is, Babylon
Babylon the great hath drank of the cup of the wine of God's fiercest indignation.

After the pouring out of these vials one of the angels, who had executed that commission, further explains what had been represented, by describing the character of the great harlot who sitteth on many waters, and with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication. And then follows an account of another angel descending from heaven, declaring with a loud voice, that Babylon the great is fallen, and pouring out the lamentation of her friends and merchants over her. Upon which is described the triumph of the heavenly host on account of the fall of Babylon; which is further illustrated by the representation of an attack made by Christ and his army on the beast, ending in an entire victory over him. (chap. xiii.—xiv.)

The Fourth Period represents an angel descending from heaven, to confine the great dragon, or Satan, in the bottomless pit for the space of a thousand years, during which the church is in a very peaceful and flourishing condition. (chap. xx. 1—6.)

The Fifth Period represents Satan loosed again for a little season, and making a fresh attempt for the establishment of his kingdom, which shall issue in its utter destruction. (ver. 7—10.)

The Sixth Period represents the general resurrection, the last judgment, and the utter destruction of the wicked. (ver. 11, to the end.)

The Seventh Period represents the vision of new heavens, and a new earth, or the happiness of the Jerusalem above, described by the sublime figures which can enter into the human imagination. (chap. xxx. xxii.—3.)

In the conclusion of this truly marvellous series of prophecy, with which the canon of scripture closes, our blessed Lord in the most awful manner charges his faithful servant and apostle John, to reveal to the churches what had thus been revealed to him, and declares his own speedy approach to the final judgment; denouncing a very dreadful sentence of condemnation on those who should add to or diminish the words of the prophecy of this book. And then the sacred writer concludes the whole with a solemn benediction; (chap. xxii. 6, to the end.)

After all the labour and pains, which learned men have been at to explain and illustrate this book, so many articles are contained in it, which are dark and mysterious, that I remained some time undetermined, whether I should publish any commentary upon it at all. But on a more devout and attentive review, I resolved to offer to the reader what assistance I could, to enable him to comprehend its general design, and lead him to those practical and important
important instructions, which it suggests with great plainness and
ever energy; without entering very deeply into critical inquiries con-
cerning those particular events to which the several prophecies may
be supposed to refer. It is an excellent observation of Monsieur
Saurin, that this is a very mortifying book to a mind greedy of
knowledge and science, but a very satisfying and agreeable one to
a heart solicitous about maxims and precepts, for regulating our
temper and lives; or, in his own expressive and elegant words,
*L'Apocalypse, qui est un des plus mortifiques Ouvrages, pour un
Esprit avide de Connoissance & de Lumiere, est un des plus satis-
faisans pour un Cœur avide de Maximes et de Precepts.* Saurin's
PARAPHRASE AND NOTES
ON
THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

SECTION I.

The preface, and dedication to the seven churches in Asia; including an affecting display of the Divine glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and sublime songs of praise to him for redeeming love.

Rev. I. 1—8

Revelation I. 1.

This is the book of the revelation of Jesus Christ; even that revelation, which God his Father gave to him for wise and holy purposes, to shew to his servants the things which must shortly be; many of which are to be very quickly accomplished, and the rest within a period of time, which, when compared with his reign in the heaven of heavens with all his saints and people, is only a short and very inconsiderable duration. And sending the discovery of these things by his angel, whose office it was to raise extraordinary signs and representations in his imagination, he signified them to his servant John, who had indeed been distinguished by his Master's affection in the days of his flesh; insomuch that he even lay in his bosom, and was styled, by way of eminence, the disciple whom Jesus
The inscription to the seven churches in Asia.

Jesus loved: And who, being honoured with so important a message, failed not faithfully to declare it: but testified the word of God, which in those prophetic visions came unto him, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, (whose messenger the angel was,) exactly reporting whatever he saw.

Happy is he that attentively readeth, and they that obediently hear the words of this prophecy, and who keep the things that are written in it, fixing their mind upon them, and duly regarding them; for the time of their accomplishment [is] at hand.

And considering the particular manner in which they were addressed by our blessed Lord, in some of the first of the revelations, JOHN dedicates and inscribes this account of the whole, to the seven churches, which are in the province of Asia, at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea; wishing that grace in the richest abundance, and peace in all the variety of its blessings, may [be] with you all from the Great God, the fountain of all blessings, even from him, who is, and who was, and who is to come; possessed of invariable Divine attributes and perfect truths; and from the seven spirits, which are before his throne, and appear as emblems of the various operations and endowments of that one blessed Spirit by whom they are actuated. And from Jesus Christ, the true and faithful Witness, whose testimony is ever to be received with the most religious regard, as being the First-born from the dead, the first who rose to die no more, and who as the eldest Son of the family of God, is gone to take possession of the inheritance for himself, and in the name of his brethren; even from him, who is the supreme Ruler of all the kings of the earth, and who knows how to humble them.

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it. For the time is at hand.

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia. Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne.

3 And from Jesus Christ, whom the faithful Witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of

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* From beginning to end, and who was, &c. The Learned Graecians of all opinions, that the meaning is not being varied into what the preservatives call a creator, as the common mark of preservatives require, is designed to represent the everlasting eternity and immutability of God, and the unchangeable majesty of Christ in the testimony of the gospel, and the glory of his kingdom.

b The seven spirits before his throne.] Some have explained this of the seven archangels, and urged it as an instance of consecration to them; but we may rather suppose the Spirit of God to be splendidly represented by the seven spirits before the throne: as it is a very very agreeable to the genius of this enchanted book. Thus, as Bishop Burnet observes, in support of this opinion, See Hesich. on the article, p. 70 it is most consistent with the prohibition of prayer to the angels. And if we do not suppose this to be the case, it will be a great difficulty to account for the omission of the Spirit, whose dignity must, on almost every hypothesis, be allowed far superior to that of the highest created angels. See Mr. Levison in loc.

He
of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him; and they also which pierced him; and all kings of the earth shall

6 He is coming in the clouds, and every eye shall see him.) It is surprising, that Dr. Whitby should interpret these words as relating to the temporal calamities to befal the Jews when the destruction of Jerusalem was long since past. And whatever slaughter was made of the Jews in Lybia, Simyra, Alexandria, and other places afterwards, it could by no means be called, the coming of Christ in the clouds by way of eminence: even though that phrase might be allowed applicable to remarkable temporal vengeance, inflicted by the providence, and in the cause of Christ.

7 All the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of him.) In this verse is prefixed the great moral, which the whole book is designed to illustrate; namely, that though
Who declares himself to be the Alpha and Omega.

Sect. 1.

Rev. 1. 7.

lament that fatal opposition, by which, instead of prevailing in the least against him, they have only effected their own destruction. "Ye, Lord, we repeat our joyful accent: amen: come, Lord Jesus, in the clouds of heaven; take to thyself thy great power and reign; thy people shall lift up their heads with joy and triumph, being infallibly assured, that their complete redemption is approaching." And to confirm their faith and hope, let them hear him speaking as it were, by his own majestic voice from heaven, and saying, I am the Alpha and the Omega: the beginning and the end. I was before all worlds, and shall continue the same, when the revolutions of this world are over, and the final scenes relating to it shall be concluded. I am the First and the Last; I am he saith the Lord Jehovah, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the eternal, the unchangeable, the Almighty" Author, Supporter, and Disposer of all things.

Improvement.

With what sublimity doth this wonderful book open! which, though pregnant with inexplicable mysteries, is at the same time pregnant with instruction; which the weakest of Christ's humble disciples may peruse with sacred complacency and delight. For surely we are not to imagine that Divine book to be Verus, for our perusal, and undeserving our regard, concerning which an Divine Author expressly declareth, Blessed is he that readeth

there should be great opposition made against the name and kingdom of Christ, and it should be utterly in vain; and he knoweth should triumph in the most illustrious manner; so that all who had opposed it, should have the greatest reason to mourn. And as this view of Divine prosperity begins, so it ends with this sentiment, and with the joyful conclusion of his faithful servants, to the glorious truth, which should fill the enemies of Christ with such terror and dismay. Compare chap. xii. 20.

And, Thrice has been interpreted by many as spoken by the Father, but it will be very difficult to prove a direct proof. Most of the phrases, which are borrowed concerning this glorious Person, are afterward used concerning our Lord Jesus Christ; and therein, though in ecclesiastical writers of the earliest ages, generally, so far as I can find appropriate to the Father, may according to the Syriac version, be rendered, He who is, that, is, the Septuagint, supports, and governs all; and then it is applied to Christ, Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3. But if, after all, the words should be understood as spoken by the Father, our Lord's laying so many of these titles afterwards to himself, plainly proves his partaking with the Father in the glory peculiar to the Divine nature, and incommunicable to any creature. See Bishop Pearson on the Creed, p. 175.

Dr. Clarke contends that the word άλαπάλαπα is peculiar to the Father; compare Clarke on the Trinity, Num. 41, and Faith, Sermon. Vol. i. p. 280.) yet he intimates, that Christ may have the title of Alpha and Omega, as Author and Finisher of our faith, Beginner and Completer of our salvation. Heb. xii. 2.
Reflections on the glorious character of Christ.

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eth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy! Thanks be to our heavenly Father, that he gave it to his son Jesus Christ. Thanks to the Son of God, that he gave it to his servant John, to be trans-

mitted down to future generations.

Let us attentively view the Divine glory of the Father, and of his only begotten Son, who is the brightness of that glory, and the express image of his Person, and of the Holy Ghost, who is here represented by the seven spirits before the throne. From us, and from all created nature, let there be glory to him that is, and that was, and that is to come, and to the First-born from the dead, who is superior to all the kings of the earth, and to all the angels of heaven, who is so intimately united with the Father in Divine perfections and glories, that he also is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End: that he also is almighty: able by his mighty power to subdue all things to himself; and is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Never let us be unmindful of the condescension of the Son of God, in becoming for our redemption and salvation the Son of man. Let the great things he has done for us, the great things he has taught us to expect from him, be ever familiar to our minds. How astonishing was that love, which engaged him to wash us from our sins in his own blood! How glorious is that exaltation to which he is raising us! rendering us, even in the present world, kings and priests to God, and inspiring us with the ardent hope of an inmutable kingdom, and an everlasting priesthood in the temple of our God above. This is the sublime and transcendent happiness of all who with lively faith look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. This illustrious Personage is coming in the clouds, and our eyes shall see him: too often already have we pierced him; let us now look up to him with an humble and lively faith; let us mourn over our sins at present, that we may not pour forth floods of unprofitable tears in that awful day; as all the tribes of the earth shall do, who have dared to set themselves against the kingdom of Christ; a kingdom which shall then be triumphant over all opposition, the last of its enemies being vanquished and destroyed.
St. John acquaints them that he was in the isle of Patmos.

SECT. II.

St. John gives an account of the circumstances and manner of our Lord's appearance to him, when he received the Revelation in Patmos. Rev. I. 9—16.

Revelation I. 9.

JOHN, who was formerly distinguished by the name of the disciple whom Jesus loved, who am also your brother, O ye Christians, and who have the honour to be a partaker with you all in the tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ: with all I say, who are called to the hope of his kingdom, and in the patient expectation of that, endure with cheerfulness the afflictions which his infinite wisdom is pleased to appoint us: I was in the desert and disconsolate island of the Aegean Sea, called Patmos, to which I was banished by Domitian the emperor, for the sake of the word of God, manifested in the gospel, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, which I had endeavoured faithfully to maintain. I was on a sudden in the Spirit, under his miraculous energy, on that blessed day which we Christians are accustomed to call the Lord's day, the first day of the week, which our dear Redeemer has rendered sacred and venerable, by his resurrection from the dead on the morning of it; and though I was then incapable of joining in any worshipping assembly, the want of that privilege was amply made up, by that manifestation with which the Lord of the day was pleased to favour me; for I heard
Where Christ appeared to him in great glory.

11 "Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last; and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

I am Alpha and Omega.] That these titles should be repeated so soon, in a connection which demonstrates they are given to Christ, will appear very remarkable, whatever sense be given to the eighth verse. The argument drawn, in the preceding note upon it, would have been strong, wherever such a passage as this had been found; but its immediate connection with this, greatly strengthens it. And I cannot forbear recording it, that this text has done more than any other in the Bible, toward preventing me from giving into that scheme, which would make our Lord Jesus Christ no more than a deified creature.

Seven churches in Asia.] I presume not to enquire, Whether these were the only Asiatic churches. To be sure they were the principle. Nor will I enquire, why the epistles were appropriated to the churches of that province. It is certain they contain many things of universal concern; and as there is plainly an intention to represent the regard of Christ to ministers, and churches, by his walking among golden candlesticks, and holding stars in his right hand, the number seven may be mentioned, as it seems best to harmonize with some other parts of this book, namely, with the seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven thunders, and seven spirits before the throne.
with a golden girdle, which being properly fastened there, hung down to his feet. And his head, even his hairs which adorned it, and flowed round his shoulders, were white as snow, or to speak more properly, as white as snow; (Dan. vii. 9;) and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet were resplendent like fine brass, when purified in a furnace from all its dross, and polished by the hands of some skilful artificer; and his voice was loud as the voice of many waters, so that I imagined it might have been heard as far as the sounding noise of the billows of the sea, when they beat against the rocky shores; And he had in his right hand seven stars; the motions of which he seemed to direct and govern, at the same time that he supported them; and out of his mouth there went a sharp two-edged sword, or dagger, capable of piercing and wounding every way; and his countenance was radiant and glorious as the sun, when he shineth in all his meridian power and lustre, and beams forth his rays, vigorous and unclouded.

IMPROVEMENT.

What unspeakable happiness can our blessed Redeemer confer on his faithful servants, while suffering in his cause! How wretched was Cæsar on his imperial throne, compared with this despised and persecuted disciple of Christ, in his old age banished to the desolate island of Patmos! There his Lord condescended to visit him, opened his eyes to prophetic visions, and diffused around him celestial glories. May we in no case be ashamed of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, a zeal for which was so graciously acknowledged, so gloriously rewarded.

It was on the Lord’s day that the apostle was in the Spirit: how often has the Spirit of God visited his people at that sacred season, visited them as well in their secret retirements as in the public assembly;

A golden girdle. [The girdles were a kind of scarf, which first went over the neck like a napkin, were crossed on the breast, and then went round the lower part of the breast, two or three times, like a modern apron, and then they fell down almost to the feet. And as they were sometimes embroidered, and sometimes fringed with gold, they must make a very ornamental part of dress. The priests were required, for cleanness and decency, to wear linen garments, and gird themselves higher than others. Compare Ezek. xlv. 17, 18. And this is one of the many allusions to the temple and its forms and customs, with which we shall find the book so greatly to abound. Compare Ezek. xxix. 5.]
assembly; when the hand of Providence, as in the instance before us, and not their own negligence, and indifference to Divine ordinances, occasioned their absence from them: otherwise we might fear that those raptures of mind, which in the contempt of ordinances some make their boast and glory, arise from the artifices of the great enemy of souls, and are to be numbered among the most dangerous engines by which he attempts our ruin.

Let our souls again bend, in humble veneration, to him who is the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega. As if we heard his awful voice proclaiming himself by these illustrious and marvellous visions in which he manifested himself to St. John, let us endeavour to form some imperfect ideas of our blessed Lord, and the magnificence and glory with which he appears to the inhabitants of the heavenly regions. Every circumstance, not excepting the minutest and most inconsiderable, attending this appearance of Christ to his beloved apostle, seems designed to convey some Divine truth, some important lesson, for the contemplation and instruction of future ages. It was, in general, beyond all question, intended to impress us with the lowliest reverence of our glorified Redeemer, that we may pay him our humble and devout adoration, and thus in some degree anticipate the pleasure with which we hope to appear in his immediate presence above.

SECT. III.

Our Lord Jesus Christ addresses himself to the Apostle John, and charges him with an epistle to each of the seven Asiatic churches already mentioned: and in the first place, with the epistle to the church of Ephesus. Rev. I. 17.—II. 7.

Revelation I. 17.

I have just been describing the appearance of Jesus Christ to me, with which I was favoured on the Lord’s day, in the island of Patmos, while I was engaged in such devout sentiments as were suitable to the time and occasion; and I now add, that when I saw him in this awful, this glorious and resplendent form, I was perfectly overwhelmed with the majesty of his appearance, so that I fell down at his feet as dead: and he immediately condescended to raise me up, with great indulgence; for he laid his right hand upon me, [and] said to me, Fear not, John, for
for I appear to thee for purposes of mercy; I am, indeed, as I have proclaimed myself, the First and the Last, possessed of Divine perfections and glories; And yet I still wear the human form, which I assumed for the redemption of human and fallen creatures like myself; I [am] he who liveth, and have life immortal, and glory immutable in myself, though I was once dead, as thou knowest: and now behold it both with joy and wonder, I am living for ever and ever: (Amen). be it so then, O Lord; mayest thou for ever live and reign! And he added, I have the keys of the unseen world, and of death: I have a supreme dominion over it, and remove the souls of men from world to world, calling them out of the body, and fixing them in the invisible state, according to my pleasure, till at length I shall exert my power of raising the dead.

19 Write therefore the things which thou hast seen, and those which will be opened to thy view, in which there will be, in part, a reference to the things which already are, and a further reference to the things which shall hereafter be.

20 And, as a general key to what I am now going to dictate, observe, that is, the mystery of the seven stars, which thou hast seen as in my right hand, and of the seven lamp which are of gold; the seven stars are an emblematical representation of the angels, or presiding ministers, of the seven churches, and the seven lamps which thou hast, are a representation of the seven churches themselves, to which I have directed thee to inscribe and transmit the important epistles I am now about to dictate, according to what I observe

A Amen! As this word appears to have a doxological force, it is rendered as expressing the joyful shout of John to what was revealed. I have explained the parenthesis upon it in a former place.

b Unseen world! It must be observed, that this somewhat soothes the sense, when the very only question is, that, as Mr. Hales has forcibly proved in his excellent dissertation, I have here risen, is most reasonable. That which would refer it to God as the seat of the dead, limits the sense in a manner very derogatory from the meaning of our blessed Father, as he there shows unanswerably. Hosea's Words, Vol. II. p. 41, &c. According to Graver (see his note on Mat. xiv. 11,) the word 'abad, always denotes either dead, or the state of its dead, and they who are of opinion, that Luke xvi. 23, is an exception, may answer that learned author's judgment on this place. Our English, or rather a Greek word, not in its original significance, though it is now understood in a more limited sense, exactly answers to the Greek word, hades, and denotes a confinement, or prison place; and this sense of the word is still retained in the current, and especially, in the western counties of England, to this over a thing, is to confine it. See Lord King's History of the Greek, chap. iv.

c Respective
Christ's epistle to the church of Ephesus.

CHAP. II. 1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write, These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right-hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience; and thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not: and hast found them liars;

3 And hast borne and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast served of their respective circumstances and necessities.

And in the first place, address to the angel, or presiding officer, of the church of Ephesus and write thus. These things saith he who holdeth the seven stars in his right-hand, to signify that he is the great Support of his ministering servants, and directs their several situations and motions in the churches; and who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamps, to intimate thereby his presence among Christian societies, and his particular inspection over them. My eyes have been carefully fixed upon thee, and I have observed many things in thy conduct with pleasure. I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, with which thou hast endured the trials and sufferings to which thou hast been called out; and I know thou hast such a zeal for the honour of my gospel, and the establishment of my kingdom, that thou canst not bear those who are evil. And, as false pretensions to a Divine mission and inspiration are so common, I know thou hast tried those, who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them [to be] liars, and rejected their pretensions with a becoming disdain. And I know thou hast sustained, with exemplary fortitude, the trouble they

c Respective circumstances and necessities.] How exactly the address in each epistle, suits the state of the church to which it was sent, and what condemned is implied in our Saviour's giving them these distinct notices and admonitions, is in some measure, though very imperfectly illustrated in my Ten Sermons on the Power and Grace of Christ. See Serm. vii.

d To the angel, or presiding officer.] That there was one pastor, who presided in each of these churches, is indeed evident from the expression here used; but that he was a diocesan bishop, or had several congregations of Christians under his care, can by no means be proved. Nor is there the least hint of it, that I know of, in any of these epistles. Many have shewn from ancient Jewish writings, that there was an officer of the synagogue who had the name of angel. See Vitr. de Synog. Vet. lib. 3. p. ii. c. 2. And Dr Lightfoot adds, that from his office of overlooking the reader of the law, he was called [?] or episcopus. Compare Mal. ii. 7.

e Canst not bear those who are evil.] This has been pleaded by Lord Barrington as an argument that the church of Ephesus, in the early days of Christianity, recovered itself from those corruptions which some endeavoured to bring into it, (2 Tim. i. 15; ii. 17—26; iii. 6—10;) and which St. Paul, in his first epistle to Timothy, endeavoured, it seems, with some happy success, to prevent. Misc. Soc. Vol. I. p. 42. Limborch has sufficiently shewn, (see his Theo. lib. v. cap. 27. § 49) the absurdity of opposing such a text as this to the great Christian doctrine of iteration, which some have madly endeavoured to prejudice by trifling inferences from such detached and perverted clauses in opposition to the tenor of the whole New Testament. But the pretending to enforce such ecclesiastical measures as the laws of Christ do indeed in some cases require, with those secular terrors which the magistrate, by virtue of his office, is to inflict on immoralities prejudicial to society, has been the destruction of Christian discipline in popish countries universally, and generally in all protestant establishments too.

EE
He orders them to repent and do their first works.

...they have given thee; and hast exercised invincible patience under all thy sufferings and trials in my cause; and thou hast laboured constantly and tenaciously for my name's sake, and to establish the faith of my people: and hast not averted under thy toils or tribulations. Nevertheless, I have [something] to allude against a ce, exemplary as thou art in many respects; and it is this, That thou hast lost the zeal and fervour of thy first love to me and my cause; and this cannot but be very displeasing to me.

5 Remember therefore from what thou art fallen; recall those better days to thy memory, and in the view of them set thyself seriously to repeat of the decay which hath so much prevailed; and do the first works, or rather endeavour to exceed them. Otherwise thou must expect, that I will come unto thee quickly, in some awful dispensations of Providence, and take away thy lamp out of its place, unless thou repent, no longer shalt thou continue to be a church, if thou dost not endeavour to recover thy lost ground, and to shine at least with thy former lustre.

6 Nevertheless, thou hast this honour and praise remaining, that thou hast hated the impure works of the lewd Nicolaitanes, which I also hate, as having brought so great a reproach upon the Christian name: To conclude: Let him that hath an ear,

[Lost the first love.] It is very plain, that these epistles are addressed to the angels or princes of the churches, are directed to the churches themselves, as represented by them. Just as the Jewish church was represented by Israel, their high priest, Zea., m. i. But it is not probable, that where some of the churches are blamed, there might be in their numbers some faults correspondent to those charged upon the others: and particularly, that the soul of the minister of Ephesus might be declining. There is, I think, no reason to be serious with regard to Timothy's character on this account; for it can never be proved that he was a weak prince of the church of Ephesus, though in some accidents things have been said concerning it on very slender foundation.

[Take away thy lamp out of its place.] As this threatening is addressed to the church of Ephesus, though no better than some other churches, it is reasonable to believe that it, like other denunciations was intended to awaken the rest. It intimates how terrible a thing it would be to have the lamp taken away from them. And indeed it has been executed upon them all in a very awful manner. For though there be a little congregation, if I remember right, at Smyrna, yet most of those churches are quite ruined, and with them the cities in which they stood, though they were once very celebrated. And it is hardly possible, even for one who is not a Christian, to view the account which Sir Paul Huet, and the learned and ingenious Mr. Smith, have given of them, without being tenderly affected with so lamentable a catastrophe.

[In Nicolaitanes.] Some have thought these heretics derived their name from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons; and some entertained they asserted it. But the case was more upon among the Jews that little argument can be drawn from there. See First. Hist. Ch. iii. c. 23. The substance of what ancient writers are concerning these is, that they taught the doctrine of heathen and adulterous origin, entering them things indifferent in their own nature, and their practices were suitable to such principles. Compare ver. 14, 15.
ear, hear what the Spirit saith to all the churches for their encouragement; to that of Ephesians in particular: To him who conquers the enemies, which lie in the way of his duty and happiness, and manfully breaks through all oppositions, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

With whatever humble and holy reverence this awful representation of our blessed Redeemer may strike us, let us be encouraged to look up to him by a lively faith, and to hear with joy, and with purposes of the most grateful obedience, the gracious declaration he makes of that amazing contrast of Divine perfections and characters, and of human weakness and infirmities, which met in him. The Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, is he who lives and yet was dead, but is now alive for evermore: for us he became liable to death, but is now risen to a Divine and immortal life; in which consideration let us continually rejoice on his account, and on our own. It is exceedingly reviving to the heart of a sincere Christian, that Jesus has the keys of the unseen world, and of death; so that whenever we are removed by the stroke of this our last enemy, it is only to be considered as his turning the key, which will turn us out of this world into another, of happiness and glory everlasting. How delightful to reflect that heaven is under the command of our Redeemer, and hell is under his controul! What have his faithful servants to fear from the one? what have they not to hope from the other? How does this cheering sentiment disarm both life and death, of their respective terrors.

Let us attend to each of these excellent epistles, which Christ condescended himself to dictate, and to address by the hand of his servant John, to these Asiatic churches. Let us attend to his titles, his admonitions, his promises, that we may be awed with holy reverence, that we may be animated to humble hope, and steady courage, in every encounter with the enemies of our salvation.

Let the ministers of Christ rejoice, that they are as stars in the
Christ's epistle to the church of Smyrna.

Sect. ii.

right-hand, of thy Redeemer. "Support them, O Lord, by thy almighty power, and guide all their motions by thine infinite wis-
Ver. dom." Let all the churches of Christ remember, that he walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks; may they be pure gold: may their lamps shine with unsullied lustre, that their Father may be glorified, and their Saviour delighted with the survey.

2, 3 He sees our labour, our patience, our fidelity, and our zeal. May he see that we cannot bear those who would corrupt: our religion, without exerting ourselves to silence their false pretensions, and to guard the churches, to which we are related especially, from the venom they might diffuse over them? In all these respects, may we daily approve ourselves to him in a more perfect manner. But, alas! does he not perceive in many of us, what he complained so early of, in the church of Ephesus; that we have lost our first love, and that much of that zeal with which we set out in religion is declined? If so, let us take the alarm: for dreadful indeed would it be, to have our candlestick removed out of its place; to have the gospel and all its privileges taken away from us. To prevent this awful judgment, let us recollect from whence we are fallen, if we are indeed in a backsliding and declining state; and humbly and heartily repent, and rigorously exert ourselves against the enemies of our salvation: that overcoming the difficulties of this howling wilderness, we may be received to the enjoyments of the heavenly country: and when we can no longer share in the bounties of providence in this inferior state, be feasted with the fruit of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

SECT. IV.

The epistles which Christ orders St. John to write to the churches of Smyrna and Pergamos. Rev. ii. 8.—17.

Revelation ii. 8.

AND to the angel, or minister, of the church of Smyrna, write, These things saith the First and the Last; that glorious and Divine Person, who having assumed the human nature into a union with Deity, is able to say, he was dead and is alive; who therefore demands by all considerations of reverence, gratitude and love, thy most attentive audience, and most obedient regard: I know thy works to have been in many respects very extraordinary; and I am well acquainted

Rev. ii. 9.

AND unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, These things saith the First and the Last which was dead, and is alive; 9 I know thy works, and tribulation and poverty,
They should fear none of the things they might suffer.

poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the defilement cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt have the crown of life.

a And poverty.] Archbishop Wake supposes this refers to the extraordinary character of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna; who had, as ecclesiastical history tells us, reduced himself to a voluntary poverty, as many of the primitive bishops did, by selling his estate, and distributing it to the poor. But I much question, whether the personal character of the bishop, or pastor of these churches, be referred to in this address; and the very next verse seems to demonstrate it is not. Compare also ver. 5.

b Say they are Jews, and are not.] There were great numbers of Jews in the proconsular Asia; and their inveteracy against the gospel there and elsewhere, is well known. This is an instance, in which the word Jew signifies one of God's peculiar people; and it is not improbable, that many prophetic phrases, in which Jewish rites are mentioned, are to be interpreted with as great a latitude; that is, for those rites of worship which God's peculiar people should use.

c Cast some of you into prison.] Whether the power of the synagogue extended so far as to imprison, I do not certainly know; to scourging it undoubtedly extended.

d Tribulation ten days.] Mr. Fleming, (of the Resurrection, p. 129,) with many others, thinks this refers to the persecution under Domitian, which continued about ten years, and was begun when John was banished into Patmos, and saw these revelations. But it may only signify a short and limited time. Compare Gen. xxxii. 7; 1 Sam. i. 8; Eccl. vii. 19; Dan. i. 12; Zech. viii. 23.

e Be thou faithful unto death, &c.] I have endeavoured at large to illustrate the great force of this noble text in my funeral sermon for that illustrious Christian hero, Colonel Gardiner, whose name I could not forbear recording here, and the memoirs of whose life, which from the most intimate knowledge of him I have written, will, I hope, promote the admiration, love, and imitation of all who peruse them.
assault thee; for thou lightest under a General, who, though thou fall by the stroke of this last enemy, can raise thee again; and instead of losing by thy fidelity to me, thou shalt be richly rewarded; for I will give thee a crown of eternal life, and advance thee to such glory and felicity, as shall be infinitely more than an equivalent for the utmost thou canst possibly suffer.

11 In my cause. He that hath an ear to hear, let him be all attention to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: The valiant conqueror shall be secured from evils, which are beyond all comparison greater than any he can endure on earth. In this world he may indeed encounter the first death for my sake; but he shall not be injured hereafter by the second; he shall rest in everlasting security and peace, while those who desert and renounce their duty for the preservation of this transitory life, shall be consigned to that state of misery, where they shall seek death, but it shall for ever flee from them.

12 And to the angel, or minister, of the church which [is] in Pergamos, write: These things saith he, who in taken of the penetrating and efficacious nature of his word, is represented as one who has the sharp two-edged sword coming out of his mouth: even that word, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. I know thy works, and thy circumstances, in every respect; and particularly, where thou dwellest: even upon the throne of Satan (as he fixed, in the midst of superstition, and in the midst of persecution, by the union of which the kingdom of darkness is supported, and thou hast cast the honour of my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days of extreme difficulty and danger in which Antipas also my faithful martyr, and sealed his fidelity to me with his blood, even that dear and resolute Christian, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth, and seems to take up his residence, as might be inferred from the

ful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou hast held my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days, wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

"Antipas my faithful martyr." Evidently many have not inferred as who this Antipas was. Perhaps he was a most zealous servant, who died for the faith he had preached, or some private Christian of the same faith, rash, and circumstances, ruled by and one resided in the Christian cause. But we may be sure that such a determining notice taken of him by our Divine Master, who mentions his name with affection and regard, would be, instead of a thousand arguments, to animate the courage and fidelity of other Christians. He might be called out to the

5 Balaamites.
14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 Repent: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give the privilege of being, as it were, admitted into the most holy place; and there he shall have liberty to eat of the hidden manna; and shall be entertained with those sacred pleasures, which in these later ages, is owing to the contrary doctrine and practice. And I greatly fear, that millions of souls are continually sacrificed to it, especially in France, and other countries, in which protestant churches were once planted, but are now overthrown. Nor can it be hoped, that the reformed interest will ever revive, till a few of its professors at least have the courage to die for the truth, and scatter their blood as the seed of the church. An anonymous writer, (in the Memoirs of Life, Vol. V. p. 235,) thinks, that by Balaamites, or Nicolaitans, which he also supposes the same, we are, in general, to understand lewd and profligate persons, who aim at nothing but their own secular advantage, and pleads in favour of his opinion, ver. 13; iii. 9; viii. 11; ix. 11; xi. 8, in which places proper names are used in such a figurative manner, to express characters resembling theirs whose names are thus used.
which God's sanctuary above affords, and of which the manna that fell in the wilderness, and was laid up in a golden vessel before the Lord, was only an imperfect type. And I will give him a white stone, in token of full absolution from all his crimes; and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, except he who receiveth it: I will admit him to that intimacy of sacred friendship, from whence results a joy which the stranger intermediates not with, and which can be only conceived by those who happily experience it.

IMPROVEMENT.

5 Ver. Again let us direct our eyes to that glorious Person, who is the First and the Last; and who, though it may appear incompatible with that Divine title, was once dead, and is alive again; and since he is here awfully represented as with a sharp sword going out of his mouth, let us be greatly concerned, that we do not incur his displeasure by our irregular conduct, lest he smite, or even destroy us. Let us observe and imitate what he commends in the churches whom he here addresses; their humility in being sensible of their poverty, when enriched by his grace; their patience, their diligence, and the resolution with which they retained the honour of his name, notwithstanding the throne of Satan was in the midst of them, and the rage of persecution had destroyed Antipas before their eyes, that blessed, that triumphant hero, whose fidelity

1. Note again from, except he who receiveth it. I have sometimes thought, 

may signify, one that has received it, as it seems a name given to any person, must be known to others, or it would be given in vain; and then it intimates, that honour shall be conferred on such an one, which shall only be known to the inhabitants of that world to which he shall be admitted, and who have already received it. Otherwise, it must refer to a custom which has sometimes prevailed among princes, of giving particular names, expressing familiarity and delight, to distinguished favourites, by which to call them in the greatest familiarity of converse, whether by discourses, or by letters, and which have not been communicated to others, or used by them at other times. I have hinted at both in the paraphrase, not being able in my own mind certainly to determine, which is the peculiar and more exact sense.
fidelity and constancy his Divine Saviour commemorates with approbation, and even with satisfaction and pleasure. Who would not be ambitious of dying in the same manner, were it ever so severe and terrible, to be thus honoured and celebrated by our Lord Jesus Christ, or any of his faithful apostles? Let us not be terrified at the apprehension of what we may suffer from the malice of Satan, and by his instruments, even though not merely imprisonment, but death itself were to await us. It is only for a limited time that he can occasion tribulation to any of the people of God; and our blessed Lord will never be unmindful of that gracious promise, Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. O! let us by faith survey that innumerable company, who, though they have fallen by the stroke of the first death, have been, and shall for ever be, unhurt by the second: that blessed society who are encircled with immortal crowns, which their triumphant Leader, whom they followed with such undaunted fortitude, hath bestowed upon them; who, though they partake no longer of the bread that perisheth, nor are feasted with earthly viands, are yet eating of the hidden manna; who have received the white stone, in token of their absolution; and while the names and memory of many of them have sunk into oblivion, and the honours attending others are of little consequence, they are known in the heavenly regions by a new name, conferred as a mark of favour and distinction by the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. We are drawing on, if we are true Christians, to the completion of that blessed hope. And that we may not be disappointed, may we by Divine grace, be preserved from the artifices of those who call themselves the people of God, while they are indeed of the synagogue of Satan, and from whatever, like the doctrine of Balaam, would ensnare our consciences, and defile our souls.

SECT. V.

The epistles which Christ charges St. John to write to the churches of Thyatira and Sardis.

Rev. II. 18, to the end. Rev. III. 1—6.

Revelation II. 18.

And to the angel, or Christian minister, of the church in Thyatira, write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes bright, and penetrating, as a flame of fire, and his feet shining like fine brass: I know thy works and charity, and service,
vice and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last shall be more than the first.

Nevertheless, I have a few things against thee, and particularly, that thou permittest that woman Jezebel, (for she deserves no better name, than of that infamous and idolatrous wanton,) who audaciously and falsely saith, that she is a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants, in order to avoid persecution, to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. And she is the more necromancer, as I have given her sufficient time to repent of her fornication, and she repented not, but continued her enormities with increasing aggravation.

But behold, at length I will execute judgment upon her. And let the process of my righteous vengeance be observed: I am just preparing to cast her into a bed; and will bring those who commit fornication with her, who suffer their consciences to be debauched by such licentious and detestable principles, into great tribulation, unless they speedily repent of their wicked works.

And I will slay her children, those that presume to follow her in her wickedness, with sudden and inevitable death; and all the churches shall know, that though I am very long suffering with respect to many sinners, and am unwilling immediately to come to extremities; yet I am not to be mocked and trifled with; that my eyes are indeed as observant as they are bright and piercing, and that I am he who searcheth the hearts.

What was Jezebel? Who thinks it to have been Helena, the harlot of Simon Magus, the great magician of the aqueous kind of the Gnostics? (See Simeon Magn. ed. by Tyttenham, p. 14.) For Jefferson, p. 11, 12.) The revelation speaks expressly, that I am just preparing to cast her into a bed; and I will bring those who commit fornication, and to seduce my servants, in order to avoid persecution, and to eat things sacrificed to idols, into great tribulation, unless they speedily repent of their wicked works.

And I will slay her children, those that presume to follow her in her wickedness, with sudden and inevitable death; and all the churches shall know, that though I am very long suffering with respect to many sinners, and am unwilling immediately to come to extremities; yet I am not to be mocked and trifled with; that my eyes are indeed as observant as they are bright and piercing, and that I am he who searcheth the hearts.

It is the idea of the analects, that there was an oracle, and so great a number of distinct arts, that there was an evident propriety in such a representation, that it is thought to have been Helena, the harlot of Simon Magus, the great magician of the aqueous kind of the Gnostics. (See Simeon Magn. ed. by Tyttenham, p. 14.) For Jefferson, p. 11, 12.) The revelation speaks expressly, that I am just preparing to cast her into a bed; and I will bring those who commit fornication, and to seduce my servants, in order to avoid persecution, and to eat things sacrificed to idols, into great tribulation, unless they speedily repent of their wicked works.

And I will slay her children, those that presume to follow her in her wickedness, with sudden and inevitable death; and all the churches shall know, that though I am very long suffering with respect to many sinners, and am unwilling immediately to come to extremities; yet I am not to be mocked and trifled with; that my eyes are indeed as observant as they are bright and piercing, and that I am he who searcheth the hearts.
The faithful are ordered to be stedfast, till he come.

The faithful are ordered to be stedfast, till he come.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden.

25 But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even the reins and the hearts; and I will at length approve the justice of my proceedings with respect to this society, as well as all others, and will give to every one of you according to your works, and according to those principles from which I know they have proceeded. But I 24 say to you who are faithful, even to the rest of those that are in Thyatira, as many as do not hold this pernicious doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they proverbially speak, nor make themselves the instruments of accomplishing the designs of this infernal policy. I will lay upon you no other burden will not severely reprove you for that mixture of human infirmity, which is to be discerned every where. Nevertheless, what you have received, as of Divine revelation and command, hold fast till I 25 come, and let nothing prevail upon you to make a sacrifice of your regard for me and my cause, for neither my ability, nor inclination, to reward those who are faithful, will ever be diminished. And as for him that conquers, and 26 keeps my works unto the end, notwithstanding the vigorous efforts of the enemies of my gospel, to wrest it from him, or induce him to deny it, though he should be ever so much exposed and overborne now, I will, at length, give him complete power and victory over all the nations that have combined against my people. And 27 I will raise him to the dignity and glory of sharing with me in my final triumph; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and they shall be at once dashed in pieces with it, like a potter’s vessels: in like manner, as I have also received the

\[\text{sects. v.}
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Rev. 11.23.
the promise of my Father in that ancient oracle, (Psal. ii. 9,) the accomplishment of which all my faithful subjects shall see; for they shall behold all their enemies, however numerous and mighty, laid prostrate at their feet in the dust, and covered with everlasting confusion.

And I will give him, even every one who approveth his fidelity to me, such lustre and glory, that he shall shine in my presence like the morning star, when its sprightly and cheerful beams break through the shades of night, and proclaim the approaching sun. He, therefore, that hath an ear, let him attentively hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; for all the churches are concerned in the message I send to each; and the importance of the contents make them worthy of universal regard.

And to the angel, or minister, of the church in Sardis, write, These things saith he, that hath the seven Spirits of God, he who presides over, and orders the dispensations of the Spirit, with respect to his various gifts and graces, and produces thereby such wonderful events as shall astonish all future ages; and that hath in his hand the seven stars, which represent the ministers of the churches, all whose motions he continues to govern and direct, according to his all-wise and gracious pleasure. I know thy works, that thou dost not answer that character which thou generally maintainest in neighbouring churches, for religion and piety. I know, that thou hast a name that thou livest; thou makest a splendid profession, and many of thy brethren are deceived by thy apparent zeal but thou art indeed dead; there is little real religion lying at thy heart, nor do the uniform fruits of it prevail in thy life and conversation. Be watchful, therefore, that the whole may not be lost; and strengthen the things which remain, and which are ready to die; for I have not found thy works filled up in the sight of God, with that care and fidelity with which they ought to have been discharged; and he, therefore, cannot behold thee with the same approbation and delight, as he does more active, more diligent, and more resolute Christians. And this thy declension in religion is the more aggravated, as thou hast had so many advantages for improvement. Remember therefore, how thou hast received, and heard, for though thou mayest forget these advantages,

even as I received of my Father.

23 And I will give him the morning star.

20 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore, how thou hast received, and heard, and held
They who overcame, should walk with him in white. 447

hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before

vantages, they are all distinctly in my view; and let it therefore be thy care to hold fast what yet remains; and to repent of that negligence by which thou hast lost so many opportunities: therefore, unless thou art watchful, I do now solemnly warn thee, that I will come upon thee by some alarming and awful interposition of my Providence, on a sudden, as a thief, on those that are buried in sleep; and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come upon thee: and the surprise will throw thee into the greatest consternation and distress. But I will do thee the honour, and the justice, to say, that thou hast a few names, and people, even in Sardis, corrupt and indolent as the general state of it is, who have not polluted their garments with the abominations by which so many have contracted gross defilements. And, as they have been distinguished by their fidelity and their zeal, I will distinguish them by my special favour, and raise them, ere long, to those seats of complete purity and glory, where they shall walk with me in white robes, and attend my joyful and triumphant train; for they are worthy of such distinguished honour, as they have been especially careful to keep themselves from those evils which have been generally prevailing around them. As for the conqueror, he shall be clothed in white raiment; every victor shall wear the habit of festivity and triumph; and I will not blot out his name from the book of life; but, as he is enrolled among my faithful people, he shall ever continue in their number; and when the

Walk with me in white.] It is well known, that white robes were worn on occasions of great joy, and sometimes in triumphant processions; to both which here is, probably, a reference, as indeed it seems that triumph and feasting would naturally go together. Priests also were clothed in white, and the addition of that dignity may also be implied, as certainly coming within the scheme of Christ with regard to his people. (Compare Rev. i. 6.) Some think here is an allusion to the custom of the Sanhedrim, when they examined the candidates for the high-priesthood; if they judged him worthy, they gave him a white garment; if unqualified, he was sent out from among them in mourning. L'Enfant Introd. p. 86. See Ainsworth's Pref. to Gen.

I will not blot out his name, &c.] I think this plainly implies, that some names shall be blotted out from the book of life; and consequently, as nothing can occasion an alteration in the decrees of God, I think it proves, that the book of life does not signify the catalogue of those whom God has absolutely proposed to save; but rather the catalogue of those who were to be considered as heirs of the kingdom of heaven in consequence of their Christian profession, till by apostacy from it they throw themselves out of that society to which they before belonged; and it seems to intimate, that though the imperfection even of these conquerors might, in strict justice have deserved it, yet Christ would spare them, and suffer them to continue in the number of those who should finally be found registered, as free of the heavenly city; and who, in the great day, should be called up to possess it.
IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Let the disciples of Christ always remember, that his eye penetrates the most hidden recesses; that he searcheth the hearts and consciences of the children of men: accordingly, let them take heed to cherish nothing, even in their hearts, which their great Master will behold with displeasure. There may faith, and patience and charity, erect their throne; and may their dominion so prevail, that our last works, like those of the church of Thyatira, may be more than the first. And surely it is most reasonable, as we approach the end of our course, as we experience more of the vanity of life, and the substantial and solid pleasures of religion, that they should be so. But, alas! how much more common is the character of the church of Sardis, and of those who have only a name to live, while they are dead! Censorious and uncharitable as such a state a part of the world is, are there not some who are ashamed and humbled in the view of the esteem which they are held in by their brethren, while conscious of so many inward, though unallows, infirmities, of so much deadness and coldness in religion, even where they would be most zealous and lively? Alas! how far are our works from being filled up before God! Let us often lament these our imperfections and declensions; let us deeply humble ourselves before God on account of them; and let us be as vigilant as possible, that we may strengthen those things, which if they do indeed remain, seem ready to die. The more general the prevalence of such an indolent temper is, the more let us emulate the distinguished honour of those few names in Sardis, which had not defiled their garments: that we may walk with them; and with Christ, in white raiment: that we may arrive at that happy state of everlasting purity, of everlasting festivity, of everlasting triumph, which our Divine Master has encouraged us to expect. We know not how unexpectedly he may come upon us; let us be always ready, always strenuous in maintaining a holy war against the enemies of our salvation; and then we shall conquer, we shall triumph:
Christ's epistle to the church in Philadelphia.

Triumph; our name shall remain in the book of life; it shall be confessed by Christ before his Father and his holy angels: we shall share with him in his triumph over all the rebellious nations, in that day, when he shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel: we shall for ever wear the lustre of the morning star; yea, we shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. Amen.

SECT. VI.

The epistles, which Christ orders to be written to the two remaining churches, the Philadelphia and Laodician. Rev. III. 7—22.

Revelation III. 7.

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write, These things saith the Holy One, and the true One, who claims perfect holiness, and invariable truth, as necessary and essential to his nature, in a manner which no creature can pretend to; he whose authority in the church of God is so uncontrollable, that it may truly be said, he has the key of David; he, who openeth, and shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth; inasmuch that Eliakim, who is spoken of in such terms of honour, (Isa. xxii. 22,) was only a type of him: I well know thy works, how exemplary they are; and behold, I have used the power of the key which is in my hand, in such a manner, that I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: I give thee a power and opportunity of spreading my gospel, which none shall take from thee; because thou hast, at least, a little strength; and thou hast used it well, and hast courageously kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of the holy One, the true One. This is so peculiarly the prerogative of God, that I have sometimes wondered, no greater stress should have been laid upon it in proof of the Deity of our blessed Redeemer, by many writers who have pressed other texts, of a much more dubious nature, to serve in the cause. (Compare chap. vi. 10.)

b Who openeth, and no man shutteth, The office of lord steward of the household, who hath the power of opening and shutting what apartments in the palace he pleaseth, is described by these terms.

c Worship.
He would keep them from the hour of temptation.

the solemn guise of religious worship, are carrying on his cause and interest; they say they are Jesus, and pretend to be my people, and are not; but lie. Behold, I say, I will give them into thy power; and I will make them to come and worship before thy feet; and they shall know that I have loved thee, finding I have evidently supported thy cause and interest against all that have opposed it. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, that gospel, which I have myself, by such patient suffering in my human nature, established in the world, and by which I at once exercise and support the faith and patience of my people; I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try all the inhabitants of these parts of the earth: my hand shall remarkably appear, in sheltering thee from the dangers, by which others fall, and in strengthening thee in proportion to the trial. Behold, I come quickly, to put an end to those exercises which are for the present so painful; keep that which thou hast with resolute fidelity; that no man take thy crown from thee, even that crown of everlasting glory, which will be the gracious reward of thy continued fidelity. As for the conqueror, I will make him a pillar of distinction and ornament and beauty; and I will not only fix him near, but in the temple of my God above, and he shall stand there upon an unshaken and everlasting basis, so that he shall go out no more, and he shall bear the marks of immortal honour: for I will inscribe upon him the name of my God, under whose auspicious influence the grand victory has been gained, and under whose protection this sacred monument of Satan, (which say they are Jesus, and are not, but do lie;) behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that woman take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out no more; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God.

6 Works before thy feet. Were we more perfectly acquainted with the history of those seven churches, in the time immediately preceding the date of these epistles, we might perhaps find many remarkable illustrations of several passages in them, and of this among the rest: supposing, for instance, persons of considerable rank and dignity in Philadelphia, were converted to Christianity, and the interest of the congregation here spoken of, was so weakened, or the heathen population of the place so prejudiced against them, as that the chief members of the congregation should find it necessary to court the protection of the Christians for the security of their persons or effects; it will throw considerable light upon the place. The like observation may be applied to the following clause: I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, &c. Dr. Smith has observed, in his learned and accurate account of these parts, p. 134—141, that the city of Philadelphia was the lost of the seven, here spoken of, which fell into the hands of the Turks; for whereas the rest were subdued by Urchan and Amurath: Philadelphia held out till the time of Rajzaat. So that the remains of this society were preserved, when those of the rest were ruined. But how far that event might immediately be referred to in the words before us, I cannot certainly say.
the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write, These things saith he, who is the AMEN, the faithful and true Witness; attesting those truths, which are of the utmost importance, on the most perfect knowledge of them, and with most unerring exactness; yea, he who is the beginning of the creation of God, by whom it was produced, and who is the Head and Governor of all that he has made: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would make him a pillar, &c.] Few
texts, in the whole New Testament are more illustrated by antiquity than this. Great numbers of inscriptions are yet remaining, brought from the Grecian cities of Europe and Asia, and some from islands in the neighborhood of Patmos, in which the victories of eminent persons are commemorated. And as some of these were placed near the temples of their deities, others were in those temples, to signify their being put under the particular protection of those deities; whose names therefore were inscribed upon them, and the names of the conquerors and of the cities to which they belonged; as also the names of the generals, by whose conduct the victory was gained. As all these circumstances suit such kind of martial victories, much more than those obtained in the Olympic games, so celebrated in antiquity, and so largly and elegantly described by Mr. West in his late dissertation on that subject, I think this text seems to justify the turn I have generally given in my paraphrase to those weighty passages, on which so much of our strength and comfort as Christians depend.

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; that thou art growing very indifferent in religion, though thou canst not allow thyself entirely to cast
They are charged with lukewarmness.

cast it off; now is this so disagreeable to me, that I wish thou wouldst determine one way or another; and that it might be said, thou art either cold or hot; if thou really thinkest it not worth thy regard, reject it entirely; but if indeed thou art convinced of its truth and importance, act with a steady conformity to that conviction. Therefore, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, this indifference of thine is as disagreeable to me, as liquors, in this condition, is to the stomach; and therefore to pursue the similitude, odious as it may seem, I must tell thee, that if thou persistest in such a disposition, I will cast thee out of my mouth with

17 loathing. Because thou sayest I am wealthy, and hast enriched me by my own wisdom and virtue, and have need of nothing imagining thy state in religion to be so very prosperous and happy; and in this spiritual lunacy into which thou art fallen, like a miserable beggar who fancied himself a prince, knowest not that thou art wretched, and pitiable, and poor, and blind, and naked, in a most deplorable condition, destitute of every desirable blessing; I counsel thee, that with an humble sense of thy condition, so extremely unhappy, thou apply to him who alone is capable of helping thee. And as I require no price, or equivalent for my treasures, but only a conviction of such an incapacity to make an adequate return for them, I advise thee, in that way, to buy of me a full supply for all thy necessities; blessings, as desirable as gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear. Apply to me for an interest in my righteousness and sanctifying grace; that thou mayest be absolved before God, and adorned with every virtue which can render thee lovely in his sight.

And

would then were cold or hot.

16. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,

18. I counsel thee to buy of me gold, tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear. Apply to me for an interest in my righteousness and sanctifying grace; that thou mayest be absolved before God, and adorned with every virtue which can render thee lovely in his sight.

1 So disagreeable to me, that I wish thou wouldst determine one way or another.) Mr. Lowman observes, that the clause, I would thou were cold or hot, may be understood as expressing great dislike, not as a proper wish, or expression of what man really desires.

g. (Rev. 3:19, and parallels, &c.) The sad account which is here given of the London church, which is placed last, when compared with what is said of the glorious state of Christianity in the last ages of the world, may, I think, convince any attentive reader, that these epistles are not to be understood in a prophetical sense, expressive of the state and character of the Christian church in different periods of time, it may also be observed, that at that rate the middle ages of the church, which were in fact most corrupt, must have answered to Berytus and Thyatira, which are described in these epistles, as in the most flourishing and happy state.
They are exhorted to be zealous and repent.

thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

And whereas thou art blinded with such unhappy self-conceit, come, and anoint thy eyes with my sovereign eye-salve, that thou mayest see; for I can bring thee to right sentiments of thyself, and of thy state; and can teach thee to judge of objects according to their real worth. In the mean time, imagine not, that what may seem severe in this address, proceeds from any unkindness to thee: for whomsoever I love, I reprove and correct. Instead, therefore, of ungratefully quarrelling at so kind an admonition, set thyself immediately and diligently to improve it: be more zealous for the future, than thou hast ever been in time past, and deeply repent of thy prevailing indolence and degeneracy. Behold, I have stood for a long time, and I still stand at the door and knock; waiting for admittance into your hearts. If any man hear my voice, with a due regard, and open the door; if he welcome me with affection due to such a friend, and such a Saviour, how mean soever his circumstances in life may be, and how faulty soever his character may formerly have been, I will enter into his house, and like some princely guest, will bring my own rich and delightful entertainment along with me; I will sup with him, and he shall sup with me; I will treat him with the most endearing and familiar friendship, accept the tokens of his affection, and give him the most solid evidences of mine. Let this variety of motives then engage you, O ye Laodiceans, to shake off that dull lethargic temper, which has so long given me cause of complaint; and for your further encouragement, hear the last promise which I make, to all who exert themselves in that holy warfare, to which I am calling you, with becoming vigour and resolution: as for the valiant conqueror, I will give him to sit down with me upon my glorious and exalted throne in the heavenly world; as I also myself have conquered the enemies which violently assaulted me in the days of my flesh, and am set down with my Father upon his throne; my faithful servants shall partake with me of this honour in the great day of my appearing; and shall live and reign with me for ever. He therefore, that hath an ear to hear, let him be all attention on this occasion, and hear what the Spirit saith to the churches; regarding what has been
been addressed to each, as intended to afford
matter of general instruction.

IMPROVEMENT.

In what age, or in what place, will the church be entirely free
from this Laodicean temper, which is so justly complained of by
our Lord, and represented as so loathsome to him; I mean, an
indolence in religion, often joined with arrogance and spiritual
pride too, as if great attainments were made, where it is almost
matter of doubt, whether the very essentials be remaining! Let
us not indulge to a vain conceit of our own wisdom, and riches,
and sufficiency; but let us thankfully hearken to that kind invi-
tation, which he here gives us, to come and purchase that of him,
without money, and without price, by which we may be truly and
substantially enriched; that by which we may attain to real
knowledge and true discernment; and may be clothed with or-
naments and glories, which shall render us amiable in the eyes
of God. How long has our compassionate Saviour been waiting
upon us! How long has he stood knocking at the door! And O,
for what guests hath he been excluded! who have filled our hearts
and taken the throne in them, while the entrance has been de-
tined to the Lord of glory and grace! Let us humble ourselves
in the dust before him, and entreat that he would now enter as
into his own habitation; that he would do us the honour to sup
with us; that he would cause us to sup with him; opening to us
the stores of his love and bounty, and causing our souls to rejoice
in his salvation. "Awaken us, O blessed Jesus, to give thee a
most cheerful admittance; and rather show thy love to us by chas-
tisements and rebuke, than suffer us entirely to forfeit it, by con-
tinued insensibility and negligence. Holy and true, who hast the
keys! David, exert thy power, irresistible in heaven and on earth,
in opening our hearts: and O, set before us an open door of ser-
vice; and give us to use it to the utmost, for thy glory. Strengthen
us to keep the word of thy patience, and make us unshaken in our
attachment to thee, in every hour of temptation, which may come
upon the earth, that none may take away our crown."

Whatever our trials may be, let us rejoice in this, that they will
be only for a short duration; for our Lord is coming quickly: what-
ever our combat may be, let us arm ourselves with faith in those
glorious promises, which our Lord makes to them that persevere
and overcome.

Have we not experienced the pleasure of filling a place in the
house of God on earth? But this sacred satisfaction, and the holy
season
season which affords it, is quickly over: let us long for the blessed
time, when we shall be fixed as immovable pillars in the temple
of God above. And O, may we now wear, engraved on our hearts, the
name of our God and of his heavenly city, and the new name of our
triumphant Redeemer, as a token for good, that we shall bear
the inscription in bright and everlasting characters above. But
even this most expressive promise was not equal to all the purposes
of a Saviour's love: that nothing therefore, might be wanting to
enkindle the most generous ambition, he has been pleased to speak
of our sitting down with him upon his throne, as he is sat down on
his Father's throne. And who then will ever scruple to suffer with
him, when thus assured of reigning with him in everlasting glory!
O, who would grudge to resign, not merely the accommodations
of life, but even an earthly throne, in the hope of one so much
more radiant, exalted, and permanent! Fear not, little flock! it
is your Father's and your Saviour's good pleasure to give you the
kingdom, (Luke xii. 32,) and he animates you to pursue it with
such compassionate earnestness, as if he could hardly enjoy it him-
self, unless it were communicated to you.

SECT. VII.

Another scene now opens on the apostle John: in which God is re-
presented as enthroned in celestial glory, surrounded with the
hieroglyphical representation of angels, and the glorified church.
Rev. IV. 1, to the end.

Rev. IV. 1.

AFTER this, I looked
and behold a door
was opened in heaven;
and the first voice
which I heard was as it
were of a trumpeltalk-
ing with me: which
said, Come up hither,
and I will shew thee
things which must be
hereafter.

2 And immediately
I was in the spirit:

a I was in the spirit.] This phrase
signifies, to be under a strong and superna-
tural impulse, caused by the miraculous
operation of the spirit of God acting on
the imagination in such a manner as to
open extraordinary scenes, which had
not any exact external archetype. And it
is much illustrated by the view presented
to Ezekiel, when he sat in his house among
the elders of the people, (Ezek. viii. 1,) who
probably saw nothing but the prophet
himself, as one in a trance, or ecstasy, or

Revelation IV. 1.

AFTER these things, and after Jesus had dic-
tated to me these seven epistles, I saw, and
behold, it seemed as if a door were opened in
heaven, near to which I was brought; so that I
was able to look in, and see what passed, and
was transacted there. And the first voice which
I heard before, [was] as loud as the sound of a
trumpet, and while speaking to me, it seemed to
issue out from thence; and it said, Come up
hither; and having given thee this charge re-
lying to present things, I will shew thee what
shall be afterwards. And immediately I was
in the Spirit: and an extraordinary vision pre-
sented
sented itself to my intellectual view; for behold
and observe directly a circumstance of so great
importance; a throne was set in heaven, to re-
present that of the blessed God; and there was
one sitting upon it, of a majestic form and ap-
appearance, and arrayed in robes of glory, suited
3 to the situation in which he was. And he
who sat [on it] was, to the form and lustre of
his appearance, like a river and serene stone,
and a rainbow, in which the bright green, in
appearance like the vivid, though soft and agree-
able color of an emerald, was especially pre-
ident, appeared round about the throne, ex-
pressing the propinquity, and kindness, and
of that covenant relation to his people, which
the blessed God is pleased to acknowledge in
the marks of his transcendent glory. (Compare
4' Gen. xvi. 2.) And, in an extensive circle,
round about the throne of God [there were]
twenty-four other thrones; and on the thrones I
saw twenty-four elders sitting as an emblem of
the Old Testament church, and also of the New;
and they were clothed in a habit somewhat re-
sembling that of the Levites, or Priests, with
white raiment; and in token of their royal dig-
ity, they had upon their heads golden crowns.
5 And out of the throne there came flashes of vivid
lightnings and thunderings, and sometimes articu-
late voice, and seven lamps of fire [were] burning
continually before the throne; which are the
seven

and behold, a throne
was set in heaven, and
one sat on the throne.

3 And he that sat
was to look upon like a jas-
pur, and a sardine
stone; and there was
a rainbow round about
the throne, like the light
unto an emerald.

3 And round about
the throne were four
and twenty seats;
and upon the seats I
saw four and twenty
elders sitting, clothed
in white raiment; and
they had on their heads
crowns of gold.

5 And out of the
throne proceeded
lightnings, and thunder-
ings, and voices;
and there were seven
lamps
seven spirits of God; that is, they represent a great variety of the Spirit’s operations, and those of good angels who act in subserviency to him. And before the throne [there were] correspondent-ent to the brazen sea in Solomon’s temple, a great laver, or sea, which was made all of pure pellucid glass, which was clear like crystal itself. And in the middle of the space between the throne and the circle about the throne [there were] four living creatures; and to signify their intelligence, and quickness of observance, they appeared full of eyes, both before and behind: These four animals, of a very extraordinary form, seem to have been intended as hieroglyphical representations of the angelic nature: and the head of the first animal, in this marvellous composition, [was] like a lion, to signify the courage and vigour with which these celestial beings execute the com-

But I at present doubt, whether they may not be distinguished, Lamps of fire, or lambent flames, like those that fell upon the apostles on the day of pentecost, (Acts ii. 3.) might perhaps be emblems of the blessed Spirit of God in its various and powerful operations; especially those by which the minds of intelligent created beings are illuminated and purified. And the Spirits standing before the throne, might be distinct appearances of angelic forms; as it is certain some of them were, from the actions they afterwards performed: sounding the seven trumpets, &c.

e Four living creatures.] It was a most unhappy mistake in our translators, to render the word ἔμπνευσεν, beasts; it certainly signifies any other kind of animals, that is of creatures which have animal life, as well as beasts. The word beast not only degrades the signification, but the animals here mentioned, have parts and appearances, which beasts have not, and are represented as in the highest sense rational.

[Hieroglyphical representations, &c.] It is well known, the ancients (borrowing them I suppose from the Egyptians,) dealt much in hieroglyphics, by which natural and moral truths were expressed. Dr. Middleton, in his curious collection of antiquities, presents us with one so remarkable, that I cannot forbear mentioning it here. It is a copy of a gem, in which a man’s face, an elephant’s head, a peacock, and a serpent, are joined together. He thinks it was intended as an hieroglyphic, or emblematical representation of Socrates: as the face bears a strong resemblance to the

g Temple

pictures usually given of him. He sup-

poses the human face to represent that of Socrates, and the other figures, those beautiful and Divine images which were in his mind. The peacock, being the most beautiful bird, may denote the beauty of his virtues; the sceptre, his majesty and authority; the elephant, the strength and for-
titude of his mind. And to the same reason he observes, it might be used to express the character of a philosopher in general; but especially, the stoic’s wise man, who was furnished with all kinds of virtues and perfections, being the only beautiful and valiant man, and a king, whatever his circumstances might happen to be. Middleton’s Antig. Tab. xxi. § 10, p. 243—245. There can, I think, be no doubt, but these are the chorus of angels described by Ezekiel, chap. i. which therefore should be carefully compared with this representation. To consider this appearance as an emblem of deity, which is the scheme of Mr. Hutchinson and his followers, appears to me a very great absurdity. Nor can I think, with Mr. Jackson, that they are merely intended to signify the homage paid to God by all terrestrial creatures. Another peculiar and extraordinary hypothesis, with regard to them, has been proposed to me, and may perhaps be laid before the world; and therefore I think it most respectful to the revered and ingenious author, not to anticipate his own design. Some have thought these animals represent spirits of an order superior to angels, taken up wholly in contemplation. See Reynolds of angels, p. 6.
Who gave glory to him that sate on the throne.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes, within; and they rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts gave glory and honour and thanks to him that sitteth upon the throne, and adored him that liveth for ever and ever, with unceasing voice and activity of mind, The four and twenty elders, whom I described before as themselves sitting on majestic thrones, fell down in the Divine presence, even before him that sitteth upon the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever; and they cast down their crowns before the throne, in token of their homage to that transcendentally glorious being, from whose sovereign

mands of God, and the irresistible strength with which they encounter and vanquish all opposition. And the head of the second animal [was] like a calf; or young bullock, to signify the firmness, patience, and perseverance with which they go through the labours which God has appointed them. And the third animal had a face like a man, to express, in the image of the only rational creature on this earth, the clearness of intelligence, and the strength of reason, with which, in a vastly superior degree, they are endowed. And the fourth animal was like a swift flying eagle, with its wings displayed, and with quickness in its eye and motion, to signify the sprightliness and activity, and incomparable velocity, with which these celestial spirits fly from world to world, to execute the commands they receive from their Sovereign. And though the heads of these four wonderful living creatures were different, yet they had in the rest of their body, one form; and they had each of them six wings round about; so that their body seemed covered with the rich plumage of them. And within [they were] all full of eyes, to signify their quick discernment of every object around them. And they rest not day nor night; but they stand in the Divine presence, saying with united voices, (as the seraphim, represented in the vision which Isaiah saw, Isa vi. 2, 3,) "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come:" thus giving to God, in continual acts of adoration, the glory of his natural and moral perfections, and acknowledging their immortality from everlasting and to everlasting. And while the living creatures are thus giving glory and honour, and thanks to him that sitteth upon the throne, and addressing their sublime and harmonious anthems of praise to him, who liveth for ever and ever, with unceasing vigour and activity of mind, The four and twenty elders, whom I described before as themselves sitting on majestic thrones, fell down in the Divine presence, even before him that sitteth upon the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever; and they cast down their crowns before the throne, in token of their homage to that transcendentally glorious being, from whose sovereign
Reflections on the worship paid by the living creatures.

11 Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.

reign grace and unparalleled munificence they received them; saying, at the same time, Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive the ascription of glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast, by thine almighty energy, created all things, and for thy sovereign will, they are and were created; their first production, and continued existence, is owing to the riches of thy free goodness; and therefore, they are all under the strictest obligations, according to their respective natures, to subserve the purposes of thy glory.

IMPROVEMENT.

And should not we likewise fall down with the angels and glorified spirits, and pay some homage to the Sovereign Majesty of heaven, though it be impossible for us to equal theirs? For ever adored be the Divine grace, that a door is opened in heaven; in consequence of which, even before we enter, we are allowed to look in; and thus to confirm our faith, and to animate our devotion; which, alas! after all, is too ready to decline and languish. That it may be greatly invigorated, let us look up to the throne, and to him that sitteth thereupon; and rejoice to see that peaceful emblem with which the seat of his glory is surrounded, the rainbow of vivid and pleasant green: signifying, that the majestic Being who fills it, is the covenant-God of all his believing and obedient people, and that mercy and love reign triumphant, in the whole constitution of that perpetual covenant.

Let us contemplate with veneration the blessed angels, the ministers of God, who do his pleasure, represented here under hieroglyphical characters, as possessed of amazing strength and courage, resolution and patience, of the sublimest reason, and the most deep and penetrating sagacity, active and pure as flames of fire; and with these lofty ideas in our minds, let us ardently pray that the will of God may be so done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Let us also remember the elders here mentioned, the representatives of the church of the Redeemed, seated on glorious thrones, clothed in that white raiment, which is the righteousness of the saints, and adorned with crowns of glory. And let us especially consider, how the angels and the saints are employed: they rest not day nor night from breathing out the most ardent devotions; they feel nothing of that weariness and languor with which we are too frequently invaded in this state of mortality, even in our best moments, and divinest frames; but they cry continually, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art...
St. John saw a Book in his hand, who sat on the Throne;

art to come; they give glory, and honour, and thanksgiving to
him that sitteth on the throne. And infinitely worthy he is to
Ver. receive it: He who is the Almighty Creator, He who is the ever-

The vision of the sealed Book, and of the Lamb that was slain, who
was found worthy to open it, and on that account received the ac-

Revelation V. 1.

AND, having observed the particulars men-
tioned above, I saw in the right hand of
him who sat on the glorious throne already de-
scribed, the volume of a book, or scroll, written
on both sides, within and without, for though
I saw only the outside, perceiving it inscribed
with characters, I naturally concluded the in-
side was full; and, as it was rolled up, it was
sealed with seven strong seals, each of which be-

a Written on both sides, within and
without: Mr. Lowman, after Granting,
bath observed, that there must be a
stop after the word, seals, (seals,) and
that it should be rendered, seven
seals, and opened on the back side. But the learn-
ed Dr. Hammet hath very well defended
these sense given in the paraphrase; observ-
ing, that it appears in the prophecy, that the
opening of every single seal brings forth
some new representation; which could not be the case, if all the seals were on
the back side; for then they must all be
opened, before any part of the book could
be discovered, &c. And therefore it must
be concluded, that each seal belonged to a
distinct leaf.
And the Lamb only was worthy to open the seals of it.

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6 And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain, its wonderful contents? And upon this I saw an universal blank confusion upon every countenance; so that it plainly appeared, that no one; among all the creatures of God, in heaven, or upon earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it: And, as I had an earnest desire to know the contents, and had pleased myself with a secret expectation that some extraordinary discovery was to be made to me, and to the church, from thence, it grieved me exceedingly, insomuch that I wept abundantly, because no one was found worthy to open and read the book; nor indeed, so much as to look into it. And as the grand act of adoration, in which the elders had joined with the living creatures, to him that sat on the throne, was over, one of the elders said unto me, Weep not, behold, the Lion, who is of the tribe of Judah, (that excellent Person to whom that oracle relating to Judah, in which he was described under the token of a lion, to represent his invincible strength, by which he shall triumph over all the enemies, (Gen. xlix. 9, 10, principally referred;) he hath conquered this great difficulty: He, who is the Root, that was to spring from the stock of David, when it seemed to be withered in the earth, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose its seven seals; so that thou shalt soon hear its contents; for he is appointed by God to penetrate and discover those secret decrees, which are concealed from every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. And I beheld, and lo, to my great astonishment, in the middle space between the throne and the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, who made a kind of semicircle about them, there stood this illustrious Person, whose title I had just been hearing; and, though he was spoken of by the name of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to express the terrors of his wrath against his implacable enemies, the symbol of his Person, in this mysterious vision, was very different; for he appeared as a Lamb, who had been slain for sacrifice, and wore the recent marks of slaughter, in the blood on his throat and breast; and this Lamb was of a very uncommon form, having seven horns and seven eyes, instead of two of each; and this I understood as a mysterious representation of extraordinary power and knowledge, and of the wonderful degree in which the Spirit of God was...
was poured out upon the Person whom this visionary Lamb represented; for these are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth; they represent that Divine energy, which operates every where; and of exercing which, the most illustrious angels have often the honour to be the ministers. And he came near to the seat of Majesty, and took the book out of the right-hand of him who sate upon the throne; which I understood as a symbol, to intimate that the Lord Jesus Christ, whom I knew to be represented by this slaughtered Lamb, was appointed to reveal the secret decrees of God, and to give me those discoveries which I so much desired to receive.

And when he received the book in the manner I have described, the four living creatures, and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, in token of humble reverence and adoration, and these elders appeared as a choir of humble worshippers in the temple of God, having every one harps of gold, with which they played in sweet harmony, to add the music of their voices; and they had also golden vials, or censers, full of perfumes, which are the prayers of the saints; for, as I understood these elders to be the representatives of the church, I apprehended that, in allusion to the incense offered in the temple while the people were praying, this circumstance had a reference to prayer, and was intended to shew how acceptable it is to God, when it proceeds from an holy and an upright heart. And they sang a new song, excellent in its kind, and composed on a much greater occasion, and in much sublimer strains of Divine harmony, than those which the priests and Levites sang in the temple of Jerusalem; saying, Worthy art thou

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, ...

b Seven Spirits of God.] Comparing this text with chap. viii. 2, I must acknowledge, that this is indeed to be understood of seven angels. Mr. Mode infers from hence, that there are, in fact seven archangels, who preside over all the rest. But I cannot allow the consequence to be certain. We sometimes read of four spirits, sent forth as these are said to be. (Zech. vi. 5, 7;) and, I think, the whole it amounts to, is, that there are many celestial spirits, who are the instruments of that providence which Christ exercises over the earth, who bring to him an account of what passes, and receive and execute his commands. But by the way, this will no more prove, that he is under a necessity of receiving intelligence from them, or of using their assistance, than the parallel passage of Zechariah will prove it of God the Father, Zech. iv. 2, 10. But Dr. Scott very justly argues, that as they are called the seven eyes of the Lord in that text, and hence of the Lamb, it is an argument for the exaltation of the Man Christ Jesus, above the highest angel in heaven.

c Vials, or censers.] These, (as Mr. Lowman observes,) were not small bottles, such as are now called vials; but cups on a plate, like a tea-cup and cancer, in allusion to the censers of gold in which the priests offered incense in the temple.
book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy precious blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,

do take the book from the hand of God, and to open the seals thereof; for thou, O blessed Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, thou wast slain to expiate our guilt, and thou hast redeemed us to God by thy precious blood, from the dominion of sin, the tyranny of Satan, the curse of the law, and the wrath of a justly incensed Deity; whose servants and favourites we are now become, in consequence of thy kind and gracious interposition. And we are now assembled round his throne, out of every tribe, and language, and people, and nation, near and afar off, sacred and profane, learned and barbarous; wherever we were dispersed, thou hast found us, and into whatever bondage and misery we were sunk, thy power and thy mercy have rescued us; And thou hast made us to our God, kings and priests; we are robed in purity and majesty, we are crowned with gold; and here we appear in these priestly offices, which we perform with the splendour of princes; and we shall reign on earth: the Christian cause shall prevail through all ages; while the happy souls who have passed courageously through their trials upon earth, come hither in their appointed seasons, and share the honours of thy triumphant kingdom. And I beheld this glorious scene with inexpressible pleasure; and while my soul was all attention, I also heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and of the living creatures, which betokened in general the angelic nature, and of the elders which represented the church. And a multitude appeared joining the choir, so exceeding great, that the number of them was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands: I was ready to apprehend that neither thousands nor millions were sufficient to express them. And there was not so much as a jarring voice, or a cold and languid heart in the whole assembly; but with united ardour and harmony, they were saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered, to receive power over universal nature, and all the riches it can bestow. Worthy is he, to whom we should ascribe consummate

d Of many angels, and of the living creatures.] This plainly shows that there was an appearance of angels, as well as of these animals which represented their natures; a circumstance which I do not remember in the vision of Ezekiel.
and unsearchable wisdom, and resistless might, and peerless honour, and resplendent glory, and immortal blessing; even he, who once appeared under a cloud of weakness and poverty, and under the imputation of folly, loaded with dishonour and infamy, with reproaches and curses; worthy is he, of all the dignity and glory, the be-creation and homage of the heavenly world, throughout the endless ages of eternity! And while the multitude of the heavenly hosts were singing this sublime anthem, every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, even all things that are in them, in every various form of nature, seemed to echo back the voice; and I heard them saying, To him who sits upon the throne, and to him who is the Lamb, the worthy Partaker of his throne and kingdom, [be] perpetual blessing, and the profoundest honour, and consummate glory and almighty strength, ascribed for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen, to this hymn, to testify their hearty concurrence; and at the same time, the twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever, acknowledging him to be infinitely superior to all those services which the most exalted powers of created nature are capable of rendering.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. It should fill us with unutterable joy, when we lift up our eyes to the throne of God, that we there discern the Lamb wearing the marks of slaughter. We should then gratefully remember his dying love; for it is his precious blood which cleanses us from all sin, and emboldens our addresses to God, conscious as we are, that our guilt is attended with great aggravations. Surely, had it been queried, with respect to the great atonement to be made for our transgressions, as it was with respect to the opening those seals,

c In the text] As the inhabitants of the century elements are necessarily alive. I suppose we are not to understand by this that they seemed to grow mad in the praises of Christ upon this occasion; but rather, that heaven, earth and sea, is used to signify, that all nature, in its different ways, concurred in the praise; that is, that the whole constitution of it contributed to furnish out matter of praise; just as manifold, as well as rational creatures, are called upon to praise God in several of the psalms especially, Psalm cxviii.

2 The
seals. Who is worthy to complete this gracious undertaking? we should have seen with unspeakable anguish, that none in heaven or on earth, would have been found equal to the task. But here 3, 4 likewise, the Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed. How divinely is he furnished for the high station he sustains, and for all the glorious services assigned to him! What amazing power, what adorable wisdom is implied in the seven horns, and seven eyes, with which he is here delineated? and O! what love, in submitting to be slain, that he might redeem us to God by his blood! With the prayers of the saints, which come up before God as incense, may they ever mingle their most ardent praises for this Divine condescension. And out of gratitude to their Redeemer, let them rejoice to see the glorious change in his condition, from his humiliation and sufferings on earth, to his exaltation and reward in heaven: and let them ardently long for the happy season, when the full choir of the redeemed, from every nation, and people, and tongue, shall unite in this joyful acclamation, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.—In this world the disciples of Christ are only a little flock, but when they stand together upon the heavenly mountain, they shall appear ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; and all the harmony of their voices, and all the ardour of their souls, inconceivably improved as all their powers will be, shall be united on this happy occasion. Form us, O Lord, we intreat thee, for this Divine employment, and teach us, in some measure, to anticipate its pleasure, in these regions below. Even now, in spirit and intention, we prostrate ourselves before thee, and lay down the crowns, which faith, as it were, hath already received, at thy feet; giving glory to him who sitteth upon the throne, and celebrating the victories and honours of the Lamb.

SECT. IX.

An account of the opening of the six first seals, and of the awful events which accompanied the opening of each. Rev. VI. throughout.

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<td>And I saw, when the Lamb opened one</td>
<td>I COULD not but be all attention to this wonderful scene; and I saw when the Lamb opened one</td>
<td>Rev. VI.</td>
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a The vision of the seals.] I am vastly more obliged to that ingenious and excellent commentator, Mr. Lowman, for what I understand of this book, than to any other writer whatsoever. And as I think his celebrated and valuable scheme of
of interpretation the most satisfactory, and which indeed throws considerable light upon the series of prophecy, I shall present my readers with a short view of his plan, under the several visions, referring the more curious to the commentary itself. But I would first observe, with regard to this celebrated performance, that there is, in many particulars, a beautiful resemblance between the prophetic representations, and the events supposed to be correspondent to them; and that the historical facts are represented with great learning and judgment, yet the correspondence between the prophecies and the events is not in all respects, so clear, and evident, as might have been expected, nor can we always say, why the events in question are represented by one of the emblematical, rather than by another. However, he has finely illustrated many passages, especially by similar phrases from the prophetic books of the Old Testament, in which he is quite unequalled; and hath made out so much, particularly with respect to the first, and beginning of the third period, as evidently proves this book to be a glorious confirmation of Christianity, and worthy our most attentive and diligent examination. This learned and accurate writer, then, divides the prophetic parts of this book into seven periods. The first represented by the seal, shows the state of the church under the heathen Roman Empire, from A. D. 25, to A. D. 365. II. Period, of the triumph, to its state from Constantine, A. D. 355, to A. D. 750. III. Period, of the calf, its state in the times of the last head of Roman government, represented by the beast, for 1290 years, from about the year 750, to A. D. 1446. IV. Period, the millennium, from A. D. 1492, to A. D. 2145. V. Period, Satan bound for a little season, and then destroyed. VI. Period, the resurrection and final judgment. VII. Period, the heavenly state.

b First seal, &c.] This refers to the triumph of Christianity over Jewish and heathen opposition by the labours of its first promoters. c Of living creatures.] As each of these living creatures is represented as speaking successively, I think it continues what was advanced in seal. vi. note f, relating to the scheme of Mr. Hutchinson, who supposes the four living creatures, taken together, to be an emblem of the Deity.

d Another horse came out.] Mr. Lowman thinks, that the leaves of the book were so adjusted, that on opening the first seal, the first leaf unfolded; and on it there was drawn, in a vivid and beautiful picture, a man mounted on a white horse; and that what is described on opening those that follow, is an account of the various pictures which John saw delineated on the several leaves. But as we have an account, not only of the appearance of these things, but of their motion, and their name; and especially, of a change in the state of several of them, particularly of the man under the altar, (ver. 9.) I infer one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come, and see.

2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse appeared; and he that sat thereon had a bow in his hand, and a quiver of arrows hanging at his back; and to express his royal dignity as the King both of the church and of the world, there was given to him a crown of gold, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer: I understood that he was to gain signal victories, and that the series of them was immediately to begin. (Compare Psal. xlv. 3; Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 11.)

3 And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature, saying, as the former had done when the first was opened, Come and see. And another horse came out, [which] seemed to be white, and he that sat thereon had a bow, and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come, and see. 4 And there went out
On opening the third seal, a black horse:

out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come, and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see that thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

conclude, that the scene did not lie in the leaf of the book, but arose in vision as the rest; and that the events described, seemed successively to pass before the eyes of John. And indeed, it appears to me that the state of the vision he first saw was somewhat altered, upon the opening of some of the seals, especially the seventh.——The ingenious author above mentioned, interprets this seal, of the judgments of God upon the Jewish persecutors, under Trajan and Hadrian; A.D. 100, to A.D. 138, when the Jews had 1000 cities and fortresses taken and destroyed, and 500,000 men slain.

A measure of wheat for a penny.] This may seem, to an English reader, a description of great plenty; but it certainly intends the contrary, as I have intimated in the paraphrase. The penny was about seven-pence halfpenny of our money; and it appears from Tacitus, as well as from Mat. xxvii. [See Fam. Expos. in loc.] to have been the daily wage of a labourer, It also appears from other ancient writers, particularly Herodotus, (see Raphelinos in loc.) and from Hippocrates. Diogenes, Laertius, and Athanæus, (see Grieus in loc.) that this measure or chanix, was no more than was allowed to a slave for his daily food. What would become of families when a man could gain by his labour no more, and that only of bread, than might suffice for his own subsistence?——Mr. Lowman interprets this third seal of the scarcity, in the time of the Antonines, from A.D. 138, to A.D. 193. and produces passages from Tertullian, and the Roman historians, concerning the calamity the empire endured by scarcity in this period.

[See that thou injure not, &c.] The introduction of so many allegorical persons, as famine and death, and the state of separate spirits in this vision, confirms what was said above, in note d, as to the nature of the things that appeared.

Vol. v.

G g
On opening the fourth seal, a pale horse, &c.

Let the olive-trees, and the vines, remain unblasted, to show, that God in judgment remembers mercy.

And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying to me, Come, and see a further discovery of the Divine will. And I saw and behold a pale horse appeared; and as for him that sat on him, his name was called Death. He appeared like a person entirely emaciated, and had followed him: he seemed to be attended with a person, who was a proper emblematical representation of the state of separate spirits; and there was given unto him power to slay a great number, as it were, the fourth part of the earth, with the sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, that most dreadful kind of death; and with the wild beasts of the fields.

And when he opened the fifth seal, a very memorable scene represented itself to me; for then I saw under the altar, which made a part of the view before me, a visible representation of the souls of those who were slaughtered on account of the word of God, and the testimony to the truth of the gospel which they courageously retained, in the midst of all opposition. And they cried with a loud voice, as making an appeal to the injured justice of the Divine Being; and said, How long, O thou supreme and sovereign Lord of the universe, who art ever armed with almighty power and terror against all time unplaceable enemies, how long, O thou holy and true God, shall it be, ere thou dost judge and avenge our blood upon them who dwell upon the earth, who have, without remorse, poured it out as water. And, upon this, they appeared to be called up from the place where they lay as so many bleeding victims; and there were given unto each of them white robes, in token of the

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast, saying, Come, and see.

8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse, and he that sat on him was named Death, and had power to take away life, and to kill the fourth part of the earth, with the sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and with the wild beasts of the earth.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood upon them that dwell upon the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also should be killed, as they were, even unto the resurrection of life.

[Mr. Lowman interprets the seal of the pestilence, and other calamities, in the reigns of Maximian and Valerian, from A. D. 235. to A. D. 253. This he supports by proper authorities from several Christian and heathen writers in that period, who particularly mention one pestilence that lasted fifteen years.

[We are not to understand this as the language of personal revenge, but of seal for the honour of God, which was so intimately concerned in the punishment to be inflicted upon those blood-thirsty persecutors.

[Mr. Kemm understands this, as an indication of their prerogative to some new part of honour and service. But, I suppose, this was only a representation, that though their blood did cry for vengeance in the ears of God, yet that vengeance should be delayed; nevertheless, that, in the mean time, they should be exalted to a glorious state. The argument he draws from this passage, in proof of
On opening the sixth seal, a great earthquake, &c. 469

that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind;

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places:

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains;

the triumph they had gained over death, and all its terrors; and it was said to them, that they should rest yet a little while, though their blood remained unavenged, till the number of their fellow servants, and brethren, who should be killed, as they [had been] for the testimony of a good conscience, and the defence of the gospel, should be fulfilled, according to the intention of Divine Providence, in letting their persecutors go on a while, till they had filled up the measure of their iniquity.

And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and behold there was immediately a great earthquake: and not earth alone, but heaven, was affected with great consternation; for the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became red as blood: And it seemed as if the stars fell from heaven upon the earth; numbers of them at once, as fast as when a fig-tree dropeth its untimely figs, being shaken by the force of a mighty wind. And the heavens passed away, the clouds rolling one upon another, like a volume of a book when it is rolled up; and every mountain on earth, and every island in the sea, were moved out of their places; so great and general was the shock, to represent the calamities approaching in those terrible wars, which were to precede the revolutions to which this seal referred. And all the inhabitants of the world were thrown into an universal terror; so that the kings of the earth, and the grandees about their courts, and the rich men and the chief officers of armies, who commanded their thousands, and the powerful men, who bore the greatest sway in the public counsels, or were armed with the most warlike prowess; and every slave, and every free-man, fled as in surprise, and hid themselves as fast as they could, even in the

a first resurrection, seems too precarious to be repeated. Fien. First Res. p. 46, 47.

k The number of their brethren who should be killed, &c.] Nothing could tend more to encourage Christians to endure their sufferings with steady patience, than this that it was appointed of God, that a certain number of martyrs should be put to death, and that the season of their triumph was to succeed.

l Fifth seal.] Mr. Lowman interprets this seal, of the severe persecution under Dioclesian, from A. D. 270, to A. D. 304; which was the most extensive and furious of all; and so many Christians suffered death, that the brethren boasted, in an ancient inscription that they had effaced the name and superstition of the Christians.

m Earthquake,—sun becoming black,—stars falling, &c.] Awful judgments and calamities are often described by such commotions and alterations in the natural world. Compare Isa. xiii. 10; xxxiv. 4. Ezek. xxxii. 7; Joel ii. 10; and the like.

n Day
the most gloomy caves; and among the rocks of the mountains, horrid as this retreat appeared.

And not thinking themselves sufficiently secure there, they said, in wild astonishment and affright, to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him who sitteth upon the throne, the almighty and terrible God, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and mild and gentle, as he once appeared, we find it insupportably dreadful; and who can be able to stand against it? Thus it appeared that they would have thought the crush of a mountain less terrible, than the vengeance they expected; and had more hope of moving inanimate nature by their outcries, than of prevailing upon their righteous and inexorable Judge.

IMPROVEMENT.

To whatever event these seals may refer, it is certain, that the representations here made, are very awful, and very instructive. Let us consider ourselves as invited to come up and see, and let us observe the memorable spectacle with attention. Let the view of the white horse, and his rider who went forth conquering and to conquer, lead us to reflect on the peaceful purposes of our blessed Saviour’s appearance, and the rapidity of his conquests; and engage us frequently to pray for the further prosperity of his kingdom, that kingdom of righteousness, love and happiness.

When we think of the terrible effects of war, of famine, and of pestilence, represented by the three following horses, and their riders here mentioned, let it excite our thankfulness, that not one of this dreadful triumvirate is sent forth against us, though our national crimes have indeed deserved, that they should invoke us with

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:
17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand.
with united terrors; that peace should be taken from our land, that our bread and water should be received by weight and measure, and that the dead should lie unburied in our streets, the Verd food of the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the earth: nor can any thing more justly excite our gratitude and thankfulness, than that the terrors and the guilt of sanguinary persecution, are not to be found in the midst of us. The history of its horrors and raves in other nations and ages, may sometimes be an exercise of our faith; and we may be ready to cry out with the souls under the altar, How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt thou not avenge the blood of thy saints upon the earth? But let us wait with patience; let us not form a hasty and inconsiderate judgment. The dead, who die in the Lord, and those who had been persecuted to death for his sake, and in his cause, are incomparably more happy than those who are the happiest among the living. The white robes, and golden crowns, with which they are adorned, are an abundant compensation, not only for every lighter suffering, but even for the slow fire, and the rack, those most dreadful instruments of torture. And though their malicious and implacable enemies may bitterly insult over them for a while, yet the triumph of the wicked is for a short time, their guilty spirits will soon be summoned before the great Avenger of blood; and the day is coming when they shall be publicly brought forth, to suffer the utmost demands of his justice; even that day, when all the figurative descriptions here used shall be fully answered, in their literal meaning; when the sun shall indeed be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood; when the volume of heaven shall be rolled up as a scroll, and its stars shall fall from their orbs. It is no wonder, that ungodly sinners fly from this alarming and tremendous scene, with wild consternation and confusion: no wonder, that they read the very heavens with their cries, and call upon the mountains to fall upon them, and the rocks to cover them: for O! what were the sudden and irresistible crash of a rock, or a mountain, when compared with the weight of the wrath of the Lamb, and with the fire and brimstone of the second death O! that by the expectation of this awful day, men of all ranks and conditions, may be influenced to make their application to him, while he yet appears in the displays of his grace and mercy; to kiss the Son lest he be angry, and they perish from the way, even when his wrath is only beginning to be kindled. (Psalm. ii. 12.)
The increase of the Christian church, which was to succeed the opening of the seals, is represented by the vision of twelve thousand sealed out of each tribe of Israel; and then follows a view of the glory and happiness of those who should courageously endure persecution while it continued. Rev. VII. throughout.

**SECT. X.**

The increase of the Christian church, which was to succeed the opening of the seals, is represented by the vision of twelve thousand sealed out of each tribe of Israel; and then follows a view of the glory and happiness of those who should courageously endure persecution while it continued. Rev. VII. throughout.

**Revelation VII. 1.**

And after these things, it pleased God to give me a representation of the increase which his church should receive, after the communications which had been shadowed out by those visions which were introduced by the opening the seals. Accordingly, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth; that is, the north, the south, the east, and the west; and they appeared as holding the four cardinal winds of the earth in their hands, that the winds might not blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor upon any tree; but that there might be the most intense and complete calm, to represent the peaceful state of things, which should succeed the tumultuous and distressing revolutions which had been intimated to me above. (Comp. Jer. xlix. 36, 37.)

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having in his hand, the seal of the living God; in order to impress a mark upon those whom he was graciously determined to distinguish as his own property, and who should be inclined to dedicate themselves to his service. And he cried with a great voice to the four angels, to whom power was given over the winds, at present to restrain them, but afterwards to loose them with great violence, and by them to injure, in a terrible manner, the earth, and the sea; saying, Injure not, by the missive vengeance committed to you, the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads; that distinguishing them by that seal, you may know how to moderate the force of the storm, where their safety and comfort is concerned. And I then heard the number of those that were sealed, in all, one hundred.
were sealed an hundred and forty-four thousand, all the tribes of the children of Israel.

5 Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Asher were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Naphtali were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zebulun were sealed twelve thousand, who were sealed in an equal number, out of every tribe of the children of Israel. And I heard them mentioned in the following order; of the tribe of Judah, as the most noble and glorious, distinguished by its regal dignity, and its peculiar relation to Christ according to the flesh, [were] sealed twelve thousand. And of the tribe of Reuben, though that were so much degraded by Jacob, and comparatively so small, when the people were numbered in the wilderness, [were] sealed twelve thousand too. Of the tribe of Gad, whose territories in Canaan lay contiguous to those of Reuben on the other side Jordan, [were] also sealed twelve thousand, and thence, the angel appeared to pass over to the north-west boundary of the land, and to the shore of the Mediterranean sea, which was the lot of the tribe of Asher, of which there [were] also sealed twelve thousand. And of the neighbouring tribe of Naphtali, whose inheritance lay east of the former, [were] sealed twelve thousand. And of the tribe of Manasses, whose land lay next to the east of Naphtali [were] sealed the same number, that is, twelve thousand. And of the tribe of Simeon, though it had its inheritance taken out of that of Judah, and so might seem less considerable, there [were] sealed as many as of the former, even twelve thousand. And of the tribe of his brother Levi, though his posterity were scattered among the other tribes, and had no land that was properly their inheritance, [were] sealed twelve thousand likewise. And of the tribe of Issachar, to which the angel then passed, [were] sealed twelve thousand. And of the tribe of Zebulun, which lay contiguous to that of Issachar to the north, [were] also sealed twelve thousand. And of the tribe of Ephraim, the other son of Joseph, and by far

\[a\] Of the tribe of Judah, &c.] I freely acknowledge, that it is very difficult to me to assign the reason of that order in which the tribes are placed, or the reason, why one of the tribes is omitted; the latter of which appears much more important than the former. However this is plain, that when Levi was mentioned for one tribe, it was necessary, that since twelve only were to be mentioned, one should be omitted. Some indeed have imagined, that Dan was omitted, to express how detestable idolatry is in the sight of God; as the tribe of Dan was the first that fell into idolatry after their settlement in Canaan. Compare Judges xviii. 30, 31. Dr. Hammond assigns another reason, namely, that long before that time, the tribe of Dan was destroyed, or brought very low, say the Jews; and indeed it is not numbered among the rest of the tribes, 1 Chron. ii, and following chapters. See Hammond, in loc.

\[b\] Multitude
The saints ascribe praise to God.

The tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand: 12:10 the tribe of Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son, were sealed twelve thousand. And thus upon the whole, the number of one hundred and forty-four thousand was completed. Nor did I presume to inquire who Dan was not introduced among his brethren, on this occasion. Thus did God represent to me, the extraordinary growth of the Christian Church, which seemed to be master of inexpressible joy to the inhabitants of the heavenly world. For after this, I saw, and beheld a great multitude, who made a thronged assembly, which no one could number: and appeared to have come out of every nation, and tribe, and people, and language, the blessed front of preaching the gospel over all the world; and they then appeared to me, as standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in long white robes, and having branches of palms in their hands, to signify the victory they should gain over all their enemies, and the state of happiness and joy to which they should be finally conducted, notwithstanding all the formidable opposition through which they should be called to pass. And I heard them crying with a loud voice, in token of the intenseness of their devotion, and burning. Let all the glory of this great salvation, which we have obtained, be ascribed to our God who sits upon the throne, and from thence has graciously regarded us, and exalted us to such dignity and happiness, mean and miserable as we once were; and let it be also ascribed to the grace and blood of the Lamb, who gave himself to be slain for our redemption. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and every one round about also, at the same time, the twenty-four elders, and the four living creatures, and, in token of the holiest reverence,

The saints ascribe praise to God.

The tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand: 12:10 the tribe of Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son, were sealed twelve thousand. And thus upon the whole, the number of one hundred and forty-four thousand was completed. Nor did I presume to inquire who Dan was not introduced among his brethren, on this occasion. Thus did God represent to me, the extraordinary growth of the Christian Church, which seemed to be master of inexpressible joy to the inhabitants of the heavenly world. For after this, I saw, and beheld a great multitude, who made a thronged assembly, which no one could number: and appeared to have come out of every nation, and tribe, and people, and language, the blessed front of preaching the gospel over all the world; and they then appeared to me, as standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in long white robes, and having branches of palms in their hands, to signify the victory they should gain over all their enemies, and the state of happiness and joy to which they should be finally conducted, notwithstanding all the formidable opposition through which they should be called to pass. And I heard them crying with a loud voice, in token of the intenseness of their devotion, and burning. Let all the glory of this great salvation, which we have obtained, be ascribed to our God who sits upon the throne, and from thence has graciously regarded us, and exalted us to such dignity and happiness, mean and miserable as we once were; and let it be also ascribed to the grace and blood of the Lamb, who gave himself to be slain for our redemption. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and every one round about also, at the same time, the twenty-four elders, and the four living creatures, and, in token of the holiest reverence,

The saints ascribe praise to God.
Even they who came out of great tribulation:

the throne on their faces, and worshipped God.

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing and glory and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes; and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth

reverence, they fell down on their faces before the throne, and worshipped God. Saying, Amen: thus let it be, let the blessing, and the glory, and the wisdom, and the thanksgiving, and the honour, and the power, and the strength, [be] ascribed to our God for ever and ever. Amen: may all creatures for ever bless, and give thanks to him, as originally and essentially possessed of supreme glory, complete wisdom, of irresistible and almighty power, and therefore worthy of all honour, though exalted above all praise. We acknowledge him to be so, we rejoice that he is so, and wish that universal nature may join with us in so reasonable, and so delightful an homage, and pronounce the solemn amen. And one of the elders answered, saying to me, As for those who are clothed with white raiment, and make such a splendid appearance, who are they, and whence do they come? And I, supposing by his question that he asked in order to quicken my attention to what he had to tell me concerning them, said to him, Sir, I conclude thou knowest, though I do not. And he said to me, It is true; and I would have thee observe, for thine own encouragement, and that of thy brethren, and those who may arise after thee, that these are they who are come out of much tribulation which they have endured in the cause of true religion; and they have washed their robes, and made them so white as you see them, in the blood of the Lamb: they owe all their exaltation and glory, not to the blood they have themselves offered, but to that most precious blood of his, which he permitted to be shed for their sakes. Therefore, being thus redeemed to God by him, and having been enabled to approve their fidelity to their Divine Master, in the midst of the greatest extremities, they now receive a rich equivalent for all they have suffered; for they are before the throne of God, and they perform Divine service.

Made them white in the blood of the Lamb.] It looks too much like an obstinate resolution by no means to acknowledge the efficacy of Christ's blood to our salvation, for any to maintain, that the blood of the Lamb here signifies blood shed for his sake, when it is said in words so much resembling these, chap. i. 5, who loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood. And chap. v. 9, thou hast sinned, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. The texts produced to palliate the other forced and unnatural interpretation, when consulted, will appear little to the purpose. They are chiefly Col. i. 24, and Heb. xi. 26.
service to him day and night in his temple; and he who sitteth upon the throne, pitches his throne-nacle, as it were, upon them, and displays the tokens of his presence all around them. They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more, for ever; nor shall the scorching rays of the sun fall upon them, nor any other in-

17 convenient and disagreeable heat. For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall himself, as it were, own the relation of a Shepherd to them, and take care to feed them, and he shall lead them to fountains of living water; and that God, whom they have faithfully served, and whose interest has been so dear to them, shall act, as it were, the part of an indulgent Father, and tenderly wipe every tear from their eyes; comforting them with the most reviving consolations, after all the calamities and distresses he has permitted them to endure below.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. How inexpressibly happy are the thousands of those who are sealed, those whom God has marked out for his own, and in that character, has taken them under his special protection. Whatever storms and tempests may arise, they are in no danger of being forsaken; they shall be preserved inviolably safe, and their happiness is secure. They shall all be brought at length to join with the innumerable multitude, who surround the throne, and ascribe, as all Israel must do, salvation to God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. And O! that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion, that their praises might sound sweeter here on earth, and that myriads of new voices might unite in the harmonious concert.

12 Those songs of heaven let us begin below, and say, Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be to our God for ever and ever: amen! If through his grace, we can call him our God, how cordially should we join in this sublime ascription!

14, 13 In the mean time, we may see the church in affliction; we may feel a large share of personal, or public tribulation; but, when it presses hardest upon us, let us lift up our eyes to that glorious scene which the apostle beheld, and which was so excellent and sublime, that it might well transport him, even under the tribulations through which he was then making his way to it. Let us persevere, steadily and faithfully, as they did; and the day will come,
come, when our robes shall be as white, and our crowns as radiant, and our palms as verdant as theirs. Let us then bear with patience, hunger and thirst, heat and weariness. While we travel through this vale of tears; rejoicing in hope of the everlasting refreshment and pleasure to which the Lamb will lead us; even those fountains of living water, of which he will give us to drink, when God has wiped away all tears from our eyes, and placed us before his throne, where we shall serve him day and night in his temple, and see his face, and dwell with him, and have him for ever dwell with us, and in us. Amen.

SECT. XI.

On the opening the seventh seal, the seven angels appear with their trumpets, and the four first of them sound. Rev. VIII. throughout.

Revelation VIII. 1.

Thus I have given an account of the manner in which the Lamb proceeded in opening six of the seals, and of the effects produced by them: and I am now to add, that when he had opened the seventh seal, there was a profound silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour; to awaken by that means, a more earnest attention to the extraordinary things that were to appear in consequence of the opening that seal. And I saw the seven angels which I have before mentioned, and which then stood before the throne of God, and seven trumpets were given to them, that they might each of them successively sound an alarm; which I understood to be the symbol of some very important and awakening events, which were in order of time, to succeed those which had been expressed by the

a Silence in heaven.] Some are of opinion, here is an allusion to the silence which used sometimes to be kept in the worship of God in the temple, while the people were praying, Luke i. 10.—I think, with Mr. Lownau, that the seventh seal was only introductory to the trumpets, and the seventh trumpet to the vials.

b The seven angels which stood, &c.] The manner in which this is expressed in the Greek, τῶν αγγέλων—οἱ ἵππαι, is very emphatical. It seems to signify the seven angels, who had before been mentioned as standing before the throne; and this form of speaking so plainly refers to what had been said before, that it does a great deal towards proving, that the seven Spirits of God, mentioned chap. v. 6, as the eyes and horns of the Lamb, are the same with these angels mentioned in the note on Rev. iv. 5, though, as I have there intimated, it is not absolutely certain.

c With
And of an angel before the altar, with a golden censer:

the seals. And while they were preparing to execute the orders they had received, another angel, whom I understood as a typical representation of the great High Priest of the church, come and stood before the altar which I saw in this celestial temple, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much fragrant incense, consisting of a variety of excellent perfumes mingled together, that he might present [it] with the prayers of all the saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne; just as the Jewish high priest used to burn incense on the golden altar in the temple, while the people were praying in the courts of it, at the hour of morning and evening sacrifice. And the smoke of the perfume went up in a thick and odoriferous cloud, together with the prayers of the saints, from the hand of the angel as he stood before God, and seemed thereby emblematically to signify how grateful to the Divine Being those prayers were, which proceeded from holy hearts, being recommended by the intercession of that great High Priest, whom this glorious angel had the honour, upon this occasion, to represent; as Aaron and his sons did in the Jewish tabernacle of old. And when the angel had performed this office, in order to shew the awful manner in which God would avenge the injury which his praying people upon earth received from its tyrannical and oppressive powers, he took the censer, and advancing towards the brazen altar of burnt-offerings, he filled it with fire

3. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne.

4. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the temple; and no man could stand in the temple, because of the smoke of the fire of the altar, and of the smoke of the incense which the angel had cast into the temple. And the temple was filled with a cloud, and with the glory of the Lord; and there was heard a voice from heaven saying, This is the place of the house of prayer; and there shall be in it the presence of the Lord. And he which had stood in the middle of the temple cast an ephod and a girdle upon one of the young priests, and took another of the young priests, and cast upon him the vesture which was upon the man which had stood in the middle of the temple; and the altar was filled with smoke.
the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire, was cast into the sea; and it produced so great an alteration

d With fire of the altar.] There was no fire upon the golden altar, but that which was in the censer, in which the incense was burnt; so that we must necessarily, by this fire of the altar, understand that of the brazen altar, though it is not expressely declared to be so; and this may intimate, that in some other places the same words may, by comparing different circumstances, have different ideas annexed to them.

e Voices and thunder.] If the latter word be intended to explain the former it might be rendered, voices, even thunder. But if different ideas are to be annexed to the words, I must confess, that I know not what they are. Yet we may imagine some distinct articulate sounds different from thunder, to be mixed with it, like that which some of those present heard, John xii. 29. (Compare Isa. xxix. 6.) This representation may be intended to intimate, in general, the confusion and calamities, with which the period, expressed by the successive trumpets, should be filled, and the regard God would shew to his praying people during its continuance.

f Hail and fire mingled with blood.] Grotius explains this, of the hardness of heart, and bloody rage of the Jews; Mr. Mede, of the invasion of the northern nations upon the Romans; and Mr. Clark, of the Arian heresy and persecution, whereby many professors of Christianity were infected, and many destroyed. See his Annotations in loc. But Mr. Lowman, more probably, interprets it of the bloody wars in Constantine's family, which with the invasion of the neighbouring nations, almost ruined the whole strength of the Roman empire, fell heavy on its great men and particularly the family of Constantine, which during this period, was extinguished; from A. D. 337, to A. D. 379.

g Mountain burning.] Grotius explains this, of the soldiers rapine upon the people of Jerusalem, and firing the towers; Mr. Mede, of the firing of Rome; Mr. Clark, of the spirit of ambition and pride among the clergy; Mr. Lowman, of the invasion of Italy by the northern nations and the taking of Rome by Alaric, general of the Goths, who plundered it and set it on fire, and this calamity was followed by the spoil of the greatest part of Italy, from A. D. 379, to A. D. 412.
tion in the colour of the waters, that it seemed as if a third part of the sea became blood, which I easily apprehended to signify the slaughter which should come upon many people by means of some victorious Prince, and those who fought under his banner. And, as a further token of it, a third part of the creatures which had animal life in the sea died, and a third part of the ships were destroyed thereby, and the persons sailing in them all perished. (Compare Jer. h. 25.)

10. And the third angel sounded; and to represent some great destroyer that was to appear, and become very conspicuous, both for the mischief he should occasion, and the ruin in which he should be involved, there fell from heaven a great star, burning like a torch; and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; to signify the influence which the Person represented by it should have upon human affairs, and upon those things that were the springs of comfort and support to mankind. And, in reference to the effect it was to produce, the name of the star is called Wormwood, and a third part of the waters became impregnated with wormwood, but with this additional circumstance, that it was poisonous as well as distasteful; and many men died in consequence of drinking the waters, because they were become bitter. (Compare Exod. vii. 20, 21.)

11. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so that the third part of them, even of their light, was darkened; and the day did not appear, with

[The sun fell upon a great star.] Compare Dan. viii. 10. Groton interprets it of the Lybian emperor, Aug. xvi. 28. Mr. Milne, of the fall of the western empire under Augustus, and Mr. Clark, (see his Ann. in loc.) of the corruption of ordinances by an heretical churchman, of great parts and considerable figure, whom he supposes to be Pelagius. Some explain it of Mahomet, whose name signifies dust of earth. Mem. of Literat. Vol. V. p. 323. But Mr. Lowman, with greater probability, interprets it of the succeeding ravages in Italy, founding the Gothic kingdom there, and putting an end to the Roman empire; from A.D. 411, to A.D. 507. Agreeable to this, historians inform us, that several provinces of the empire were disembarrassed, the city of Rome again taken, and plundered, and Italy became a prey to the barbarous nations.

[Darkened.] Compare Ezek. xxvi. 7, 8. Groton interprets this of taking the south Galilean towns; Mr. Milne of the destruction of the light of Rome, when deprived of regal and comnar majesty. And Mr. Clark, see his Ann. in loc. of eclipsing the light of the church, by tradition and human inventions. Mr. Low-
the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound!

with respect to a third part of its lustre, and the night also; but there was as great a deficiency in the usual light of both, as when either the sun by day, or the moon by night, is so eclipsed, that a third part of the body of each is shaded; which I understood to imply, that God would, in the course of his Providence, draw a veil over the whole face of things, and obscure the glory of the state to which this vision referred. And I beheld and heard one of the angels flying in the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, The things which have already happened, are terrible; but what is yet to come is much more so; woe, woe, woe to those that dwell upon the earth, for the remaining sounds of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound! Prepare therefore for the manifestation of these awful scenes.

IMPROVEMENT.

While we prepare ourselves, with silent admiration, to attend the discoveries here opened upon us, let us rejoice in the symbolical representation of the intercession of Jesus, our great High Priest, shadowed forth, in so beautiful and expressive a manner, by the angel standing at the altar with the golden censer, and much incense, Behold, how the prayers of all the saints ascend before God with acceptance! See the method we are to take, if we desire that ours should be acceptable to him; and, encouraged by such a view, let us offer them up, not only with humility, but with cheerful confidence, though we are conscious of their great unworthiness.

To what wretchedness are they exposed, who oppress and injure those, that through their great Representative, have such an interest in the court of heaven. The hail and the fire, shall, at the Divine command, powerfully plead their cause; the mountains shall be torn from their basis, and cast into the midst of the sea; the sun, the moon, and the stars shall be darkened in their orbs, and all nature be thrown into convulsive agonies, ere God will suffer them finally to be over-born, or fail to punish, with becoming

man interprets it of the wars in Italy, between the Goths and Justinian's generals, whereby the exarchate of Ravenna was erected, all remaining power and authority at Rome suppressed, and the imperial city became subject to Ravenna, where the exarch or lieutenant of the eastern empire resided; from A.D. 493, to A.D. 508.

a Locusts
becoming severity, those who continue to persecute, or evil intreat them.

Let such awful representations as these remind us of the sovereign almighty power of God, whom all the hosts of heaven worship with reverence; and at whose awful word, when he gives forth his voice, hailstones and coals of fire descend; (Psal. xviii. 13;) at whose rebuke the pillars of heaven tremble, and the foundations of the earth are shaken; who speaks to the sun, and it shineth not; who darkenth the moon, and sealeth up the stars. Who would not fear thee, O thou King of nations, so terrible in the judgments which thou executest on the earth? Deliver us, we intreat thee, from the multiplied and accumulated miseries of those who continue obstinately to oppose thee; and conduct us at length to the heavenly presence, though it should be through days of darkness, and waters of bitterness, and seas of blood. Amen.

SECT. XII.

The effect of the fifth and sixth angels sounding their trumpets, Rev. IX. throughout.

REVELATION IX. 1.

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw an angel of distinguished lustre, descending with such amazing velocity, that he seemed like a shooting star, compare Job. xxxviii. 7. and when he was fallen, as it were, from heaven to the earth, and appeared standing upon it, there was given to him the key of the bottomless pit;

2 And he went to the door of that infernal dungeon, and he opened the bottomless pit, and a thick smoke ascended from the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and it diffused itself all abroad; so that the sun and the whole body of the air, were darkened by the smoke and gloomy exhalations of the pit: which I understood as intimating some terrible calamity approaching.

3 And I saw a very shocking appearance; for out of the smoke there came locusts upon the earth; and

a Locusts upon the earth.] Many protestant writers imagine these locusts to signify the religious orders of monks and friars, &c. The learned Græus understands by them, the sect of the zealots, which appeared among the Jews during the siege, and at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. Mr. Mede, the inun-
...and a destructive power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power, that they should be as pernicious to the inhabitants of the earth, as those terrible animals, and should injure men by their stings as well as by their teeth. And there was this farther remarkable circumstance, that whereas locusts bring along with them such general destruction to all vegetables, it was said to them, whom I saw on this occasion, that they should not injure the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only some human creatures; and this, under a particular limitation to the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads; from whence I inferred that this destructive visitation should especially affect those, who whatever they might profess, were destitute of true vital religion. And to signify the lingering vexation which these destroyers should occasion to the inhabitants of the country they were to ravage, I was further informed, that it was given to them, that they should not kill them outright, but that they should be tormented five months; which might be intended to express a calamity, that should endure about an hundred and fifty years. And their torment, that is, that which they occasioned by their attack, was] extremely violent, like that of a scorpion when it strikes a man. And in these dreadful days, to which this vision refers, men shall seek death, in a wild kind of despair, and shall not find it; and they shall desire to die, and death shall flee away from them, and leave them to mourn over a life of wretchedness, all the comforts and enjoyments of which shall be utterly swallowed up in their sufferings.
And these creatures were not exactly of the form of locusts; but though they bore some resemblance to them in many instances, they differed from them in others, and were to be considered as a kind of hieroglyphical representation of creatures which are very mischievous and terrible; and I particularly observed, that the likeness of the locusts [were] like horses prepared for war. (Compare Joel ii. 4,) especially the form of their heads; and whereas common locusts have some brilliant ornaments on their heads, and various parts of their bodies, I observed, with regard to these, that on their heads were crowns, like gold; and their faces were like the faces of men; which two circumstances gave me to understand, that they were intended as an emblem of mighty and powerful men, who were to reign over various provinces and kingdoms. And they had on their heads long tresses of hair, like the tresses of women; whereas common locusts have only a down upon their breasts. And whereas other animals of that name have large strong teeth, their teeth were like the teeth of Lions, sharp and pointed, as well as large and strong. And instead of the fire down on the breasts of common locusts, they had breast-plates like breast-plates of iron; and whereas common locusts make a terrible noise with their wings, the noise which these strange and symbolical locusts made, by the motion of their wings, was like the noise of chariots, and many horses running to war; so that they seemed to tear the ground with their rage and fury, and to shake the air with their neighings. And instead of being formed at the lower end of their bodies, as other locusts are, which have no stings, but are quite inoffensive and innocent animals, these creatures had tails like scorpions, and their stings were in their tails; and their power, as I observed above, given them to hurt the earth, and men its inhabitants, for about five months, or about an hundred and fifty years. And they had a king over them, wherein they further differed from the locust kind, (Prov. xxx. 27,) who is the angel of the bottomless

7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

9 And they had breast-plates as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power was to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless

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A kind of hieroglyphical representation.] As there are no animals in nature answerable to those which are here described, I take it for granted, that as the four animals mentioned above are hieroglyphs of angels, so are these of mischievous creatures. Compare chap. iv. 7, note f.

e Abaddon.]
the name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon; but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past; and behold, there come two woes more hereafter.
13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God:

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loosen now the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were loosed, who were prepared, for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to

gel of the bottomless pit, and the great head of those apostate spirits who dwell there; whose name is in the Hebrew language, Abaddon; and in the Greek, he has the name of Apollyon: both the one, and the other, expressing his destructive nature, and the dreadful havoc he makes, wherever his attempts are successful. And thus, one woe is gone; [and] behold yet other two woes besides it, coming, threatening yet more terrible calamities than these. And upon this the sixth angel sounded; and I

12 did not see any immediate appearance in consequence of it; but I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which was before God, (which seemed therefore to come from the most holy place which was directly behind it,) Saying to the sixth angel, who still had the trumpet which he had sounded in his hand, Loosen now the four angels, which are bound in the great river Euphrates; who were intended to represent some potentates arising from that part of the world, who, in the period referred to, should become very famous throughout the earth, for their exploits and achievements. And the four angels were loosed, who were prepared for a certain period of time, signified, according to the prophetic reckoning, by an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year; that they might

The sixth angel sounds: 

sect. xii. Rev. IX. 11.

The sixteenth century, this event seems to be too late in the successive order of periods, and correspondent events. Mr. Lowman's interpretation seems to me much more probable, which refers it to the re-union of the divided Saracen power, their invading and ravaging Europe, till they were defeated by Charles Martel; and agreeable to ver. 20, 21, the sufferers were so far from repenting, that image-worship was confirmed by order of the Pope, and the authority of councils in the east and west. This period reaches from A. D. 675, to A. D. 750.

Spiritual empire did not commence till the 13th

15

e Abaddon.] When the etymology is so evident, and so particularly explained by the author, I cannot but wonder at Dr. Moore's endeavour to explain it another way, as referring to the profession which the Mahometans should make of maintaining the doctrine of the Unity. See Moore's Thol. Works, p. 130.

f The four angels which are bound.] Grotius refers this to the Roman army under four commanders, which came from the borders of this river. Mr. Mede, to the four beylerbeyys of the Turks; and he interprets, ver. 17, of guns invented about that time, and used by them in their successful war upon the Europeans. See the passage at large in More's Thol. Works, p. 150, 151. They who refer this passage to the rise of the Turkish Ottoman empire, suppose that the four angels mean either four provinces, or four cities near Euphrates, from whence considerable leaders arose, who pushed on, and advanced the Turkish conquests; and Mr. Pyle, and others, have endeavoured to confirm this interpretation. But, as the Turkish

II H 2
might make a great slaughter among the inhabitants of the earth; or, as it was expressed to me in the vision, according to the language used before, might kill a third part of the men, who after the preceding plagues continued upon it.

16 They accordingly appeared, as leading on a mighty army; and the number of the horsemen they led on, was immensely great, represented to me by two myriads of myriads, that is, no less than two hundred millions. And I heard the number of them thus mentioned to me, as it was impossible for me to count them. And I saw the horses, and those that sat upon them, thus, in [their] appearance; that is, having breast-plates of fire, and hyacinth, and brimstone, which seemed to send forth blue, burning flames, which went devouring before them; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths went fire and smoke, and brimstone, to represent the courage and fierceness of their armies, and the irresistible destruction they should make, wherever they marched. And with the united force of these three things, that is, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, that went out of their mouths, they slew a third part of men, as was declared above. And as the destroyers, represented by the locusts, appeared as having devouring teeth, and stings like scorpions in their tails, these had likewise a double provision of mischievous furniture; for their paws are partly in their mouth, from whence, as I have already said, the fire appeared to issue, and in their tails, and their tails also [are] like serpents, having heads, and with them, as well as with their mouths, they injure men. Thus they were represented as bringing a most fearful destruction on the human species. Yet it was not productive of such a reformation as might have

squadrons who had been before subject to the Sultan of Babylon. And as for the time here mentioned, my endeavors to shew it to be, in the prophetic rule, 27 years; and computing from that conquest at Prussia, in 1605, by adding 96, the number will be 166. See Bishop Burn-

the Prophetical History of the Times, Vol. I p 594. But how lucky soever the conclusion was, it does not convince me, that it is the true interpretation; and so much the less, as it seems evident to me, the year spoken of in this book, consists only of 360 days. Besides, the Turks have removed their war on the papists Christians, particularly on the Emperor and the republic of Venice, in 1726, and since. As for the phrases, or how, a day, &c. I do not understand them, they may, perhaps only signify a determined, limited time, as such expressions as scripture frequently do, though they should seem most naturally, and agreeable to the prophetic reckoning, to denote about 271 years.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand myriads; and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of hyacinth, and brimstone; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths went fire, and smoke, and brimstone.

18 And the third part of men were killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 And the power was given unto them over the nations, and each one received a mouth, and a measure, and a weight, and a cup; and the earth was troubled, and every work that was wrought upon the earth was troubled.

20 And the rest of the
the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

have been expected; the remainder of men who died not by these plagues, did not repent of the wicked works of their hands, nor reform those abominations which had brought down destruction on their brethren: and particularly, did not forsake those detestable superstitions which had been so offensive to God, that they might not worship demons, and senseless idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood; which instead of having any Divine properties, are destitute of the senses common to men, and even to brutes, as they can neither see, nor hear, nor walk. And they repented not of other crimes more immediately affecting their fellow-creatures, such for instance as their murders, and their sorceries; nor their fornication, nor their thefts and robberies, by which they had so notoriously injured all about them, and bid defiance to every law, but that of their own unruly appetites and passions, to which they were held in the basest subjection.

IMPROVEMENT.

It is exceeding natural to reflect, while reading this representa- tion, how exactly the mightiest princes, and most savage destroyers of mankind, execute the plan of Divine Providence, and fulfil the decrees of God; even while they are intending nothing, but the gratification of their own ambition, and avarice, and cruelty. The angel of God holds the keys of the bottomless pit; and it is by his Divine permission, that these voracious locusts issue forth and infest the earth. The ministers of God's pleasure, bind the messengers of destruction, and loosen them at the Divine command. And the season, wherein they shall ravage the world, is here limited to a year, to a day, to an hour: ABADDON, APOLLYON, the great and mighty destroyer, cannot effect the least of his mischievous and ruinous purposes, without the permission of the Preserver and Redeemer of mankind; and cannot go beyond his limits. And even the mischief which he does, is intended and

h Not worship demons.] This demon-worship Mr. Mede has taken great pains to prove, to be the worship of d uninterrupted. As for their worshipping idols of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone, the fact is as evident, as that the heathens themselves ever practised such idolatrous worship.

i Sorceries.] By σαρκοφάγον, Dr. Clarke understands all the superstitious methods of making men fancy themselves to be religious, by what others can do for, or to them, or what they can do for themselves, without the practice of true righteousness and virtue. Clarke's xvith Sermon, p. 168. But others understand by it the arts of poisoning.
A mighty angel descends with a little book,

and over ruled to subserv the wisest and kindest designs. But O, how grievous is it to think of that degree of obstinacy and perverseness which so generally prevails in the world, and which renders men so incorrigible, under the most painful chastisements Satan is permitted to inflict. Send forth, O Lord, the gentle influences of thy Spirit, and melt those hearts, which will not be broken by the weightiest strokes of thy vengeance; and deliver us from a tempter, so much resembling that of hell, and so evidently leading down to those dreadful abodes; the temper of those who are hardened by correction, and in the time of their affliction and misery, increase and multiply their transgression against thee.

SECT. XIII.

The vision of a mighty angel appearing in great glory, who had in his hand a little book, which St. John was commanded to eat, Rev. X. 1. throughout.

**Revelation X. 1.**

A MOST beautiful and wonderful scene now opened itself to my view; for I saw another mighty angel, who carried, in his appearance, the marks of unusual strength and vigour, descending from heaven, clothed with a cloud; so that I could not discern the full lustre of his whole body; though variegated with the rays it either reflected or transmitted, it appeared very glorious; and the complete circle of a rainbow [was] about his head, and his face [was] bright as the meridian sun; so that I could not bear to gaze directly upon it. And I had reason to think there was an extraordinary lustre emitted from all the other parts of his body; for even his feet were like pillars of lucid fire. And he had in his hand a little book open, which I afterwards understood to be the volume of the Divine decrees, to be communicated to me. And he put his right foot upon the sea, and the left foot upon the earth, to signify the Divine dominion over both, and the concern of both, in what was further to be transacted. And he cried with a loud, solemn, and awful voice, as a lion roars;

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*Angel clothed with a cloud.*] The beauties of this noble description are

mostly illustrated by that most elegant

and pious writer, the Rev. Mr. James

Hervé, in his *Meditations*, Vol. II. page

21, 22.

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And he sware that time should be no longer.

roars; and when he had cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices, which I had heard before, uttered their voices again, responsive to his, and to increase the terror of so tremendous a scene. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to have written the contents of what they had uttered; for loud as their voices were, there was something articulate and intelligible in the sound; and just in that instant, I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5 And the angel which I saw stand up on the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.

b Lion roars.] The original word, µυηση, rather signifies bellows; but that English word as an idea annexed to it, which appeared to me not to suit the dignity of this description.

c That time should be no longer.] The word γνυς sometimes signifies delay, as well as time. And, according to the former version, the meaning is, that there should be no delay of the destruction of the church's enemies, and of its prosperous and glorious condition. In the latter view, it signifies that the end of time, and the consummation of all things, should soon come. Though the former sense seems to be principally intended, yet I own myself not to be so certain as absolutely to determine it. I think it is evident, that some of the concluding prophecies of this book refer to the eternal state, and therefore I have taken that sentiment into the paraphrase, though not to the exclusion of the former sense; which, as I said, seems to be principally intended, considering the connection, and that the interval between the pouring out of the seventh vial, and the consummation of all things, must, at least, be more than a thousand years; and, perhaps, a much more considerable period. Dr. More is of opinion, that the only meaning of this clause is, that the time was elapsed which had been marked out by the period of three years and a half. See his Theol. Works, p. 122—Grotius refers the accomplishment of it to the vengeance to be taken upon the Jews, by Adrian and his successors. Compare Saurin's Serm. Vol. I. p. 1, 2. Mr. Lowman renders the clause, the time shall not be yet: that is, the time of the glorious state of the church shall not be yet; but it shall not be long to it; for in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, as it follows, the mystery of God shall be fulfilled, &c.

d Mystery
ant scenes of eternity might open: He swears, I say, that the delay should not be much longer, but that it should hasten to its end, in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, who was about quickly to sound, and was to introduce the period of the seven vials: and that, consequent on the pouring out the last vial, the mystery of God, as he had revealed its glad tidings to his servants, the prophets, should be fulfilled, in the utter ruin and destruction of all the enemies of the church, and in us happy and glorious exaltation.

8. And the voice which I before heard from heaven, now spoke to me again, and said, Go, and take the little book, which, as thou perceivest, is open, out of the hand of the angel, which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth, for it is intended for thy use and information. (Compare Jer. xv. 16.) And accordingly I went to the angel, and awfully as his appearance was, I said to him boldly, in consequence of the Divine command, Give me the little book which thou holdest in thine hand; and he said unto me, Take [it] as Ezekiel did that which was shewn to him, [Ezek. iii. 1, 2.] and eat it up: to signify thy receiving it into thy mind, and digesting there the events to which it relates; and it shall imbitter thy belly but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey; to signify, that how pleasant soever it may be to be honoured with such revelations, the contents of thee, in thine after-reflections, shall be very bitter and grievous.

9. And, accordingly, I took the little book out of the hand of the angel, and seemed to myself, to eat it up; and the event exactly answered, what he had said to me: for, in my mouth it was sweet as honey, and when I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said to me, Then hast thou yet dispatched the whole of thy work, in what thou hast already registered, of those visions of the Lord; but thou must again prophesy to many people.

10. And I took the book, and went out of the city of Jerusalem, and sat upon the ground, and began to prophesy again. As it is here said, that the mystery of God should be revealed, its commencement to us, that the things yet to be revealed should extend to the end of time: and when it is declared, that this should be fulfilled in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, who was about to sound, it intimates, that the remainder of time, even to the end of the world, should be comprehended in that period of prophecy, to which the words immediately introductory to the vials, relates.
people, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

The oracles thou hast yet to deliver, shall be propagated through many countries, translated into a variety of languages, and perused by persons of various ranks and conditions, and some of them the most eminent and conspicuous; but fear not to deliver them, being assured that He, by whom they are inspired, will take care they shall be punctually fulfilled.

IMPROVEMENT.

If other parts of this chapter should seem to be less pregnant with important practical instructions, perhaps the design was, that we might be engaged to fix our entire and undivided attention on the awful words of this illustrious angel; whose appearance is described in colours so exceeding beautiful and striking; with the radiance of the sun streaming from his countenance; the variegated colours of the rainbow encircling his head; of a stature so vast and majestic, that he at once bespread the earth and the sea; with his hand solemnly lifted up to heaven; with a voice awful as thunder; appealing to the venerable name of God the Creator of the heavens, of the earth, of the sea, and of all their various inhabitants, in order to add the sanction of an inviolable oath, to a declaration, which in itself from such a Divine messenger, was worthy of absolute and entire credit; a declaration, that time should be no longer; which is a certain truth, in the most sublime and interesting sense of which the words are capable. Time, as distinguished into days, and weeks, and months, and years, by the revolution of the heavenly luminaries, when the most resplendent of these are extinguished in their orbs, as they quickly will; when the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood; time shall then I say be absorbed in an immeasurable eternity. And O, what an eternity! An eternity, either of perfect and inconceivable felicity, or hopeless and remediless misery.—But besides this general construction, there is an important sense in which the proclamation of this celestial herald shall be fulfilled, with regard to individuals; that time shall be

from hence, that the apostle is about to go over the same period of time he had before been discoursing of, giving an account of the state of the church, as he had just done of the state of the empire. But the new description, and new events to which they refer, which are introduced here, and constitute the following chapter, may be sufficient, without any peculiarity of interpretation, to justify the expression. See the preceding note.

a Measure
be no longer; the time of Divine patience in waiting upon us; the time in which we shall be continued under the sound of the gospel, and the offers of mercy, and the means of salvation; the time in which we shall be conversant with these scenes of mortality, and with the persons who are here most familiar to us, at least in the present circumstances of their being. The period, during which we are to inhabit this earth, and enjoy our spiritual advantages, or our worldly possessions and pleasures, is confined within very narrow limits. The oath of this mighty angel is, perhaps, just ready to be accomplished, and time is closing; and eternity is opening upon us. O that we may consider time and all its concerns, as very shortly to vanish, that our thoughts and our cares may be directed more and more to our own eternal interest, and to that of our fellow creatures. The Judge is even at the door; let us endeavour therefore to be ready, let us improve every transient moment to the purposes for which it was given us; and in these views of the brevity of time, and the importance of preparing for eternity, let us detest all the pleasures and allurements of sin; for they will soon appear like the mysterious morsel of the apostle, bitter as wormwood in the belly though with deceitful and fatal indulgence, we may, for a few moments, have rolled them, like a sweet morsel, under our tongues, vainly desiring to prolong those pleasures, which can serve only to add more keen and exquisite sensibility to our future pain.

SECT. XIV.

The vision of the angel commanding St. John to measure the temple: and declaring that the Gentiles should tread down the outer-court; and that the two witnesses should be slain, and raised from the dead, and received into heaven; after which, the triumphs of Divine vengeance over their enemies are celebrated. Rev. XI. 1—18.

Revelation XI. 1.

And when I had eaten the book according to the Divine command, there was given to me, as there was shewn to Ezekiel, whose vision bore so great a resemblance to mine, Ezek. xli. xlii. a reed, like a [measuring] rod; and the angel, which had spoken to me before, stood by me, saying, Arise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and the space filled by those

a Measure the temple of God. From the proportion between the area of the temple and the outer court, supposed to be as one to 3 and 1-half, Mr. Mede, understanding
those who worship at it in the inner-court; 
And the outer-court of the temple, throw out of the account, and measure it not; for there shall be such great disorders introduced, that it shall be given to the Gentiles, and they shall trample, not only upon that, but upon the holy city, for the space of forty-two months; such corruptions shall prevail in the Christian church, though by profession the holy city, and the temple of God, that they who pretend to be its inhabitants, and to worship in it, shall be no better in the Divine account, than Gentiles. And in the mean time, I will raise up some to bear an united testimony against these growing corruptions; and I will give my two witnesses \[commission\] and they shall prophecy all this while, that is, during the forty-two months, or a thousand two hundred [and] sixty days, clothed in sackcloth\[^c\]; to denote their afflicted condition. These are dear and precious to me, as Joshua and Zerubbabel among the Jews of old; and in reference to the emblems under which I represented those my faithful servants, (Zech. iv. 3, 11, 14.) I may call these, the two olive-trees, and the two burning and shining lamps, who stand before the God of the whole earth; high in his esteem, and continually in his presence, planted like olive-trees in his house, or kindled like the sacred lamps in the candlestick of the sanctuary. And if any one will obstinately injure them, encouraged by the gentleness of their appearance, and the seeming

\[^a\]proceedeth of their mouth, 

\[^b\]power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth.

\[^c\]clothed in sackcloth \] This was the habit of mourners, and suited to their prophetic character, Isa. xx. 2. This period is the same with that after described as the time of the woman's travail in the wilderness, chap. xii. 6; Dan. vii. 23. xiii. 7.
And the beast shall overcome and kill them;

Their cries to God shall be heard, and such sudden and irresistible vengeance shall follow, that fire shall seem to come out of their mouth, and devour their enemies at once; it shall not merely scourch and terrify, but utterly destroy them: and I pronounce it again, If any one will injure them, so must he be put to death.

These, despised as they are, have power with God, like my servant Elijah of old, (1 Kings xvii, 1,) by their prayers to shut heaven, so that no rain shall be showered down in the days of their prophecy, and like Moses and Aaron, (Exod. vii. 20,) they have power over the waters, to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth as often as they will, with every plague; such is the prevalence of their prayers with God that they may be said, as it were, to be armed with his omnipotence. And when they shall have finished their testimony, according to the plan of Divine Providence, the fierce and savage beast which ascends out of the abyss, and is afterwards to be described, shall make war against them, and shall conquer, and triumph over them for a while, and carry his success so far as to kill them. And their dead carcases shall lie unburied in the open street of the great city, which is spiritually called, on account of its lewdness and persecutions, SODOM and EGYPT, where also our Lord was crucified; that

I think it highly probable, that expression may be taken and understood to express the awful vengeance which God will take on his enemies in that day, as he is represented in Genesis, and when the injury received by any of his servants, and especially his faithful witnesses, shall be remembered, and their wrongs fully avenged.

Shut heaven, &c.] Lord Chief Justice Hale seems to think it is intimated here, that the spirit of Moses and Elias shall be in them, Ezra being called man from heaven, and hindered the rain; and Moses having turned water into blood. (See Hale's Gen. comp. Vol. II. page 175)—it indeed seems to intimate, that God would interpose for their defence, as he pleased the cause of his people and witnesses of old, in the awful manner here described.

More understands by this, and thinks this passage must be explained by what follows, comp. v. 1. I am rather of opinion, it alludes to what had been said before, comp. xix. 11, where a hast of the beast is mentioned as a man, a destructive creature, called also the angel of the abyss; and it is certain, the word Seph. is used with this latitude. Compare Acts xxiii. 4, 5.

The great city.] Mr. Fleming understands this of the German, that is, the Roman empire; of which Babylon was a part. Indeed it is probable the whole Roman empire may be here represented, as one idolatrous and impious city; as elsewhere, the church of Christ is represented, by one pure, holy, and glorious city. It may intimate the extreme persecution many of God's witnesses should suffer; and that their enemies should triumph over them so much, that his cause should seem to be quite ruined.

Sodom and Egypt.] The lewdness of Sodom
Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth:

11 And after three days and a half, the Spirit of life from God entered into them; and they stood upon their feet, that is, in the place, where he has suffered so much in his spiritual members, that he may be said to have been crucified over again. And persons of various people, and tribes, and tongues, and nations, shall look on their dead bodies three days and an half, and maliciously insult over them; and they shall not permit their corpses to be laid in their graves which should be prepared for them. And they who dwell upon the earth, shall rejoice over them, and be glad, and with mutual congratulation, shall send gifts to each other, to testify their great exultation, because these two prophets, who tormented those who dwell upon the earth, by their plain and faithful remonstrances, shall be entirely silenced; and as they suppose, for ever removed out of any capacity of molesting them. All these things I distinctly saw, just as the angel had represented them to me in his description; and while I was looking, with the greatest concern, upon the venerable remains of these two excellent persons, denied the common rites of burial, and exposed to all the insults of their enemies, I saw, that after three days and an half, the Spirit of life communicated from God, who quickeneth all things, entered into them, and they stood upon their feet again, to renew

Solomon, and the cruelty of Egypt are so celebrated in scripture, as to make them proper emblems of these evils in general. And the abominable wickedness of the church of Rome, in both these respects. (I suppose not to be equalled in any other society of men, calling themselves a church,) is most justly, as well as severely, expressed by these appalluations. When one sees their places of worship everywhere adorned with images of a crucified Saviour, one would think, (as our Lord says with respect to the furniture which the persecuting Pharisees bestowed upon the sepulchres of the ancient prophets, that they meant to perpetuate the memory of the dead with honour,) that these persecutors intended to crucify Jesus in effigy: a sentiment, perhaps, not disagreeable to the original design.

Three days and an half.] Very different interpretations have been given of this period of time. Mr. Fleming thinks it to be the purpose to observe, that from the death of Andrew Pallicka, the last Bohemian martyr, to the appearance of Carolstadius and Zunglis, at the beginning of the reformation was just three years and an half. See Temple of the Resur. p. 144. The above-mentioned Bishop Lloyd imagined it was fulfilled in the slaughter of the Albigenses and Waldenses, in the year 1686; and they arose in 1690. He supposes Archbishop Usher's celebrated prophecy a mistake of this place; he thought the treading down the court was the affliction of external professors; (whereas it was, indeed, the general prevalence of idolatry in the church,) and that the witnesses were slain by the king of France, not by the pope; and that the earthquake, (ver. 12,) signified the destruction of the kingdom of France. Some think here is an allusion to the time of our Saviour's lying in the grave; and that it intimates, that the time of the witnesses suffering, will be in proportion to the time of their prophecy, which is described as a time of persecution; and so it comports with three times and an half, 1260 days, or 42 months. It may, in general, signify a certain limited time; and, perhaps, three days and an half, may be mentioned, in reference to the state of a dead body, which will seldom keep longer without corruption. See Mr. Lowman in loc. k Ascended
The trumpet sounds. The second coming. And thou shalt see the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ."
shall reign for ever and ever.

10 And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were wroth, and were transport-ed with rage and pride, that their vain schemes were thus powerfully opposed: and having suffered them, for a season, to exert their impotent efforts, thy wrath came in its awful turn; thou didst display the terrors of thy superior vengeance; and the time of the dead came, when they should be judged, and the blood of thy people avenged, and when a reward should be given to thy faithful servants, the inspired prophets, and to the saints, and on the whole, to them that fear thy name, both small and great: for such is thy goodness, that thou wilt not forget any one of them; and the period is at length come, when thou shouldst interpose in an awful and irresistible manner, to destroy those that destroy and corrupt the earth by their many vices; and particularly, by their cruel ravages; in persecuting those, who were, with the greatest integrity of heart, solicitous to have reformed it.

Improvement.

Long hath the court of God’s temple been trodden under foot by Ver. the Gentiles, and a party of very corrupt and degenerate Chris-tians; (if they at all deserve the name, though they proudly arrogate to themselves the title of the Catholic church,) been intro-ducing and countenancing all the fopperies and absurdities of pagan superstition, as well as more than the horrors of pagan cruelty, so in fact, the case. Compare chap. vi. ver. 17, note n.

17 A reward shall be given to thy servants.] The reward to be given to all that fear God, both small and great, seems to be the final reward at the judgment-day. This therefore represents that judgment day as now nearly approaching.
so as indeed to have disgraced not the gospel alone, but human
nature itself. A wise and gracious Providence hath raised up
Ver. witnesses for the truth in all ages; and it is a signal honour to
bear a faithful and courageous testimony against these enormous
corruptions, though it were unto bonds and imprisonment, and
even at the expence of life. Those noble and heroic confessors
God hath remarkably supported; and even when they had been
in a state of mourning and oppression, they have borne their testi-
mony and prophesied; their prayers have been remembered before
God, and many have been smitten, who injured and oppressed
them. But, notwithstanding this, the beast hath continued his war
upon the saints, and their oppressions have increased, until in
many places, they have been cast down, and trodden in the dust,
and their blood hath been poured out like water on the earth. Thus
hath that great city, the metropolis of the world, once faithful and
celebrated, become even as Sodom and Egypt, or even as Jeru-
salem, where Christ himself, our Divine Master, was crucified.
Thus have the enemies of the truth triumphed over the servants
of the Lord, and have erected trophies of their victory. But,
thanks be to God, their triumph shall not be perpetual; Christ
our Redeemer will revise the expiring cause, in a manner as
glorious and wonderful as a resurrection from the dead; he will
glorify the remnant of his people; he will cause the earth to
tremble, and shake down the towers of the enemy; and when the
first and second see is past, will bring upon them a third and more
terrible see. In the fault of this triumphant event let us rejoice; and
though in our day we see not this glorious scene, let us consider it
as approaching, when the seventh angel shall sound, and when all
the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of the Lord,
and of his Christ. Let our prayers do all that the most earnest
prayers can do, towards promoting this great event. O Lord God
Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come, we beseech thee to take
to thyself thy great power and reign; for the proudest of the en-
emies who oppose thy kingdom, reign, and even live, only by thy
permission. Overbear, by thy superior valour, the rage of the
angry nations; and give patience to thy afflicted servants, that if
they should wait even till the dead be judged, they may never re-
sign the hope of the reward which thou wilt at length confer upon
them: not only on the prophets, and most eminent and distinguis-
ed of the saints, but on all them that fear thy glorions and tre-
mendous name; on the small, as well as on the great: when the
destroyers of the church, and of the earth, shall be destroyed to-
gether. Amen.
A woman in heaven clothed with the sun, &c.

SECT. XV.

On a view of the temple of God, as opened in consequence of the seventh trumpet, a vision appears, representing the multiplication of the church, and the attempt to be made by the devil upon it, under the emblem of a woman bringing forth a son, attacked and persecuted by a great dragon. Rev. XI. 19, XII. throughout.

Rev. XI. 19.

AND the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament; and there were lightnings, and voices, and thun- ders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Revelation XI. 19.

AND when these acts of adoration passed, upon the sounding of the seventh angel, the temple of God was opened in heaven; and the veil, which seemed to separate the most holy place, being drawn aside, the ark of his covenant appeared in his temple; to signify further manifestations of the Divine presence, which were now to be made. And as, when the law was given from mount Sinai, the whole atmosphere seemed in a violent commotion, which was communicated to the most solid parts of nature, so there were now lightnings, and loud and awful voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and a great storm of hail, which had been described as a circumstance attending the Divine appearance, under former dispensations. (Compare Psal. cxiv. 4. & sim.) And thus ushered in, there appeared a great sign in heaven, a woman of a beautiful and majestic form, clothed, as it were, with the radiance of the meridian sun, streaming forth on all sides; which I understood as an emblem of the church of Christ, most gloriously arrayed through the comeliness and lus- tre which he puts upon her: and the moon was under her feet, to signify the conquest which the church should gain over all sublunary enjoy- ments and terrors: and upon her head there was a crown of twelve stars, to represent the twelve apostles, who had been so illustrious an ornament to that honoured society. And, to sig- nify the increase of the Christian church, this woman, by which she was represented, being apparently pregnant, cried out in travail, and seemed as in violent pangs to be delivered. And while she was in these circumstances of extre- mity, there appeared another sign in heaven: and behold! for it was a very memorable phe- nomenon,

CHAP. XII. 1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

2 And she being with child, cried, trav- ailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold, a great
nomenon, there was a great red fiery dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns; and upon his heads seven crowns, on each of them one; which represented Satan, the great enemy of the church, as animating a people, who were to answer, in a remarkable manner, to these mysterious and symbolical characters. And he appeared as having a long tail; and with it he took an horrible sweep over the compass of a considerable part of the heaven, on which he seemed to stand; and as it then appeared as decked with stars, whereby Christian ministers were especially represented, his tail drew down a third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth; which signifies, that many, whose business it was to enlighten and preserve others, should themselves be corrupted, by the attempts of this great and subtle deceiver, whose artifice and rage were so aptly represented, by the seducing nature of this vast and voracious dragon.

4 And the dragon stood directly before the woman who was about to bring forth, that when she was delivered, he might immediately devour her child, for whose appearance he seemed eagerly to wait.

5 And to signify the certain success of the church and the care God would take to preserve it, she whom I saw in the vision as the representative of it, brought forth a masculine son, a male-child, who appeared of a vigorous constitution, and likely soon to advance to manhood; who, as I then learned, was destined by God to a most glorious triumph over all opposition; so as to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, which they

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3 Dragon having seven heads, and ten horns] I suppose most of my readers will know, that a dragon is a vast serpent of enormous bulk; there is one of them about 85 feet long, preserved in the repository of the royal society. And Job, the celebrated African, assured me, that one of them, carried away a live cow in its mouth, before his face. Nothing could be a more proper emblem of the persecuting power, that by the instigation of Satan, attacked Christians; or rather, of Satan, as instigating these persecuting powers, and those especially of Rome, under its different states, as heathen and Christian; for the directing agent was still the same. I apprehend therefore, that the church is here represented, first, as pregnant, to signify its state while the empire was heathen; the more vigorous state it afterwards arrived to, when such large successions were made to the number of Christians, is described by the birth of the child; and its state, when an almost universal corruption was introduced, by its abode in the wilderness. The dragon, in the mean time, in all these various successions, labours it possible, to destroy it; at least to prevent the propagation of its interests.

b Masculine son] As it was impossible, that one alone, should be any other than a son, a male, I conclude, that the conjunction of these two words was intended to express the vigorous constitution of the child, and what we properly call a masculine form, which may, or may not, be joined with the male sex. Such was Jesus, who from hence had the name of a child fully made. Gen. xxv. 25.
her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there, a thousand two hundred and three-score days.

7 And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought, and his angels.

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They should be unable successfully to resist. And as the strength of this dragon seemed vastly superior to that of the woman, or the newborn infant, her child was, on a sudden, caught up to God, even to his throne, there to be guarded as the charge and favourite of heaven, in full security from all the rage of his furious and destructive enemies. (Compare 2 Kings xi. 23.) And the woman, his mother fled into the wilderness, by which circumstance was represented to me, the obscure condition in which true Christianity should long remain, while antichristian principles and practices everywhere prevailed. There she dwelt, where she had a place prepared for her by the ever watchful Providence of God, that she might there be nourished, one thousand two hundred [and] sixty days, for God took care that she should be nourished, though in a wilderness, raising up friends and supporters for her, during that desolate and melancholy time. And there was the appearance of a very formidable war in heaven, and several mighty battles seemed to be fought before my sight; Michael, the great leader of God's host, and therein an emblem of the great Emmanuel, and his angels, were marshalled on the one side; and they made war against the dragon: and on the other side, the dragon made war with him; and his angels likewise, consisting of many legions of infernal spirits, in confederacy with the great head of the apostacy, made war under

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Into the wilderness.] I think I never met with a wilder interpretation than that which Grotius gives of this place; referring it to the banishment of Christianity out of Rome, into little neighbouring towns and villages, (which in comparison of that capital city might seem a wilderness) during the time of the seduction of Simon Magnus; an event neither certain in itself, nor ever so certain, by any means answering to the description here given, and the great and important idea suggested, and so much insisted upon in this prophecy. It is on the same precarious principles that he explains the triumph of heaven on casting out the dragon, of Simon's being vanquished in his contest with St. Peter at Rome.

One thousand two hundred and sixty days.] These days are years of Papal usurpation. Mr. Fleming, (who hath the honour herein to be followed by Sir Isaac Newton, and Mr. Lowman, though not as I remember named by the former, whom the latter professes to follow, supposes them to begin in the year 736, when Pepin of France made a grant to the Pope, of the temporal dominion of Rome, on the destruction of the Exarchate of Ravenna, to which that imperial city for a while belonged. Upon this the Pope began the eighth head of Rome; and the period of his remaining so will end, about the year 2016: or if (which seems most reasonable,) prophetic years be used in the computation, consisting of 360 days, about 2000; which he supposes will be the beginning of the millennium. Flem. of Res. p. 120.
under him. Nevertheless they did not prevail against the armies of God, neither was place found for them any more in heaven; but being unable to stand their ground, they seemed to be expelled, and fall down to the earth. And thus the great, furious, and voracious dragon was cast out: [even] the old serpent, so long experienced in the arts of mischief: who, from his falsehood, is called the devil, or the false accuser; and from his malice, Satan, or the general adversary: he, who deceives the whole world by his whole temptations, was cast out of heaven, and sunk down to the earth, and his confederate angels were cast out with him, following him in his ruin, as they had done in his guilt. And I heard a great voice saying in heaven, Now is come the long-expected salvation; and the power, and the kingdom of our God is now exerted and established; and the authority of his Christ shall now prevail against all opposition; because the malignant and pernicious accuser of our brethren is now cast out, who carried his malice to such a height, that he accused them before our God day and night: unrestrained by a sense of the Divine presence, he was ready, as in the instance of Job, [Job i. 9; ii. 5], continually to charge them with the greatest evils before him, who was indeed the Witness of their integrity. And now they have overcome him, formidable as he appeared, with all his confederate angels; and it is by the blood of the Lamb they have gained this glorious victory: its sacred efficacy has procured them Divine strength and grace; and the remembrance of it has wrought powerfully on their souls. And their victory has been, under this, in a great measure, occasioned by the word of their testimony; by that word of the gospel to which they had borne their testimony with so much fidelity, and at so great an expense; for they loved not their lives, unto the death, they exposed and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice, saying in heaven, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.
12 Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea; for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast into the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and a half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which exposed themselves to the greatest dangers, and many of them actually met their death in this glorious conflict; but they fell to rise, and triumph and reign. And therefore, rejoice, ye heavens and ye who inhabit them, and, as it were, pitch your tents there; let all the celestial armies proclaim the victory with joy. But woe to those that inhabit the terraqueous globe, consisting of the earth and the sea; for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time; and therefore, is maliciously bent to make the most he can of it, exerting one powerful effort more to establish and confirm his cause. And when the dragon saw that he was cast out on the earth, I perceived him to be greatly enraged; and saw that mindful of the original of the late war, he persecuted the woman who had brought forth a male-child. And, to signify the extraordinary provision that should be made for her deliverance, there were immediately given to the woman two wings, like those of a great and strong eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness; unto her place, which, as I observed before, was appointed for her; where as I said she is nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days; that is, for a time, or one year, and times, or two years, and half a time or year that is, for three years and a half, which is the same period. And thus she was hid from the face of the serpent, and preserved from his destructive efforts. And the serpent threw out of his mouth a flood of water, like a river, after the woman, as she was winging her flight from him, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. And the earth assisted the woman; and the earth opened its mouth, and drank up the flood which the dragon threw out of his mouth, so that it sunk as fast as it fell, and could not swell into such a formidable current

§ Fly into the wilderness.] This is the same event that was represented, ver. 6.

A flood of water, like a river.] Perhaps this is one of the artifices which these enormous creatures make use of to beat down their prey, when flying from them; though I cannot, at present, remember a passage that illustrates it.

The earth assisted the woman, &c.] This may intimate, that notwithstanding all the violent and cruel attempts of Satan, and of those persecuting powers whom he instigates, God will raise up some persons, (and perhaps, as Mr. Lowman observes, it may mean, some persons of power and authority in the world, to protect his witnesses, and secure many of those who faithfully retain the testimony of Jesus; and to prevent pure religion from being entirely overborne and lost. And this has been, in fact, the case in many nations; and particularly in this.
rent as he seemed to have intended it should. And the dragon was enraged against the woman, to see all his efforts against her defeated by a superior power; and he went away to excite new troubles, and to make war against the woman, and against the remainder of her seed, even as many as might by any means be brought within his reach; nor did he spare any of those who keep the commandments of God inviolable, and have the courage to retain, at the greatest expense or hazard, the testimony of Jesus Christ in his pure uncorrupted gospel.

IMPROVEMENT.

Whatever concealed and unknown wonders may be intimated in some parts of this grand and awful vision, in others it contains very obvious and important instructions.—While we are beholding this emblematical representation of the Christian church, let us adore the great original Sun of Righteousness, who 1, 2 has decked her with his glorious beams, and will at length cause every faithful member of this blessed society, to shine forth as the Sun in his Father's kingdom. And let us be desirous of treading this changeable and uncertain world under our feet. Let us thankfully own the hand which he crowned the church with the apostles, as with a diadem, and taught by their precepts, and inspired by their example, let us prepare ourselves for that sacred war, to which we are called, the war against the devil, and his confederate hosts. It is indeed, under a very formidable type, that he is here represented.—His cruelty, his subtility, his experience in all the arts of destruction, are painted out with dreadful propriety, in the old serpent, the great dragon; but formidable as his violence, or artful and potent as the confederacy of infernal spirits may be, here is a victory gained over him, which calls for the congratulation of all the armies of the Lord: the dragon and his angels, are cast out; the saints are enabled to triumph over him, feeble and impotent as they are. But in what way are they able to overcome him? It is by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. Instructive and edifying admonition! Let this be our confidence, even the banner of the cross, the blood of the Saviour, who died upon it; and, in this signal, we shall come off conquerors too: faith in him shall be our shield; the word of God shall be our sword, the sword of the spirit; and Satan, thus resisted shall flee before us, (James iv. 7.) In vain are the floods of temptation, which he may attempt to throw
A beast rises from the sea, with seven heads and ten horns: throw out of his mouth, to debauch our principles, or practices; they shall be entirely swallowed up. And though the church be for a while in the wilderness, it shall be happily sheltered, and tenderly nourished; there its members shall be in safety, as—if they were taken up to God: even unto his throne, till the time which he has appointed for its triumph. In the mean while, however the sons of malice, under the instruction and influence of the great accuser of the brethren, may defame them however persecution may attack and harass them; let them be courageous and undaunted, not loving their lives even to the death! in the cause of Christ; for, though they fall, they shall rise again to certain victory and glory; nor shall death bring down their heads so low, as to render them unworthy of wearing a crown of eternal life.

SECT. XVI.

The vision of the two beasts, and the outrages committed by them throughout.

Rev. XIII. I.

A ND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his

a Savage beast.] This I understand of the papal power, as exercised by the bishop of Rome, supported by his regular clergy and by those secular princes, who have given up their name and power to him. And when the dragon is said to give him his power and throne, &c. ver. 2. it intimates, that he should have his seat or residence there, where the dragon had reigned even at Rome; which had been the seat of idolatry and persecution during its pagan state.

b Names of blasphemy.] They must have very little acquaintance with the arrogant titles, which have been assumed or admitted by the pope, who discern not in them a very remarkable illustration of this circumstance of the prophecy.—Instead of νοματος, the common reading, I think νοματας, names, in the plural, which is supported by the authority of the Alexandrian and other manuscripts, to be preferable.

Revelation XIII. 1.

A ND I stood upon the sand of the sea, as I apprehended in the vision, and saw a fierce and savage beast ascending out of the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns; to intimate the city of Rome standing upon seven hills, and the ten kingdoms into which its dominions were to be divided: and upon his horns [were] ten diadems; to signify the royal power that was to be found in each; and on his heads [there were] names of blasphemy; such names as it was most profane and blasphemous to assume. And the beast which I saw, was, as to the form of the greater part of its body, like a leopard, and its feet [were] like those of a bear, to signify its exceeding great fierceness; and its mouth...
mouth was like the mouth of a roaring and furious lion: and the dragon, who still appeared on the visionary scene, that is, the devil, gave him, by solemn delegation, his power, and his throne, and great authority in his kingdom; so that this beast seemed to be constituted his viceroy; however he might pretend to represent a very different person.

3. And I saw one of his heads wounded, as it were, to death; that is, in such a manner, that a recovery seemed impossible; to signify those early efforts, which should be made, to put a stop to the usurpation, cruelties, and blasphemy represented by those heads, and the names written on them. And yet his mortal wound, as one would have thought it must have proved, was unaccountably healed. And then all earth wondered at so strange an event, [and] they [followed] after the wild beast, thinking a greater argument of its extraordinary power arose from its cure, than could have taken place, had he never been wounded at all. And they, that is the inhabitants of the earth, worshipped the dragon, who gave his authority to the wild beast: and they worshipped the wild beast, even as with God-like adoration, saying, If he, that pretends to Deity in heaven, or earth, [is] like unto the beast, or who can ever presume to make war against him, since his power is so well established, without hazard of immediate or certain destruction? And there was given to it, that is, to this monster, a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies, as with a human voice; to signify that it was influenced by that being, who assuming the form and organs of a brute, had used the power of speech for the most mischievous purposes. And there was also given unto it power to make war with the saints, with some apparent advantage, for the term above-mentioned, of forty-two months; that is, one

his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

4. And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast.

4. And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

Never been wounded at all. It is certain that such an event, to recover the liberty and purity of the church, have sometimes been reported in visions of further ages, and may have been intimated to them from making any further attempts. Yet they have not entertained doubts of their success, as they at least deliver the case of those who have exerted their utmost ability in making them; and may afterwards be productive of bitter fruits and consequences. Of those to whom the word was given, and have resolved never to return, a term which it must be noted, it sometimes bears a particular, Acts xxv. 8; xx. 2, but I have chosen to rely on these copies, which retain the word estas. See ver. 7.
6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into peril verethelse, God will not forget the injuries his people
people sustain; but, if any one lead [them] into captivity, he shall be led into captivity himself by a superior power, which he shall not be able to resist; and, if any one slay others with the sword of injustice and cruelty, he shall himself be slain with the sword of Divine vengeance, when God comes to make inquisition for blood. In the mean time, while they are waiting for his appearance, here is a sufficient exercise for the patience and the faith of the saints: it is the greatest trial to which they were ever brought; let them therefore consider themselves as called out by God to it, and be assured that he will hunt it both as to its duration and degree, in a manner answerable to the purposes of his infinite wisdom, and of his peculiar love to them.

And, to represent a very crafty and insidious power, which should join with the former, and greatly abet its sanguinary persecutions, I saw another beast ascending out of the earth, and it had two horns like a lamb; but, whatever gentleness there might be in that circumstance of its appearance, it spake like a dragon. And such is the nature of their alliance, that it exercises all the power of the first beast, in its presence, and it makes the earth, and those that dwell in it, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed, whose interest, which seemed so much endangered, was greatly revived, being thus powerfully abetted and supported, in order to confirm his subtle pretences, to lord it over the consciences of men, does great miracles, so as even to make fire come down from heaven to earth before men; strange artifices he has, to persuade them of his being endowed with more than natural powers, and that the vengeance of heaven will be armed against all that oppose him! And he deceiveth the inhabitants of the earth by the signs which he doth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those great miracles. The artful impostures, which the regular clergy, that is, the several orders of monks, and especially the Jesuits, have used to persuade the people of the truth of their pretended miracles and revelations, seem to be finely delineated by this otherwise amazing description.
And causeth all to receive his mark.

which it is given him to do before the beast; commanding the inhabitants of the earth to make an image of the beast, that had the wound of the sword, and yet lived; that is, he teaches men XIII. 14, to extol, and almost adore, that which in itself is most contemptible and detestable. And it was given to him, by a Divine permission, to give spirit and breath, as it were, to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might speak with an audible voice. And, so zealous and powerful is he in abetting this cause, that by this its oracle, he should cause as many as will not worship the image of the beast, to be put to death. And he causeth all, of every rank and condition, both small and great, rich and poor, freemen and slaves, to receive the mark of this detestable power, on their right-hand, or their forehead, in token of becoming its subjects and property. And, so rigorously is this enforced, that no one should be able to buy, or sell, but one who has some such trace of the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number, which is equivalent to the numeral letters of his name, and which I thought, in the vision, I saw impressed on the hands and foreheads of many. Herein is a great effort of wisdom; let him, therefore, whoever he be, who hath an enlarged and penetrating understanding, beyond what is common, compute the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man, or the numeral letters of the beast is, distinct from the beast itself, I confess I know not; and therefore interpret the expressions, making an image, and giving it breath, &c. of idolizing the power of the Pope, and compelling persons to pay homage to it, and obey the effects it published. And all the enormous fury of the inquisition, which is managed by one of the regular orders included in this interpretation, namely, the Dominican, is a remarkable verification of the following part of the prophecy, of its causing all that would not worship it to be put to death.

The number of a man, &c.] Of all the various interpretations given to this text, which it would be endless to enumerate, and much more to canvass, I find none that pleases me so well, as that of Sir Isaac Newton; that the words signified the number, or Datum, the man of Latium, or of Rome, whose numeral letters, taken together, make 666, are here referred to. And I suppose this number is mentioned to signify, that the appearance of that power, whose efforts were to continue 1260 years, (compare chap. xii. 6, note H,) was to happen about 666 years after the date of the revelations, A. D. 96. And this I take to be the grand key by which the are of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast: saying to them that dwelt on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right-hand, or in their foreheads. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of 2 Receive the mark.] I have elsewhere observed, (Serm. to Young People, Serm. ix.) that it was customary to mark soldiers and slaves with some impressions, either on their hands or foreheads, by which they might be known to belong to their respective masters or commanders; and idolaters, with the signature of the god they worshiped. Perhaps this may particularly refer to the sacraments which the people are obliged, on the highest penalty, to receive from the Romish priests, and which none can receive without such superstitious and idolatrous rites, as are in effect, worshipping the image of the beast.
ters in the name of a man, and his number is and amounts on the whole, to six hundred and sixty-six, which I leave to the intelligent reader to decipher.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Whoever is the beast intended, and whatever be meant by his image, his character, beyond all controversy, is very odious 6, 7 and detestable; for he is represented as blaspheming the name of God, and his tabernacle, and as making war with the saints. There have arisen such impious monsters in the Christian church, and none among them have been more openly and enormously wicked and proflate, than those who have made the foulest pretensions to be the successors of Christ, and invested with his whole authority. Many of the saints of God have seemed to have been overcome by this antichristian tyranny; many have been led into captivity; many have been slain with the sword: but those who took them captive, continuing impenitent, shall be taken, and the slayers slain. O, may our names be written in the Lamb's book of life! then shall we be secure in the midst of all these formidable evils; and from every trial of our faith and patience, shall come out as gold seven times purified.—Let us not be troubled and offended, to discern these usurpations in the course of Divine Providence, prevailing, and the time actually come, in many parts 17 of the world, in which men can neither buy nor sell, nor are permitted to enjoy any other natural or civil privileges, if they will not give up their names to the beast, receive his mark, and implicitly submit to his authority. The prophecy justly removes all offence which might be taken at the event; and discerning its accomplishment, we may embolden our hopes, that the triumphs 11 of Divine justice over these enthusiasts of the dragon, as they are also foretold, will be fulfill'd with the like punctuality. And O, may the church of God be cleer'd from their artifices, and fortified against their terrors: and in his own due time, may he break 13, 14 the jaws of the snared! May he utterly disarm all the power and policy of those who take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed, and though their confidentance may seem to mock all of the 9th of Revelation, in the 5th, or threateningly, as with the destruction of the enemies of Babylon, the Papal name is again given marks; that is, in prophetic language, a mark. See in my other commentary in 1st Peter 3d. 7. ver 12. Mr. Potter thinks the numbers referred to our calendar 567, from 1, 256. This has led Dr. More to fix upon c a letter 16, relating to the church of Christ, and 7th 25, relating to antichrist; and concludes further, that the 6th chapter is not mentioned, to prevent too sudden a discovery. Compare Ver. I said p. 184. Origen referring it to Trog, an is very ungrounded in every view.
all human opposition, yet at his appearance, they shall melt away as snow before the sun, when the time to remember Sion, yea, the set time is come. (Psal. cii. 13.)

Sect. xvii.

The vision of the Lamb standing upon mount Sion, surrounded with those whom he had redeemed; and of several mighty angels, proclaiming his vengeance upon the beast, and upon those that worship him. Rev. XIV. 1, throughout.

Revelation XIV. 1.

AND, while these terrible objects were before me, I looked, and beheld another object, which animated my heart under the alarm and distress they gave me: for behold, the Lamb was standing upon mount Sion, which was represented to me also in my vision, as the place on which the temple, that had been opened in heaven stood; and with him were one hundred forty four thousand, who in opposition to the name of the beast, which was so rigorously imposed, and by many received with so base a submission, had the name of God his Father written on their foreheads, in token of their inviolable submission, and entire dedication to him. And I heard a voice out of heaven, which was loud as the sound of many waters, when tossing themselves in the ocean, and like the sound of great thunder; and, loud and awful as it was, it was accompanied with a most delightful harmony; for I heard the voice of harpers playing upon their harps, aiding their instruments with the melody of their voices. And they sung, as it were, a new song, before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are pure and unspotted souls, free from the idolatries and other abominations which have been so prevalent in the age in which they live; or to speak in the prophetic language, these are they who have not been polluted with women:

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins: these are they
women: for they are chaste virgins: these are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: and having humbly traced his footsteps upon earth, shall be led by him to the possession of various and ever-new delights in the celestial world. These are they, who were redeemed from among men, [as] the first-fruits, consecrated to God, and to the Lamb: most excellent in their kind, and separate from every unclean or profane use, to the immediate honour of God, and of their Redeemer. And no deceit, or evil of any kind, was found in their mouth, for they are entirely blameless before the throne of God, and exalted to that world, where he reigns in perfect purity, as well as Divine glory, nor can any thing unclean be admitted in his presence.

And I saw another glorious angel, flying with strength and rapidity, through the midst of heaven, having in his hand the volume of a book, which he displayed, as with an air of complacency and triumph, even the everlasting gospel, to preach to the inhabitants of the earth, even to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people, dispersed over the world. And as he passed I heard him making proclamation of its important contents, and saying: with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, with becoming reverence and submission, for the hour of his judgment is come, when he shall execute vengeance on his enemies, and worship him who made heaven and earth, and sea, and the limpid fountains of waters, which are derived from it, and flow back into it. And another great angel followed him, crying out, as with the voice of exultation and triumph, saying: It is fallen, it is fallen, [even] Babylon, the great city, a city famous as Babylon of old, when it was at the height of its power and glory. God in his righteous vengeance hath brought it down, because it made all the nations drink of the wine of its ravings

d. They are virgins. This probably signifies their freedom from idolatry, which is, in a spiritual sense, fornication: nor can it, with any reason, be urged against marriage.

b. First-fruits, most excellent in their kind, &c. That the Jews first fruits had this property, will appear from comparing the following texts relating to them;

they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb.

And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

Saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of its rage.
An angel announces the fall of Babylon.

wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, raging fornication, till they were stimulated thereby to the most scandalous and furious excesses. And a third angel followed them both, saying with a loud voice, If any one, how strong soever the temptation may have been, worship the beast, and his image, and receive the mark on his forehead, or on his hand; if he subject himself to this wicked and idolatrous form of religion, and obstinately persist in it, notwithstanding the light which God is giving to discover its errors and superstition; He also shall himself drink of the wine of the indignation of God, which is tempered with various ingredients of wrath, without any mixture of mercy, in the cup of his wrath; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the day of God's future vengeance, in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb: whose religion has so shamefully been perverted and dishonoured, even by those who pretend entirely to have engrossed it: And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name.

10 The same shall drink the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: whose religion has so shamefully been perverted and dishonoured, even by those who pretend entirely to have engrossed it: And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name.

11 And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name.

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are the triumphs of those who keep the commandments.

\[d\] On his hand.] Compare sect. xvi. note m.
\[e\] Presence of the holy angels.] From hence Mr. Reynolds conjectures, that possibly the torments of the damned may, at certain seasons, through eternal ages, become a spectacle to the inhabitants of the blessed world above. See his Sermon concerning angels, p. 305.
\[f\] Presence of the Lamb.] This signifies (as Dr. Clarke well observes,) that it shall not only be appointed by the infinite Majesty of God, the righteous Judge of all, but approved moreover by men and angels, and by him also, who loved us unto death, even Christ, that merciful and compassionate High Priest. Clarke's Posthumous Sermons. Vol. I. p. 341.
\[g\] The smoke of their torment—who worship the beast, &c.] When I seriously reflect on this text, and how directly the force of it lies against those, who, contrary to the light of their consciences, continue in the communion of the church of Rome, for secular advantage, or to avoid the terror of persecution, it almost makes me tremble; and I heartily wish, that all others, who concur at those things in the discipline and worship of protestant churches, which they, in their conscience, think to be sinful remaines of popish superstition and corruption, would seriously attend to this passage, which is one of the most dreadful in the whole book of God, and weigh its awful contents, that they may keep at the greatest possible distance from this horrible curse, which is sufficient to make the ears of every one that hears it, to tingle. Compare Jer. xxv. 15, 16.

h Hence
mants of God, and the faith of Jesus, and are
determined to maintain the purity of the gospel
amidst these formidable efforts to corrupt it.
And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me,
Write this for the instruction of mankind, in the
most distant ages: henceforth blessed [are] the
dead, that die in the Lord: so numerous, and so
various are the calamities which the persecuting
powers shall bring upon the saints, that there is
abundant reason to congratulate those who are
taken out of this vexations, oppressive, and affec-
tive world, whether by a natural, or by a violent
death: yes, saith the Spirit, by whose inspiration
and command I recorded it, they are as-
suredly blessed; for they are removed, that they
may for ever rest, from their labours, and their
sorrows; and their works of piety and goodness,
though so ill requited here, shall not be forgot-
ten, but shall follow them into the presence of
God, shall be acknowledged there in the most
comdescending manner, and through the riches
of Divine mercy, recompensed with eternal glo-
ry. Accordingly, let this remembrance of
their faith and patience, in connection with this
transcendent reward, encourage and animate
their surviving brethren to imitate their exam-

14 And I saw, and behold, another remarkable
appearance offered itself to my view; a white
cloud, shining with wonderful lustre and beauty;
and on the cloud one sitting, who seemed by
the majesty of his form, to be like the Son of
man as represented in Daniel; having on his
head a golden crown, and in his hand, instead of
a sceptre, a sharp sickle: so that he seemed to
be going forth, as to some wonderful harvest.

15 And as soon as I had viewed him, another an-
gel came out of the temple of God, crying with a
loud voice to him that sat upon the cloud, Put
forth thy sickle, and reap, for the season of thy
reaping

are they that keep the commandments of
God, and the faith of Jesus.

15 And I heard a
voice from heaven,
saying unto me, Write,
Blessed are the dead
which die in the Lord,
from henceforth: Yea,
saith the spirit, that
they may rest from
their labours, and their
works do follow them.

14 And I saw,
and behold, a white
cloud, and upon the
cloud one sitting, who
seemed by the
majesty of his form, to
be like the Son of
man as represented in
Daniel; having on his
head a golden crown,
and in his hand, instead
of a sceptre, a sharp
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15 And as soon as I had viewed him, another an-
gel came out of the temple of God, crying with a
loud voice to him that sat upon the cloud, Put
forth thy sickle, and reap, for the season of thy
reaping

h He-sat ] The learned HINT, understands this to mean, from the time
of their death: as if it had been said, (except) immediately after their dissolution
they are blessed. BISH. Observ. Part 5, xiv. 21. And Mr. Baxter observes, their
works are said to follow with them, not after, not to come many thousand years
after them.

i De in the Lord ] Archbishop Tillotson interprets this chiefly of those who die
in the cause of Christ, who, no
doubt, are included. But I think the
phrase more extensive. There is, per-
haps, no allusion to the words of Solomon,
1 Pet. iv. 2. I praised the dead already
dead, rather than the living, yet more, in
time of extreme desecracy, and bitter
persecution. See his Works, Vol. II. page
116. Bishop Burnet, (ten the Articles, p. 241.) and many other protestant writers,
have justly urged this text, as dema-
gerative against the papish doctrine of
purgatory.
in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

20 And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horses bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

thou mighty Messenger of God, which the wickedness of the world hath righteously deserved. And, accordingly, he that sate upon the cloud, put forth his sickle on the earth, with strength and rapidity; and the harvest of the earth was presently reaped; signifying, that the execution of the threatened vengeance should be very speedy. But it seemed that the vintage yet remained to be gathered in. And, in reference to this, another angel came out of the temple, that was in heaven: and he also was armed as the other, like the Son of man, and had a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel, just at that instant, came from the altar, having, as it seemed, power over the fire of it; and he called out with a great cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, Put forth thy sharp sickle, and lop off the clusters of the vine, which grows upon, and extends itself almost over the earth, for its grapes are ripe; and the persons represented by it have so abused the Divine long suffering, that it is proper the season of their destruction should commence. And accordingly the angel, with celerity and vigour, thrust out his sickle upon the earth, and lopped off the grapes from the vine of the earth; and he threw [them] into the great wine-press, of the wrath of God, which seemed to stand ready to receive them. And the wine-press, [which stood] out of the city, was trodden with great violence; and the blood of the grape, which I knew betokened the blood of those who were enemies to God and his people, came out of the wine-press in such abundance, that it made a kind of inundation, like a vast river, or sea, and reached up even to the bridles of the horses, which attempted to pass the channel through which it flowed, at the distance of one thousand six hundred furlongs. In such an amazing

One thousand six hundred furlongs.] As a furlong is one eighth of a mile, this would amount to 200 miles. This representation, like the dimensions of that temple, which Ezekiel saw, may seem extravagantly large, and such as the eye, in vision could not possibly judge of. I look upon it, therefore, as only an hyperbolical expression, to signify its exceeding greatness; unless possibly it may point out the dimension of that country over which the judgment should extend, which is here prophetically referred to. Though perhaps it may only intimate in general
amazing extent and quantity was the effusion of
blood represented to me in vision. (Compare
Isa. lxiii. 3.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Ver. In what awful characters is the righteous vengeance of God here
described! How quickly do his hautpest enemies fall before
him, like corn before the sickle, or clusters of grapes before the
knife! His wine-press shall indeed be trodden, and the blood of his
enemies shall overflow: but blessed are all they that put their trust
in him, and look to him, who trod the wine-press alone, and
who distinguishes him-ell by the title of him, who is mighty to
save, and who travels in the greatness of his strength. (Isa. lxiii.
1—3 ) Arrayed in terror, he will vanish all the enemies of his
people; but, to his faithful followers, will appear with the gentleness
of the Lamb, of the Lamb their Redeemer, to whose honour their voices and their harps shall resound. O, how happy
are those souls, who by his special love, being redeemed from
among men, and having humbly traced the steps of his purity and
goodness on earth, shall, in the heavenly world, follow the Lamb
whithersoever he goes! Let us be accordingly engaged to preserve
ourselves unspotted from the world, and to walk worthy of so ex-
alted a hope and expectation; to keep our mouths from every de-
cel, that we may be found blameless in the presence of God, and
6, 7 of the Lamb. God hath granted us the everlasting gospel, on pur-
pose that we might be taught to fear him, and to give glory to his
name; to worship him, as the great Creator and righteous Gover-
nor of the universe: and while we are under the conduct of his
Providence, and devoted to his service, let nothing discourage or
dismay us. Though for the present we see that Babylon is trium-
phant, though its patrons are making themselves drunk with the
blood of his saints, a very different cup is prepared for her, and
will assuredly be given her to drink, even the cup of the wrath of
God, poured forth without mixture; while blessings, inconceivable
and eternal, are reserved for those that suffer for righteousness
sake. Let the patience, therefore, of those who keep the com-
mandments of God, and the faith of Christ, be invincible; for their
fiercest, and most formidable enemies, can only kill the body; and
having done that, can neither prevent, nor delay, the blessedness of
that after the antichristian powers had
being oppressed and persecuted the saints;
the power of Christ should humble and
destroy them; and therefore they are re-
presented as a harvest ripe, and fit for reap-
ing, &c. the measure of their iniquities
being full.

a Sea
of the dead that die in the Lord. The infallible Spirit has said it, the blessed apostle hath, by Divine command, recorded it, for the instruction and triumph of his people in all ages, that they Ver. rest from their labours, and that their works follow them; while those that persecuted and hated them, rest not day nor night; but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. And, O, that numbers of those who worship the beast; and who receive its image, may be awakened, while the day of their visitation continues; lest they also, after having dealt damnation, in their arrogant censures, upon men of much purer faith, and holier lives, than themselves, be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

SECT. XVIII.

The appearance of seven angels, with seven vials, full of the seven last plagues; and the pouring out of the three first vials, with their consequent effects. Rev. XV. 1, to the end. XVI. 7.

Revelation XV. 1.

AND I saw another great and wonderful sign in heaven, which fixed my attention, and will demand that of the reader; Seven angels, who had the seven last plagues; So called, because in them the wrath of God was to be completed; and, because they refer to some of the last judgments which he shall pour forth on the enemies of the church, before the time of its most illustrious triumph. And I saw, as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand

a Sea of Glass.] Some explain this in a different manner, as if there were properly a sea, seeming to lie before the ground which appeared in the vision, through which they had passed who now stood upon the shore of it; and they suppose the glass to represent the frail nature of this world; and the fire, the mixture of calamity and misery to which they had been exposed, before they arrived at the state of security and happiness in which they then were. Many other interpretations have also been given. But the consideration of what I have said elsewhere, of the reference to the scenery of the temple, determined me to the interpretation I have preferred.

b Overcame the beast.] It is, in the original, is τω θήρα, which Dr. Clark would translate, out of the midst of the beast, that is, adorning steadfastly to the true religion, in the midst of an idolatrous and corrupt nation. See his Poet. Sect. Vol. III. p. 36.
stedsfastly refused, though at the expense of their possessions and lives, amidst so many who were devoted to him, to receive his mark, [and] the number of his name, I saw standing by the sea of glass, having the harps of God in their hands, with which they were celebrating his praises, for that powerful presence and assistance which had rendered them victorious. And they sung the song of Moses, the faithful and beloved servant of God, and the song of Jesus, the Lamb, who had bought them with his blood. They celebrated the triumph they had gained over the proud enemy, with a joy, like that with which Israel of old, at the Red Sea, celebrated the destruction of the haughty and cruel Egyptians, by the immediate and glorious interposition of the Divine power, saying, "Great and wonderful [are] thy works, both of judgment and of mercy, O Lord God Almighty; nor dost thou use thine almighty power to oppress any, the meanest of thy creatures; on the contrary, perfectly righteous and true [are] all thy ways and administrations, O King of saints, who art thyself supremely holy, as well as powerful. Who should not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy great and adorable name? because [they] only [art] holy, and in thy presence, the holiness of all other beings disappears, as unworthy to be mentioned or remembered. Surely all nations shall come and worship before thee, in token of the humblest adoration, because thy righteous judgments are already in many instances, made manifest, and are about to be manifested in a yet more illustrious degree."

5 And after this I saw; and behold the temple of the tabernacle, in which was the ark of the testimony, was opened again in heaven: the most holy place, which since the vision I before described, had been veiled again, being now subjected to my view. And the seven angels, who had the seven plagues already mentioned, came stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sung the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5 And after that, I looked and beheld, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven

--- Song of Moses—and of the Lamb. ---

That is, with Mr. Mede, upon the conversion of all nations from idols, they sang a song of congratulation to Moses and Jesus, whose doctrine had so directly opposed it. Mede on Luke xi. 2. But I think this a very loose interpretation. Whoever diligently observes the contents of the song of Moses, Exod. xv, will find many expressions finely adapted to the occasion, here supposed. And if it were true, as Maimonides tells us, that the song of Moses was sung daily in the temple-service, it may be considered as a beautiful illustration of this circumstance, agreeable to the general plan pursued in these visions.
seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, which liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Chap. XVI. 1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

2 And the first went and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

d And agreeable to that wonderful event, &c.) Indeed it appears most surprising, and worthy of greater notice than has generally been taken of it, that the blessed God should thus, on the consecration of the temple, possess it alone and drive out, as it were, even the favourable tokens of his majestic presence.

c First vial] Mr. Lowman supposes, that this third period of the vials, reveals the state of the church and providence in the times of the last head of the Roman government, represented by the beast, for 1260 years, from about A.D. 750, to its final overthrow about A.D. 206; and he interprets each vial of some signal judgment.

3 K
Another angel celebrates God's righteous judgments.

4 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and it became a mass of blood, and pitiful action, like that of a dead man, and every living soul which was in the sea died, the fish were immediately destroyed, and the sea appeared a most gloomy and terrible spectacle. (Compare Exod. vii. 20.)

5 And I heard the angel of the waters, who seemed to be appointed to have the care of them, instead of repining at what was done, adoring the hand of God in it, and saying, Most righteous art thou, O Lord, who art, and who wast, the same immutable and everlasting Jehovah; and (thou art) holy, because thou hast judged these execrable sights of vengeance upon them. Justly dost thou make these persecuting and wicked countries the scene of such detesting judgments; because they have poured forth the blood of thy saints, and even of thy prophets, like water; and it hath flowed in a crimson stream, till their rivers have been dyed with it. And, accordingly, how madest thou read their crime in their punishment, and hast given

judgment upon the papal kingdom? supposing for the first time to be possessed of it and under its influence. But, I must say again, if not entirely satisfied, whether this supposition be just, (though I am entirely prepared to think it so) on account of all the following representations, and not to mention the future, and descend the negligible and pipe to be rejected as the papal kingdom, to its last days. Mr. Pococke speaks the first time of the absolute and complete victory of the papal power. Mr. Lowman, with greater probability, refers to the great revolutions in the west empire, and the family of Charles the Great, by which that family became extinct, and the empire of the crown of France, were transferred to other families, A.D. 80, to A.D. 1199. And I thought it necessary to introduce the papal power, and to derive its own ambitious designs, which pervaded a painful age, and were the causes of numerable misfortunes to Europe, and especially to Italy. During this period, the Saracens invaded and plundered France, the Saracens ravaged Italy, and the Hungarians the western parts of Germany and Italy.

6 And I heard the voice of Johannes, a prophet, saying, for thy fear, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus: For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.
7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

Let us now raise our eyes and our hearts above the low and sordid scenes of mortality, to those happy and exalted spirits who are described as standing before the crystal sea, with golden harps in their hands. Let us attentively hearken to those broken and imperfect echoes of the song of Moses, and of the Lamb, which a gracious God causes to descend, as it were, to this world of ours, and which sometimes sweetly mingle themselves with the clamour of strife, with the din of folly, with the groans of misery. Happy and glorious is their condition now, who are freed from all these evils, and who triumph over all their enemies; whom, as it was said to Israel of the Egyptians, having beheld, they shall see them no more for ever: (Exod. xiv. 13.) They are now acknowledging their great Deliverer, singing everlasting praises to his name, and celebrating the wonders of his works, and the righteousness and truth of all his ways. O Lord God Almighty, O thou King of saints, who would not fear thee, and glorify thy holy name? Let the nations come, and worship in thy presence; let them pay thee their humble reverence and homage before

i Third vial.] Some interpret this of the persecution of the church of Bohemia. (See Mr. Pyle in loc.) But this by no means suits the act of adoration, ver. 3, 6. It seems to refer to calamities to be brought on some parts of the papal kingdom. According to the order of time, Mr. Lowman supposes this to refer to the bloody wars between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, or the papal and imperial factions whereby the popes were driven out of Italy into France; from A. D. 1200, to A. D. 1371. During this period, both these parties had joined in many persecutions, and a violent one raged against the Albigenses; the inquisition was began about A. D. 1216; and the council of Lateran established these severe and cruel methods of supporting the papacy. And God gave them also blood to drink, (ver. 6,) for a violent contest arose between the papal and imperial parties, about the right of presenting to ecclesiastical preferments, so that almost all the cities in Italy were engaged in civil wars, and great multitudes destroyed. In A. D. 1282, all the French in Sicily were massacred. Thus were they, who shed the blood of the saints, punished by civil contentions and bloodshed. And, on the whole, this seems to be the most probable and satisfactory interpretation.

a Fourth
before the vials of thy wrath are poured out: those vials, which terrible as their contents are, the benignant spirits of heaven, prepare themselves, at thy command, to pour forth with pleasure; applauding, in their responsive hymns, thy righteous judgments, even when the sorest and most dreadful plagues convert the worshippers of the beast and his image; even when their seas and their rivers are turned into blood. Whatever be the calamities, whether past or future, to which any of these particulars may refer, surely they are big with terror to those who on any pretence, are pouring forth the blood of thy prophets and thy saints. They are worthy of having blood given them to drink, and accordingly, thou hast a dreadful draught in reserve for them. And, though some of them may have laid down their heavy heads in peace, which we might rather have expected, would have been brought to the grave with blood, the day of thy vengeance will surely come: a vengeance so terrible, that nothing but a zeal for thy violated law, and thine injured gospel, would make the very sight of it, supportable to those whose cause shall then be pleaded, and whose blood shall be visited on their tormentors and murderers.

SECT. XIX.

The pouring forth of the four last vials, and the awful events they produce; with the incorrigible obstinacy of the sinners on whom this vengeance is executed. Rev. XVI. 8, to the end.

Revelation XVI. 8.

AND the three former angels having thus poured forth their vials on the earth, and sea, and the rivers of water, the fourth angel poured forth his vial on the sun; and the power was given of the earth, and occasion pestilential disorders; and historians informs us, that this was the case in the time supposed to be here referred to; particularly by means of the ensuing calumny, which began in England, and spread wide into other countries, particularly Germany, A. D. 1517; and again A. D. 1529. But that they were not, (ver. 4) is evident from the war commenced against the Bohemians; the infamous conduct of the council of Constance, in burning John Huss, and Jerom of Prague, in violation of the public faith, and establishing that scandalous doctrine, that faith is not to be kept with heretics, &c.
The fifth angel on the seat of the beast.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain.

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because

given to it to scorch men with an intolerable heat, so that they seemed, as it were, to live in the very fire itself. And men were scorched with sudden calamities, and with great and unsufferable fierceness of heat; and yet instead of giving glory to the great Author of these awful chastisements, which afforded them so lively an idea of everlasting burnings, as if they had already been inhabitants of the world of despair, they blasphemed the name of God, who had power over these plagues. And the continuance of their torments did not subdue their hearts, but they still persisted, as with a diabolical obstinacy, and repented not, to give glory to him, by a confession of their sins, by seeking his mercy, and returning to his obedience. (Compare Isa. xxiv. 6.)

And as these vials had greatly affected the kingdom of the beast, the next came still nearer to him; for, the fifth angel poured forth his vial upon the throne of the beast itself; and his kingdom was darkened, so that his unhappy subjects, from whom he had so long veiled the light of God's word, and of his favour, had not the benefit of the solar rays, either to guide or cheer them. (Compare Ezek. xxxii. 8.) And yet at the same time, the secret fire kindled in their veins by the former scorching heat continued; and they gnawed their tongues for the extremity of the pain and anguish which they felt; And they still blasphemed the great God, the tremendous Majesty of heaven, as well as earth.

b Fifth vial.] Mr Pyle interprets this of the perplexity occasioned to the See of Rome by removing the seat of it to Avignon, and the schism between the popes. But this prophecy seems to refer to a later period. Mr. Lowman's interpretation is more probable, who refers it to the Protestant reformation, and the confirmation of it by the principal states of Europe, notwithstanding all the attempts of the pope, and in opposition to the papal authority: from A. D. 1560, to A. D. 1650. During this period, several nations renounced subscription to the pope, and have continued free to this day; and, in other nations, his power has been greatly abridged and restrained. This event gave great vexation to the popes, and their adherents; occasioned invasions, assassinations, massacres, and bloody wars; as the civil wars in France, the wars in Germany about the reformation, the war between Spain and the united provinces, the Spanish invasion of England, and the powder plot; the massacre of Paris, &c. Yet all proved unsuccessful to prevent the establishment of the reformed religion. And that they repented not of their deeds (ver. 11,) is evident from the instances of their rage and cruelty already mentioned, and which they take care to repeat whenever they have power; and especially from the edicts of the council of Trent, (from A. D. 1542, to A. D. 1562,) which instead of diminishing or relaxing, increased and confirmed the corruptions of popery, and condemned all doctrines tending to reformation.

c River
earth, for their pains and their unctions, which the searching heat had excited; and they repented not of their wicked works, whereby they weakened his just indignation.

12 And the sixth angel poured forth his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and its water, wide and rapid as the stream had been, was dried up, immediately, that a way might be prepared for the march of the kings from the rising of the sun, who appeared in vision as coming to the borders of it, with all their armies, to pour forth destruction upon the beast and his kingdom.

13 And, as I saw the dragon standing in my presence, with the beast and the false prophet near him, as the great abettors of his kingdom, which was threatened by this invasion, I had an intimation given me of the various efforts they should make for the preservation of it: [and] out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, [there came] evidently three animals, which expressed unclean spirits, being represented by creatures like frogs. For these are the spirits of demons, whose design it is to impose upon mankind by the most artful stratagems, and pretences of working miracles, by which they attempted to support the kingdom they had raised: and indeed, it seemed they did even enchant whole nations; for they were permitted by God, to go forth to the kings of that part of the earth where the seat of the beast was; and, indeed, his territory was so extensive, that it might be said, they went through the whole world; and they operated so powerfully, as to bring them together, to the battle of that great day of God the Almighty, in which he was seen to determine to pour forth his vengeance upon them. And, as this last effort of this infernal agent would be a signal trial of the faith and because of their pains and their sores and repented not of their deeds.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For these are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God the Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth
525 and constancy of the saints, in order the better to fortify them against it, I heard a voice which I understood to be that of our Lord Jesus Christ, saying, Behold I come suddenly and unexpectedly, as a thief, that surprises a sleeping family: blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments. That they may not suddenly be snatched from him, and he may not be forced to walk naked, so that men should see his shame. Let my servants, therefore, guard against these sudden surprises, which during this time of danger and alarm may frequently happen. And the army appearing against the saints, as was observed above, He, that is, God, by the secret conduct of his Providence, disposed things, that he gathered them together into a certain place, which is called in the Hebrew language, Armageddon, or the mountain of Megiddo, because it was to be a place more remarkable for slaughter than Megiddo had ever been.

And when they were there assembled, the seventh angel poured forth his vial into the air; and there came out a great voice out of the temple of heaven, even from the very throne of God himself, saying, "It is now done, the great work is just compleating." And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was also together with them a great earthquake, to add new horror to the scene, such as there had not been from the time that men were upon the earth; even such, and so great an earthquake, quite unequalled in history or observation. And the great city was immediately divided into three parts, and the cities of the Gentiles fell down. And thus it appeared, that Babylon the great came into remembrance before

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e Keepeth his garments.] Dr. Lightfoot thinks here is an allusion to what that Jewish officer called the man of the mountain, that is, of the house of the Lord, used to do, when taking his round in the temple to examine the work; if he met with any asleep, he had a liberty to set fire to his garments. Perhaps, in this case, the person might be obliged to appear in the fragments of his burnt garments the next day, which would be a great disgrace. See his Works, Vol. I. p. 919. According to Ainsworth, on Numb. xviii. 4, 5, they were beaten by the provost, and their garments were taken away and burnt.

f He gathered them.] This seems a memorable circumstance; they were the dragon's army, yet God assembled them. Such oblique intimations of the interposition of Providence, are wonderfully instinctive, and they are scattered up and down in many places of the sacred writings.—That Megiddo had been a place remarkable for slaughter, See Judges v. 19; 2 Kings ix. 27; 2 Chron. xxxv. 22. Compare Zechar. xii. 11. To express the certain destruction that should come upon these antichristian powers, they are described to be brought together to this mountain.

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g Seventh
fore God, to give her the long threatened cup of
the wine of the fiercest wrath, in which all the
most dreadful ingredients of vengeance were,
as it were, mingled together, like poignant
poison in the strongest wine, to give it the
greater power and efficacy. And the whole
face of nature was thrown into such a consterna-
tion by means of this grand event, that every
island fled away, and the mountains were found
no more. And a great and violent storm of hail,
the stones of which were as of the weight of a
talent, descended from heaven upon men, so as to
dash in pieces the stoutest heroes, how well so-
ever they might be armed and defended. And
men, instead of being reformed by it, blas-
phemed God so much the more, for the plague
of the hail; for the plague of it was very great,
and brought along with it a very extensive ruin
and desolation.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 8 Whatever particular events these vials might be respec-
tively intended to represent they all agree in giving us most
awful views of the Divine power and agency over the whole
universe. He is able to search and blast the earth with insuffer-
able heat, to veil it in midnight darkness, to dry up its rivers,
or even shake its foundations, so as to throw them, in a moment,
the strongest and the proudest cities. From the air he can cause
even rivers of ice to descend, sufficient, not only to destroy our
frail and tender bodies, but these regular fortifications which
are deemed impregnable; turning them into the graves of those
who seek and expect protection from them. How worthy is this
tremendous Being of our homage and reverence? And yet men
bear of his awful judgments, and sometimes see and feel them
too, and continue unreeformed. Even while they are gnawing
their tongues through the extremity of pain and anguish, it is
possible, that as well as their wounded tongues will give them
leave, they may blaspheme God of heavenly, and utter their im-
petent rage and malice against him. The infernal regions re-
sound with diabolical language; and O, that so many parts of
this earth bore not resemblance to them. But let the outrage of
the wicked be what it may, God, when he enters into judgment,
will

g See 4391. end.] This is introductory
to the fall of the papal kingdom, and the
expressions, ver. 12, may only signify,
that great numbers should fall by these
awful judgments, which were only intro-
ductive to the full and complete ruin
afterwards described.
An angel shews St. John the judgment of the great harlot: 

will overcome. And, though the rage of his enemies engages them to gather themselves together, the event will prove, that it is only as sheep for the slaughter. And, while they are acting in this with the utmost freedom, they are indeed assembled by him, their own angry passions subserving the purposes of his righteous Providence.

Let us confide in his word, let us attend to his voice; and, in spite of all our difficulties and dangers, let us do our endeavour, to secure the blessedness of that man, who watcheth, and keepeth his garments; who is always on his guard against every surprise, which might expose him to shame in the presence of his Master, though he should come in ever so expected a manner, even like a thief in the night.

SECT. XX.

In order to let the author into the meaning of the seven vials, he sees a representation of the great harlot sitting upon a mysterious beast; and hears her doomed to destruction by the Divine judgments. Rev. XVII. throughout.

Rev. XVII. 1. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither: I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth upon many waters;

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Revelation XVII. 1. And, when all this was done, one of the seven angels, who had been honoured with bearing the seven vials, the pouring forth of which I have just described, came and spake with me, saying to me, Come, [and] I will shew thee, to what this prophetic scene, which has passed before thy view, principally refers, even the judgment of the great harlot, that sitteth upon many waters, whom thou shalt now see; and observe the terrible vengeance to which she is reserved, though so many people have been corrupted by her, and though she has tyrannized over them in so insolent and imperious a manner: Even of her with whom the kings of the earth have so long committed fornication, (compare Isa. xxiii. 17,) and their subjects have been debauched with them; so that, in a manner, all the inhabitants of the earth have been drunk with the wine of her whoredom, as if they had taken some powerful provocative, to make them doat upon her, and sacrifice every dictate of religion, and reason, and even common sense, to those alluring arts with which she has been tempting
And he brought me in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman, of an impudent front, and a most imperious and cruel appearance, sitting upon a scarlet beast, fierce and savage; and the beast had gaudy trappings of embroidery upon it, full of blasphemous names, ascribing to itself, and the harlot upon it, properties and glories which belong to God alone; and having also, like the beast which I saw before, (chap. xvi. 1.) seven heads and ten horns; referring to the hills on which the city, designed by this harlot stood, and the number of kingdoms subject to its government. And the charms of her person, such as they were, were set off with all the gorgeous ornaments of the most splendid dress: for the woman was clothed with purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; having also a golden cup in her hand full of that infamious mixture, by which those who drank of it, were instigated to all the abominations and pollutions of her dissolute and abandoned whoredom; that is, those idolalous practices, which the society of men represented by this infamous woman, had carried to so shameful height. (Compare Jer li. 7.) But, that she might appear in my eyes as a criminal, marked out by God for speedy and dreadful execucution, [she had] upon her forehead [her] name, her titles and crimes, written; and the first word was MYSTERY: the great mystery of iniquity, abetted by all the fraud and artifice which can be conceived, is represented by this woman: after which followed these words, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH; the most impudent strumpet that ever appeared upon earth, and the greatest procuress of lewdness that ever polluted the face of it. And I saw the woman drunk; and was informed, that it was with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; of which she had gorged vast quantities, and for which she still thirsted impatiently; and seemed to cast her greedy eyes around, as longing for renewed draughts of it. And I wondered, when I saw her, with great amazement, as I knew she

\[a\] Amazement. This seems a plain argument, that the society referred to was Christian; for it had been no great wonder, that a heathen power should persecute.

b The
7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest, was and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that she represented a society that would call itself Christian, and pretend a regard for Jesus and his saints, in the midst of all this cruel persecution of them; and also, for the honour of God amidst all these unequalled idolatries and immoralities. And the angel said unto me, Why dost thou marvel? Hast thou not thyself had intimation of this antichristian sect, and this great apostacy? I will tell thee the secret of the whole matter; the mystery of the woman, and of the beast which carrieth her, which hath, as thou seest, the seven heads, and the ten horns. The beast which thou formerly sawest, was, and is, not; that is, God will cut short its reign, and he will indeed ascend as has been represented, out of the bottomless pit, and go suddenly into destruction; and the inhabitants of the earth, (whose names, as I said, are not written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world,) shall wonder, seeing the beast, who for a little while, was, and is not; that is, he shall quickly be overthrown, though he is to appear for a while and perform such great wonders.—Here [is] a proof of the understanding that hath wisdom; for the utmost sagacity may here be put to the trial. But this I will observe, to guide the enquiring mind, and I am commissioned by God to give this key to the mystery, that the seven heads of the beast are seven mountains, on which that celebrated city is built, on which the infamous woman I have been describing sitteth. And there are seven kings, or forms of government, five of them are fallen, and one is, [and] the other is not yet come; and when he comes, he must endure for a little time, but will soon be destroyed and swallowed up. And the beast, of whom I said, that he was, and is not, he is the eighth, and he is of the seventh; he ariseth out of the remainders of this people, but

b The beast—was, and is not] This seems to intimate, that the persecuting power of Pagan Rome, should for a while revive in Papal Rome, and, ere long, be utterly destroyed.

c Seven—Forms of Government.] Some reckon these to be the Roman kings, consuls, dictator, deconsuls, military tribunes, emperors, and popes. But I much question, whether this be a right solution.—Mr. Lowman supposes here is an intimation, that the seventh form of government was not to begin till the imperial power was destroyed. And this last may, on some account, be called the seventh, and for other reasons, the eighth head of government, as the exarchate of Ravenna was in some sense, a new form of government, and yet hardly so distinct and proper a form, as to be reckoned for a different head. Compare chap. xii. 6. note d.

d He is the eighth, &c.] Mr. Fleming understands this of the government of the Ostrogoths in Rome; who, though they were the seventh head in number, yet were not
They shall make war with the Lamb, but he shall overcome.

but at length goes into destruction, as the rest, though his reign shall be so much longer than any of his predecessors. And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, or kingdoms, which shall arise out of the ruin of the former state, and shall all, for a while, be dependent upon, and subject to the beast; they have not, indeed, yet received their kingdom, but they shall receive authority from the beast as kings, though greatly under his limitation and control, to reign, for one hour, for a certain limited time. And however these princes may be disunited in their political interests, which may, in some respects, contradict each other, yet, with respect to their unhappy prejudices in religion, and idolatrous inclinations, there shall be a surprising agreement between them; and they have one mind and sentiment in that respect, and shall consent to deliver over their own power and authority to the beast, to be employed by him for the advancement of his interest; so that they shall act but as his viceroys, even in their own territories. These also shall presume to make war with the Lamb, and the consequence may easily be conjectured, for the Lamb, who bears such magnificent titles, and who hath already triumphed over all the powers of hell, shall undoubtedly overcome them, and triumph over them; for he is indeed, (what some vain mortals have unpiously and arrogantly called themselves,) Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, the supreme Ruler of all governors and magistrates upon the face of the earth, to whom dominion over them belongs, by the strictest and most unalienable right; and those that are with him, have the honour to fight under his banner, not only called, but chosen to act in the service that was, and is not, even yet in the eight, and is of the seventh, and goeth into perdition.

12. And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength into the beast.

14. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings; and they that are with him, are called, and chosen, and faithful.
15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire;

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

18 And the woman which thou sawest, is endeavoured to lead his readers to affix to it. The truth is, both signify something more general, though both may be applied, in particular cases, in the limited sense contended for. Compare Isa. xxxiv. 2, 6, 7.

 Execute his sentence. We render it to fulfill his will. Hence some have inferred, that it is the will of God, that heretics should be cut off. But it is sufficiently known to what extremities people are driven to find any thing that looks like an argument for persecution in the New Testament, when they are forced to have recourse to a text for this purpose, which only proves that God had, in his wise and holy counsel, determined that the idolatries and persecuting antichristian power should be destroyed.

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city, that ruleth over the kings of the earth, and now disposeth of their crowns at her pleasure, none daring to make war against her.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. E.S'LY might we have apprehended, that Rome had been here 2, 3 designed, though it had not been so particularly described by its situation on seven hills, or by the empire it then possessed over all the kingdoms of the world. The harlot might be sufficiently distinguished by her names of blasphemy, by her cup of enchantment, 4 by her titles, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE 4, 5 MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. Yea, she might be known by this single character, of having made her self drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And is it heathen Rome, to whom these characters are most remarkably applicable? The apostle would not then have adorned with so great admiration, that idolatry and persecution should prevail, where the former had reigned for so many ages, and the latter almost from the very beginning of Christianity, and to such a degree, in the days of Nero, who, as their own historian tells us, had thirty years before this, added drunkenness and cruelty to torment, that Christians were dressed up in the skins of wild beasts, and so exposed to be worried on the theatre: a method which hath, indeed, figuratively speaking, been every where practised, and must be practised, if Christianity is to be made ridiculous, or odious. But the true occasion of the apostle's astonishment was, that Rome professing Christianity, Rome setting up for the head of the Christian world, should have emulated and exceeded any Pagan city, and even itself in its Pagan state, in its idolatries, and its cruelties. And this is a fact indeed wonderful. But these are the secret counsels of God, even those counsels which are to us unsearchable. Nevertheless, the 17 beauty and glory of them shall at length be apparent. The kings of the earth, though like Nebuchadnezzar, [Isa. x. 7], they meant if not, are now fulfilling the plan of Divine Providence; a plan that shall at length appear wise and harmonious, though the permission of all these accumulations and horrors make a part of it. And when the words of God are fulfilled, they who with one mind have 19 given their power and strength to the beast, in order to support the harlot, shall be as unanimous in hating her, and making her desolate and naked, shall be ready to devour her flesh, and consume her in her own fires. Fierce and savage as the beast may at present appear, its war with the Lamb shall be utterly in vain; for the Lamb is always victorious, and will assert his grand and imperial titles,
The fall of Babylon is proclaimed.

LORD OF LORDS, AND KING OF KINGS. May we all list under his banner; May we not only be called but chosen and faithful, faithful even to death; since all the rage of men, and Ver. multitudes, and nations, and tongues, if it were united against us, could not prevent his giving us a crown of victory, and a part in his everlasting triumphs.

SECT. XXI.

A sublime description of the fall of Babylon, and an account of the lamentation of her friends and merchants over her. Rev. XVIII. throughout.

Rev. XVIII. 1.

AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lighted with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice saying, Babylon the great is fallen is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drank of the wine of the wrath of her fornification, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4 And I heard another

a Is fallen.] This is still the language of prophecy, expressing what shall certainly and speedily come to pass; for verse the fourth shows, that in strictness of speech, Babylon was yet to be considered as standing.

b Luxuries.] The word σερανος, seems to signify such luxury of diet as cherishes unnaturalness, and disposes to acts of an-

chastity, and may well represent the manner in which the Roman clergy have pampered themselves, and the effects it has produced, to the scandal of the Christian profession, in the eyes of all the world, as well as the idolatries which have been established and maintained to support that luxury. Compare 1 Tim. v. 11, and the note there.
souls which were yet in Babylon, Come ye out from the midst of her, O my people, separate yourselves from this accursed society, that ye may not be partakers with her in her sins, which are so polluting and ensnaring; and that ye may not, by a fatal consequence, partake of her plagues too, which those who share her sins must expect to share, whatever their former profession may have been. Because her sins have followed up to heaven with their clamours, and her unrighteous actions are come up in remembrance before that God, who will not fail severely to visit her for them. And now, O my people, give her, as she also has given to you, and recompence to her double, according to her works; for God will plead your cause for you: in the cup of terror, which she has mingled for those whom she was not able to reduce and debauch, mingle her a double quantity of those poisonous ingredients: 

7 In full proportion to the degree in which she hath for so many ages, made a devastation of her glory and lived in luxury, inflict upon her torment and grief, and vengeance; because she has audaciously said in her heart, while the Divine threatenings have been sounding in her very ears, I sit as a queen, enthroned above the reach of adversity, and I am not a desolate wretch: as it hath been pretended I should be; and I shall not see sorrow. (Compare Isa. xlvii. 7, 8.) Therefore in one day shall her plagues come upon her, even upon this iniquous and abominable city, death and mourning and famine, which shall all unite their efforts against her; and she shall be burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her; and all her boasted strength will, in his presence, be weakness and confusion. And the other kings of the earth, who shall not be active in the execution before described, but still retain their affection for her, even the remainder of those, who have committed fornication, and lived in luxury with her, shall mourn over her, and lament for her, when they shall see the flames of wrath kindle about her, and the smoke of her burning, like that of Sodom in the day of its conflagration, ascending up to heaven. 

10 They shall see it, standing afar off for fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, and alas, O thou great city, Babylon, the strong city! well may we lament over thee; for in one hour thy judgment is come, and thy desolation is as sudden

her voice from heaven saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues:

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her work; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.

10 Standing afar off for fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city; for in one hour is thy judgment come.
11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

12 The merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk and scarlet, and all thyne wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble.

13 And cinnamon, and四种, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and the flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul tasted after are departed from thee and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things which were made rich by her shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing.

They who were enriched by her, shall lament her ruin.
ly incapable of giving her any relief; smiting
in their breasts, And saying, Alas, alas, far
the great, elegant, and magnificent city, that
was clothed with fine linen, and purple, and
scarlet, and adorned with gold, and precious
stones, and pearls! For, who can sufficiently
lament this sad instance of the uncertainty of all
human things, when he sees, that, in one hour,
all these great riches are laid waste, and made
desolate? And this sad scene was represented to
me in a lively vision; and every pilot, and every
one of the ship's company, and the mariners, and
all that bestrove their labour upon the sea, stood
ashore from the flames of the burning city.

And cried, when they saw the smoke of her burn-
ing ascend: What city is like to the great city, so long-un-
equalled in its glory, and now in its ruin? And they seemed like men in the greatest agony
of distress, and cast dust upon their heads, and
cried, weeping, and mourning, saying, Alas, alas,
for the great city, by whose magnificent
expenses, arising from her profusion, and ele-
gance, and grandeur, all that had ships in the
sea were enriched, so that she alone was suffi-
cient, as it were, to maintain the merchandise
of the world; for she is made desolate in one
hour, to a degree that we should have imagined
utterly impossible.

But while they were thus lamenting their own
less and her's, I was affected in another manner,
and could not forbear crying out in my own
heart, Rejoice over her, O thou just avenging
heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, who
look down from your abodes of glory, on so
wonderful and interesting a scene. Take your
part in the sacred triumph; for on your ac-
count, God has pronounced sentence upon her;
he hath adjudged her to righteous destruction,
for her opposition to his kingdom, and for the
injuries done to you, who, with ardent and un-
wearied zeal, endeavoured to establish and
promote it.

And,

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great cit-
y, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple,
and scarlet, and decked with gold and pre-
cious stones and pearls;

17 For in one hour so great riches is come
forth to desolation; and every pilot, and every
one of the ship's company, and the mariners,
and all that had ships in the sea, stood
ashore from the flames of the burning city.

18 And cried, when they saw the smoke of her burn-
ing ascend: What city is like to this great city?

19 And they cast dust upon their heads,
and cried, weeping, and wailing, saying, Alas,
Alas, that great city, wherein were made
rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason
of her costliness; for in one hour she is
made desolate.

20 Rejoice over her, O thou heaven, and ye
holy apostles, and prophets; for God hath
avenged you on her.
And a mighty angel took up a stone, like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violent and rapid motion, hurled it into the sea, saying, Thus shall Babylon the great city, unequal as the production of this event may seem to any human power, be violently hurled away by the almighty arm of an avenging God, and sink into the depths of destruction; so that it shall never be found any more. And the harmonious sound of harpers, and other musicians, and those who sound the flute, and the trumpet, shall no more be heard in thee, and every artificer of every curious trade, employed for the accommodations and ornaments of life, shall no more be found in thee; O Babylon, nor shall the noise of the millstone be heard in thee any more, even to prepare bread for the meanest inhabitant. And the light of a lamp shall no more be seen in thee, to gild thy dark night with its cheerful rays; and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride, rejoicing in their new relation, and celebrating the nuptial feast, shall be heard in thee no more; because thy merchants were grannies of the earth, and maintained so shameful a traffic by every dishonest art, and because all the nations were deceived by thy sorceries, and poisoned by thy pernicious practices. And to complete her guilt, as Babylon of old had grown great by the slaughter of Israel, so in her, who has been here represented, was found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints of God, even of all those who were slain upon the earth; for this wicked city exceeded all the rest of the world in cruelties, and might boast in the multitudes of the martyrs she had slain, beyond all that had ever gone before her, in such detestable persecutions; and this hath filled up the measure of her iniquities, and plunged her into this reco verable ruin.

IMPROVE-
From the particular detail which is here given us, of the various commodities in which Babylon traded with its merchants we may surely take an incidental occasion to reflect upon the rich bounty of Divine Providence to the children of men, in giving them such a variety of good things, which tend not only to their necessary support, but their ornament and delight. To whatever pernicious purposes, vanity and luxury many abuse the silver and the gold, and the gems and the pearls, the fine linen and silk, the purple and scarlet, the ivory and the marble, the cinnamon and the myrrh, as well as the more important blessings of wheat and oil, of wine, and sheep, and horses, all are the gifts of God; and if wisely and properly used, may justly excite our thankfulness to him; and it is on ourselves, and not on him, that we are to charge it, if what should have been for our welfare becomes a trap, and our treasures be turned into idols. Nor is the wise disposition of Providence to be disregarded in causing many of these things to be the peculiar products of different countries, denying to some what he has given to the rest, that so traffic and commerce may be encouraged, and by it, society and intercourse extended among different nations, and provision made for that spread of Divine knowledge, which had in many instances been impossible, if human industry, quickened by necessity, and the prospect of gain, had not invented those arts of navigation, to which Great Britain, above all other nations, is so much indebted, and without which, indeed, our Beautiful and fruitful island had been a desert, inaccessible to men.

But, though this oblique reflection may profitably be made, the great object to which we are directed by this chapter, is the certain and final ruin of Babylon, which, how highly soever exalted, how superbly soever adorned, how luxuriously soever regaled, shall fall, shall fall as a milestone cast into the sea. Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her; and it is impossible she can withstand the force of his omnipotent arm. Long has she, in a metaphorical sense, been the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird; and God will make her so in another; even in a literal sense, when he shall appear to remember and punish those iniquities, which have reached unto heaven, among which, various and detestable as they have been, shedding the blood of the prophets and saints, must be reckoned as most enormous. Let no triumph of the antichristian powers, for the present, shake our faith in these most certain and indubitable prophecies; and let
let that charge never be forgotten, Come forth from her, O my people, and be separate." Blessed be God, that a separation has been begun, that it has been so long supported, and that so many attempts to bring back God's Israel into captivity have been defeated. May the boundaries of the reformation be extended; may the purity of the reformed churches be more and more advanced, and all remainders of superstition, persecution, and imposition be taken away. And to conclude all, let those who are now living deliciously, and glorifying themselves in the forgetfulness of God, abusing the various gifts of his bounty to his dishonour, and saying in their hearts, that they shall see no sorrow, remember how suddenly their state may be changed; how quickly they may sink into the depths of misery, proportionable to the height of their abused prosperity; and experience a torment and sorrow, which will be doubly bitter in the remembrance of their former condition. Let such therefore, in whatever rank of life they are, according to the words of Daniel to the most illustrious king of Babylon, (Daniel iv. 27,) Break off their sins by righteousness, and their iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening out of their tranquility; and give glory to God, before all their cheerful light be exchanged for darkness, and all the harmony of their music for weeping and wailing, groaning and lamentation for ever.

SECT. XXII.

The triumphs of the heavenly host in the fall of Babylon are described, and further illustrated, by the view of an attack made by Christ and his army, on the beast, which ended in an entire victory over him. Rev. XIX. throughout.

Rev. XIX. 1. And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven saying Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God:

Revelation XIX. 1. And after these things, this affecting representation of the certain destruction of Babylone, as the seat of the antichristian kingdom, I heard the voice as of a great multitude in heaven who seemed to be triumphing on this occasion, saying, Hallelujah; let the name of Jehovah, the most high God, be ever praised and exalted. Let this great salvation, and all the glory and honour, which can arise from this, and all his other wonderful works and the power so amazingly displayed in them, be ascribed to the Lord our God. For his judgments are true and righteous, and we have lately seen a most glorious
And rejoice in the marriage of the Lamb:

And he hath judged the great harlot, who corrupted the whole earth with the contagion of her fornication: and he has awfully avenged the blood of his faithful servants and martyrs, which hath been shed so profusely by her cruel hand. And a second time, at the conclusion of the hymn, they say Hallelujah: and looking down upon her ruins, they added, The smoke of her (torment) ascendeth for ever and ever; and God is pursuing the impious sinners, he has destroyed in her, with far more terrible vengeance in a future state, than any they could endure while they continued in the body. (Isa. xxxiv. 10.) And the twenty-four elders, and the four animals so often mentioned before, who still appeared present, fell down and worshipped God, who was represented sitting upon the throne, saying, Amen Hallelujah, so let it be: let universal Hallelujahs, and everlasting praises, rise to thee, O thou everlasting Jehovah, who art most worthy to receive them. And a voice came out from the throne, which said, in my hearing, Now praise our God in the most exalted strains of rapturous devotion, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great, in your various ranks and circumstances of life. Adore his great and magnificent name, so highly exalted, and in these scenes of wonder, so gloriously displayed.

And I heard a voice which was as the voice of a great multitude, and loud as the voice of many waters, when the waves of the sea are in a violent agitation, and like the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord God Almighty, the omnipotent Jehovah, who is the Author and Support of universal nature, reigneth, and is about to exalt his kingdom among men to more visible splendour than it has ever yet worn. And we will now, in an especial manner, rejoice and exult in the greatest transport of holy joy, and we will give glory to him, because the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has prepared herself to meet him, being adorned with all those ornaments, which are most grateful in themselves, and most agreeable to him. And he is going to espouse his church with circumstances of the highest festivity and solemnity. And it was given to her, that, in token of her virgin-innocence and sanctity, she should be clothed in fine linen, pure and resplendent;
To which blessed are they who are invited.

fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

dent; and the fine linen, that I speak of, is intended to signify the righteous acts of the saints, whereby they are adorned in the sight of God, and an evidence given of the sincerity of that faith which interests them in the merit of what their Lord has performed, to which they ultimately owe their acceptance before him. And 9 he said to me, Write this down, as an important truth, in which all that read this book in future ages will be greatly concerned. Happy [are] they who are invited to be guests at the splendid marriage supper of the Lamb, which is now prepared, and shall accept the invitation, so as to partake of its blessings. And he said unto me, These are the true words of God, and are to be regarded by thee, and all that read them, as an oracle which he hath inspired. (Compare 2 Cor. xi. 2.)

And while he was speaking to me in this manner, overawed by his majestic appearance, I fell before his feet, to pay homage to him. And he immediately interposed to prevent it, and said unto me, See [thou do it not; for I am not worthy of such regard from thee, being a fellow-servant with thee, and with the rest of thy brethren, who resolutely and faithfully keep the testimony of Jesus. Pay thine homage, in such expressions of it, to God alone. I am now sent for the service of that religion to which you and your brethren are making such considerable sacrifices; for the Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus, and serves in a glorious manner, to confirm his Divine mission to all that know and duly observe the circumstances of it; and that which I now reveal to thee, makes a considerable article of the proof.

And

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a The righteous acts of the saints.] So evidently signifies; and, therefore, though I make no doubt but it is with regard to the obedience and righteousness of the Son of God, that all our righteous acts are accepted before God, and have accordingly referred to this doctrine in the paraphrase; yet I cannot suppose that these words have that reference which some have imagined, to the imputation of his righteousness to us. And I hope Christian divines will have the courage to speak with the scripture, even though it should be at the expense of their reputation for orthodoxy with some, who profess, nevertheless, to make scripture their standard.

b With thy brethren.] The expression in the Greek obliges me to give the word "fellow-servant" the usual meaning in the ode of which it speaks. But Mr. Fleming understands it, I am one of thy brethren, which he thinks intimates that this was the departed spirit of an apostle; perhaps of St. Peter or St. Paul, or his own brother James, though not in a form to be known. And, on the same mistaken principle, he thinks the person speaking, chap. xxiii. 9, might be the spirit of one of the prophets, perhaps Isaiah, or Ezekiel, or Daniel. *Flem. Christol.* Vol. 1, p. 91.
And a glorious vision immediately followed this; for I saw heaven opened, and behold, and observe it with due attention, a white horse appeared, and he that sat upon it [was] called Faithful and True, being indeed no other than the person speaking of him elsewhere, as the Amen, the faithful and true Witness; and he judges, and makes war in righteousness, and not like the unjust conquerors of the earth, who are so ready to use their superior power to oppress all that fall under it. This was the glorious Prince, whose eyes [are] piercing as a flame of fire, and many crowns were upon his head, having also a mysterious name written upon them, which no man knows but himself: to signify, that there are mysteries in his nature, and in the administration of his kingdom, which it is impossible for men to find out. And to express the irresistible power with which he triumphs over his enemies, and brings destruction upon them according to his pleasure, he [was] clothed in a garment dipht in blood, and his name is called, The Word of God, the glorious and divine Person, whom I have elsewhere spoken of as in the beginning with God, and himself God, and the great Medium of Divine revelation in all ages.

And the armies which were in heaven followed him, in token of being most willingly and entirely under his command, and they appeared [riding] on white horses, and themselves clothed in pure linen, white, and perfectly clean and pure, to denote their perfect innocence and righteousness. And he still retains this circumstance in the vision I at first saw of him, that there went out of his mouth a sharp sword, that with it he might smite the heathen; to signify the power of his word; and he shall govern them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the indignation and wrath of Almighty God, which was signified by the blood staining his garments; to intimated, that he shall subdue the proudest enemies with as much ease as men burst grapes by treading them under their feet.

(Compare Isa. lxvi. 2, 3.) And he hath upon his garment, and his thigh, that is, upon the sword which hangs upon his thigh, a magnificent and exalted name written, even KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS; to signify his universal empire, over all the princes and potentates on earth, and in heaven.

And
17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

And I saw a single angel; but one of great majesty and strength, detaching himself, as it were from the army in heaven, who followed the great leader of the Lord's host on their white horses: and he was seen by me standing in the sun; and to intimate the approaching slaughter and desolation which was so soon to come upon the enemies of the church, he cried with a loud voice, saying to the eagles, and vultures, and all the other birds of prey, which were flying in the midst of heaven, Come and assemble yourselves to the supper of the great God; for he is about to make a splendid entertainment for you; That ye may eat the flesh of mighty kings, and the flesh of famous commanders, who have led on their thousands to battle; and the flesh of the mighty soldiers, who have fought so courageously under their banners; and the flesh of warlike horses, that were advancing with so much intrepidity and rage to the battle; and the flesh of those who sat thereon, and were ready to trust to their strength or their speed; and the flesh of all the promiscuous multitude, freemen and slaves, both small and great, who shall fall down together in the dust, and pour out their souls in blood, leaving their mangled carcases for your prey. (Compare Ezek. xxxix. 17, 18.) And, to fulfil this awful decree of the great God, whose influence over all human affairs is supreme, and who knows how to work his own purposes, even by the greatest malice and rage of his enemies, I saw the beast appearing again, as at the head of the antichristian interest; and the kings of the earth, who supported him, and gave their power unto him; and I saw all their armies gathered together, to make war with him who sitteth upon the white horse, and with all his army, even the host of heaven, which I mentioned as with him: insensible of his superior power, and madly borne on to their own destruction, they marched their feeble forces against him, and all his celestial legions. And the issue was such as might be expected; for the beast was taken captive, and with

20 And the beast was taken, and with him

e Beast was taken] What Brandt tells us, of the interpretation given by a divine of Heidelberg, to this text, as promising Frederick king of Bohemia, that he should take the emperor prisoner, and that all the other potentates of Europe should be subjected to his sovereign will, appears too ridiculous to be contended; but I mention it, to engage men to be cautious how they apply any of these prophecies...
with him also the false prophet, who had wrought so many fallacious signs before him, by which he had deceived those who received the mark of the beast, and those who worshipped his image; and they were bound fast in chains of Divine vengeance, and both of them were cast alive into the lake of fire which burnt so fiercely, enraged with stores of brimstone, to make the flames more durable, and more tormenting.

And the rest, who had so insolently and foolishly followed the banners of these accursed leaders, were slain with the sword that came out of the mouth of the great leader of the heavenly army, even him who sate on the white horse, described before, robed with light, and crowned with glory. And their carcases were left unburied on the field of battle; and all the birds of the air, according to the invitation which the angel had given them, were satiated with their flesh.

**Improvement.**

Let us learn by what we have here been reading, to adore

Ver. the Lord God Omnipotent, who reigneth over all, and who displays

1-3 the truth and righteousness of his judgments, in his vengeance on the enemies of his church, even when he inflicts on them a torment, the smoke of which rises up for ever and ever. In the certain assurance, that in due time he will plead his own cause, and rescue and exalt his people, let all his servants and people praise

5, 6 him, even all that fear him, both small and great, and labour to live that Divine life of gratitude, and joyful thanksgiving on earth, which may anticipate the pleasures and employments of the heavenly world. The time will at length come, when all of such a character shall celebrate the marriage supper of the Lamb; yea, when the whole society shall appear in his presence as one chaste virgin, whom he has espoused to himself; and whom, with unutterable delight, he places in his more immediate view, not only as arrayed in robes of pure and shining linen, which is the righteousness of the saints, but as perfectly free from spot, or blemish, or any such thing.

cite to events which may happen to themselves, or those for whom they are immediately concerned. Exodus vii. 11. of the Reform. Vol. IV. p. 902. Compare chap. xvi. 12; and § xvi. note 6, and 1. 

d cast alive. See the note on chap. xx. 15. Dr. Clarke observes, it is only said of other sinners, they were cast into the lake; and this he supposes intimates a distinction of punish men, severe in proportion to the faults of them punished; and he thinks it illustrated by the words of Moses, concerning Korah and his company, Numb. xvi. 24. If these men do the common death of all men, or if they be treated after the violation of all men, then the Lord hath not sat up me; intimating, that there would be as much difference in their punishment, as between being executed in the common way, and swallowed up with an earthquake. Clarke's Notes. Vol. I. p. 408, 401.
thing. He will admit them all to feast in his own presence; yea, to dwell for ever with him; so shall we ever be with the Lord. These are the true sayings of God. And though a consciousness of our own utter unworthiness of such honours might be ready to detract from the credibility of these Divine assurances, or at least prevent us from giving so clear an assent to them, as we might otherwise do, yet let God be true, and every man a liar.

And in the mean time, in the mingled scenes of adversity and prosperity, which attend the Israel of God, let us direct our believing eyes to him, who is faithful and true; to him, who both administers justice, and wages war in righteousness. Let us reverence his penetrating eyes, which are like a flame of fire. Let us rejoice in the diadems placed upon his head, to signify the extent of his dominion; and read with awe the inscription upon his vesture, and his thigh, The word of God, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. As such let us pay our homage to him; and let the favour of lords, and kings, be as nothing to us, where his favour or his honour is concerned. The proudest of earthly potentates oppose his dominion in vain; in vain do they marshal their captains, and their mighty men: vain is the strength of horses, and of them that sit thereon, and the combinations of bond and free, though Satan himself abet their rebellion, and inspire them with subtilty, and arm them with rage: their subtilty shall be defeated, their rage shall be repelled. The sword of the Lord shall devour them. The birds of prey shall at his pleasure be feasted with their carcases; and the sad catastrophe of their bodies shall be only an imperfect emblem of the anguish and misery of their spirits, when plunged with the evil spirit that deceived them, they sink deep into the lake that burns for ever, and feel the terrors of the second death. Be wise now therefore. O ye kings, and be instructed, ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear; and sensible of his uncontrollable dominion, and your own weakness and imperfection, even while ye rejoice before him, rejoice with trembling. (Psal. ii. 10, 11.)

SECT. XXIII.

The binding of Satan for a thousand years, during which the gospel is greatly to prevail; with a view of the destruction of the enemies of Christ, upon their making their last attempt against his church; and of the universal judgment. Rev. XX. throughout.

Revelation XX. 1. AND I saw an angel come down from heaven. Thus the beast was conquered and taken; but the dragon yet remained at liberty. And
And that I might also be informed as to his
doom, I saw an angel descending from heaven,
who had the key of the bottomless pit, and he had
also a great chain in his hand: And he ad-
vanced with the intrepidity of one who feared no
resistance; and laid hold on the dragon, dreadful
as he was; even that old serpent who is called
the devil, from being the great false accuser;
and Satan, as being the great adversary both of
God and man; and he bound him for the space of
3 a thousand years. And, having opened the
door with the key that he bore, he cast him into
the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal
upon him, to signify, that none should break open
the door; that he might not deceive the nations any
more, for the time above-mentioned, that is,
till a thousand years were accomplished, and then
he must be loosed again for a little time, and make
his last effort against the cause of God, and the
4 kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ. And after
this, I saw thrones, and they sate upon
them, and a power of judgment was given to
them, and the souls of them who had been be-
headed for the testimony of Jesus, and for the
word of God, and who had not worshipped the
beast nor his image, when his cause was so tri-
umphant, and who bravely opposed the torrent
of prevailing degeneracy, so that they had not
received his mark in their foreheads, and upon
their hands, when it was so furiously urged up-
on all; these appeared to rise in triumph, and
they

heaven having the
key of the bottomless
pit, and a great chain
in his hand.

2 And he laid hold
on the dragon, that
old serpent, which is
the devil and Satan,
and bound him a thou-
sand years.

3 And cast him into
the bottomless pit, and
set a seal upon him,
that he should deceive
the nations no more, till
the thousand years
should be fulfilled: and
after that he must be
loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones,
and they sat upon them,
and judgment was
given unto them: and
I saw the souls of them
that were be-
headed for the wit-
ness of Jesus, and for
the word of God, and
who had not wor-
shipped the beast,
or his image, neither
had received his mark
upon their foreheads,
or in their hands; and
they lived and reigned with

the power of judgment.

a. [A thousand years] I think we must
interpret this period as
an expression of
duration, not as
any actual period of
time, as we understand
the passage. This
expression is a very
familiar one in the
Scriptures, and we
must understand it to
mean a very long
period of time, and
that it is
not intended to be
interpreted literally.

5 In the main the
questions here
are of a practical
character, and in
considering them
we must
be guided by the
principles of
Christian

thought.

And verse 4, may only intimate
that the spirit of the martyrs seems to
live again, in those whom God should
choose up, Compare Ezek. xxxvii. 1.
Ps. cxlv. 18. Rev. x. 11, 12. Rev. xi. 15. This
interpretation is illustrated and confir-
med also by Mr. Lowman. So that the
seventh chapter, or 1700 years, from the
creation of the world, is to be a kind of
Salvation Time, Compare Asc. worth on Gen.
1. 5. and His Speech on Redemption, p. 211.

But the main of them who had been be-
headed! Dr. Whately, not unreason-
able, thinks this a great objection, to
understand the resurrection of their bodies. See his Le-
tones on the Millennium, chap. iv. Mr. How-
son observes, it is said elsewhere, that
their souls were actually living before;
and hence, he thinks, must be put for
rising from the dead, because it is said,
the rest of the dead lived not till a thousand years
with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ; and shall reign with him a thousand years.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, to deceive the nations, which are in the four distant corners of the earth, and shall prevail against them, and deceive them.

c They lived and reigned with Christ.] This is the chief text on which Mr. Fleming builds his doctrine of the first resurrection; when, he supposes, those who have died for the testimony of Jesus, and other most excellent saints, shall be raised from the dead; not, (he imagines,) to live upon earth, but to live a thousand years with Christ in heaven; enjoying a blessedness nearly approaching, if not altogether equal, to that which good men are to enjoy after the general resurrection; while the rest have only the common blessing of the separate state, during this period; and, even after the resurrection, shall have only inferior degrees of glory, to what these first fruits of the resurrection shall for ever possess. Flem. Christol. Vol. II. p. 42.

d The rest of the dead, &c.] This has been urged to prove, that a proper resurrection is here spoken of; but I much doubt the justness of the conclusion.—Such expressions may, sometimes, be thrown in to promote that obscurity, which seemed, upon the whole, convenient in such a series of prophecy. Compare chap. xxi. 17.

e On such the second death shall have no power.] Mr. Fleming considers this as an intimation, that the second death will have some power to terrify, though only for a little while, those good men, who shall not have their share in the first resurrection. See his Christol. Vol. II. p. 45. But the notion appears to me very absurd, and ill to agree with the representation which scripture gives of the universal judgment, as a day of unmingled joy and triumph to all the righteous.

f The four corners of the earth.] As it is most certainly known from the most convincing arguments, and from repeated experience, that the earth is of a spherical form, it is certain, that by the four corners of the earth, we are to understand the nations which lay at the greatest distance from the city of the saints; which, I suppose, does here especially signify Jerusalem. And we may suppose, that those who live
against them, so that they shall engage in a vain and fatal enterprise, for the overthrow of what God has determined for ever to establish: even Gog and Magog, as the prophecy of Ezekiel, (chapters xxxviii, xxxix,) stiles the enemies of God's people: and Satan shall succeed in his attempts to gather them together in war; even an army, whose number [is] like the sand of the sea. 9. Accordingly I beheld them in vision, as drawn forth in order of battle, and saw, that they went up over the breadth of the earth; so that they seemed to cover the face of it from north to south, and then surrounded the camp of the saints and Jerusalem, the beloved city, in which they dwelt; and it seemed at first in imminent danger, but it was not long before it was remarkably delivered; for fire came down from God out of heaven, at once, and devoured them, so that there were no more remainders of them to be seen; but they, and all their dreadful artillery, perished and disappeared, as if they had never existed. (Compare Ezek. xxxviii. 22.) And then the devil, who had deceived them, came in for his share of that punishment, which had long before been inflicted upon many of his accomplices, and was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where, as I before said, the beast and the false prophet were; and there they shall be tormented together day and night, for ages of ages, for ever and ever, without any hope of release or respite.

11 And, after this, I saw a great white and splendid throne, which shone with a glory scarce to be supported; and yet, mine eye being divinely strengthened for that purpose, I beheld him who sitteth thereon, from whose majestic face, when he came on this solemn and tremendous occasion, earth and heaven fled away, and

live in that situation, shall be last instructed in the gospel, and so capable of being most easily engaged to rise up against it. Compare chap. viii. 1. and paraphrase. By Gog and Magog, many understand the Scythians, and other nations, whom the devil will stir up to assault the people of God.

For ages of ages: [i.e. the ages: see answer.] This is the most literal rendering of these words; but it is certain that no argument can be drawn from hence against the eternity of future punishment, for no phrase can more strongly express a proper eternity than this.

quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet were, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.
All mankind shall be judged according to their works.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake and there was found no place for them, in which they might continue. And I saw the dead, of all ranks and orders, small and great, rich and poor, princes and people, in one great assembly, which knew no more of those distinctions, once so much regarded, standing before God, to receive their final doom from him; to intimate, that the last judgment should quickly follow the wonderful events which had been represented to me before. And the books were opened, which contained the records of the Divine omniscience on the one hand, and, on the other, the law and the gospel, which were the rule whereby those who stood before him were to be judged. And another book was opened, distinct from these, which is [the book] of life, in which were registered the names of all those happy persons, who, according to the tenor of the Divine declarations to men, should be the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, and live with God for ever, in the enjoyment of felicity and glory. And the dead were all impartially judged out of the things written in the books, and in a manner agreeable to the tenor of them according to their works, as they had been agreeable or disagreeable to the discoveries which God had made to them of his will for the rule of their actions. And, that none might be exempt from coming into judgment, I perceived that the resurrection extended also to the sea, which gave up the dead that were in it; and death, and the unseen world, and separate state, in all their extensive domains, gave up the dead that were in them, all that death had swallowed up, and Hades received; and they were judged, as I said before, every one according to their works. And I saw, in the vision, emblematical persons, who seemed to preside over the regions of death and Hades, or the separate state; and, to signify that human souls should be no more separated from the bodies, to

mon readers. "It is so plain, says he, that it does not need, so majestic and grand that it exceeds, commentary and paraphrase." See his Sacred Class. Vol. I. p. 329.

k There was found no place for them. [Hence Mr. Whiston infers, that at the consummation of all things, and the final judgment, the earth will desert its present station, and be no more found among the planetary chorus. Whist. Theor. p. 282. But I cannot think this description intended to teach any astronomical niceties; it seems only to intimate that all nature was thrown into strong commotion, as if it were incapable of sustaining the majestic presence that appeared.

Death
to which they were now united, these persons, as it appeared, were cast into the lake of fire, which I have before described, and of which I said, that this is the second death. And as the register, which God, in pursuance of his counsels of everlasting love, had kept of those, whom it was his gracious purpose, according to the tenor of his gospel, to save, was complete, I saw, that if any one were not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire: so that this was the awful end of the whole human race, to be plunged into that flaming and eternal ruin, or to be received into those abodes of glory, which I am next to describe, under the figure of a new heaven and a new earth. (Compare Rev. xxi. 1, note 2.)

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. We have here a most affecting view of that important event, in which we are all so intimately concerned. Whatever the first resurrection may import, or that glorious reign of a thousand years, (which probably intimates a signal revival of the Christian cause in the world, and a display of its influence beyond what hath yet been known,) I say, whatever these events may particularly intend, the ill-fated day, in which heaven and earth is to pass away, demands the attention of all mankind. For the dead, both small and great, whether buried in the earth or the sea, must then stand before God: Therefore let all the living, both small and great, seriously weigh the solemnity and importance of that appearance. Let them often look forward to the awful period, when the glorious throne shall be set, the important volumes opened, which contain the record of our lives and actions, and of God's gracious and merciful transactions with us. We must be judged according to our works, that God, before whom all our ways are, and who searches all our hearts, will bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Let us judge ourselves impartially, that we be not condemned of the Lord, and

1 Death and Judgement cast into the lake of fire. It is to wonder a man of Mr. Hoober's eminence and piety, should be ready to admit any are going to prove the resurrection of the dead. But, that we may be saved from any prejudice (see his Letter, p. 572,) it must be very precocious. For, as Archbishop Hume observes, in his Serm No. 6, p. 409, we must ask of those who imagine the plain meaning is, there shall be no more temporary state. And that, I think, clearly overthrows that hypothesis, which supposes this last fire will tell those that are thrown into it, and that their separate spirits are to bear for ever remain in that misery, which must be the consequence of having lost happiness and hope, while they retain their bodily passions; a doctrine, which Dr. Watts has strangely taught in his Apology to the Thess. chap. i.
and conscious how unable we should be to stand in that judgment, if God were rigorous to lay justice to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, let us humbly apply to the throne of mercy, to the blood of his Son, to the grace of his gospel-covenant. So shall we find mercy of the Lord in that day, and be the priests of God, and of Christ, and reign with him, not a thousand years alone, but for everlasting ages.

In the mean time, let those who have no reverence for his majesty, who have no esteem for his gospel, who have never taken this awful alarm, who have never fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them, tremble at these awakening views. Let them all, of every condition, both small and great, say in their hearts, Who shall dwell with devouring flames, and lie down in everlasting burnings, even in this lake of fire, into which every one who is not found written in the book of life, shall be cast, and where the wretched victims of Divine justice shall be tormented for ever and ever?

How melancholy does the face of our earth appear, when we reflect on the reign of Satan on it, on the influence of the dragon, and the beast, and the false prophet! O Lord, cut short their power; 1, 2, 3 send down the angel that has the key of the bottomless pit, to bind this destroyer; yea, when he shall be loosed for a season, moderate his rage; support thy saints under the terror of every assault, till thou appear to the last confusion of their enemies, till thou appear to close this perplexing scene, by the wise and glorious catastrophe of all things; when it shall be seen, that the souls of them who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, were not lost, and that it was wisdom strenuously to refuse the mark of the beast, and the homage so generally paid to his image, though men might neither buy nor sell, nor enjoy their liberty, nor their lives, without making an entire submission to it.

SECT. XXIV.

The solemn introduction to the glorious vision of the new heaven and the new earth: with a declaration of the blessing to attend the faithful and courageous conqueror, and the misery to be inflicted on impious and wicked offenders, Rev. XXI. 1—8.

Rev. XXI. 1.

A ND I saw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;

Revelation XXI. 1.

A ND when this scene of things was passed away, another most glorious and delightful one opened upon me; for I saw a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein I knew righteousness was ever to dwell, for the former heaven, and the
And of the New Jerusalem, coming down God.

Sect.

the former earth was passed away, as I said before; and the sea was no more; the whole terraqueous globe was changed for another kind of world, wherein every thing was incomparably more beautiful and excellent than the face of nature had ever been, and room was made for a vastly greater number of inhabitants: And as an emblem of the eminent holiness and felicity which should there reign, I John saw the holy city, that is, the New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven; and it was prepared with all imaginable ornaments and decorations, like a bride adorned for her husband, and preparing to meet him with all her charms set out to the greatest advantage. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying aloud, Behold the tabernacle of the living God is now with men: and he shall pitch his tent among them, in token of his favour and friendship, and they shall be owned by him as his people, and God himself shall have melted with fervent heat, as St. John and St. Peter endeavour to describe it; and when death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, with all that are not written in the book of life: And that, which I think cannot be explained properly of any event, but those of the day of universal judgment. And it is certain, that if we do not go into this interpretation of them, there is no view given us of the final restoration of things on this earth of ours, in this comprehensive prophecy, though intended to represent the triumph of Christianity, which seems in theory a very improbable supposition.

Descending from God out of heaven.) I apprehend be saw in the vision as an appearance of a city, which seemed like the same which Peter saw, to be let down from heaven, and appeared pleasant, as it were, in that view, that the foundation was visibly distinguishable from the superstructure; and thus be considered, not as actually the abode of the blessed, but as a figurative representation of the holiness and felicity in which they were to dwell; so that it was a type of what the church itself should be. To interpret it therefore, as if there were now such a city made in heaven, and by angelic power to be brought down to earth, and settled upon some spot of it, is so vast, and unreasonable a thought, that one would wonder any one person of learning and understanding should ever have embraced it. Compare Hackett's Notes and Discourses, Vol. I. p. 300. See Isa. liv. 11, 12.
himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sate upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End: I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh be with and among them as their God, their Protector and Friend, their Guardian and Father, their supreme Good and final Portion. And God shall, with parental tenderness, wipe away their tears from their eyes; though here their tears have plentifully flowed, not one shall now be left on any of their faces. And death shall be no more; he shall be for ever banished those blissful regions, and with him all his melancholy train, nor shall there be grief, nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain, or labour; for all the former things are passed away, all the mournful scenes which were on the earth so familiar to their eyes. And he that sate upon the throne then spake himself, and said with his own awful and gracious voice, which through the whole vision I had not before heard, Behold, I make all things new. I exert my power in producing a new creation, whence every trace of seeming imperfection and irregularity shall be banished. And he then condescended to take notice of me; and singling me out by his eye, and directing his voice to me, he said unto me, while all my soul was awed into reverence and attention, Write what thou hearest, for these are true and faithful words; and as their contents are important, so they are beyond all controversy certain. And he said unto me, Wonderful is the prediction, doubt not of its accomplishment; It is done, it is, as it were, already present with me; I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End; too great and excellent to need to use any artifice with my creatures; and far above the temptation of raising in them any false hopes and expectations, I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely; I open the springs, and they shall flow in abundance; and let every humble soul that desires it, freely come and quench his thirst. I have already made many gracious promises to him who overcometh; and I will now comprise them all in one; the conqueror shall inherit all things;

c He that sate upon the throne.] As the Lamb, and He that sate upon the throne, have been mentioned, as distinct, through the whole book, and as the Lamb is mentioned here as the Spouse of the church, I am ready to understand the Father as the Person here spoken of. But I will not absolutely insist upon this, because in chap. xx. 11, 12, it seems to be Christ who is represented as sitting upon the throne; since we know it is he who is to appear as universal Judge, under which character the Person who sate upon the throne is there spoken of.

d All
things: the whole new creation shall be his; he shall possess its blessings to the utmost of his most enlarged desires. And I will be to him a God, a source of complete and everlasting blessings; and he shall be my son, and as my son, inherit my kingdom, and dwell with me in it through eternal ages. But as for the treacherous and unfeeling, I will not face the difficulties which a courageous profession of my religion requires; and the obstinate, who have devoted themselves to sensual affections and pursuits; and murderers, and whores, and forgers, and traitors, and all liars, all who allow themselves in their words, or in their actions, to violate the eternal and invariable law of truth by which I have governed myself, and by which I have required all my rational creatures to be governed; their part [shall be in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Let them therefore be recorded by the pen, that every future generation of men may carefully peruse, and seriously consider it; that every sincere believer, however weak, may be encouraged, and that every obstinate sinner may be terrified, and, if possible, awakened, and that none, in the day of my final judgment, may complain, that they have not been warned and cautioned with the greatest plainness, and with the greatest solemnity.

**Improvement.**

Let us pause a little, before we proceed to the more particular description of this glorious scene, and let our hearts rejoice.

1, 2. In this general view of the new heavens, and the new earth, and of the holy city descending out of heaven from God. Will God ever dwell with men? Will be dwell with them for ever? Will he fix his tabernacle with them, and condescend to avow them for his people, and to make himself known unto them as their God?

Let our souls then be awakened, to pay a due attention to such glorious and important promises. Let us hearken to the voice of him who sitteth upon the throne, whose words are undoubtedly true and immortal.
true and faithful. Lord, dost thou make all things new? Verify the word first, we implore thee, in our hearts, that it may be verified at length in our state and condition. O thou Alpha and Ver. Omega, who art the Beginning and the End, thou who hast done so much to introduce this Divine scheme of salvation, perfect it, we intreat thee with respect to us; exciting our thirst after the water of life; and may we come and take it as freely as it is offered in the gospel.

In what part of the holy scripture is life and death, the blessing and the curse, set before us, if not in these awful passages? Let those who are too timorous resolutely to adhere to their duty, be recovered, and as it were, driven back to it, by the fear of Divine vengeance. And let all habitual and obstinate sinners, and especially all liars, who bring up the rear of a catalogue, in which murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, make a part, be awakened by this awful threatening. O desperate and inexcusable folly, to be afraid of the displeasure of men, and the inconveniences which may possible attend an adherence to the truth, and not to fear the lake which burns for ever with fire and brimstone.

But let us courageously encounter, and then we shall conquer all our enemies, animated by the glorious promises, in which all the encouragements contained in the sacred volume, are comprised, that he, who overcomes shall inherit all things, while God owns himself his God, and acknowledges him as his son: and if a son, then an heir, an heir of God, and Joint-heir with Christ; and if so, all things are indeed ours. Let those tears, that will now sometimes silently steal down our cheeks, be shed as tears, which we expect quickly to have wiped away, even by the soft and compassionate hand of our heavenly Father. Let us bear our sorrows, and our pains, as those that know we shall, through Divine grace, soon be out of the reach of them; and let us meet death itself, if we are sincere believers in Christ, as those that know its reign will soon come to a period; and that when once we are recovered from it, by the almighty power of our great General, we shall never more be subject to its invasion, or any of its terrors; even then, when all former things shall have passed away.
SECT. XXV.

A sublime and particular description of the splendour, glory, purity, and happiness, of the heavenly Jerusalem. Rev. XXI. 9, to the end.

Revelation XXI. 9.

And after this he who sat on the throne, had condescended to speak to me, in the words I have just now mentioned, there came to me one of the seven angels who had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues which had lately been poured out; and he spake with me, saying, Come, and I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb, and thou shalt observe how beautiful and glorious she is. And he brought me, in a vision of the spirit, to a great and high mountain, and he shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God; which I understood to be an emblem of the church of Christ, in its most happy and glorious state. And it was indeed a most delightful object to behold, having the glory of God shining round about it; and its lustre [was] like that of a most precious gem, bright as a jasper stone, and clear as crystal, for the whole city, as it was represented to me pendent in the air, shone with an elegant and amazing lustre.

And it appeared having a great and high wall, for ever to secure it from all the attacks of its enemies: having also twelve gates, and over the gates there appeared twelve angels, as a celestial guard posted there; and there were names written upon them, which were [the names] of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel; to signify that it was the dwelling of the Israel of God. And the city made a complete square, having on the east side, which I first viewed, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates.

And as I saw the city suspended, as it were, in the air, I had an opportunity of observing, that the

a The Twelve tribes (of the sons of Israel.) Such a regard constantly maintained to the Jews, and their ancestors, and their temple-worship, must have a great tenderness to constitute their regards; and may also afford some hints for the interpretations of many passages of the Old Testament, in which expressions, taken from the Jewish church, are used in describing that of the Messiah.

b It
the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, 15 And he that talked with me, had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed; twelve thousand furlongs; the length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18 And the building of the wall was of jasper, and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, a sapphire; the third a chalcedony; the fourth an emerald;

20 The fifth, a sardonyx; 21 the sixth, a sardius; 22 the seventh, a chrysolite; 23 the eighth, a beryl; 24 the ninth, a topaz; 25 the tenth, a chrysoprase; 26 the eleventh, a jasper; 27 the twelfth, a sapphire. And the twelve foundations were twelve apostles of the Lamb, seated on thrones.

The wall of the city had twelve foundations; and in them, the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb were engraven; to signify, how great a dependence the church had on their testimony, and what an influence the gospel, which they preached, had upon raising this noble and Divine structure. And he that spake with me, as the angel who appeared in vision to Ezekiel (chap. xl. 3,) a measuring reed, but with this circumstance of illustrious distinction, that it was a golden reed; and it was given him, that he might measure the city, and its gates, and its wall. And the city was a complete square; and its length was exactly equal to its breadth; and he measured the city with the reed, and each side was twelve thousand stadia, or furlongs.

And, which was most extraordinary of all, it appeared to me, in this vision, as a perfect cube, so that its length, and its breadth, and its height, were equal; which was an intimation how impossible it was for any of its enemies to scale the bulwarks that defended it. And he measured the thickness of its wall, and found it one hundred and forty-four cubits, the square of twelve; and this was according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel who had the measuring-rod in his hand, and accurately took the dimensions of it. And the building of its wall was like a complete rock of jasper, and the city was pure gold, and it was bright and clear like refined glass. And to signify how firm the foundations of the walls of the city, which were the emblems of the apostles and their doctrine, they appeared, adorned with every precious stone, like so many vast and solid rocks of gems, lying under the gates, and appearing radiant and glorious, while the city hung, as I said before, suspended in my sight. The first foundation was jasper; the second sapphire; the third chalcedony; these were on the east side; the fourth emerald; the fifth sardonyx; the sixt...
And was enlightened by the glory of God, 

the sixth sardius, these were on the north; 
the seventh chrysolite, on a stoned the colour of pure gold; these, with a beryl, the sixth, topaz, these were on the south; and to complete the square, the tenth was chrysoprasus, or a beautiful mixture of gold and green, the eleventh, by sardis, and the twelfth, amethyst, which appeared on the west side; thus were they agreeably variegated and decorated, with all the elegance and magnificence that can be imagined.

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each of the gates was an emerald; and the street of the city was pure gold, the substance being transparent glass, and reflecting the light that shone upon it, with a lustre equal to that of polished gold. And whereas the temple made so considerable a part of the view of Jerusalem, the holy city, which I had been used to visit; as for the heavenly Jerusalem, I see no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it: God was present in Christ his Son, by a more intimate presence than had ever been known upon earth, and by that presence, he made even the whole of the city most holy.

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine thereon: for the glory of the Lord gave light, and the Lamb is the light thereof, and the glorious manifestation of this presence rendered, not only artificers, but all natural light, unnecessary. And the nations of the earth did walk continually in the light. Happy nations, consisting of myriads and millions, shall expatiate in, and enjoy the delightful scene, and the hope of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

21 And the stream of life which proceeded from the throne of God and of the Lamb, fell upon Mr. Washington's letter, and bore down every thing, which being prevented to be in any part of the city, but in the temple, and the temple in the city, the Lord is the Saviour of the heavenly world.

22 And I saw a temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.
were to conceive all the monarchs upon earth, uniting all their treasures to adorn one single place, they could produce nothing comparable to what I then saw. And the gates of it shall not be shut by day; and that is equivalent to saying, they shall never be shut at all; for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it; whatever is most desirable among all nations, seemed to meet together, to adorn that place, where good men of all nations shall dwell and reign with God for ever. And nothing unclean shall enter into it, nor [any thing which] practises abomination and falsehood of any kind, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life, in which none of such a detestable character can possibly have any place.

**IMPROVEMENT**

**GLOORIOUS things are indeed spoken of thee, O thou city of God.** (Psal. lxxxvii. 3.) Thus does the Divine Being condescend to aid our feeble faith, by such sensible representations. But none of these things which are spoken, can give us an idea grand and magnificent enough. The pearls and the gems, the gold and the crystal, the honour of kings, and all the nations they govern, all fall inconceivably short of that glory; for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor, active and boundless as the human imagination may seem, has it entered into the heart of man to conceive,

new earth, whose glory shall be reflected, from, and so adorn the blissful city which they shall then inhabit. (Compare Isa. lx. 3, 11, 20; lxvi. 12.)

If there shall be no night there.] Mr. Whiston supposes, that a comet, meeting the earth at the conjunction, (for to such a concurrence he ascribes that awful phenomenon,) shall give it such a blow, as to destroy its diurnal motion, leaving only such a degree of it, that, like the moon with respect to us, it shall move round its axis, while it performs its periodic revolution round the central body; and so as to turn always the same face towards it; so that one hemisphere shall be always enlightened by the sun, and the want of it in the other, shall be supplied by a supernatural light. But the four dark corners, (which where they are it is difficult to say) shall be the habitation of Gog and Magog. It is hard to determine whether this agrees with the description here given, or the principles of good philosophy. See Whist. Theory, p. 447. But this is not a place to canvass such an hypothesis, nor is it necessary, after what his antagonist Kell has said concerning it. This gentleman also, thinks a comet shall remove the moon from its orbit, so that it shall be converted into a primary planet, as he thinks it would have been at the flood, had it not been prevented by a peculiar providence.

*But only those, &c.* As it is certain, that nothing profane, abominable, and false, can here be considered as written in the book of life, this is another text to be added to the large catalogue I have given to John xvii. 12, where it is to be considered, not as an excipitive, but adhesive particle. See Vol. II. sect. 159, note f.

*There are many beautiful ideas in the description, which I have not collected together in this improvement, as some of them have been taken notice of before, and some occur in the next chapter.*
sect. 23 tokens of his presence. (1 Cor. ii. 9.)

27 And who shall abide in this thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in this thy holy hill? They who are written in the Lamb's book of life, they whom God has, from the beginning, chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, being predestinated to the adoption of children, through Jesus Christ unto himself. And who are these? None that are unclean and profane:

3 none that work abomination and a lie; but the pure and pious, the humble and the holy. Form us, O Lord, to this character by thy grace: and never let the gaudy glare of sensual enjoyments, and worldly possessions, turn our eyes from contemplating this glorious sight, or alienate our hearts from the pursuit of this blessedness; till, having heard of it by the hearing of the ear, and believing the faithful report, our eyes shall behold those Divine substantial glories, which these emblems, resplendent as they are, can but imperfectly represent. In the mean time, O Lord, lead us onwards through what dark and gloomy path thou pleasest, to these abodes of light and glory; determine for us in what cottages we shall lodge, though ever so mean and obscure, while we are pursuing our journey to this royal, this imperial palace.

SECT. XXVI.

The Apostle hath a further vision of the river of life, and of the tree of life; describes the happiness of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, and receives a further message from God by an Angel, before whom he is about to renew his prostration; but is forbidden. XXII. 1—9.

REV. XXII. 1.

A ND having given me this view of the holy city, he, that is, the angel who condescended to be my guide on this occasion, showed me the pure river of the water of life which was clear as crystal, issuing out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb; an emblem of that perpetual life, and overflowing joy, which shall be the portion of all the blissful inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. And in the midst of the street of it, and on the one side and the other of the river, [was] the tree of life, (Gen. iii. 22,) producing

Rev. XXII. 1.

A ND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river,
The happiness of the new Jerusalem described.


And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord of lords shall give them power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

And when he had said this to me, he added, Though these words which I have spoken, be token

Every curse shall cease.] So the late learned Bishop of London, I think very justly renders these words, which are plainly limited to the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, and must certainly therefore, refer to the final state of happiness, after the resurrection: till which time all the saints of preceding ages will remain under the power of death, as to their body, and the effect of the first curse be written in their dust.

Names upon their foreheads.] It hath elsewhere been observed, sect. xvi. note 1. that there was a custom prevailing among many of the heathen, to inscribe on the foreheads the names, or symbolical marks, of the deity they worshipped; but the near connection between this clause, and that which related to their serving God in the offices of devotion, (for that λαμμα signifies) makes me think it more natural, to refer this to the inscription of Holiness to Jehovah, written on the mitre of the high priest, and so naturally leads us to reflect upon that intimate approch to the blessed God with which all these happy souls shall be honoured.
These glorious things St. John saw.

token such glorious things, that they may seem in a manner incredible, yet is not the divine bounty and munificence to be estimated by any human standard; they are therefore to be received, and depended upon, as faithful and true. And these things, O John, are intended not merely for thy own instruction and consolation, and much less for thy curiosity; but the Lord God of the holy prophets has sent his angels, to shew to his servants, what must quickly be done, and to represent scenes, which shall not be long ere they begin to open.

7 though it may be long before they close. Yet, on the whole, I may in his name declare, Behold, I come quickly; Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John, who wrote this book, am the person who saw and heard these things, and when I heard and saw [them] I was so powerfully affected, that I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who shewed these things to me, forgetting the manner in which the same kind of homage had lately been refused, upon a like occasion. And he also said to me, as the angel had before done, (chap. xiv. 10) See [how do it] not, for I am a fellow-servant with thee, I am subject to the same Lord, and share in the duty and service of thy brethren, the prophet, and of those who keep the words of this book, which thou art now commanded to write: worship God alone, and avoid not thy religious homage, between him and any creature, how exalted and excellent soever.

IMROVE-

4 Keep the words of this book. There are indeed a multitude of things contained in this book, which are of great nature, that whoever pays a deep regard to them, must necessarily be a true Christian, and submitted to all the blessings and promises of the gospel.
IMPROVEMENT.

We will not now employ our time in reviewing the infirmity of this holy apostle, who seems again to have fallen into the same danger of idolatry from which he had so lately been recovered Ver. Nor will we stay to examine, whether he took this angel for our Lord Jesus Christ, as some have imagined; or to determine what homage it was he attempted to pay. Let us content ourselves, for the present, with reflecting, how necessary it is we should be on our guard, against exceeding in our esteem and affection, for creatures who have been the means of conveying to us signal advantages, and especially assisting our views of the New Jerusalem:—To the contemplation of which, may we now return with new and growing delight.

Let us raise our eyes to the water of life, which issues from the throne of God and the Lamb: to the tree of life, which grows on its banks, and produces such a variety of fruit, both for food and refreshment, and for the healing of the nations; to that more excellent paradise, in which there shall be no curse, where, from the throne of God and of the Lamb, shall be scattered ten thousand blessings, on all his servants; who shall there serve him, with everlasting, with increasing delight, being admitted to see his face, and exulting in their having the name of God written upon their foreheads; which they reckon a brighter and nobler ornament, than the most glorious crown, or diadem, without such an inscription, could be. These are the words of truth and faithfulness; and as such, may our faith embrace them and our souls ever rest upon them.

O that we may feel our thirst after this water of life, our hunger after this fruit of the tree of life, more powerfully excited. We shall, in both respects, be satisfied in the proper season; and, in the mean time, God will send us some refreshments, during our continuance in the wilderness. Already are we, if we are true believers, delivered from the curse; and those things, which were the original effects and consequences of it, shall be overruled by our gracious God, and converted into a blessing. And O, may Divine love, and every genuine regard to God and to the Lamb, prevail and govern in our hearts; and may our lives be devoted to that service, in which we hope our eternity will be employed. Have we not already, as it were, received the mark of God in our foreheads? Have we not solemnly enlisted ourselves to fight under the banner of Christ? Have we not, in repeated and most affecting solemnities and ordinances of his own institution,
tion, declared our desire of being for ever devoted to him? O let us ever remember the sacred engagement. Let holiness to the
Ver. Lord be written on our hearts, as well as on our foreheads. Let
3 all our affections, and all our faculties, all our possessions, and
all our pursuits, be consecrated to God. To hear this name and
inscription will now, even in this dark and bemighted world, shed
a glory around us. It will be as a sacred guide to our ways, it will
clear and animate our hearts, it will bring down to us many a
delightful foretaste to that world, where, in his light, we shall see
light, and where we shall reign with him for ever and ever. Amen.

SECT. XXVII.

Our Lord Jesus Christ admonishes the Apostle, to discover to
the churches what had been revealed to him; and solemnly
declares his speedy approach, to fix the eternal state of
men according to their characters and works. Rev.
XXII. 10—15.

Revelation XXII. 10.

A ND h, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom I received this revelation, said unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of
this book, that they should not be immediately put forth; for the time is near, in which the accomplishment of these things shall begin.
Yea, the time is just approaching, when the last seal shall be set upon the characters of men, and
when it shall be said on the one hand, Let him that is unjust, be unjust still; and let him that is
polluted, be polluted still; for no more opportuni-
ties shall ever be granted for reforming what
hath been amiss and recovering the unrighte-
ous and polluted soul to rectitude and purity.
And, on the other hand, it shall be said, Let
him that is righteous, be righteous still; and let
him that is holy be holy still, nothing shall ever
happen to bring the virtues and graces of good
minds into any future danger, or under any cloud;
but their righteousness and their holiness shall
for ever shine; yea, shine with an increasing
lustre.

a. And h, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ.] Many following words, and especially ver.
b. To prove that our Lord is here meant.
c. But it is a remarkable instance of the re-
d. Of a relative to a remote antecedent,
fluence of a figure of speech, which I have taken
in, for many former occasions.
Hab. vi. 2, note a.
12 And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according to his works shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Lustre. And, to confirm this, Behold I come quickly; I shall be manifest ere it be long; and my reward both of grace and vengeance, [is] with me; and I will recompense to every man according as his works shall be, whether it shall appear, on an impartial examination, to have been good, or evil. And, to confirm it further, I repeat it again, I am the Alpha, and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last; and what I say may be depended upon as the words of invariable fidelity; Hear them therefore with attention and regard. And, since my nature and perfections are immutable, see that the necessary change be made in yourselves, in order to your obtaining that happiness of which your sins may now render you incapable. Happy [are] they, and they alone, who do his commandments, and so prepare for his important appearance; that they may have the privilege [to eat] of the tree of life; and they shall freely enter by the gates into the glorious city. I have described, and have their perpetual abode there. But, without; [are] the unclean, who merit no better a name than that of dogs, as they debase their rational faculties to the service of detestable lusts; and sorcerers, and fornicators, and murderers, and idolaters, who may justly be ranked together as the most abominable of sinners; and with them must be ranked too, every one who loveth and make a lie, who forges falsehood, and practises it, or acts in any allowed contradiction to the great eternal rule of truth and rectitude.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us be very thankful, that the words of this prophecy are not Ver sealed from us; but that truths, in which we have so important a concern, are so plainly published and proclaimed. The time is near, when a seal will be set on the characters of men; blessed be God,

b Who do his commandments, &c.] This promise to all that do his commandments, that they shall enter into the gate of the city, here described, evidently proves it to refer to that state of future happiness which all good men shall finally enjoy. Compare ver. 18, 19,

c Every one who loveth and maketh a lie.] Though idols are called lies, yet as idola
tors had been mentioned before as excluded out of this New Jerusalem, I think it most natural to understand this clause in the sense given in the paraphrase.
God, he who is never unrighteous and polluted, may be purified and restored, justified and saved. Adored be that grace, that waits so long upon sinners! But the Divine long-suffering towards them will have its period; yet a little while, and Jesus comes, to render to every man according to his works. May we then be fixed in a world of immutable holiness and happiness.

The Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, has discovered to us many evangelical truths in this my serous book. He hath directed our eyes to the Lamb that was slain to redeem us to God by his blood; and hath shewed us the saints in glory, laying down their crowns in his presence and ascribing the praise of all the salvation to him; but he hath shewn us nothing that is inconsistent with the necessity of real and universal holiness. Yea, he himself proclaims them alone to be entitled to enter the gates of the New Jerusalem, and to eat of the fruit of the tree of life, who do God's commandments. Let us not, therefore, deceive ourselves with vain words, nor attend to any who would sophisticate the word of God, and fixing their view only on some detached passages of it, erroneously by their unguarded interpretations its general scope and meaning. Let us, in reviewing scripture, observe what God commands and requires, and compare it with what he forbids, that we may thereby impartially judge and try ourselves. And how free soever we may be from any of the grosser crimes here enumerated, such as fornication, murder and idolatry, let us not allow ourselves in the love and practice of any thing inconsistent with the immutable rule of right, wisdom, and truth; as well knowing every allowed and continued indulgence of that kind, to be utterly irreconcilable with a well-grounded hope of inheriting eternal life. May it please thee, O Lord, to inscribe all these laws upon our hearts; that our joy, in the hope and prospect of the promised blessedness, may rise in proportion to our acquaintance with thy unerring word, and the impartiality and diligence with which we trace the actions of our lives, and the affections of our hearts, in comparison with it, and reduce them to a holy conformity to its precepts.

SECT. XXVIII.

Our Lord Jesus Christ repeats his august titles, and gracious invitation; warns us of the dreadful doom of him who shall add to, or take from his words; and declares his purpose of coming quickly; to which St. John adds his hearty assent, and concludes with his apostolical benediction. Rev. XXII. 16, to the end.

Revelation XXII: 16.

And now to conclude the whole; be it known to every one, who reads these words,
If any one add to this prophecy, God will severely punish him.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come. And let him that wineth, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues of those plagues which are written in this book:

a Whoever will, let him receive, &c.] Such a declaration of free grace seems to have been wisely inserted just in the close of the sacred canon, to encourage the hope of every humble soul, that is truly desirous of the blessings of the gospel; and to guard against those suspicions of Divine goodness which some have so unhappily abetted. The word ἀποκορύφεια, which we render take does often signify receive; and the word δωγμα, is as much as gratis, which implies the freedom of the gift; and

b If any man add, &c.] It is true this particularly refers to the book of the Revelation; but the parity of reason extending to other books, I doubt not the terror of the threatening does so too. God forbid we should imagine every honestly most taken
And in like manner, if any one take away from it.

he will, by any designed addition to them, or corruption of them, make himself highly criminal, and eternally miserable. And if any one take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, with a design thereby to diminish in any degree, by the omission of what is disagreeable to him, or others whom he may desire to please and favour, God will severely punish such a sacrilege, and take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and the glorious things, even the invaluable blessings which are written, and described in the preceding passages of this book.

20 He who testifieth these important things, says, and leaves it as his parting warning with all that read them, Surely I come quickly. My soul, while I write it, replies, and let every reader reply with me from his heart, Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus, come surely, and quickly, as thon hast said; for all our highest and sublimest hopes depend upon the blessed and glorious day of thy appearance.

21 In the mean time, let the churches to whom these messages are especially directed and inscribed, receive my most affectionate wishes, my most solemn benediction, which I express in this one ardent prayer. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, even all the invaluable effects of his favour, and above all, the abundant communications of his Spirit, [be] with you all, and with all Christians, to whom these words may come, unto the end of the world. Amen.
How sweetly and delightfully does the canon of scripture conclude, leaving as it were, the music of heaven upon the attentive ear. "O thou blessed Root and Offspring of David, O thou bright and morning Star, impress on all our hearts these thy gracious words, which thou hast condescended to speak from the throne of thy glory; thereby as it were, to aid the weakness of our faith, in those which thou didst deliver, while dwelling in mortal flesh." Then did the compassionate Saviour proclaim, from an eminence in the temple, to a crowded assembly on a day of peculiar solemnity, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: (John vii. 17) And now behold he makes the same proclamation from the celestial temple; he points, as it were, to the fountain-head of happiness, to the springs of the water of life, near the throne of God, and says, Whoever will, let him come, let him take, let him freely take of this living water; yea, and not content with speaking this language by his Spirit only, he calls on his bride, to lift up her melodious voice, to publish this kind invitation; he calls on every one that hears it, to echo it back, as if the excess of his goodness overcame him, as if it were necessary to his own happiness, that men should accept of their own salvation.

With what sacred observance should these books be guarded, which contain a message of such infinite importance! Of what dreadful curses are they worthy, who presume to add to what is already perfect, or to take away from that which is in every part Divine. I trust none of us shall ever presumptuously attempt to do it: and may we be preserved from those mistaken interpretations, in consequence of which, we should teach the world, as by his authority, any thing which he has not dictated, or deny any thing which carries along with it the stamp of such an authority. "Have pity, O Lord, upon our weakness; impute not prejudices which thou knowest we do not allow; and give us a greater penetration of mind, to understand the true sense of thy word; a simplicity of heart to receive it; an integrity, so far as the duty of our places requires, to declare it; and a zeal to inculcate and defend it."

And while we are thus employed, or employed in any other services which Providence has assigned us, in our respective stations and circumstances of life: whatever labours may exercise us, whatever difficulties may surround us, whatever sorrows may depress us, let us with pleasure hear our Lord proclaiming, Behold, I come quickly, I come to put a period to the labour and suffering of my servants; I come, and my reward of grace is with me,
Sect. XXVIII. to recompence with royal bounty, every work of faith, and labour of love: I come to receive my faithful persevering people to my self, to dwell for ever in that blissful world, where the sacred volume, which contains the important discoveries of my will, shall be no more necessary; but knowledge, and holiness, and joy, shall be poured in upon their souls in a more immediate, in a nobler and more effectual manner. Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus. Hasten the blessed hour to us, and to all thy churches as far as it may consist with thy wise and holy counsels. And, in the mean time, may thy grace be with us, to keep alive the remembrance of thy love, and the expectation of thy coming, in our hearts, and to animate us to a temper and conduct, which may suit the blessings we have already received, and the nobler felicity after which thou hast taught us to aspire. Amen and amen.
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