

**A COMMENTARY
ON
PHILIPPIANS (KJV)**

Dr. John Gill D.D.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This commentary written by John Gill (1697 - 14 October 1771) is a verse by verse comment on each verse of the gospel of Matthew. It is part of his 3 volume set of the New Testament (1735-38). He was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology. Born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, he attended Kettering Grammar School where he mastered the Latin classics and learned Greek by age 11. He continued self-study in everything from logic to Hebrew, his love for the latter remaining throughout his life.

John Gill was awarded in 1748, an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Aberdeen. He was a profound scholar and a prolific author.

His most important works are:

- The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated (London, 1731)
- The Cause of God and Truth (4 parts, 1735–38), a retort to Daniel Whitby's Five Points
- An Exposition of the New Testament (3 vols., 1746–48), which with his Exposition of the Old Testament (6 vols., 1748–63) forms his magnum opus
- A Collection of Sermons and Tracts[1]
- A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents (1767)[1]
- A Body of Doctrinal Divinity (1767)
- A Body of Practical Divinity (1770).

He taught and maintained the Doctrines of Grace and contended against the Arminianism of John Wesley and has been classified by some as a Hyper Calvinist.

His views on Eschatology were Historic however his treatment of the Olivet Prophecy in Matthew shows he noted the significance of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and it is believed by the publisher that had Dr. Gill known J.S. Russell the eschatology taught in his his book *The Parousia*¹ he would have been enabled to further the cause of God and Truth and clearly teach a fulfilled view of prophecy know as Preterism. It is hoped this commentary will be of helped to those Preterist who have no knowledge of Calvinistis soteriology.

¹ See Further Publications at the end of this book.

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Presentation and Dedication

This new edition of Dr. John Gills, Commentary on the book of Ephesians is presented and dedicated to the students, pastors and teachers of Christ-Centered Church Inc. Ministries, Philippines, under the care of William Ola Poloc, its founder and senior pastor (Bishop) on the, 16th January 2020, by David Clarke, founder of Trojan Horse International (TULIP) Inc.

Brief History of the Baguio Christ-Centered Churches Ministries Inc.

Pstr William O. Poloc Sr. was released from the New Bilibid prison in August 2002, where he graduated with a Degree in Theology, and started prison ministries in his hometown Baguio City, with his wife and the aid of a certain missionary from UK, by name David Clarke, the founder of Trojan Horse International. In December 2002 they were able to baptize 22 inmates in Baguio City Jail, 9 inmates in Benguet Provincial jail, along with William's wife Beth Poloc and Josephine Ortis, along with her daughter Karen Basoon, who had all confessed their faith in the lord Jesus Christ. David Clarke returned to the UK in 2003 after his mission.

Later, God gave them a burden to open a church within the city so as to reach out to their families, relatives and the families of my co inmates who are still incarcerated at the New Bilibid Prison.

By His grace the Baguio Christ-Centered Church Inc. stood up. As years go by God continued to bless the church by drawing more souls into it. He also bless us with a bible school to train ministers unable to study in an expensive bible schools. Graduates of our school were sent out to reach lost souls and augment Christ Centered mission churches to different places around the archipelago. As a result, by God's grace and providence Christ Centered Churches were established to the different places in the country.



God's work here in the Northern Philippines bloomed most especially here in the city of Baguio. The Baguio Christ-Centred Church is the mother church of all the Christ Centered Churches in the Philippines namely; The Pilot-Christ-Centred Church, The Kamog Christ-Centred Church, The Christ-Centered-Church Theological School(TULIP), The Christ-Centred Radio Ministry,

The Christ-Centred Jail Ministries etc.). We'll, we are truly blessed by these works He has entrusted to us. To God be the glory!



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Ministries Philippines

Personal note from the
publisher

It is noted and remarked that this date of publication is the Golden Jubilee ²(Leviticus 25:8-13 King) of conversion of David Clarke, which took place on, 16th January 1971.

<http://www.Biertonparticularbaptists.co.uk>

David Clarke is the sole remaining member of Bierton Particular Baptists who was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982. The doctrinal foundation of Trojan Horse Mission are those of the Bierton Particular Baptists Articles of religion.

View the Wikipedia Entry for Bierton and view [None Conformist Place of Worship](#)

² 8 And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR	Contents	Philippians 2:2	30
INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS I	2	Philippians 2:3	30
Philippians 1:1	6	Philippians 2:4	31
Philippians 1:2	7	Philippians 2:5	31
Philippians 1:3	8	Philippians 2:6	32
Philippians 1:4	8	Philippians 2:7	33
Philippians 1:5	9	Philippians 2:8	33
Philippians 1:6	9	Philippians 2:9	34
Philippians 1:7	9	Philippians 2:10	36
Philippians 1:8	11	Philippians 2:11	36
Philippians 1:10	12	Philippians 2:12	37
Philippians 1:11	13	Philippians 2:12	38
Philippians 1:13	14	Philippians 2:14	39
Philippians 1:14	16	Philippians 2:15	40
Philippians 1:15	17	Philippians 2:16	41
Philippians 1:17	17	Philippians 2:17	42
Philippians 1:18	19	Philippians 2:18	42
Philippians 1:19	19	Philippians 2:19	42
Philippians 1:20	20	Philippians 2:20	43
Philippians 1:21	21	Philippians 2:21	43
Philippians 1:22	21	Philippians 2:22	44
Philippians 1:24	22	Philippians 2:23	44
Philippians 1:25	24	Philippians 2:24	44
Philippians 1:26	24	Philippians 2:25	44
Philippians 1:27	25	Philippians 2:26	45
Philippians 1:28	25	Philippians 2:27	45
Philippians 1:29	27	Philippians 2:28	46
Philippians 1:30	27	Philippians 2:29	46
INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS II	28	Philippians 2:30	46
Philippians 2:1	28	INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS III	47

Philippians 3:1	47	Philippians 4:9	69
Philippians 3:2	48	Philippians 4:10	70
Philippians 3:3	49	Philippians 4:11	70
Philippians 3:4	50	Philippians 4:12	71
Philippians 3:5	50	Philippians 4:13	72
Philippians 3:6	52	Philippians 4:14	72
Philippians 3:7	52	Philippians 4:15	72
Philippians 3:8	53	Philippians 4:16	73
Philippians 3:9	54	Philippians 4:17	73
Philippians 3:10	55	Philippians 4:18	73
Philippians 3:11	56	Philippians 4:19	74
Philippians 3:12	57	Philippians 4:20	75
Philippians 3:13	58	Philippians 4:21	75
Philippians 3:14	58	Philippians 4:22	75
Philippians 3:15	59	Philippians 4:23	75
Philippians 3:16	60	FURTHER PUBLICATIONS	76
Philippians 3:17	60	COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS	76
Philippians 3:18	60	SONG OF SONGS	76
Philippians 3:19	61	A COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW'S GOSPEL	
Philippians 3:20	62	(Part 1)	77
Philippians 3:21	63	A COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW'S GOSPEL	77
INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS IV	63	A COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS	77
Philippians 4:1	64	A COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS	77
Philippians 4:2	65	A COMMENTARY ON COLOSSIANS	78
Philippians 4:3	65	A COMMENTARY ON 1 and 2 THESSALONIANS	78
Philippians 4:4	66	A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY I	79
Philippians 4:5	66		79
Philippians 4:6	67	A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY II, II, IV	80
Philippians 4:7	68	A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY, V, VI	81
Philippians 4:8	69	A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY VII	82

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS Philippi was a Roman colony, and the chief city of one part of Macedonia, Ac 16:12, it is by Appianus called *Datos* which was its original name; and by Diodorus Siculus it is called *Crenidae* {a}, from, the fountains about it; and it took its name *Philippi*, from Philip king of Macedon, father of Alexander the great, who rebuilt and fortified it; near this place a famous battle was fought, and a victory obtained by Augustus Caesar and Mark Antony, over Brutus and Cassius; it is now called *Chrixopolis*, properly *Chrysopolis*, from the plenty of golden mines near it: here the apostle was directed by a vision, to go and preach the Gospel; and which was succeeded, to the conversion of Lydia, and the jailer, and their families; which laid the foundation of a Gospel church in this place, to whom this epistle is written; and which was written by the apostle when he was a prisoner at Rome, as many things in it show; for he more than once makes mention of his bonds, and of these being made manifest in Caesar's palace, and of some of Caesar's household sending their Christian salutations to this church: Dr. Hammond makes the date of this epistle to be the year 59, and Dr. Lightfoot places it in the year 60, and the sixth of Nero; the occasion of it was this, the Philippians, to whom the apostle was very dear, he being the first preacher of the Gospel to them, and the instrument of their conversion, hearing that he was a prisoner at Rome, send their minister and pastor Epaphroditus to him, to visit him, and by him a present to support him under his afflicted circumstances, and who related to him the case of this church; and at his departure he sent by him this letter; the design of which is, to express his love and affection to them; to give them an account of his bonds, and the usefulness of them, and how he was supported under them; to encourage them under all the afflictions and persecutions, they endured for the sake of Christ; to excite them to love, unity, and peace, among themselves; to caution them against false teachers, judaizing Christians, that were for joining Moses and Christ, law and Gospel, works and grace together, in the business of salvation; to exhort them to a holy life and conversation, and to return them thanks for their kind present. {a} Vid. Ptolom. Geograph. l. 3. c. 13.

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle; the apostle's salutation of the Philippians; an account of his thanksgivings, prayers, and affection for them, and confidence of them; a narrative of his

sufferings, and the use of them; and an exhortation to a conversation becoming the Gospel, to abide by it, and suffer cheerfully for it. The inscription is in Php 1:1, in which are mentioned by name the persons that subscribed the epistle, Paul and Timothy; and who are described by their character, servants of Jesus Christ; and also the persons to whom the epistle was sent, by the place of their abode, Philippi; the members of the church by their general character, saints in Christ Jesus; and the officers of it, by those that are peculiar to them as such, bishops and deacons: the salutation is in Php 1:2, and then follows a thanksgiving for them to God, which was made in prayer, and upon every remembrance of them at the throne of grace, and that for their constant fellowship in the Gospel, Php 1:3-5, and the apostle expresses his strong confidence of the good work of grace being begun in them, and of the performance of it, until the day of Christ; grounded upon a judgment of charity, and a belief of their being partakers of the same grace with himself, Php 1:6,7, and declares the most tender and affectionate love to them, for the truth of which he calls God to witness, Php 1:8, and as a proof of it, puts up several petitions for them; that they might have an increase of love, and spiritual knowledge, judgment, and sense, that so they might be capable of trying and approving things that differ, and which are the most excellent of them; that they might be sincere and harmless in their lives, and always doing good works in the strength of Christ, and to the glory of God, Php 1:9-11, next follows an account of his bonds and imprisonment, and the usefulness of them, as that they were for the further spread of the Gospel in many places, and even in Caesar's palace, Php 1:12,13, yea, by means of them several of the ministering brethren were the more emboldened to preach the Gospel without fear of men; though there was a difference among them, some preached Christ of envy, strife, and contention, thinking to add to the apostle's troubles, and others, of good will, and of love to the apostle, who they knew was set for the defence of the Gospel, Php 1:14-17, upon all which the apostle gives his sentiments, and makes his reflections, that whatever were the views of some men in preaching, it was, and ever would be, constant matter of joy to him that Christ was preached, Php 1:18, yea, he was satisfied, that the ill designed by some to him would be overruled for his good, by means of the prayers of the saints, and the supply of the Spirit; for he had a pure and well grounded hope and expectation, that he should never be brought to shame and confusion,

but that Christ would be magnified in him living and dying; for he knew that both his life, and his death, would be gain to Christ, or that it would be for the glory of Christ for him to live, and his own gain should he die, Php 1:19-21, which put him in a strait what was most eligible in this case, whether, to live in the flesh, or depart out of the world; seeing to live in the flesh, and labour in the ministry, were fruitful and profitable, and more necessary and useful for the churches of Christ, and to die, and be with Christ, were better for himself, Php 1:22-24, but upon maturely weighing things on both sides, like one of a truly noble public spirit, he inclines to the former; nay, is persuaded, that he should continue longer to be an instrument of increasing the faith and joy of the Lord's people, which he knew would abound in Christ on his account, should he be restored again, Php 1:25,26, and then he concludes the chapter with an exhortation to the Philippians, to order their conversation agreeably to the Gospel of Christ, and to continue firm and unanimous in it, and use their utmost endeavours to keep it themselves, and spread it among others, Php 1:27, being not daunted and intimidated by the persecutions of men, which to the persecutors was a sign of perdition, looked darkly, and with an ill aspect upon them, but to the persecuted was a token that they had an interest in that salvation which is of God, Php 1:28, for as it is a gift of grace to believe in Christ, so likewise to suffer for him, Php 1:29, to which the apostle animates them by his own example, that which they were called unto being no other than what they had seen endured by him, and had heard concerning him, Php 1:30.

Philippians 1:1

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ

The apostle sets his own name first, as being not only superior to Timothy in age, in office, and in character, but the sole writer of this epistle. The reasons of his joining Timothy with him are, because he was with him when he first preached at Philippi, and so was known unto the Philippians, and respected by them; and because he was about to send him to them again, whose commendations he enlarges on in the epistle itself; and to let them see, that there was a continued agreement between them in affection and doctrine. It shows indeed great humility in the apostle to join with him one so young, and so much inferior to him on all accounts; though it must be observed, that Timothy was

not a partner with him in composing the epistle; he only joined in the salutation to this church, and approved of the letter to it, and might be the amanuensis of the apostle; but had no hand in the epistle itself, which was dictated by Paul under divine inspiration. He chooses a character which agreed to them both; he does not say apostles, for Timothy was no apostle, though he himself was, but "servants of Jesus Christ"; not of men; nor did they seek to please men by preaching the doctrines and commandments of men, and which are suited to the carnal reasonings, lusts, and pleasures of men; for then the character here assumed would not belong to them: but servants of Christ; and that not in such sense only as all mankind are, or in right ought to be, since all are his creatures, and therefore ought to serve him; nor merely as all the saints in common are, being bought with the price of Christ's blood, and being effectually called by his grace, and so made willing to serve him from a principle of love, without servile fear, and with a view to his glory; but as ministers of the word, and preachers of the Gospel; they were his servants in the Gospel, they served him under the ministerial character, and as such were the servants of the most high God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; so that this title is far from being mean and despicable, it is high, honourable, and glorious.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.

The persons to whom this epistle is inscribed are here described by the place of their abode, Philippi, and by the various characters they bore in the church; which was at this time very numerous, consisting of many members, and of proper officers, and are both taken notice of here. The members are meant by "all the saints in Christ Jesus"; they were saints or holy persons, not by Moses and his law; not by ceremonial ablutions and sacrifices, which only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, but could not take away sin, or cleanse from it; nor by themselves and their moral righteousness; for though thereby men, nay outwardly appear holy and righteous, yet they remain inwardly unholy and impure; nor by baptism, which has no regenerating nor sanctifying virtue in it; if persons are not saints before that, they are never by it; it leaves them as it finds them, and neither takes away original or actual sin: but these were saints in and by Christ; they were become holy in consequence of being in Christ; men are first in Christ, and then saints in him; they are chosen "in him" before the world

began to be holy, and in time are made new men, new creatures, are created in him unto good works by virtue of their being in him; hence he sanctifies his church and people by his blood, they being so nearly related to him, and interested in him, and he in them; hence they being first of God in Christ, he is made sanctification to them; and hence internal holiness is wrought in them from Christ, by his Spirit; which being begun is carried on, and will be performed until the day of Christ; and which was the happy case of these Philippians, as the apostle was confident of. The officers of this church were “the bishops and deacons”. The “bishops” were the pastors, elders, and overseers of the church, for a bishop and an elder is one and the same; see (Acts 20:17 Acts 20:28) ; where the elders of the church at Ephesus are called “overseers” or “bishops”; for the same word is used there as here; and the Syriac version here renders the word by (ܩܫܝܐ) , “elders”: and they design no other than common and ordinary pastors; who have the name of elders from their age, gravity, and seniority; and that of bishops and overseers from the nature of their office, which is to feed, watch, inspect, and take the oversight of the flock, minister sound doctrine to them, and preserve them from error and heresies. It seems by this, and the instance of the church at Ephesus, that there were, and so may be, where there is necessity for it, more pastors or bishops than one in a church; unless it can be thought that there were more churches than one in each of these cities; or that the pastors of adjacent churches are here included; neither of which seem to be a clear case, but the contrary: but then these pastors or bishops were all upon an equal foot; one had not any authority or power over another, or more authority than another; they were not metropolitan or diocesan bishops, but pastors of a particular church; and were neither lords over one another, nor of God’s heritage. The “deacons” were such as served tables, the Lord’s table, the minister’s table, and the poor’s table; took care of the secular affairs of the church, received and disbursed moneys, kept the church’s accounts, and provided everything necessary for its temporal good. The one sort of these officers were concerned with the souls and spiritual estate of the members of the church; the others with their bodies and temporal estate, by visiting the sick, relieving the poor and both these exhibit the true primitive plan of church offices and discipline; there being no other order of offices or officers, in a Christian church of divine institution, but pastors and deacons; whatever else is introduced is without warrant, and comes from the

man of sin. These officers are mentioned by the apostle, not only to show his respect to them, but to observe to the members of this church, that they ought to esteem them highly for their works’ sake; these being offices of great importance and usefulness to the church, which, by having such, was a truly organized church of Christ.

Philippians 1:2

Grace be unto you

This form of salutation is used by the apostle in all his epistles; (See Gill on Romans 1:7);

Philippians 1:3

I thank my God

After the inscription and salutation follows a thanksgiving, the object of which is God; to whom thanks is to be given at the remembrance of his name, and the perfections of his nature, and for all his mercies, temporal and spiritual. The apostle expresses his propriety and interest in him, calling him “my God”; thereby distinguishing him from all others, the nominal and fictitious gods of the Gentiles, and the idols and lusts of men’s hearts; he was the God whom he served in the Gospel, by whom he was sent, and from whom he received all his possessions, and to whom he was accountable. He had a special, particular, covenant interest in him, had knowledge of it, and faith in it; and therefore could draw nigh to God with freedom, use confidence, plead promises, expect favours, and do all he did, whether in a way of prayer, or praise in faith, and therefore was acceptable unto God. This work of thanksgiving he was often employed in on account of these Philippians, even, says he,

upon every remembrance of you;

that is, as often as I remember you, or make mention of you to God at the throne of grace, it being a customary thing with the apostle to mention by name the several churches, the care of which was upon him, in his prayers to God; see (Romans 1:9) (Ephesians 1:16) (1 Thessalonians 1:2) ; and so he used to mention this church; and whenever he did, it was with thankfulness. The Arabic version reads it, “for”, or “concerning all your remembrance”; meaning of himself, and as if the sense was, that he gave thanks to God for their remembrance of him at all times, and particularly at that time, by sending him relief in his present circumstances. But the

former sense is preferable.

Philippians 1:4

Always in every prayer of mine for you all

The apostle was a praying believer, and a praying minister: notwithstanding all his gifts, and graces, and high attainments, he was not above the work and duty of prayer, and in which he was sensible he stood in need of the assistance and direction of the Spirit of God, As soon as he was converted he prayed, and continued to do so without ceasing, as he himself directs; he was constant and assiduous at the throne of grace, and was concerned for others, as well as himself, for all the churches, and for this church, and all the saints in it.

Making request with joy;

for what God had done for them, and continued with them. Requests are to be made known to God with thanksgiving. When we request a favour of him, it becomes us to return thanks for what we have received from him. Thanksgiving is a branch of prayer; as we have always mercies to ask for, we have always mercies to be thankful for.

Philippians 1:5

For your fellowship in the Gospel

Or “for your communication unto the Gospel”; that is, to the support of it. These Philippians were one of the churches of Macedonia the apostle so highly commends for their liberality in (2 Corinthians 8:1-3) ; they had been very communicative to him, and those that were with him, from the beginning of the Gospel being preached to them: as the instances of Lydia and the jailer show, and which are taken notice of in this epistle, (Philippians 4:15 Philippians 4:16) ; And this same generous spirit still continued, of which their present by Epaphroditus was an evidence; and for this the apostle gives thanks, not only that they had an ability to support the Gospel, and assist Gospel ministers, but that they were willing to communicate, and did communicate, readily and cheerfully, largely and liberally; or this may intend their “participation in the Gospel”, as the Arabic version renders it. The Gospel was in a very wonderful and providential manner brought unto them, and it was attended with mighty power to the conversion of them; they received it with joy and gladness, and cheerfully submitted to the ordinances of it; they had much light

into it, and spiritual knowledge of it; and were made partakers of the blessings of grace, which are revealed and exhibited in it, and of the exceeding great and precious promises of it, for which the apostle gives thanks to God; for all this was from him, and a wonderful instance of his grace it was. Moreover, through the Gospel being thus brought unto them, and succeeded among them, they became a Gospel church, and had, through the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, fellowship one with another; yea, they had fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, unto which they were called by the Gospel; and in this they remained

from the first day until now;

they continued in the Gospel which they were made partakers of, and in fellowship with one another, in breaking of bread, and in prayer, and in hearing the word, which they constantly attended to, and were blessed with communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, to that time; and therefore the apostle continued from the first of their receiving the Gospel, to that moment, to give thanks to God for them on that account: for this last clause may be connected with the words in (Philippians 1:3) , “I thank my God”, as well as with those immediately preceding, “your fellowship in the Gospel”; and shows not only their perseverance in the Gospel, from the first to the present time, as the Ethiopic version renders it, for which he was abundantly thankful; but the continuance of his thankfulness on that account, from his first acquaintance with them to that time.

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing

The reason of his thanksgiving, and of his making request with joy continually on the behalf of this church, was the confidence and full persuasion he had of this same thing, of which he could be as much assured as of any thing in the world:

that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ:

by this good work is not meant the preaching of the Gospel among them, nor a Gospel church state set up in the midst of them: for though the preaching of the Gospel was a good work, and issued well in the conversion of many, in their edification and comfort, and which was still continued; and though a Gospel church state was erected among them, and was now flourishing, yet the apostle could not assure himself of the continuance of

either of them, especially until the day of Christ; and both have been removed from thence many hundreds of years ago: nor is their liberal communication to the support of the Gospel intended; for though this was a good work, yet this was not wrought by God, but by themselves, and was not wrought in them, but done by them; nor their good lives and conversations. The Syriac version indeed renders it “good works”, but these cannot be designed, for the same reasons as before; for though they are good things, and answer many valuable ends and purposes, yet they are external works done by men, and not internal ones wrought in them by God; wherefore by it is undoubtedly meant the work of grace upon their hearts, sometimes called the work of faith, because that is a principal part of it: this is God’s work, and not man’s, as may be concluded from the nature of the work itself, which is the transforming of a man by the reviewing of him, a regeneration, a resurrection, and a creation, and therefore requires almighty power; and from the condition man is in by nature, he is dead in sin, and has no power to act spiritually, and much less what is equal to such a work as this; he has no will, desire, and inclination to it, but all the reverse; and if he had, he could no more effect it, than the dry bones in Ezekiel’s vision could cause themselves to live. This is the work of God. Sometimes it is ascribed to the Father, who regenerates, calls by his grace, reveals his Son, and draws souls unto him; and sometimes to the Son, who quickens whom he will, whose Spirit is given, whose image is stamped, and out of whose fulness grace is received; but more commonly it is attributed to the Spirit, who is a spirit of regeneration, sanctification, and faith: and this is a “good work”, as it must needs be, since it is God’s work; he is the efficient cause of it; his good will and pleasure, his grace and mercy are the moving cause of it, and not men’s works; and his good word is the means of it. The matter of it is good; it is an illumination of the understanding, a subduing of the will, a taking away of the stony heart, and a giving of an heart of flesh, an infusion of spiritual life, a formation of Christ in the soul, and an implantation of all grace there: it is good in its effects; it makes a man a good man, and fits and qualifies him to perform good works, which without it he cannot do; it makes a man a proper habitation for God, and gives him meetness for the heavenly inheritance. And this is an internal work, a work begun “in” the saints; nothing external is this work; not an outward reformation, which, when right, is the fruit of this good work; nor external humiliation for sin; nor a

cessation from the grosser acts of sin; nor a conformity and submission to Gospel ordinances; all which may be where this work is not; but it is something within a man; as appears from the names by which it goes; such as spirit, so called, because it is of a spiritual nature, wrought by the Spirit of God, and has its seat in the spirit of man; it is called the inward man, which is renewed day by day; a seed that remains in him, and a root which is out of sight, and oil in the vessel, the heart, as distinct from the lamp of an outward profession: as also from the several things, which, together, make up the subject of it; it is the understanding which is enlightened; the will which is subdued; the heart and inward parts in which the laws of God are written; the mind and conscience, which are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and cleansed; and the affections, which are set on divine objects. This is a begun work, and but a begun one. It may be said to be begun as soon as light is let into the soul by the Spirit of God; when it sees its lost state, and need of a Saviour, for as the first thing in the old creation was light, so in the new; when the fear of God is put into the heart, which is the beginning of wisdom; when love appears in the soul to God, to Christ, to his people, word, and ordinances; and when there are the seeing, venturing, and relying acts of faith on Christ, though there is a great deal of darkness, trembling, and unbelief; and when it is got thus far, and even much further, it is but a begun work; it is not yet finished and perfect: this appears from the several parts of this work, which are imperfect, as faith, hope, love, knowledge from the indwelling of sin, and corruption in the best of saints; from their various continual wants and necessities; from their disclaiming perfection in this life, and their desires after it. But the apostle was confident, and so may every good man be confident, both for himself and others, that God who has, and wherever he has begun the good work of grace, will “perform”, finish it, or bring it to an end, as the word here used signifies: and this the saints may assure themselves of, from many considerations; as from the nature of the work itself, which is called living water, because it always continues, a well of it, because of its abundance, and is said to spring up to eternal life; because it is inseparably connected with it, where there is grace, there will be glory; grace is the beginning of glory, and glory the perfection of grace; this work of grace is an incorruptible seed, and which remains in the saints, and can never be lost; it is a principle of life, the root of which is hid in Christ, and that itself is maintained by him, and can never be destroyed by

men or devils: and also from the concern God has in it, who is unchangeable in his nature, purposes, promises, gifts, and calling; who is a rock, and his work is perfect sooner or later; who is faithful, and will never forsake the work of his hands, and has power to accomplish it; and who has promised his people, that they shall grow stronger and stronger, that they shall not depart from him, and he will never leave them. Moreover, this may be concluded from the indwelling of the Spirit, as a spirit of sanctification, as the earnest and seal of the inheritance, and that for ever; and from the intercession and fulness of grace in Christ, and the saints’ union to him, and standing in him; as well as front the impotency of any to hinder the performance of this work, as sin, Satan, or the world: to which may be added the glory of all the three Persons herein concerned; for if this work is not finished, the glory of God the Father in election, in the covenant of grace, in the contrivance of salvation, in the mission of his Son, the glory of Christ in redemption, and of the Spirit in sanctification, would be entirely lost: wherefore it may be depended on, this work will be performed wherever it is begun, and that “until the day of Jesus Christ”; meaning either the day of death, when Christ takes the souls of believers to himself, and they shall be for ever with him, when this work of grace upon the soul will be finished; for God, who is the guide of his people, will be their God and guide even unto death: or else the last day, the day of judgment, the resurrection day, when Christ shall appear and raise the dead, and free the bodies of the saints from all their bondage, corruption, vileness, and weakness, which will be putting the last and finishing hand to this good work; nor will even the bodies of the saints be quitted by the Spirit of God till this is done.

Philippians 1:7

Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all

Some connect these words with (Philippians 1:3-5) ; as if the apostle’s sense was, that it became him to be thus affected to them, and mindful of them in his prayers, to make request for them with joy, and give thanks for their fellowship in the Gospel, and continuance in it; but they seem rather to refer to his confidence of the good work begun in them, being performed until the day of Christ, and which was but just and right in him to entertain and assert; and may be understood either of a judgment of faith, or a judgment of charity: in a judgment of faith the apostle might be confident, and

so may every other man, that all that believe in Christ truly, and have a good work begun in them, that shall be finished; for nothing is more certain, nor is there anything that a man can be more confident of, than this, that he that believes in Christ shall be saved; and this the apostle was fully persuaded of with respect to everyone in this church, that was a believer in Christ; and in a judgment of charity, it was meet and proper, just and right, to think, judge, hope, and believe so of everyone of them, since there was nothing in their profession, conduct, and conversation, showing the contrary:

because I have you in my heart;

or “you have me in your heart”; and either reading carries in it a reason why it was fit and right that he should so think and judge concerning them; because they were, as the Syriac version renders it, “put” or “laid” upon his heart; whenever he was at the throne of grace, his heart was enlarged on their account, his affections were wonderfully drawn out towards them, and they were ever in his mind, “both in [his] bonds, and in the defence of the Gospel”; whether in the prison, or in the pulpit, or whatever he was about in the cause or affairs of religion, they were in his heart and thoughts; from whence he concluded they must belong to God, the good work must be in them, and would be performed; it is a token for good when the Lord lays the case of any upon the hearts of his ministers, or any of his people; and also, because they had him in their hearts, they were affectionate to him, ever thoughtful and mindful of him; and had lately given a specimen of their love to him, as a servant of Christ, and prisoner of the Lord; and as they, so he might know, that they had passed from death to life, because they loved the brethren, and him in particular for his works’ sake, who had been an useful instrument in the hand of God among them: and another reason follows,

inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace;

or “partakers with me of grace”; meaning either that they were partakers of the same electing, redeeming, adopting, justifying, pardoning, and regenerating grace, as he was; had obtained the same like precious faith in Christ, and knowledge of him, as he had, though not to the same degree; and therefore might well be assured of the performance of the good work in them, having no more to doubt of their salvation than of his own: or rather by “grace”, or as the Vulgate Latin version reads it,

“joy”, he designs his sufferings for Christ, and the sake of his Gospel; which he so calls, because it was given him by God, as a token of his favour, and a mark of honour and respect, to suffer for Christ, as well as believe in him; and therefore rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. Now these Philippians were partakers with him of this, both in his “bonds”, by sympathizing with him, praying for him, sending relief unto him, and by suffering such like things themselves; and “in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel”, whether by suffering, preaching, or writing; they stood by him, encouraged and assisted him, when others forsook him, and laid difficulties and discouragements in his way; on account of all which it was but meet and proper he should entertain such sentiments of them as before expressed.

Philippians 1:8

For God is my record

Which is all one as swearing by him; it is in form of an oath, being a solemn appeal to him as the searcher of hearts, for the uprightness of his mind, the sincerity of his expressions, and the strength of his affections:

how greatly I long after you all;

the common members, as well as the bishops and deacons, the weak as well as the strong believers, the poor as well as the rich; the apostle’s respects were universal, and without distinction: he longed after their spiritual welfare, an increase of gifts and grace among them; he was their spiritual father, and he hankered after them; as parents after their children; he longed to see them, that he might enjoy their company and conversation, have communion with them, and impart some spiritual gift unto them: and this he did

in the bowels of Jesus Christ;

not with an human and carnal affection, but with a Christian and spiritual one; with a love which came from Christ, and was in imitation of him, and on account of their being in him, loved by him, belonging to him, and being believers in him: it was in the most tender manner that he loved them, and was affected to them; the phrase denotes, that his love towards them was internal, in his heart, and was most tender and strong; and like to that tender concern Christ had for them, and which he stirred up in him.

Philippians 1:9

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more,

&c.] As a proof of his great affection for them, he puts up this petition on their account; which supposes that they had love, as they must certainly have, since the good work of grace was begun in them; for wherever the work of the Spirit of God is, there is love, which is a fruit of the Spirit; and where there is not love, there cannot be that good work; for it signifies nothing what a man says, nor what he has, nor what he does, if love be wanting; but this grace was in these Philippians, they had love to God, to Christ, to one another, to all the saints, and to the ministers of the Gospel, and particularly to the apostle, of which they had lately given him a proof: and it also supposes, that this grace, which was implanted in them in regeneration, was in exercise, which is meant by its “abounding”; it was not only a principle in the heart, and expressed by the mouth, but it was in action; it lay not in word, and in tongue, but showed itself towards the objects of it in deed and in truth; and it was in a very larger and lively exercise; it abounded, it flowed and overflowed; it rose up out of the heart, as water out of a fountain; it was as grace is said to be, a well of living water, springing up, and spreading itself various ways; wherefore the apostle did not pray that they might have love, nor merely that their love might abound, but that it might abound “yet”, might continue to abound, that there might be no stop put to its flow and exercise, and so concerns the perseverance of it, and its actings; and that it might abound “more and more”; which regards the increase of it, and enlargement of its exercise. The Syriac version reads it, that it “may be multiplied and abound”; intimating, that spiritual love cannot be exceeded in; there is no going to an extreme in the exercise of it; natural love may, but not spiritual; God and Christ can never be loved too much, nor saints, as saints, though they may as men: wherefore let love abound ever so much to these objects, it is capable of abounding more and more, without any danger of excess; and it is to be wished for; for where it is ever so large and abundant in its actings, it is not perfect, nor will it be in this life; so that there is always room for such a petition; besides, the apostle knew how apt love is to grow cold, and saints to sink in their spiritual affections through the prevalence of sin, the cares of the world, and temptations of Satan: he adds,

in knowledge and [in] all judgment;

that is, either with knowledge and judgment; and the sense be, that as their love abounded, so their knowledge might be increased, and their judgment in spiritual things be better informed and established. Some Christians are more affectionate, and less knowing; others are more knowing, and less affectionate; it is well when love and knowledge go and keep pace together: or it may be rendered “by knowledge”, suggesting, that love is increased thereby, which is true; for the more saints know of God and Christ, the more they love them; and the more they know of one another’s grace and experience, the more they love each other: by “knowledge” may be meant the knowledge of God; not that which is general, is by the light of nature, and is very obscure and insufficient to salvation; but that which is special, is of God in Christ, as a God gracious and merciful, as a covenant God and Father in him; and which at best is imperfect, and needs increasing: and also knowledge of Christ; not general, notional, and speculative, as that he is the Son of God, the Messiah, and Saviour of the world in common; but that which is special, spiritual, and saving; and which is a knowledge of approbation, whereby a soul approves of Christ above all others, as a Saviour; a fiducial one, whereby it trusts in him, and commits itself to him; an experimental and practical one, to which is joined a cheerful obedience to his commands and ordinances, and becomes an appropriating one; yet is in this life imperfect, and so needs increasing; and all means should be used in order thereunto: moreover, the knowledge of one another may be included; an increase of which is necessary to promote brotherly love, and make communion with one another delightful and profitable. By all “judgment”, or “sense”, as in the Greek text, is designed a spiritual apprehension, judgment, and sensation of things. The Syriac version renders it, “all spiritual understanding”, and may intend a spiritual perception, and sense of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, an enlarged experience of the grace of God, and particularly faith, which is expressed by all the live senses; as by “seeing” the Son, the glory, fulness, suitableness, and excellency of him, and the unseen glories of another world; by “hearing” the joyful sound, the voice of Christ in the Gospel, so as to understand and distinguish it; by “smelling” a sweet smell in the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, which are of a sweet smelling savour to faith, as are also the things of God, and of the Spirit of God; and by “tasting” how good the Lord is, how sweet is his word, and delicious his fruit; and by “feeling”, laying hold on

Christ, embracing and handling him, the word of life: and now a believer having these his spiritual senses exercised, he is capable of discerning between good and evil, and so of approving things most excellent; which is the end of this petition, as appears from the following words.

Philippians 1:10

That ye may approve things that are excellent

Or “try things that differ”. There are some things that differ one from other; as morality and grace, earthly things, and heavenly things, carnal and spiritual, temporal and eternal things, law and Gospel, the doctrines of men, and the doctrines of Christ; all which differ as much as chaff and wheat, as gold, silver, precious stones, and wood, hay, stubble. These are to be tried and proved; they are not to be received without distinction, but should be examined, which is right and best to be chosen and preferred; and to such trial and examination it is necessary that a man should be transformed, by the renewing of his mind, that he should have spiritual light, knowledge, and experience, have his spiritual senses exercised to discern the difference of things, and also the guidance, direction, and influence of the Spirit of God: and this trial must be made, not according to carnal reason, and the judgment and dictates of it; for the most excellent things are above it, and out of its sphere, and therefore judged foolish, and rejected by it; but according to the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, in the light of the divine Spirit, and with spiritual judgment and sense; when some things will be found excellent, as Christ, and the knowledge of him in his person, offices, grace, righteousness, blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction, and the several truths of the Gospel relating to peace, pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life; and of the several doctrines of the Gospel, some will appear in their nature and use more excellent than others, more grand and sublime; such as concern the sovereign and distinguishing grace of God, the glory of Christ, and the salvation of the elect; some being milk for babes, others meat for strong men. And these being tried and proved, first by the word of God, and then by the experience of the saints, are to be approved above thousands of gold and silver, and esteemed more than our necessary food; even the sincere milk of the word, as it is by newborn babes, as well as the strong meat of it by the adult, and all to be highly valued and abode by, and held fast.

That ye may be sincere;

or “pure”, as the Syriac version renders it; pure as the sun, discerned and judged by the light of it, as the word signifies, which discovers moles, faults, and flaws; in which, some think, is a metaphor taken either from the eagle, which holds up its young against the sun, and such as can bear the light of it she retains as her own, but such that cannot she rejects as a spurious brood; or from persons in business, who hold up the goods they are buying to the sun, to see if they can observe any fault in them: so such may be said to be sincere, or pure, who are pure in heart, life, and conversation, whose principles and practices will bear the test of light; such are sincere, who are like honey without wax, and fine flour without leaven, that have no mixture of corruption in doctrine, life, or manners; whose grace is genuine and right; whose faith is unfeigned; whose love to God, and Christ, and one another, is without dissimulation; whose hope is lively, and of a soul purifying nature, and is built on a good foundation; and whose repentance is attended with genuine effects, and proper fruits; whose principles are unmixed; who do not corrupt or adulterate the word of God, but desire and retain the sincere milk of it, and hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience; whose worship is also pure and spiritual, who worship God in spirit and truth, under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God, and with their whole hearts and spirits, and according to the truth of the Gospel; who keep the ordinances as they were delivered, without any human inventions, corruptions, and mixtures; who are sincere in their hearts, pure and sound in heart, simple, plain hearted, and single eyed; choose to be good, rather than seem to be so; whose desires after God, and divine things, and whose affections for them, are true and real, and proceed from the bottom of their hearts; and who have their conversation in the world by the grace of God, in simplicity and godly sincerity; and such the apostle wishes these saints to be, and adds,

and without offence until the day of Christ;

to God, as considered in the righteousness of Christ, in which they are perfectly without offence, and will always continue so; or in their walk and conversation before God, in which, though they may in many things offend, yet not be guilty of any notorious iniquity, and much less of living in it: and to themselves, to their own consciences, exercising a conscience void of offence towards God and men; acting according to that light they

have received, and those principles they have embraced and professed; desiring to be kept from all evil, that it might not grieve and wound them; and doing nothing in things of an indifferent nature, with offence, or against the dictates of conscience, and to the violation of it: and also to others, to Jew or Gentile, to the world, or to the church of God, by avoiding every thing that is offensive to either; not good things, but evil ones, and those that are indifferent; that peace may be preserved, and their own good may not be evil spoken of; that the children of God may not be grieved, staggered, and stumbled, nor sinners hardened, or have any occasion to blaspheme. The phrase denotes an harmless life and conversation, and a continuance in it to the end, to the day of death, or coming of our Lord, which is to be loved, longed, wished, and looked for, and to be always had in view; and that to engage to a becoming life and conversation, with sincerity, and without offence, since in that day all hearts and actions will be exposed and laid open.

Philippians 1:11**Being filled with the fruits of righteousness**

Good works. Some think alms deeds, or acts of liberality and bounty, are here particularly intended; and that respect is had to the generosity of these Philippians to the apostle, and others: and true it is, that these are sometimes so called, as in (2 Corinthians 9:10) , but rather good works in general are meant, which are called “fruits”, because, like fruits, they spring from a seed, even from the incorruptible seed of grace in the heart, implanted there in regeneration; and because they are owing, as the fruits of the earth are, to divine bounty and goodness, to the dews of grace, the rising and bright shining of the sun of righteousness, and to the south gale of the blessed Spirit, when brought forth aright; and also because they are pleasant and delightful, they are well pleasing to Christ, and are acceptable to God through Christ; and likewise, because they are profitable, not to God, but to men: and they are styled fruits of “righteousness”, either of imputed righteousness, the righteousness of Christ imputed without works, the effects of which are good works; for nothing more strongly influences and engages men to the performance of good works, than a view of their free justification by the righteousness of Christ; hence there can be no justification by works, since these are the fruits and effects of justification, and not the cause: or of righteousness and holiness implanted in the soul

by the Spirit of God, the new man, which is created unto good works, and in or unto righteousness and true holiness; and which naturally tends thereunto, and which stimulates and qualifies men for the performance of the same: or good works are so called, because they are performed by a righteous man; for as none but a good tree can bring forth good fruit, so none but a tree of righteousness can bear fruits of righteousness; or none but a righteous man do works of righteousness, which are truly such: or because they are such as are done according to the righteous law of God; for this is a necessary requisite of a good work, that it be according to the command and will of God; for otherwise, let it have never such a show of religion and goodness, it is no good work. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, read, “fruit”, in the singular number, but other copies and versions, read, “fruits”; and the apostle wishes, that these saints might be “filled” with them; that is, that they might be like trees laden with fruit, which have fruit on every branch, bough, and twig; that they might abound in the performance of them, be ready to, and fruitful in every good work; not doing a few of one sort only, but performing continually all manner of good works; and so be like fruitful trees that yield their fruit in their season, and do not cease from so doing, but still bring forth fruit, and that in large quantities:

which are by Jesus Christ;

who is the green fir tree, from whom all fruit, as of grace, so of good works, is found; for all good works, which are truly and properly so, spring from union to Christ, and are owing to his grace: souls are married to Christ, that they may bring forth fruit unto God; they are created in him unto good works, and are ingrafted in him the true vine; and through abiding in him, and deriving life, grace, and strength from him, bear fruit, which otherwise they could not do: without Christ no good work can be performed; it is through him, strengthening his people, they do all they do; for they are insufficient to do anything of themselves, but his grace is sufficient for them, and his strength is made perfect in their weakness. He is the exemplar and pattern, according to which they do their good works; and they are motives drawn and taken from him, from his love, from the doctrines of grace relating to him, which are the most powerful, and do most strongly work upon the saints to perform these things; and which, under his grace, and the influence of it, are directed

unto the glory and praise of God:

they are done by believers in Christ, not in order to obtain eternal life and happiness for themselves, which they know is the gift of God, and entirely owing to his free grace and abundant mercy; nor to gain honour and applause from men, but to glorify God; who is glorified when his people bring forth much fruit, and which also is the occasion of others glorifying him likewise: and this end is necessary to a good work, that it be done to the glory of God; for if anything else is in view and not that, let it have ever such an appearance of a good work, it is none at all: and indeed, here we have all the requisites of a good work; as that it should be done according to the righteous law and will of God; that it springs from a principle of grace and holiness; that it be performed in the name, grace, and strength of Christ, and with a view to the honour and glory of God. The Ethiopic version reads, “in” or “to his [Christ’s] glory, and the praise of God”; and the Arabic version thus, “to the glory of God and his praise”; and so the design of the clause is to show, either that both the glory of Christ and the praise of God are concerned in every truly good work; or that the glory of God secretly, and his praise openly, are to be sought therein; even all honour and glory, an abundance of it, and that continually; ascribing nothing to ourselves, but attributing all to him, acknowledging, when we have done all we can, we are but unprofitable servants.

Philippians 1:12

But I would ye should understand, brethren

The church at Philippi having heard of the apostle’s troubles, he was very desirous that they should have a true and right understanding of them, and especially of the use they had been of, and were like to be of more and more; and that partly that such as were weak among them might not be offended and staggered, and partly that all might be comforted; as also that they might be animated and encouraged hereby to endure, with patience and cheerfulness, whatsoever afflictions might befall them for the sake of Christ: his sufferings are more obscurely expressed in the next clause, and more clearly in (Philippians 1:13) ,

that the things [which happened] unto me;

by which he intends, not anything done by him, or his labour in the ministry, which had been greatly succeeded for the spread of the Gospel; as the Syriac version suggests, rendering the phrase, (ylyd ynrewod) , “that my work makes more abundant progress in the

Gospel”: but his sufferings on account of the Gospel, which though said to happen, were not things of chance but of appointment; for as all the sufferings of Christ the head, were by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, so are those of all the members of his mystical body, and of his ministers who are appointed to these things, and they for them; of which Christ has given previous notice, so that they do not come unexpected, but are looked for by them; nor are they over distressed with them, being supported with the presence, Spirit, grace, and favour of God; hence they can rejoice in them, in hope of the glory of God; and as the afflictions of Gospel ministers, the quality and quantity of them, are fixed and settled by divine appointment, and which accordingly come upon them, so the use of them is also determined, and which have their sure and certain effect as the apostle’s had; for the very things by which men designed to have hindered the spread of the Gospel, he says,

have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel.

The Gospel, though it is good news and glad tidings of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; yet is very disagreeable to carnal men, they are enemies to it; and do all they can to stop its progress, to shut the open door of it, and hinder its course by speaking reproachfully of it, and writing against it, and especially by persecuting its professors, and particularly its ministers; which oftentimes proves rather a furtherance than an hinderance of it; for hereby the Gospel, like gold and silver tried in the fire, shines out the more brightly, with more lustre and glory, and has the greater influence on the minds of men; persecution in one place has often been the means of carrying and spreading the Gospel in many others; see (Acts 8:1 Acts 8:5 Acts 8:6) (11:19-21) ; and has been God’s ordinance for the conversion of multitudes of souls, where it has been the fiercest and hottest; insomuch that it became a common saying in primitive times, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church; and hereby also the Gospel has been confirmed, and they that have embraced it have been the more established in it. The apostle’s sufferings and bonds were for the confirmation and defence of the Gospel.

Philippians 1:13

So that my bonds in Christ

What he had more darkly hinted before, he more

clearly expresses here; the things that happened to him were his bonds; he was now a prisoner at Rome and in chains; though he had the liberty of dwelling alone in his own hired house, and of his friends coming to see him and hear him, yet he was bound with a chain, and under the care and guard of a soldier continually, who held one end of it. These bonds of his were not for debt, which he took care not to run into, but chose rather to work with his own hands, and so ministering to his own and the necessities of others, that he might not eat any man’s bread for nought; nor for any capital crime, as murder, or theft, or anything that was worthy of death or of bonds; but his bonds were in Christ, or for Christ’s sake, for professing Christ and preaching his Gospel; he was a prisoner in the Lord, or for his sake; see (Ephesians 4:1) . The use of his sufferings, which is more generally signified in (Philippians 1:12) , is here and in (Philippians 1:14) more particularly related, and the several instances of it given, these his bonds for the sake of Christ, he says,

are manifest in all the palace, and in all other [places],

or “my bonds are manifest in Christ”, as the words may be read; that is, by the means of Christ, he causing them to be taken notice of by men, and some of the first rank: by his bonds being manifest may be meant he himself who was bound; who by his bonds became known to persons, to whom in all probability he would otherwise have remained unknown; as to Felix, and Festus, and King Agrippa, and others in Caesar’s court: or the Gospel for the sake of which he was bound; this was made manifest and became known, not barely notionally, but savingly and experimentally; and even Christ himself the substance of it, for whom he was laid in bonds, by this means came to be known, “in all the palace”. The Arabic version reads it, “in the palace of the emperor”. The word “praetorium”, here used, signifies sometimes the judgment hall, or court of judicature belonging to the Roman governors, as Herod and Pilate; see (Acts 23:35) (John 18:28 John 18:33) (19:9) ; and if it designs any such court at Rome, then the sense is, that through the apostle’s being sent a prisoner to Rome, and his cause heard in the praetorium, or judgment hall, he and the cause of his bonds came to be known by the judges in that court; and which might be the means of the conversion of some of them: sometimes it signifies the general’s pavilion in the camp, and sometimes the emperor’s palace at Rome, he being the chief “praetor”,

or magistrate; and so here it seems to design Nero’s house or court, where the Gospel, through the apostle’s bonds, had made its way to the conversion of many there; see (Philippians 4:22) ; and in all other places; or as the Arabic version renders it, “with all other men”; for it may be understood either of men or places; and that Christ and his Gospel came to be known through the apostle’s sufferings, not only in the court of judicature where his cause was tried, or in Caesar’s palace, and to many of his courtiers, but in other places in Rome, and parts of the empire, and to many persons there, both Jews and Gentiles; so that what was intended for the disadvantage of the Gospel, proved for the service of it.

Philippians 1:14

And many of the brethren in the Lord

This is another instance of the usefulness of the apostle’s sufferings, and another proof of their being for the furtherance of the Gospel; they were not only the means of the conversion of many that were without, but were very encouraging and strengthening to them that were within the church, and to many that were in the ministry; who are called “brethren”, some real, others nominal; being partakers of the grace of God, at least in profession, or otherwise they would not have been fit to have been ministers of the word, nor members of a Gospel church, which was necessary to their being regularly sent forth; and whom the apostle calls and owns as brethren in the ministry, being sent forth by Christ, at least some of them, and having the same commission to preach the Gospel as he had; though they had not equal gifts and qualifications with him: he styles them brethren “in the Lord”, to distinguish them from the Jews at Rome, who were his brethren according to the flesh; and to express their spiritual character and relation, and point out the work of the Lord, in which they were jointly concerned with him: now though not all the brethren, yet many of them were greatly affected with, and influenced by the apostle’s patient and cheerfully suffering for Christ; insomuch that, as he says,

waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear;

or as some read it, “waxing confident in the Lord”; connecting the phrase, “in the Lord”, with this word, and so make the ground and object of their confidence the Lord; whose presence, power, grace, and Spirit, emboldened them the more by the apostle’s bonds to

preach the Gospel with courage and intrepidity; the Lord being on their side, and their helper, they feared not what men could do unto them; or else being animated by the apostle’s patience and firmness of mind in suffering, and by the use they saw his bonds were of for the spread of the Gospel, they took heart and courage to “speak the word”; the word “of God”, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read; and so the Alexandrian, Claromontane, and two of Stephens’s copies: meaning either the essential word, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the subject of their ministry; or the written word, the writings of Moses and the prophets, the books of the Old Testament, according to which they spoke; or the Gospel, called often the word, and sometimes with an addition, the word of truth, the word of faith, the word of reconciliation, the word of righteousness, the word of life, and the word of our salvation, from the several subjects of it: this they spake boldly and freely, as it ought to be spoken, and “without fear”, not without fear and reverence of God, whose word it is; nor of themselves and their own weakness and inabilities, which cause much fear and trembling; but without the fear of man, which brings a snare; they had no regard to the threats and menaces, the reproaches and persecutions of men; none of these things moved them; they feared God and not man, and so went on boldly, preaching the Gospel; which is related with pleasure, as a fruit and effect of the apostle’s sufferings, and which he doubted not would be very delightful to the Philippians to hear of.

Philippians 1:15

Some, indeed, preach Christ

That is, some of them, as the Arabic version reads; some of the brethren, that were only so in profession; wherefore these could not be the unbelieving Jews, who preached the Messiah in general, but did not believe Jesus of Nazareth to be he, and opened the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to him, to the Gentiles; at which the apostle is by some thought to rejoice; inasmuch as this might be a means of giving light to them that were without any knowledge of the Messiah, and of leading them into an inquiry concerning him, whereby they might come to know the true Messiah, and believe in him: for these men were brethren, were members of the church, and whom the apostle owned as brethren in the ministry; neither of which could have been admitted had they been unbelievers to Jesus being the Messiah; nor would the apostle have rejoiced in their

ministry; and besides, they preached the same Christ as other Gospel ministers, only on different principles and with different views; they preached the pure Gospel of Christ, they did not preach themselves, or any doctrines of their own, but Christ, nor the doctrines of other men; nor did they read lectures of mere morality, as the Gentiles did; nor were they legalists, as the Jews; they did not insist on the doctrine of works, or preach up justification and salvation by the works of the law, a doctrine the apostle always militated against, nor would he ever express any pleasure and satisfaction in it; nor did they preach a mixed Gospel, partly of grace and partly of works; they were not such as joined Moses and Christ, the law and Gospel, works and grace, together in men's salvation; nor did they corrupt and adulterate the word of God, or blend it with their own, or other men's inventions, but they preached Christ clearly and fully; he was the sum and substance of their ministry; they preached up his person as the true God, the Son of God equal with the Father, and possessed of all divine perfections; as truly man, having assumed a true body and a reasonable soul, and as God and man in one person; they preached him in all his offices, as prophet, priest, and King; justification by his righteousness alone, pardon through his blood, atonement and satisfaction by his sacrifice and salvation alone by him; they directed souls to him for all grace, and every supply of it; and assured them that though he died, he rose again from the dead, is ascended on high, is set down at the right hand of God, is an advocate with the Father, and ever lives to make intercession for his people; and when he has gathered them all in, he will come a second time to judge the world in righteousness, and take then, to himself, that they may be ever with him: and yet all this they did,

even of envy and strife;

not of "envy" to Christ, whom they preached, but of envy to the apostle; they envied his gifts, his usefulness and success in the ministry; and he being now in bonds, they thought it a proper opportunity to exert themselves, and set up preaching Christ as he had done, in the clearest manner; hoping they should meet with the same success, and gain great honour and applause in the church, and even be able to transfer to themselves that glory which belonged to the apostle: as for their "strife" and "contention", of which they also preached Christ; it was not with other faithful ministers of the word, about the doctrines of the Gospel; for in these

they were agreed with them, at least, in appearance and profession, and in their ministry ever did they raise strifes and contentions about words, from which comes envying among the brethren; for this would not have answered their ends, which were vain glory and popular applause; but they strove and contended one with another, who should preach Christ best and clearest, or with the apostle to get his glory and honour from him; they strove to out vie one another, and particularly him in preaching Christ: but there were others of the brethren who were truly such, who preached Christ as well as they, and upon better principles, and with better views;

and some also of good will;

or "willingly" and "freely", as the Arabic version renders it; without any selfish end or sinister view of vain glory; not moved unto it by envy or ambition; not doing it in a contentious manner, and with an ill design; but of pure "good will" to the Gospel, having a real liking of it, an hearty love for it, a sincere desire to spread it, and promote the interest of a Redeemer, and the good of souls by it; having in a spiritual and experimental manner felt the power, and tasted the sweetness of it themselves: and so were inwardly affected and truly disposed to preach it, clear of all external motives and ambitious views; and as having a good will to the apostle himself, whose heart they knew was in the Gospel, though he was now hindered from the ministry of it; and therefore to the best of their abilities were desirous of supplying his place without the least injury to his character.

Philippians 1:16

The one preach Christ of contention

That is, those that preached of envy and strife, an not of good will to Christ, to the Gospel, to the souls of men, or to the apostle; and though they preached Christ, yet

not sincerely

or "purely"; not but that they delivered the sincere milk of the word, and preached the pure Gospel of Christ, without any mixture and adulteration; but then they did not preach it with a sincere heart, and a pure intention; for this respects not the doctrine they preached, but their views in it, which were not honest and upright; they did not preach Christ from a principle of love to his person, and from an inward experience of the power of his Gospel, and a zealous affection for it,

and firm attachment to it, and with a view to the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the good of immortal souls; but were influenced by avarice, ambition, and envy: they had very evil designs upon the apostle,

supposing to add affliction to my bonds;

imagining that by their free and bold way of preaching Christ openly in the city without control, and with impunity, it might be thought that the apostle did not lie in bonds for preaching Christ, but for some other crime; or otherwise why were not they laid hold on and put under confinement also? or thinking that by such numbers of them frequently preaching Christ about the city, it would either incense and stir up the Jews, Paul's accusers, to prosecute him more vigorously; or excite Nero to take more cognizance of his case, and either more closely confine him, or hasten the bringing his cause to a hearing, and him to punishment, as the ringleader of this sect, to the terror of others; but this they could not do without exposing themselves to great danger, unless they were determined to recant, as soon as they should be taken up; wherefore it should rather seem that their view was in preaching Christ to carry away the glory of it from the apostle, and take it to themselves; and fancying that he was a man of the same cast with them, desirous of vain glory, they thought it would afflict and distress him, he being in bonds, and not at liberty to exert himself, and make use of his superior gifts and abilities; but in this they were mistaken, he was so far from being made uneasy hereby, that he rejoiced at the preaching of Christ, let their intentions be what they would; and therefore he does not say that they did add affliction to his bonds; but they "supposed", or thought, that the method they took would do it.

Philippians 1:17

But the other of love

Those that were truly brethren in the Lord, who had received the grace of God in truth, to whom the Gospel was come in power, and who had a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ, and of the mysteries of his grace; these preached Christ of love, "out of the love of him", as the Ethiopic version reads; that is, out of love to Christ, who to them was exceeding precious, altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousands, and their hearts being hot and burning with love to him, they therefore spoke of him with their tongues; and out of love to the Gospel of Christ, which with them was the

pearl of great price, and every truth of it more valuable than gold, silver, and precious stones; and out of love to the church of Christ and the members of it, that their souls might be fed and nourished with the wholesome words of Christ, might be comforted with the doctrines of grace, and be established and built up in their most holy faith; and out of love to the souls of others, knowing their miserable estate by nature, and the danger they were in, and therefore preached Christ as the only way of salvation, whereby they could escape the wrath to come; and out of love to the apostle likewise, which the following clause shows;

knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel;

meaning either that they knew he was a chosen vessel, to bear the name of Christ, and preach his Gospel in the world; that he was ordained and appointed a minister of it before the world was; separated to it from his mother's womb, and was called unto, and sent to preach it by Christ, and was set apart for it by the church; and was in a very eminent manner qualified to defend it, by preaching, disputing, writing, and suffering: or that they knew that he was laid, or lay, as the words may rendered, in prison, for defending the Gospel of Christ; yea, they knew that his lying in prison was in defence of the Gospel; and therefore, out of love to him, they joined issue with him to defend the Gospel; as he by suffering for it, so they by preaching it, which they knew full well would be matter of great joy to him.

Philippians 1:18

What then? notwithstanding every way

What follows from hence? what is to be concluded from all this? what is to be thought or said in this case? this, that notwithstanding these brethren acted on those different principles, and with those different views:

whether in pretence:

of love to Christ, zeal for the Gospel, and concern for the good of souls; though their real views were their own applause, and detriment to the apostle's character; or (atleb) , "by occasion", as the Syriac version renders the word, and as many interpreters think is the sense of it; occasionally preaching Christ, and making a handle of this to gain some other points, and get, advantages to themselves as some:

or in truth;

as the hearty friends of Christ and the apostle did;

they not only preached Christ who is the truth, and the truth as it is in Jesus, and every truth of the Gospel; and especially that fundamental one, salvation alone by a crucified Christ, and that without any adulteration or concealing any part of it; but with great purity of mind, with integrity of heart, and in the uprightness of their souls; as of sincerity, and in the sight of God; without selfish and sinister ends, and any ambitious views and evil designs: whether it was now in the one or the other way, upon the one or the other principles and views, the apostle stood thus affected; and these were his sentiments, reflections, and resolutions, that inasmuch as

Christ is preached;

in the glory of his person, in the fulness of his grace, in the suitableness of his offices and great salvation, in the excellency of his righteousness, and the virtue of his blood, and the efficacy of his sacrifice;

and therein I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice;

not that it was an indifferent thing with him, whether Christ was sincerely or hypocritically preached; or that he could take any pleasure in the manner of preaching, and in the principles and views of one sort of these preachers; for nothing was more disagreeable to him than envy and ambition, strife and contention, hypocrisy and insincerity; but he rejoiced in the subject matter of their ministry, which was Christ Jesus the Lord, whom he dearly loved, and whose interest, if served by any means, or any sort of persons, was a pleasure to him; and also in the effects and consequences of their ministry, the establishing of the saints, the conversion of sinners, the spread of the Gospel, and the enlargement of the interest of Christ: all which may be answered through the preaching of Christ, by evil designing men; for Christ and his Gospel are the same by whomsoever preached, and God may make use of his own truths to answer his ends and purposes, whoever are the dispensers of them, and though they themselves may be cast away, as Judas and others.

Philippians 1:19

For I know that this shall turn to my salvation

Or “to salvation”, to the salvation of others; that is, the preaching of Christ by these men, though designed by them to the hurt of the apostle; yet he knew that by the power and grace of God it should be made useful to the conversion, and for the salvation of many souls;

and this was matter of rejoicing to him: or that affliction which they thought to have added to his bonds, should it befall him, he knew either from a divine revelation, or from the word of God in general, which gives reason to believe that all things work together for good to the saints, and from his own experience; that this also would turn to his advantage, and be for his good, either temporal, spiritual, or eternal, and would work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the world to come; and even in this world, he knew that every reproach, indignity, and suffering he endured, did but increase his fame and his honour, and make his name the more illustrious among the saints; which was the very thing these men envied in him, and strove to take from him; yea, he knew that the method they took would, quite contrary to their expectation, be the means of his enlargement and liberty, of his salvation and deliverance from his bonds: see (Philippians 1:25 Philippians 1:26) ; and which he believed would be brought about by the prayers of the saints, and particularly these Philippians:

through your prayer;

as Peter was delivered out of prison through the incessant prayer of the church for him. The apostle knew that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much with God, and is very prevalent with him, and much more the prayers of a whole church; wherefore he frequently desired them for him on many accounts; and among others, that he might be delivered out of the hands of unreasonable men; and he firmly believed that he should be delivered by such means:

and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ;

which he had reason to expect and hope would be given him through their prayers for him; for though God has made large provisions for the supply of the wants of his people, in his Son and in his covenant, to be dispensed unto them by his Spirit, yet for these will he be sought unto by them: the supply of the Spirit is a supply of gifts from Christ, fitting and qualifying men for his service, and which are ministered by the Spirit to them severally as he will; and a supply of grace out of the fulness of Christ, which the Spirit of grace is the applier of; and a supply of strength from the same by him, to enable the saints both to do and suffer whatever he is pleased to call, them to; it is in short a supply of all their need, which the Spirit of God helps them to, according to the riches of grace, in glory by Christ: this the apostle knew would be sufficient for him, to support him under

his present troubles, to deliver him out of them, and to fit him for whatever future work and service his Lord and master had for him to do.

Philippians 1:20

According to my earnest expectation and [my] hope

These words are so placed as that they may refer both to what goes before and what follows after; and the sense be either that the apostle had earnest expectation and hope, even a strong confidence of his salvation, or deliverance from his confinement; and also of his having an interest in the prayers of the saints, and that hereby a supply of the Spirit would be given him; for as he knew and was sure that his God would supply the wants of others, he had great reason to believe he would supply his own; and especially since he had been told by Christ that his grace was sufficient for him: or as in connection with what follows; he had a full persuasion that he should not be put to shame on any account;

that in nothing I shall be ashamed;

not of his hope, neither the grace of hope, which makes not ashamed; nor the object of hope, Christ Jesus; nor the thing hoped for, eternal life and happiness, or any of the above things about which this grace was conversant; nor of his reproaches and sufferings for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, which he esteemed as an honour to him, as jewels in his crown, as chains of gold about his neck, and as great riches; nor of the Gospel which he preached, so as to retract and deny it, drop the whole, or conceal any part of it, lay down his profession of it, or cease to preach it: “but” his earnest desire and his firm hope and faith were,

[that] with all boldness, as always;

that as he had, so he should continue to use boldness in the exercise of faith at the throne of grace, come with freedom thither, and stand before God with intrepidity, through the blood and righteousness of his Son; and that as he had met with afflictions and sufferings for Christ's sake, with cheerfulness and an undaunted spirit, none of these things had moved him, so he believed he never should; and that as he had all along, throughout the whole course of his ministry, preached the Gospel with plainness, openness, and freedom, without any guise or reserve, and that with an holy courage and boldness in the face of all opposition;

[so] now also Christ shall be magnified in my body;

for this being Christ's, his great concern was to glorify him in it; and though it was a poor, weak, and crazy body, yet rich treasure being put into this earthen vessel, Christ had been greatly magnified, extolled, and made very high in it; never was there, as the apostle, such a magnifier of Christ, by preaching him in the transcendent glories of his person as the Son of God, in the riches of his grace as Mediator, in all his offices of prophet, priest, and King; and particularly in the justification and salvation of men, where he made him to be all in all. Christ was also magnified by him, by his life and conversation, which influenced by his grace, was in obedience to his will, was directed to his glory, was as became his Gospel, and what adorned his doctrine in all things; and also by enduring such hardships and so great sufferings on his account; the power of Christ was greatly magnified in supporting him under them, and carrying him through them; and as this had been the case ever since he was in the ministry, it being the main thing he had in view, he had a well grounded hope and confidence, that it would ever be so:

whether [it be] by life or by death;

that is, should he live longer, should he be delivered from his present confinement, and be spared a little longer among men, he comfortably assured Christ would be magnified by him in his body, and as long as he was in it; for his determination was to preach him and him only, to spend his life in his service, and to seek not his own things, but the things of Christ; or should he be put to death quickly by the order of Nero, he doubted not but Christ would have some glory thereby; he should die calling upon his name with fervency, professing his constant and unshaken faith in him, and sealing the Gospel by his blood, with the greatest cheerfulness.

Philippians 1:21

For to me to live is Christ

Christ was his life “efficiently”, the efficient cause and author of his spiritual life; he spoke it into him, produced it in him, and disciplined him with it: and he was his life, objectively, the matter and object of his life, that on which he lived; yea, it was not so much he that lived, as Christ that lived in him; he lived by faith on Christ, and his spiritual life was maintained and supported by feeding on him as the bread of life: and he was his life, “finally”, the end of his life; what he aimed

at throughout the whole course of his life was the glory of Christ, the good of his church and people, the spread of his Gospel, the honour of his name, and the increase of his interest; and this last seems to be the true sense of the phrase here;

and to die is gain;

to himself, for death is gain to believers: it is not easy to say what a believer gains by dying; he is released thereby, and delivered from all the troubles and distresses of this life, arising from diseases of body, losses and disappointments in worldly things; from the oppressions and persecutions of wicked men; from indwelling sin, unbelief, doubts, and fears, and the temptations of Satan; he as soon as dies enters into the presence of God, where is fulness of joy, and is immediately with Christ, which is far better than being here, beholding his glory and enjoying communion with him; he is at once in the company of angels and glorified saints; is possessed of perfect holiness and knowledge; inherits a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, and wears a crown of life, righteousness, and glory; enters upon an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled; is received into everlasting habitations, into mansions of light, life, love, joy, peace, and comfort; is at perfect rest, and surrounded with endless pleasures. This is the common interpretation, and is countenanced by the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, which read, “to die”, or “if I die, it is gain to me”: but instead of reading the words as consisting of two propositions, they may be considered as one, and the sense be either this; Christ is gain to me living or dying in life or in death; for Christ is the believer’s gain in life; he is all in all, his righteousness, his wisdom, his sanctification, his redemption, his life, his light, his food, his raiment, his riches, his joy, peace, and comfort; he is everything to him he wants, can wish for, or desire: and he is his gain in death; the hope he then has is founded on him, and the triumphs of his faith over death and the grave arise from redemption by him; his expectation is to be immediately with him; and the glory he will then enter into will lie in communion with him, in conformity to him, and in an everlasting vision of him: or thus, for me to live and to die is Christ’s gain; his life being spent in his service, in living according to his will, in preaching his Gospel, serving his churches, and suffering for his sake, was for his glory; and his death being for his sake, in the faith of him, and the steady profession of it, would be what would glorify him, and so be his gain likewise;

and this seems to be the genuine sense of the words, which contain a reason of the apostle’s faith, why he was persuaded Christ would be magnified or glorified in his body, whether by life or by death.

Philippians 1:22

But if I live in the flesh

To be in the flesh sometimes signifies to be in a state of nature and unregeneracy, and to live in and after the flesh, to live according to the dictates of corrupt nature; but here it signifies living in the body, or the life which is in the flesh, as the Syriac version renders the phrase here, and as the apostle expresses it in (Galatians 2:20) , and the sense is, if I should live any longer in the body, and be continued for some time in this world:

this [is] the fruit of my labour;

or “I have fruit in my works”, as the above version renders it:

yet what I shall choose I wot not,

or “know not”; whether life or death; since my life will be for the honour and glory of Christ, and though a toilsome and laborious one, yet useful and fruitful: by his “labour”, he means his ministerial work and service; the ministry is a work, a good and honourable work, and a laborious one. Christ’s faithful ministers are labourers; they labour in the word and doctrine, both in studying and preaching it; and such a labourer was the apostle, who by the grace of God laboured more abundantly than others; the “fruit” of which was the conversion of many sinners, the edification, comfort, and establishment of the saints, their fruitfulness in grace and works, the spread of the Gospel far and near, the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ, and the weakening of Satan’s kingdom, and the glorifying of Christ in his person, offices, and great salvation; all which was a strong and swaying argument with him, to desire to live longer in the body, and made it on the one hand so difficult with him what to choose: for as a certain Jew F2 says,

“the righteous man desires to live to do the will of God while he lives;”

but not with that view, he adds,

“to increase the reward of the soul in the world to come.”

FOOTNOTES:

F2 Kimchi in Psal. vi. 5.

Philippians 1:23

For I am in a strait betwixt two

Life and death; or between these “two counsels”, as the Arabic version reads; two thoughts and desires of the mind, a desire to live for the reasons above, and a desire to die for a reason following. The apostle was pressed with a difficulty in his mind about this, as David was when he was bid to choose which he would, either seven years’ famine, or three months’ flight before his enemies, or three days’ pestilence; upon which he said, I am in a great strait, (2 Samuel 24:14) ; to which passage it is thought the apostle alludes; the same word as here is used by Christ, (Luke 12:50) ;

having a desire to depart;

to die, a way of speaking much in use with the Jews, as expressive of death; thus Abraham is represented by them speaking after this manner on account of his two sons Isaac and Ishmael, the one being righteous and the other wicked F3;

“says he, if I bless Isaac, lo, Ishmael will seek to be blessed, and he is wicked; but a servant am I, flesh and blood am I, and tomorrow (אכטר מן הולמ) , “I shall depart out of the world”, or “die”; and what pleases the holy blessed God himself in his own world, let him do: (כשנפטר) , “when Abraham was dismissed” or “departed”; the holy blessed God appeared to Isaac and blessed him:”

and again it is said F4,

“iniquities are not atoned for, until (am-lem rjptad) , “a man is dismissed”, or “departs out of the world”;”

and once more F5,

“when a man (Mlweh xzm rjpn) , “departs out of this world”; according to his merit he ascends above;”

(See Gill on John 13:1); the same word is used in the Syriac version here; death is departing out of this life, a going out of the body, a removal out of this world; it is like moving from one place to another, from the world below to the world above; with the saints it is no other than a removing from one house to another, from the earthly house of their tabernacle, the body, to their Father’s house, and the mansions of glory in it, preparing for them. Death is not an annihilation

of men, neither of soul nor body; it is a separation of them, but not a destruction of either; it is a dissolution of the union between them for a while, when both remain in a separate state till the resurrection: now this the apostle had a desire unto, which was not a new and sudden motion of mind; it was a thought that had long dwelt with him, and still continued; and this desire after death was not for the sake of death, for death in itself is a king of terrors, very formidable and terrible, and not desirable; it is an enemy, the last enemy that shall be destroyed; it is contrary to nature, and to desire it is contrary to a first principle in nature, self-preservation; but death is desired for some other end; wicked men desire it, and desire others to put an end to their lives, or do it themselves to free them from some trouble they are in; or because they are not able to support under a disappointment of what their ambition or lust have prompted them to: good men desire death, though always when right, with a submission to the will of God, that they may be rid of sin, which so much dishonours God as well as distresses themselves; and that they may be clothed upon with the shining robes of immortality and glory; and as the apostle here,

to be with Christ:

for the former clause is to be strictly connected with this; he did not desire merely to depart this life, but chiefly to be with Christ, and the former only in order to the latter; the saints are in Christ now, chosen in him, set upon his heart, and put into his hands, are created in him, and brought to believe in him, and are in him as branches in the vine; and he is in them, formed in their hearts, lives and dwells in them by faith, and they have sometimes communion with him in private duties and public worship; he comes into them and sups with them, and they with him: but this is only at times, he is as a wayfaring man that continues but for a night; hence the present state of the saints is a state of absence from Christ; while they are at home in the body, they are absent from the Lord, especially as to his bodily presence; but after death they are immediately with him, where he is in his human nature; and their souls in their separate state continue with him till the resurrection morn, when their bodies will be raised and reunited to their souls, and be both for ever with him, beholding his glory, and enjoying uninterrupted communion with him; which will be the completion and full end of Christ’s preparations and prayers: hence it appears that there is a future being and state after death: the apostle

desires to depart this life, and “be”, exist, be somewhere, “with Christ”; for the only happy being after death is with him; if souls are not with him, they are with devils and damned spirits, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: and it is also manifest that souls do not sleep with the body in the grave until the resurrection; the souls of the saints are immediately with Christ, in the enjoyment of his presence, in happiness and glory, hoping, believing, and waiting for the resurrection of their bodies; had the apostle known that he must have remained after death in a state of inactivity and uselessness, deprived of the communion of Christ and of his church, it would have been no difficulty with him to determine which was most eligible, to live or die; and it would have been much better for him, and more to the advantage of the churches, if he had continued upon earth to this day, than to be sleeping in his grave, senseless and inactive; whereas he adds,

which is far better:

to depart and be with Christ is better than to live in the flesh in this sinful world, in the midst of a variety of sorrows and troubles, and in which communion with Christ is but now and then enjoyed, though such a life is better than sleeping in the grave; but upon a soul’s departure and being with Christ, it is free from sin and sorrow, and in the utmost pleasure, enjoying communion with him without interruption; and this is better than labouring in the ministry: for though no man took more pleasure in the work of the ministry than the apostle did, and no man’s ministry was more profitable and useful; yet it was toilsome, laborious, and wearisome to the flesh; wherefore dying and being with Jesus could not but be desirable, since he should then rest from his labours, and his works would follow him; at least it was better for him, and so the Syriac version adds, (yl) , “to me”, far better for me; and so the Arabic: to live longer might be better and more to the advantage of Christ, the glory of his name, the good of his churches, it might be better for others; but leaving the world and being with Christ were better for him; and this was an argument swaying on the side of death, and inclining him to desire that, and made it so difficult with him what to choose.

FOOTNOTES:

F3 Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 202. 3.

F4 Zohar in Numb. fol. 51. 3.

F5 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 1.

Philippians 1:24

Nevertheless to abide in the flesh

To continue in the body, not always, but a little longer,

[is] more needful for you;

for their comfort, edification, and instruction, their further profiting: and increase in faith, and the joy of it. The Syriac version renders the words thus, “but business for you”, or “a good will towards you compels me to abide in the body”; and the Arabic version thus, “notwithstanding I choose to remain in the flesh, and this I think very necessary for you”; so that upon the whole, the argument for living longer on consideration of glorifying Christ, and of being more useful to the good of souls, preponderated with him; inclined him to desire rather to live than die; though the latter was better for him, and more to his personal advantage; and thus, like a brave and good man, he prefers a public good to a private one.

Philippians 1:25

And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide

In the flesh, in the body, live a little longer in the world. These words must be understood either of a certain infallible knowledge, arising from a divine revelation, and a firm persuasion and confidence founded upon that which the apostle had, of his being delivered from his bonds, and spared a little longer for further usefulness among the churches; and accordingly some have thought that he was after this set at liberty, and travelled through several countries preaching the Gospel, and after that was committed to prison and suffered death; but of this there is no sufficient proof: or rather therefore of a conjectural knowledge arising from the present state of things, and his view of it; being willing to hope, and persuade himself that he should be delivered from his confinement, and his life be spared for the good of the interest of Christ, and the glory of his name; it being what his heart was set upon, and he was very desirous of:

and continue with you all;

not only with the Philippians, but other saints, and other churches, who were dear to him, and he to them; though he may mean more especially these believers:

for your furtherance,

or “profiting”; in divine and spiritual things, in the

knowledge of Christ, and the truths of the Gospel:

and joy of faith;

for the furtherance, or increase of that joy which faith is attended with, and which springs from it; for true solid joy springs from faith in the person, blood, righteousness, and atonement of Christ; and is what may be increased, and is often done by and through the ministry of the word, and the ministers of the Gospel; who do not pretend to a dominion over the faith of men, only to be helpers of their joy, as they sometimes are, as also of their faith, which as it comes by hearing is increased the same way. The phrase is Jewish; mention is made in the writings of the Jews F6 of (atwnmyhmd hwdx) , “the joy of faith”.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 Zohar in Gen. fol. 113. 4. & in Exod. fol. 36. 4.

Philippians 1:26

That your rejoicing may be more abundant

They had rejoiced greatly on his account already, blessing God that ever they had seen his face, or heard his voice; as they had great reason to do, he being the happy instrument of first bringing the Gospel to them, and of their conversion; and now he hoped he should be delivered out of prison, and see them again, that their joy might be increased and abound yet more and more, upon his deliverance, they had so earnestly prayed and so much longed for, and at the sight of him they so dearly loved: and yet to show that this their joy was not looked upon by him as a carnal one, or as arising from a natural affection, he observes that it was

in Jesus Christ;

though they rejoiced in him as an instrument, and therefore he adds,

for me;

yet it was on account of Jesus Christ, the subject of his ministry; their joy did not centre in the apostle, but had Christ for its object, whose person, righteousness, and salvation were held forth by him to their view and comfort; and though they would still more and more rejoice should he return to them once more,

by my coming to you again;

yet still it would he in Christ, and because of the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, in which he should come to them.

Philippians 1:27

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ

Or “behave as citizens worthy of the Gospel”;

for not so much their outward conversation in the world is here intended, which ought to be in wisdom towards them that are without; so as to give no offence to any, and to put to, silence, the ignorance of foolish men, and them to confusion and: shame, who falsely accuse their good conversation in Christ; though this is what is highly becoming professors of the Gospel; and a moral conversation proceeding from principles of grace, under the influence of the Spirit of God, is very ornamental to the Gospel, being what that requires and powerfully teaches; but the conversation of the saints one with another, in their church state, is here meant. The allusion is to cities which have their peculiar laws and rules, to which the citizens are to conform; and such as behave according to them act up to the character of good citizens, and becoming, and worthy of the charter by which they hold their privileges and immunities. A church of Christ is as a city, and is often so called; the members of it are citizens, fellow citizens, one with another, and of the household of God, and have laws and rules according to which they are to conduct themselves; as such do who walk worthy of their calling, and becoming the charter of the Gospel by which they have and hold their freedom and privileges, as citizens of the new Jerusalem: and such a Gospel walk and conversation lies in such things as these; constant attendance on the preaching of the Gospel, and on the administration of Gospel ordinances; a strict observation of the rules of behaviour towards persons that have given offence, either in public or private; a just regard to the discipline of Christ’s house, in admonitions; reproofs, censures and excommunications, as cases require; cultivating love, unity, and peace; keeping the ordinances as they were delivered; retaining and striving for the doctrines of the Gospel; holding the mysteries of it in a pure conscience, and adorning: it by a becoming life and conversation. This the apostle recommends as the “only”, the main and principal thing these saints should attend to; and as what would give him the greatest joy and pleasure to hear of, whether he should ever come and see them again or not:

that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs.

The Vulgate Latin version reads “hear of you”; and

so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions:

that ye stand fast in one spirit;

meaning either the Gospel, which is the Spirit that giveth life; so called because it is from the, Spirit of God, and that by which he is conveyed into the souls of men, and contains spiritual things: this is one, uniform, consistent scheme of truths; find in this believers ought to stand fast, and should abide by it, and never give up, or part with anyone branch of it; and so to do is one part of their Gospel conversation; for the apostle in this and the following things points out the several parts of that conversation he exhorts to: or else the holy Spirit of God is intended, who as he is the beginner of the good work of grace on the soul, is he also who carries it on and will perfect it; and therefore to him should the people of God look for grace and strength, to enable them to stand fast in the profession of their faith, to hold fast without wavering, and to persevere to the end; who is that one Spirit by which they are baptized into one body, and become fellow citizens with the saints: or the spirit of love, unity, and peace is here meant: true Christian love makes the saints to be of one heart and soul; and in this single affection to one another should they stand fast; brotherly love should continue, and all endeavours be used to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; which is another branch of becoming Gospel conversation: the apostle adds,

with one mind,

or “soul”; either signifying the same as before, or else that they should be of one judgment in the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, and abide therein; which is necessary to their harmonious walk and conversation together, as citizens of Zion:

striving together for the faith of the Gospel:

by the “faith of the Gospel”, may be designed the grace of faith, which comes by the Gospel; as the means of it, and by which the Gospel becomes useful and beneficial to the souls of men, and which has the Gospel for its object; for faith comes by hearing the word, and that is only profitable when it is mixed with it, and is that grace which gives credit to every truth of it, upon the testimony of divine revelation: now as the doctrine of faith is that which the saints are to strive for, the grace of faith is that by which they strive for it; by which they resist Satan, oppose false teachers, and overcome the world; and agreeably to this sense the Arabic version reads, “by the faith of the Gospel”: though rather the

doctrine of faith is intended, that word of faith, or faith, which is the Gospel itself, and which is often so called; and for this, in all its parts and branches, believers should strive; as for all those doctrines of faith, which concern the unity of God, the trinity of persons in the Godhead, the divine sonship of Christ, the proper deity and distinct personality of him and the blessed Spirit; and for all such doctrines as regard the state and condition of men by the fall of Adam, as that the guilt of his sin is imputed to all his posterity, the pollution of nature by it derived and communicated to them, that the bias of man’s mind is naturally to that which is evil, and is averse to that which is good, and that he is impotent to everything that is spiritually good; and for all those doctrines which regard the free and distinguishing grace of God; of election, as eternal, personal, and irrespective of faith, holiness, and good works, as motives and conditions of it; of the covenant of grace, as from everlasting, absolute and unconditional, sure and firm; of redemption, as particular, and as proceeding upon a full satisfaction for sin to law and justice; of justification by the righteousness of Christ; of peace and pardon by his blood; of regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, as entirely owing to powerful and efficacious grace, and not to man’s free will; of the saints’ final perseverance, the resurrection of the dead, a future judgment, and eternal life, as the free gift of God: striving for these, as wrestlers do with one another, to which the allusion is, supposes persons to strive and wrestle against; and they are such as oppose truth and themselves unto it; as all such that deny divine revelation, or the authority of the Scriptures; that say that Jesus is not the Messiah; or that Christ is not the natural and eternal Son of God; or that deny his proper deity, his satisfaction and righteousness; that reject the efficacious grace of God, and the operations of the Spirit as unnecessary, to regeneration and conversion; that advance and plead for the purity of human nature, the power of man’s free will, and ascribe justification and salvation to the works of men: all such are to be contended with and strove against, and that not with carnal weapons, but with spiritual ones, with the Scriptures of truth; by which a good warfare with them may be warred, and the good fight of faith fought with much success; and the whole requires great care and solicitude, earnestness, zeal, constancy, and courage: striving together for these, intends either striving with the apostle, and as they had him both as a fellow soldier, and for an example; or rather striving one with another,

their ministers with their members, and their members with their ministers; the one by preaching, writing, and disputing more especially, the other by bearing a constant testimony to truth, and praying for the success of it; and both by dying for it when required; and so to do is to have the conversation as becomes the Gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1:28

And in nothing terrified by your adversaries

Not by Satan, though a roaring lion, for Christ is greater than he; nor by the world which Christ has overcome; nor by false teachers, though men of art and cunning; nor by violent persecutors, who can do no more than kill, the body; let not the power, the rage, the cunning, or the violence of one or the other, move, discourage, or affright from a close attachment to the Gospel and the truths of it:

which is to them an evident token of perdition;

when men wilfully oppose themselves to the truth, and show a malicious hatred to it, and hold it in unrighteousness, and either turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, or persecute it with rage and fury, it looks as if they were given up to reprobate minds, to say and do things not convenient; as if they were foreordained to condemnation; and were consigned over to destruction and perdition; and very rare it is, that such persons are ever called by grace:

but to you of salvation;

when men are reproached and ridiculed, are threatened and persecuted for the sake of the Gospel, and are enabled to take all patiently, and persevere in the truth with constancy, it is a manifest token that such are counted worthy of the kingdom of God; that God has a design of salvation for them, and that they shall be saved with an everlasting one: so that the different effects of the opposition of the one, and the constancy of the other, are made use of as so many reasons why the saints should not be terrified by their enemies: it is added,

and that of God;

meaning either that the whole of this is of God, as that there are adversaries, heretics, and persecutors; this is by divine permission, and in order to answer some ends and purpose of God, and the perdition or everlasting punishment of such persons will be

righteously inflicted upon them by him; and that the constancy, faith, patience, and perseverance of the saints and their salvation, are all of God: or it particularly respects the latter, the salvation of those who persevere to the end; this is not of themselves, or merited by their constancy, patience, and perseverance, but is God’s free gift. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, join this clause to the beginning of (Philippians 1:29) , thus, “and this is given of God to you”

Philippians 1:29

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ

For the sake of his Gospel, for the good of his interest, and the glory of his name. The Alexandrian copy reads, “to us it is given”

not only to believe in him;

for faith in Christ, which is not merely believing that he is the Christ, and all that is said of him, or all that he himself says, but is a seeing of the Son, a going to him, receiving, embracing, leaning, relying, and living upon him, as God’s salvation, is a pure gift of grace; it is not in nature, nor in every man, and in whom it is, it is not of themselves, it is the gift of God; the first implantation of it, all its acts and exercise, its increase, and the performance of it at last with power, are all owing to the grace of God; and this is only given to the elect, for it is a distinguishing gift; it is given to them, and them alone, and, therefore called the faith of God’s elect:

but also to suffer for his sake;

for the sake of Christ personal; for the sake of Christ mystical, for his body’s sake the church; for the sake of his Gospel, and for the sake of his cause and interest in the world: now to suffer in name and character, in estate or person, not as an evildoer, but as a Christian, is a gift of God, as faith in Christ is; all the sufferings of the saints are appointed by God; their being called forth to suffer shame for the sake of Christ, is an high honour conferred upon them; all the grace and strength by which they are supported under sufferings for Christ are given to them; and all the glory consequent upon them is not merited by them, which are by no meant to be compared with it, but is the free gift of God through Christ. The same persons to whom it is given to believe in Christ, to them it is given to suffer for him; and they all do in some shape or another, though some more, others less; yet all are partakers of sufferings for Christ, and

so are conformed to him their head, and hereby enter the kingdom: now all this is said, as containing so many reasons to encourage believers to have their conversation as becomes the Gospel of Christ, by a steady adherence to it, and a joint contention and striving for it, without being intimidated by their enemies.

Philippians 1:30

Having the same conflict

For it seems that the Philippians were now under persecution for the Gospel of Christ; but this was no new or strange thing; it was the same the apostle was under formerly, and at that time:

which ye saw in me, and now hear [to be] in me;

when he and Silas were at Philippi, and first preached the Gospel there, they were exceedingly ill used, and shamefully entreated; they were dragged to the market place, or court, were beaten and scourged, and put into the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, (Acts 16:19 Acts 16:22-24) (1 Thessalonians 2:2) ; of all this the Philippians were eyewitnesses, and to which he here refers when he says, which ye saw in me; and now he was a prisoner at Rome, as they had heard, hence he says, “and now hear to be in me”; for they had sent Epaphroditus to him with a present, as a token of their love to him, and to support him under his affliction; and which he mentions, in order to animate them to bear their sufferings patiently for Christ’s sake, since the same were accomplished in him, as well as in the rest of their brethren and fellow Christians in the world.

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS II

This chapter contains several exhortations to unity, love, and concord, to humility, and lowliness of mind, and to a becoming life and conversation; and concludes with commendations of two eminent ministers of Christ, Timothy and Epaphroditus. The arguments engaging to harmony and mutual affection, are taken from the consolation that is in Christ, the comfort there is in love, the fellowship of the Spirit, and the bowels and mercies which become saints, Php 2:1, as also from the joy this would fill the apostle with; and the things exhorted to are expressed by likeness of mind, sameness of love, and unity of soul, #Php 2:2, and the manner directed to for the preservation of such a spirit, is to do nothing in a contentious and vainglorious way, but in an humble and lowly manner, having a better opinion of others than themselves; and observing their superior

gifts and graces, and so submit things unto them, Php 2:3,4, and which humble deportment is further urged, from the instance and example of our Lord Jesus Christ, Php 2:5, which is illustrated by the dignity of his person, the glorious divine form in which he was, and his indisputable equality with his Father, Php 2:6, and yet such was his great condescension, that he became man, appeared in the form of a servant, and was humbled to the lowest degree, even to die the death of the cross, Php 2:7,8, nevertheless God exalted him as man, and gave him superior honour to all creatures; and will oblige all to be subject to him, and acknowledge his dominion over them, to the glory of his divine Father, Php 2:9-11, hereby suggesting, that in like manner, though not to the same degree, such who are humble and lowly minded shall be exalted by the Lord; and then with the greatest affection to the Philippians, and with high commendations of them, the apostle renews his exhortation to do all the duties of religion with humility and modesty; knowing that all the grace and strength in which they performed them was owing to the internal operation of divine power in them, Php 2:12,13, and therefore should be done without murmuring against God, or disputings among themselves, Php 2:14, and next he proceeds to exhort to an unblemished and inoffensive life and conversation, as the end and issue of a modest and humble behaviour; and this he enforces on them, from the consideration of their relation to God, being his children, which would appear hereby; and from the wickedness and perverseness of the people they lived among; and therefore should be careful, lest they be ensnared by them, to the dishonour of God, and the grief of themselves; and from their character as lights in the world, whose business it was to hold forth the word of life; and also from this consideration, that it would be the joy of the apostle in the day of Christ, that his labours among them had not been fruitless, Php 2:15,16, yea, such was his love to them, that if even he was to die on their account, it would be matter of joy and gladness to him; and he desires they would express the same joy with him, Php 2:17,18, and though he could not be with them in person, he hoped in a little time to send Timothy, for this end, that he might know how things stood with them; which if well, would be a comfort to him, Php 2:19, the reasons why he picked Timothy as a messenger to them were, because there were none like him, for the sincere regard he had for their spiritual good, #Php 2:20, and which is illustrated by the contrary disposition and conduct of others, who

sought themselves, and not Jesus Christ, his honour and interest, Php 2:21, and besides, they themselves were witnesses of his filial affection to the apostle, and of his faithful service with him in the Gospel, Php 2:22, and then he repeats his hopes of sending him quickly, as soon as ever he knew how it would go with him, whether he should be released or suffer, Php 2:23, the former of which he had some confidence of, and that he should be able to see them himself in a little time, Php 2:24, however, in the mean while he thought it proper to send Epaphroditus to them, whom he commends as a brother of his, a co-worker, a fellow soldier, a messenger of theirs, and a minister to his wants, Php 2:25, the reasons of sending him were, because he longed to see them, and because he was uneasy that they had heard of his sickness; which was not only true that he had been sick, but his sickness was very dangerous, and threatened with death; however, through the mercy of God to him, he was recovered; and which was a mercy also to the apostle, who otherwise would have had an additional sorrow; wherefore another reason of sending him was, that upon the sight of him they might be filled with joy, and the apostle himself have less sorrow, Php 2:26-28, and then he exhorts them, that when he was returned to them, they would gladly receive him, and highly esteem of him; and the rather, since the dangerous illness he was attended with was brought upon him through his labours in the service of Christ, and also of the apostle, which he performed in their stead, even to the neglect of his health and life, Php 2:29,30.

Philippians 2:1

If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ

Or “exhortation”, as the word is sometimes rendered; that is, either if there is any exhortation of Christ to love and unity, as there is in (John 13:34) (John 15:11 John 15:17) , and this is of any weight and value; or if an exhortation hereunto made in the name of Christ, by any of his ministers, messengers, and ambassadors, will be regarded, as it ought to be, then fulfil ye my joy (Philippians 2:2) , but as the word is frequently translated “consolation”, as it is here in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; the sense may be either, if there is any comfort to be given to them that are in Christ Jesus, as every converted man is, and as the apostle was, and especially to them that are afflicted and persecuted for the sake of Christ, are prisoners in him, and on his

account, which was the apostle’s case, then he desired they would attend to his following request: or if there was any consolation for them, and they had had any comfort in and from Christ; as all true, solid, strong, and everlasting consolation is only in Christ, and is founded on the greatness of his person, as God our Saviour, on the fulness of his grace, the efficacy of his blood, the perfection of his righteousness and sacrifice, and on the great salvation he is the author of: agreeably the Syriac version renders it, “if therefore ye have any consolation in Christ”; and the Arabic version, “if therefore ye enjoy any consolation from the grace of Christ”; which is displayed in the Gospel, as undoubtedly they did; and since then all this comfort was enjoyed by them, through the Gospel the apostle preached to them, the argument from hence must be strong upon them, to attend to what he desired of them:

if any comfort of love;

in it, or from it; as from the love of God the Father, which is everlasting and unchangeable, and must be comforting, when shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit; and from the love of the Son, which is the same, and equally immovable and lasting, and which passeth knowledge; and from the love of the Spirit, in applying the grace of the Father, and of the Son, whereby he becomes a glorifier of them, and a comforter of his people; and from the love of the saints to one another, which renders their communion with each other comfortable, pleasant, and delightful: or the apostle’s sense is, if they had so much love for him, as to wish and desire he might be comforted in his present situation, and that they would be willing to make use of any methods to comfort him, then he desires this; and this is all he desires, mutual love, peace, harmony, and agreement among themselves:

if any fellowship of the spirit:

of the spirit of one saint with another; if there is such a thing as an union of spirits, an oneness of souls, a tasting of each other’s spirits, and a communion with one another, then care should be taken to keep this unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, (Ephesians 4:3) : or if there is any fellowship of the Holy Spirit of God, any communion with him, any such thing as a witnessing of him to, and with our spirits, or as fellowship with the Father and the Son by him, and saints are baptized into one body by one Spirit, and have been made to drink of the same Spirit, (1 Corinthians 12:13) , then it becomes them to be of one mind, and to stand fast in one Spirit,

(Philippians 1:27) :

if any bowels and mercies;

as there are in God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, moving towards the saints; or such as become Christians, who, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, ought to put on bowels of mercies to one another; express the most hearty, inward, tender, and compassionate concern for each other's welfare, temporal and spiritual. Thus the apostle premises the most moving and pathetic arguments, leading on to the exhortations and advice, to love, harmony, and unity, given in (Philippians 2:2) .

Philippians 2:2

Fulfil ye my joy

The Arabic version adds, "by these things"; meaning not his joy in the Lord Jesus Christ, which arose from views of interest his person, blood, and righteousness; which was had by believing in him, by enjoying communion with him, and living in hope of the glory of God; this in a fruit of the Spirit, (Galatians 5:22) , and is called joy in the Holy Ghost; who, as he was the author, must be the finisher of it, and not the Philippians; much less does he mean that fulness of joy in the presence, and at the right hand of God in heaven, which he expected to have; but that which arose from the state, conduct, and mutual respect of the saints to each other; he had much joy in them, on account of the good work being begun, and carrying on in their souls; and because of their steadfastness in the faith, notwithstanding the persecutions they met with; and on account of their continued love to him, and the late fresh instance of it they had given, in sending their minister with a present to him, and who had given him a particular account of their affairs; but his joy was not yet full, there were some things which damped it; as the unbecoming walk and conversation of some, of whom he spoke with grief of heart, and tears in his eyes; and the inclination of others to listen to the false teachers, those of the concision, or circumcision; and the murmurings, disputings, and divisions of others among them, that were contentious and quarrelsome; wherefore to crown his joy, and fill it brimful, he signifies that their unity in affection, judgment, and practice, would do it, for so he explains it as follows:

that ye be likeminded,

or "equally affected to one another"; that since they

were but as one man, were one body, and had but one head, and one Spirit, that quickened and comforted them, and had but one faith and one baptism, they ought to be one in affection, practice, and judgment; this is the general, of which the following are the particulars:

having the same love;

both for quality, being hearty, sincere, and unfeigned; and for quantity, returning the same that is measured to them; and with respect to objects, loving the same Christ, the same doctrines of Christ, the same ministers of the Gospel, and all the saints, rich and poor, high and low, weak or strong believers, without making any difference, by which means unity is preserved: for if one loves Christ, and another antichrist; one loves one doctrine, and another the opposite to it; one loves a teacher of the law, and another a preacher of the Gospel, one loves one Gospel minister, and one loves another, in distinction from, and opposition to the other; one loves the rich and not the poor, men of great gifts and grace, and neglects the meaner saints; when this is the case, they cannot be said to have the same love, nor can there be harmony, concord, and agreement:

[being] of one accord,

or "being alike in soul"; having the same soul, not in substance and number, as some philosophers have asserted, but having the same affection, judgment, and will, as the first Christians are said to be of one heart and of one soul; or "unanimous" in their sentiments about doctrines and ordinances, being all of a piece in their practices; and agreeing in all their counsels, debates, acts, and votes, in their church meetings:

of one mind;

in the doctrines of grace, in the ordinances of the Gospel; and in the discipline of the church: the means of preserving and increasing such affection, unity, and agreement, are next directed to.

Philippians 2:3

[Let] nothing [be done] through strife

About words merely; otherwise they were to strive for the faith of the Gospel, the purity of Gospel ordinances, worship and discipline; but the apostle would not have them strive merely to carry a point determined on, without having any regard to reason and truth, or yielding to the infirmities of the weak; which is the case and conduct of contentious persons; than which nothing can be more contrary to the Spirit

of the Gospel, or the peace of churches: the apostle adds,

or vain glory;

for where this is predominant, persons will always be singular in their sentiments, and never relinquish them, let what reason soever be given against them; nor will they give way to the judgment of others, but right or wrong will have their own wills; Diotrophes like, loving to have the preeminence in all things, (3 John 1:9) ; and such persons and conduct are very injurious to the comfort and harmony of the saints:

but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves;

not as to the things of the world, in respect of which one man may be a better man than another, and he must know and think himself so; nor with respect to the endowments of the mind, and acquired abilities, which one man may have above another; and the difference being so great in some, it must be easily discerned, that one is more learned and knowing, in this or the other language, art, or science; but with regard to, grace, and to spiritual light, knowledge, and judgment: and where there is lowliness of mind, or true humility, a person will esteem himself in a state of grace, as the great apostle did, the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints; one in whom this grace reigns will pay a deference to the judgment of other saints, and will prefer their experience, light, and knowledge, to his own; and will readily give way, when he sees such that are of longer standing, of greater experience, and more solid judgment, as he has reason to think, than himself, are on the other side of the question; and so peace, love, and unity, are preserved. This grace of humility is an excellent ornament to a Christian, and wonderfully useful in Christian societies.

Philippians 2:4

Look, not every man on his own things

Not but that a man should take care of his worldly affairs, and look well unto them, and provide things honest in the sight of all men, for himself and his family, otherwise he would be worse than an infidel; but he is not to seek his own private advantage, and prefer it to a public good; accordingly the Syriac version reads it, "neither let anyone be careful of himself, but also everyone of his neighbour"; and the Arabic version thus, "and let none of you look to that which conduces

to himself alone, but let everyone of you look to those things which may conduce to his friend"; but this respects spiritual things, and spiritual gifts: a Christian should not seek his own honour and applause, and to have his own will, and a point in a church carried his own way, but should consult the honour of Christ, the good of others, and the peace of the church; he should not look upon his own gifts, he may look upon them, and ascribe them to the grace of God, and make use of them to his glory, but not to admire them, or himself for them, and pride himself in them, and lift up himself above others, neglecting and taking no notice of the superior abilities of others:

but every man also on the things of others;

not on their worldly things, busying himself with other men's matters, and which he has nothing to do with, but on the sentiments and reasons of others; which he should well weigh and consider, and if they outdo and overbalance his own, should yield unto them; he should take notice of the superior gifts of others, and own and acknowledge them; which is the way to submit to one another in the fear of God, and to promote truth, friendship, and love.

Philippians 2:5

Let this mind be in you

The Arabic version renders it, "let that humility be perceived in you". The apostle proposes Christ as the great pattern and exemplar of humility; and instances in his assumption of human nature, and in his subjection to all that meanness, and death itself, even the death of the cross in it; and which he mentions with this view, to engage the saints to lowliness of mind, in imitation of him; to show forth the same temper and disposition of mind in their practice,

which also was in Christ Jesus;

or as the Syriac version, "think ye the same thing as Jesus Christ"; let the same condescending spirit and humble deportment appear in you as in him. This mind, affection, and conduct of Christ, may refer both to his early affection to his people, the love he bore to them from everlasting, the resolution and determination of his mind in consequence of it; and his agreement with his Father to take upon him their nature in the fulness of time, and to do his will, by obeying, suffering, and dying in their room and stead; and also the open exhibition

and execution of all this in time, when he appeared in human nature, poor, mean, and abject; condescending to the lowest offices, and behaving in the most meek and humble manner, throughout the whole of his life, to the moment of his death.

Philippians 2:6

Who being in the form of God

The Father; being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. This form is to be understood, not of any shape or figure of him; for as such is not to be seen, it is not to be supposed of him; or any accidental form, for there are no accidents in God, whatever is in God, is God; he is nothing but nature and essence, he is the (to on) , the Jehovah, I am what I am; and so is his Son, which is, and was, and is to come, the fountain of all created beings nor does it intend any outward representation and resemblance of him, such as in kings; who, because of the honour and dignity they are raised unto, the authority and power they have, and because of the glory and majesty they are arrayed with, are called gods: nor does it design the state and condition Christ appeared in here on earth, having a power to work miracles, heal diseases, and dispossess devils, for the manifestation of his glory; and so might be said to be in the form of God, as Moses for doing less miracles is said to be a God unto Pharaoh; since this account does not regard Christ; as he was on earth in human nature, but what he was antecedent to the assumption of it; or otherwise his humility and condescension in becoming man, and so mean, will not appear: but this phrase, “the form of God”, is to be understood of the nature and essence of God, and describes Christ as he was from all eternity; just as the form of a servant signifies that he was really a servant, and the fashion of a man in which he was found means that he was truly and really man; so his being in the form of God intends that he was really and truly God; that he partook of the same nature with the Father, and was possessed of the same glory: from whence it appears, that he was in being before his incarnation; that he existed as a distinct person from God his Father, in whose form he was, and that as a divine person, or as truly God, being in the glorious form, nature, and essence of God; and that there is but one form of God, or divine nature and essence, common to the Father and the Son, and also to the Spirit; so that they are not three Gods, but one God: what the form of God is, the Heathens themselves F7

say cannot be comprehended nor seen, and so not to be inquired after; and they use the same word the apostle does here F8: and now Christ being in this glorious form, or having the same divine nature with the Father, with all the infinite and unspeakable glories of it,

thought it no robbery to be equal with God;

the Father; for if he was in the same form, nature, and essence, he must be equal to him, as he is; for he has the same perfections, as eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, immutability, and self-existence: hence he has the same glorious names, as God, the mighty God, the true God, the living God, God over all, Jehovah, the Lord of glory the same works of creation and providence are ascribed to him, and the same worship, homage, and honour given him: to be “in the form of God”, and to be “equal with God”, signify the same thing, the one is explanative of the other: and this divine form and equality, or true and proper deity, he did not obtain by force and rapine, by robbery and usurpation, as Satan attempted to do, and as Adam by his instigation also affected; and so the mind of a wicked man, as Philo the Jew says F9, being a lover of itself and impious, (oiomenov isov) (einai yew) , “thinks itself to be equal with God”, a like phrase with this here used; but Christ enjoyed this equality by nature; he thought, he accounted, he knew he had it this way; and he held it hereby, and of right, and not by any unlawful means; and he reckoned that by declaring and showing forth his proper deity, and perfect equality with the Father, he robbed him of no perfection; the same being in him as in the Father, and the same in the Father as in him; that he did him no injury, nor deprived him of any glory, or assumed that to himself which did not belong to him: as for the sense which some put upon the words, that he did not “affect”, or “greedily catch” at deity; as the phrase will not admit of it, so it is not true in fact; he did affect deity, and asserted it strongly, and took every proper opportunity of declaring it, and in express terms affirmed he was the Son of God; and in terms easy to be understood declared his proper deity, and his unity and equality with the Father; required the same faith in himself as in the Father, and signified that he that saw the one, saw the other, (Mark 14:61 Mark 14:62) (John 5:17 John 5:18) (John 10:30 John 10:33) (John 14:1 John 14:10) . Others give this as the sense of them, that he did not in an ostentatious way show forth the glory of his divine nature, but rather hid it; it is true, indeed, that Christ did not seek, but carefully

shunned vain glory and popular applause; and therefore often after having wrought a miracle, would charge the persons on whom it was wrought, or the company, or his disciples, not to speak of it; this he did at certain times, and for certain reasons; yet at other times we find, that he wrought miracles to manifest forth his glory, and frequently appeals to them as proofs of his deity and Messiahship: and besides, the apostle is speaking not of what he was, or did in his incarnate state, but of what he was and thought himself to be, before he became man; wherefore the above sense is to be preferred as the genuine one.

FOOTNOTES:

F7 Socraticus, Xenophon, & Aristo Chius, apud Minuc. Felic. Octav. p. 20. & Hostanes apud Caecil. Cyprian. de Idol. van. p. 46.

F8 Laertii proem. ad Vit. Philosoph. p. 7.

F9 Leg. Alleg. l. 1. p. 48, 49.

Philippians 2:7

But made himself of no reputation

Or “nevertheless emptied himself”; not of that fulness of grace which was laid up in him from everlasting, for with this he appeared when he was made flesh, and dwelt among men; nor of the perfections of his divine nature, which were not in the least diminished by his assumption of human nature, for all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily; though he took that which he had not before, he lost nothing of what he had; the glory of his divine nature was covered, and out of sight; and though some rays and beams of it broke out through his works and miracles, yet his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, was beheld only by a few; the minds of the far greater part were blinded, and their hearts hardened, and they saw no form nor comeliness in him to desire him; the form of God in which he was, was hid from them; they reputed him as a mere man, yea, as a sinful man, even as a worm, and no man: and to be thus esteemed, and had in such account, he voluntarily subjected himself, though infinitely great and glorious; as he did not assume deity by rapine, he was not thrust down into this low estate by force; as the angels that sinned when they affected to be as God, were drove from their seats of glory, and cast down into hell; and when man, through the instigation of Satan, was desirous of the same, he was turned out of Eden, and became like the beasts that perish; but this was Christ's own act and deed, he willingly assented to it, to lay

aside as it were his glory for a while, to have it veiled and hid, and be reckoned anything, a mere man, yea, to have a devil, and not be God: O wondrous humility! astonishing condescension!

and took upon him the form of a servant;

this also was voluntary; he “took upon him”, was not obliged, or forced to be in the form of a servant; he appeared as one in human nature, and was really such; a servant to his Father, who chose, called, sent, upheld, and regarded him as a servant; and a very prudent, diligent, and faithful one he was unto him: and he was also a servant to his people, and ministered to men; partly by preaching the Gospel to them, and partly by working miracles, healing their diseases, and going about to do good, both to the bodies and souls of men; and chiefly by obtaining eternal redemption for his chosen ones, by being made sin and a curse for them; which though a very toilsome and laborious piece of service, yet as he cheerfully engaged in it, he diligently attended it, until he had finished it: so he was often prophesied of as a servant, in (Isaiah 42:1) (52:13) (Zechariah 3:8) , in which several places he is called in the Targum, (axyvm ydbe) , “my servant the Messiah”: put these two together, “the form of God”, and “the form of a servant”, and admire the amazing stoop!

and was made in the likeness of men;

not of the first Adam, for though, as he, he was without sin, knew none, nor did any; yet he was rather like to sinful men, and was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was traduced and treated as a sinner, and numbered among transgressors; he was like to men, the most mean and abject, such as were poor, and in lower life, and were of the least esteem and account among men, on any score: or he was like to men in common, and particularly to his brethren the seed of Abraham, and children of God that were given him; he partook of the same flesh and blood, he had a true body, and a reasonable soul, as they; he was subject to the like sorrows and griefs, temptations, reproaches, and persecutions; and was like them in everything, excepting sin: a strange and surprising difference this, that he who was “equal to God”, should be “like to [sinful] men!”

Philippians 2:8

And being found in fashion as a man

Not that he had only the show and appearance of a man, but he was really a man; for “as” here, denotes not

merely the likeness of a thing, but the thing itself, as in (Matthew 14:5) (John 1:14) , (wv) here, answers to the Hebrew (k) , which is sometimes by the Jews F11 said to be (Nwymdh Pk) , and signifies likeness, and sometimes (twtmah Pk) , and designs truth and reality; which is the sense in which the particle is to be taken here: though he was seen and looked upon as a mere man, and therefore charged with blasphemy when he asserted himself to be the Son of God, he was more than a man; and yet found and known by men in common to be no more than a man, than just such a man as other men are; and so far is true, that his scheme, his habit, his fashion, his form, were like that of other men; though he was not begotten as man, but conceived in an extraordinary manner by the power of the Holy Ghost, yet he lay nine months in his mother's womb, as the human foetus ordinarily does; he was born as children are, was wrapped in swaddling bands when born, as an infant is; grew in stature by degrees, as men do; the shape and size of his body were like other men's, and he was subject to the same infirmities, as hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, grief, sorrow, and death itself, as follows:

he humbled himself:

by becoming man, and by various outward actions in his life; as subjection to his parents, working at the trade of a carpenter, conversing with the meanest of men, washing his disciples' feet and the whole of his deportment both to God and man, his compliance with his Father's will, though disagreeable to flesh and blood, his behaviour towards his enemies, and his forbearance of his disciples, showed him to be of a meek and humble spirit; he humbled himself both to God and man:

and became obedient unto death,

or "until death"; for he was obedient from the cradle to the cross, to God, to men, to his earthly parents, and to magistrates; he was obedient to the ceremonial law, to circumcision, the passover to the moral law, to all the precepts of it, which he punctually fulfilled; and to the penalty of it, death, which he voluntarily and cheerfully bore, in the room and stead of his people:

even the death of the cross;

which was both painful and shameful; it was an accursed one, and showed that he bore the curse of the law, and was made a curse for us: this was a punishment usually inflicted on servants, and is called a servile punishment F12; and such was the form which he took,

when he was found in fashion as a man: this is now the great instance of humility the apostle gives, as a pattern of it to the saints, and it is a matchless and unparalleled one.

FOOTNOTES:

F11 Vid. Kimchi in Josh. iii. 4.

F12 Lipsins de Cruce, l. 1. c. 12.

Philippians 2:9

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him

The apostle proceeds to observe the exaltation of Christ, for the encouragement of meek and humble souls; that whereas Christ, who so exceedingly demeaned himself, was afterwards highly exalted by God, so all such who, in imitation of him, behave to one another in lowliness of mind, shall be exalted in God's due time; for whoso humbleth himself, shall be exalted. The first step of Christ's exaltation was his resurrection from the dead, when he had a glory given him as man; his body was raised in incorruption, in glory, in power, and a spiritual one; it became a glorious body, and the pledge and exemplar of the saints at the general resurrection, of which his transfiguration on the mount was an emblem and prelude; and he was also glorified then as Mediator, he was then justified in the Spirit, and acquitted and discharged from all the sins of his people, he took upon him and bore, having satisfied for them; and all God's elect were justified in him, for he rose as a public person, as their head, for their justification; yea, in some sense he was then glorified, as a divine person; not that any new additional glory was, or could be made to him as such; but there was an illustrious manifestation of his natural, essential, and original glory; he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead: the next step of his high exaltation was his ascending on high up to the third heaven, where he is made higher than the heavens; when he was accompanied by an innumerable company of angels, and by those saints whose bodies rose out of their graves after his resurrection; and was received and carried up in a bright glorious cloud; and passing through the air, the seat of the devils, he led captivity captive, and triumphed over principalities and powers, having before spoiled them on his cross; and then entering into heaven, he sat down at the right hand of God, which is another branch of his exaltation; and shows that he had done his work, and that it was approved and accepted of; and had that glory and

honour bestowed on him, which never was on any mere creature, angels or men, to sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; which as it is the highest pitch of the exaltation of the human nature of Christ, so by it there is a most illustrious display of the glory of his divine person as the Son of God; who was with God, as one brought up with him from all eternity; and was so likewise when here on earth, but not so manifestly; but now he is openly and manifestly glorified with himself, with that glory he had with him before the world began: moreover, Christ's exaltation lies in his having the gifts of the Spirit without measure, to bestow on his ministers and churches, in all succeeding generations, for the carrying on of his interest, and the enlargement of his kingdom; in having all power in heaven and in earth, to complete his work and great designs; in having dominion and authority over all creatures and things, which are made to be subservient to the execution of his mediatorial office; and in having the right and power of judging the world at the last day, when there will still be a more glorious display of his eternal deity and divine sonship; for he will come in his Father's glory, and in his own, and with his holy angels: now the causes of Christ's exaltation are these: the efficient cause is God; though he made himself of no reputation, and humbled himself, these were voluntary acts of his own; yet he did not exalt himself, but God exalted him, even God the Father; with him the covenant of grace and redemption was made, in which glory was promised Christ, in consideration of his obedience, sufferings, and death; and which he prayed to him for, and pleaded for with him, having done his work; and which exaltation of Christ is always ascribed to God, even the Father; see (Acts 2:33) (3:13) (5:31) ; the impulsive or moving cause, and indeed the meritorious cause, were the humiliation of Christ; because he, though he was originally so great and glorious, yet made himself as it were nothing, humbled himself to become man, and was contented to be accounted a mere man, and went up and down in the form of a servant; and because he became so cheerfully obedient to the whole law, and to death itself, for the sake of his people, and out of love to them, "therefore" God exalted him: the exaltation of Christ was not only a consequence of his obedience and death, and his humiliation merely the way to his glory; but his high and exalted estate were the reward of all this; it was what was promised him in covenant, what was then agreed upon, what he expected and pleaded, and had as a recompense of reward, in consideration

of his having glorified God on earth, and finished the work he undertook to do: it follows as an instance of the exaltation of Christ,

and [hath] given him a name which is above every name.

The Syriac version renders it, "which is more excellent than every name"; and the Arabic version translates it, "which is more eminent than every name"; and the Ethiopic version thus, "which is greater than every name": by which is meant, not any particular and peculiar name by which he is called; not the name of God, for though this is his name, the mighty God, and so is even the incommunicable name Jehovah, and which may be truly said to be every name; but neither of these are given him, but what he has by nature; and besides were what he had before his exaltation in human nature: it is true indeed, upon that this name of his became more illustrious and manifest unto men; it is a more clear point, that he is God over all blessed for evermore; and it will still be more manifest at his glorious appearing, that he is the great God, as well as our Saviour: to which may be added, that the name Jehovah in the plate of gold on the high priest's forehead, was set above the other word; so says Maimonides F13,

"the plate of gold was two fingers broad, and it reached from ear to ear; and there was written upon it two lines, "holiness to the Lord"; (vdq) , "holiness", was written below, and (hlem-lm hwhy) , "to the Lord", or "to Jehovah", above:"

whether here may not be an allusion to this, I leave to be considered: nor do I think that the name of the Son of God is meant; this is indeed a name of Christ, and a more excellent one than either angels or men have; for he is in such sense the Son of God, as neither of them are; but this is a name also which he has by nature, and is what he had before his exaltation; and was before this attested by his Father, and confessed by angels, men, and devils; though indeed upon his exaltation, he was declared more manifestly to be the Son of God, as he will be yet more clearly in his kingdom and glory: much less is the name Jesus intended, which was given him by the angel before his conception and birth, and was a name common to men among the Jews; but it seems to design such fame and renown, honour, glory, and dignity, as were never given unto, and bestowed upon creatures; as his rising from the dead as a public person, his ascending on high in the manner he did, his session

at the right hand of God, his investiture with all gifts, power, dominion, authority, and with the judgment of the world; and whatever name of greatness there is among men or angels, Christ has that which is superior to it. Was a priest a name of honour and dignity among the Jews? Christ is not only a priest, and an high priest, but a great high priest; a priest not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek, (Hebrews 7:11) , and a greater than he himself. Is a king a great name among men? Christ has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Is a deliverer of a nation a title of great honour? Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour of men of all nations; nor is there any other name but his, that is given among men, whereby we must be saved. Is a mediator between warring princes and kingdoms accounted a name of greatness and glory? Christ is the one only Mediator between God and man, and of a new and better covenant. Are angels, seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, great names in the other world? Christ is the Angel of God's presence, an eternal one, the Angel of the covenant, the head of all principality and power. These are all subject to him, and he is set at God's right hand far above them.

FOOTNOTES:

F13 Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 1.

Philippians 2:10

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow

Which is to be understood, not of the outward act of bowing the knee upon hearing the name, and the syllables of the mere name Jesus pronounced; for in the bare name there can be nothing which can command such a peculiar respect; it was a name common with the Jews: Joshua is so called in (Hebrews 4:8) ; and the name of Elymas the sorcerer was Barjesus: that is, the son of Jesus, (Acts 13:6) ; Now, how monstrously ridiculous and stupid would it be, for a man, upon hearing these passages, and upon the pronouncing of this word, to bow the knee? Moreover, the words ought not to be rendered at, but "in the name of Jesus"; that is, in and by reason of the power, authority, and dignity of Jesus, as exalted at God's right hand, every creature is to be subject to him: add to this, that there are several creatures included in the following account, who, in a corporeal sense, have not knees to bow with, as angels, the souls of men departed, and devils; and therefore an

external corporeal bowing of the knee cannot be meant. The Jews indeed, upon hearing the name Jehovah pronounced by the high priest, in the holy of holies, used to bow: they say F14,

"that the priests, and the people, that stand in the court, when they hear Shemhamphorash (i.e. the name "Jehovah") pronounced by the high priest, (הוי כורים) , "bowed", and worshipped, and fell upon their faces, and said, blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom, for ever and ever:"

though it can hardly be thought there is any reference to this here. But inasmuch as this action is a token of reverence, worship; and subjection, it is used for those things themselves; and the sense is, that Christ is exalted as before described, that every creature may give him reverence, worship, and adoration, submit and be subject to him, as all do, and shall, either freely or forcedly. Some really and heartily trust in his name, are baptized in his name, and ascribe honour, and glory, and blessing to him from their whole hearts; and others feignedly, and whether they will or not, are subject to him, and sooner or later shall acknowledge his authority over them: and he shall be owned to be Lord

of [things] in heaven:

the angels there, and the souls of departed saints, with those who are already clothed with their bodies:

and [things] in earth;

both good men, and bad men:

and [things] under the earth;

or "in the abyss", as the Ethiopic version renders it; meaning either the devils in the bottomless pit; or rather the dead bodies of men in the grave, which shall come forth and stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

FOOTNOTES:

F14 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 66. 1. Maimon. Yom Haccippurim, c. 2. sect. 7.

Philippians 2:11

And [that] every tongue should confess

Whether of angels or men, or of men of whatsoever nation. Confession is either true and hearty, as when the mouth and heart agree in confessing, and which is made only by true believers; or verbal only, or in mere outward form, and by force, as in hypocrites, wicked men, and devils themselves; who all either have confessed, or will

confess,

that Jesus Christ [is] Lord:

the holy angels confess him to be Lord, and their Lord truly, and are unfeignedly subject to him; and true believers heartily own him as their Lord, and cheerfully submit to his commands and ordinances; and the foolish virgins, and the goats on Christ's left hand, will, at the last day, call him Lord, Lord; and the worst of men, yea, even devils, will be obliged to own his lordship and dominion; which will be

to the glory of God the Father.

The Syriac reads, "his Father", who has chose and constituted him as the Mediator, invested him with his office, ordained him to be Judge of quick and dead, and given him all power and authority, and exalted him at his own right hand; so he that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father also. The Vulgate Latin version renders the words, "because the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father": being in the form of God, of the same nature and essence with him, and equal to him; as he will appear to be at his second coming, for then he will come in the glory of his Father.

Philippians 2:12

Wherefore, my beloved

This is an inference from the instance and example of Christ; that since he, who was God over all, blessed for ever, made himself so low in human nature, in which he is now so highly exalted, having done the work and business he came about with such condescension, humility, and meekness; therefore it becomes those who profess to be his followers, to do all their affairs as men and Christians, with, and among one another, in all lowliness of mind. The apostle calls the saints here, "my beloved", he having a strong affection for them, which he frequently expresses in this epistle; and he chooses to make use of such an endearing appellation, that it might be observed, that what he was about to say to them sprung from pure love to them, and a hearty desire for their welfare, and from no other end, and with no other view; and to encourage them to go on in a course of humble duty, he commends them for their former obedience,

as ye have always obeyed;

not "me", as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions supply; but either God, acting according to his revealed will, they

had knowledge of; or Christ, by receiving him as prophet, priest, and King, by submitting to his righteousness, and the sceptre of his grace; or the Gospel, by embracing the truths of it, professing them, and abiding in them, and by subjecting to the ordinances of it, and doing all things whatsoever Christ has commanded: and this they did "always"; they were always abounding in the works of the Lord, doing his will; they abode by Christ, and continued steadfastly in his doctrines, and kept the ordinances as they were delivered to them, and walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.

Not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence;

which clause may either be referred to the foregoing, which expresses their obedience; and so signifies that that was carefully and cheerfully performed, not only while the apostle was with them, but now when he was absent from them, and much more when absent than present; which shows, that they were not eye servants, and menpleasers, but what they did they did sincerely and heartily, as to the Lord: or to the following exhortation, that they would attend to it; not only as they had done when he was among them, of which he was witness, but that they would much more do so now he was absent from them, namely,

work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

which is to be understood not in such a sense as though men could obtain and procure for themselves spiritual and eternal salvation by their own works and doings; for such a sense is contrary to the Scriptures, which deny any part of salvation, as election, justification, and calling, and the whole of it to be of works, but ascribe it to the free grace of God; and is also repugnant to the perfections of God, as his wisdom, grace, and righteousness; for where are the wisdom and love of God, in forming a scheme of salvation, and sending his Son to effect it, and after all it is left to men to work it out for themselves? and where is the justice of God in admitting of an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect one, which must be the case, if salvation is obtained by men's works? for these are imperfect, even the best of them; and is another reason against this sense of the passage; and were they perfect, they could not be meritorious of salvation, for the requisites of merits are wanting in them. Moreover, was salvation to be obtained by the works of men, these consequences would follow; the death of Christ would

be in vain, boasting would be encouraged in men, they would have whereof to glory, and their obligations to obedience taken from the love of God, and redemption by Christ, would be weakened and destroyed: add to all this, that the Scriptures assure us, that salvation is alone by Christ; and that it is already finished by him, and not to be wrought out now by him, or any other; and that such is the weakness and impotence of men, even of believers, to whom this exhortation is directed, that it is impossible for them ever to affect it; therefore, whatever sense these words have, we may be sure that this can never possibly be the sense of them. The words may be rendered, “work about your salvation”; employ yourselves in things which accompany salvation, and to be performed by all those that expect it, though not to be expected for the performance of them; such as hearing of the word, submission to Gospel ordinances, and a discharge of every branch of moral, spiritual, and evangelical obedience for which the apostle before commends them, and now exhorts them to continue in; to go on in a course of cheerful obedience to the close of their days, believing in Christ, obeying his Gospel, attending constantly to his word and ordinances, and discharging every duty in faith and fear, until at last they should receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls: agreeably the Syriac version renders the words, (פלוחו פולחנא דחייכונ) , “do the work”, or “business of your lives”; the work you are to do in your generation, which God has prescribed and directed you to, which the grace of God teaches, and the love of Christ constrains to. Do all that “with fear and trembling”; not with a slavish fear of hell and damnation, or lest they should fall away, or finally miscarry of heaven and happiness; since this would be a distrust of the power and faithfulness of God, and so criminal in them; nor is it reasonable to suppose, that the apostle would exhort to such a fear, when he himself was so confidently assured, that the good work begun in them would be performed; and besides, the exhortation would be very oddly formed, if this was the sense, “work out your salvation with fear” of damnation: but this fear and trembling spoken of, is such as is consistent with the highest acts of faith, trust, confidence, and joy, and is opposed to pride and vain glory; see (Psalms 2:11) (115:11) (Romans 11:20) ; and intends modesty and humility, which is what the apostle is pressing for throughout the whole context; and here urges to a cheerful and constant obedience to Christ, with all humility of soul, without dependence on it, or vain glorying in it, but ascribing it wholly to the

grace of God, for the following reason.

Philippians 2:12

Wherefore, my beloved

This is an inference from the instance and example of Christ; that since he, who was God over all, blessed for ever, made himself so low in human nature, in which he is now so highly exalted, having done the work and business he came about with such condescension, humility, and meekness; therefore it becomes those who profess to be his followers, to do all their affairs as men and Christians, with, and among one another, in all lowliness of mind. The apostle calls the saints here, “my beloved”, he having a strong affection for them, which he frequently expresses in this epistle; and he chooses to make use of such an endearing appellation, that it might be observed, that what he was about to say to them sprung from pure love to them, and a hearty desire for their welfare, and from no other end, and with no other view; and to encourage them to go on in a course of humble duty, he commends them for their former obedience,

as ye have always obeyed;

not “me”, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions supply; but either God, acting according to his revealed will, they had knowledge of; or Christ, by receiving him as prophet, priest, and King, by submitting to his righteousness, and the sceptre of his grace; or the Gospel, by embracing the truths of it, professing them, and abiding in them, and by subjecting to the ordinances of it, and doing all things whatsoever Christ has commanded: and this they did “always”; they were always abounding in the works of the Lord, doing his will; they abode by Christ, and continued steadfastly in his doctrines, and kept the ordinances as they were delivered to them, and walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.

Not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence;

which clause may either be referred to the foregoing, which expresses their obedience; and so signifies that that was carefully and cheerfully performed, not only while the apostle was with them, but now when he was absent from them, and much more when absent than present; which shows, that they were not eye servants, and menpleasers, but what they did they did sincerely and heartily, as to the Lord: or to the following

exhortation, that they would attend to it; not only as they had done when he was among them, of which he was witness, but that they would much more do so now he was absent from them, namely,

work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

which is to be understood not in such a sense as though men could obtain and procure for themselves spiritual and eternal salvation by their own works and doings; for such a sense is contrary to the Scriptures, which deny any part of salvation, as election, justification, and calling, and the whole of it to be of works, but ascribe it to the free grace of God; and is also repugnant to the perfections of God, as his wisdom, grace, and righteousness; for where are the wisdom and love of God, in forming a scheme of salvation, and sending his Son to effect it, and after all it is left to men to work it out for themselves? and where is the justice of God in admitting of an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect one, which must be the case, if salvation is obtained by men’s works? for these are imperfect, even the best of them; and is another reason against this sense of the passage; and were they perfect, they could not be meritorious of salvation, for the requisites of merits are wanting in them. Moreover, was salvation to be obtained by the works of men, these consequences would follow; the death of Christ would be in vain, boasting would be encouraged in men, they would have whereof to glory, and their obligations to obedience taken from the love of God, and redemption by Christ, would be weakened and destroyed: add to all this, that the Scriptures assure us, that salvation is alone by Christ; and that it is already finished by him, and not to be wrought out now by him, or any other; and that such is the weakness and impotence of men, even of believers, to whom this exhortation is directed, that it is impossible for them ever to affect it; therefore, whatever sense these words have, we may be sure that this can never possibly be the sense of them. The words may be rendered, “work about your salvation”; employ yourselves in things which accompany salvation, and to be performed by all those that expect it, though not to be expected for the performance of them; such as hearing of the word, submission to Gospel ordinances, and a discharge of every branch of moral, spiritual, and evangelical obedience for which the apostle before commends them, and now exhorts them to continue in; to go on in a course of cheerful obedience to the close

of their days, believing in Christ, obeying his Gospel, attending constantly to his word and ordinances, and discharging every duty in faith and fear, until at last they should receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls: agreeably the Syriac version renders the words, (Nwkyxd anxlwp wxwlp) , “do the work”, or “business of your lives”; the work you are to do in your generation, which God has prescribed and directed you to, which the grace of God teaches, and the love of Christ constrains to. Do all that “with fear and trembling”; not with a slavish fear of hell and damnation, or lest they should fall away, or finally miscarry of heaven and happiness; since this would be a distrust of the power and faithfulness of God, and so criminal in them; nor is it reasonable to suppose, that the apostle would exhort to such a fear, when he himself was so confidently assured, that the good work begun in them would be performed; and besides, the exhortation would be very oddly formed, if this was the sense, “work out your salvation with fear” of damnation: but this fear and trembling spoken of, is such as is consistent with the highest acts of faith, trust, confidence, and joy, and is opposed to pride and vain glory; see (Psalms 2:11) (115:11) (Romans 11:20) ; and intends modesty and humility, which is what the apostle is pressing for throughout the whole context; and here urges to a cheerful and constant obedience to Christ, with all humility of soul, without dependence on it, or vain glorying in it, but ascribing it wholly to the grace of God, for the following reason.

Philippians 2:14

Do all things

Not evil things, these are to be abhorred, shunned, and avoided, even all appearance of them, they are not to be done, even the sake of good; nor all indifferent things at all times, and under all circumstances, when the peace and edification of others are in danger of being hurt by so doing; but all good things, all that are agreeable to the righteous law and good will of God; all those good things which accompany salvation, as hearing the word, and attendance on ordinances: all church affairs relating to public worship, private conference, everything at church meetings, and which concern the discipline and laws of Christ’s house; and all things that are civilly, morally, spiritually, and evangelically good; even all things that God would have done, or we would desire should be done to us by fellow creatures and fellow

Christians: let all these be done

without murmurings;

either against God and Christ, as if anything hard and severe was enjoined, when Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light, (Matthew 11:30) , and none of his commands grievous; and because their presence is not always enjoyed, and that communion and comfort in ordinances had, which may be desired: or against the ministers of the Gospel, in whose power it is not to give grace, comfort, and spiritual refreshment; any more than it was in Moses and Aaron to give bread and water to the Israelites in the wilderness, for which they murmured against them, and in so doing against God himself, (Exodus 16:2 Exodus 16:7) ; or against one another, because of superior enjoyment in nature, providence, and grace; but all things, both of a moral, civil, and religious nature, with respect to God, and one another, should be done readily, freely, cheerfully, and heartily; and also without

disputings;

or "without hesitations", as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it. Whatever appears to be agreeable to the will of God, should be done at once without dispute upon it, or hesitation about it, however disagreeable it may be to carnal sense and reason; the will of God is not to be disputed, nor flesh and blood to be consulted, in opposition to it; nor should the saints enter into any carnal reasonings, and contentious disputations, either at their public or private meetings, but do all they do decently, and in order, and in the exercise of brotherly love.

Philippians 2:15

That ye may be blameless

This, and what follows, show the end to be answered, by observing the above exhortation. This respects not their being blameless in the sight of God, which the saints are not in themselves, being not without sin, though they are, as considered in Christ, clothed with his righteousness, and washed in his blood; but their being blameless before men: and this may be understood both actively and passively; actively, that they might be without blaming others; some are so unhappy in their disposition and conduct, as to be always finding fault with, and blaming all persons they are concerned with, and all things in them, and done by them, right or wrong, without any just reason; and this ought not to

be, and may be prevented by doing all things, as before directed: or passively, that they might not be blamed by others justly; for no man can escape the blame and censure of everyone; our Lord himself did not, nor this our apostle; but doing, as before exhorted to, will, in a great measure, preclude any just reason for blame and complaint: it is added,

and harmless;

that is, that they might be, and appear to be so; harmless as doves, in imitation of Christ, who was holy in his nature, and harmless in his conversation, as his followers should be; doing no injury to any man's person or property, behaving in an inoffensive manner to all men, to Jew and Gentile, and to the church of God: it follows,

the sons of God;

not that they might be sons by so doing; but be "as the sons of God", as the Syriac version renders it, be like them, and behave as such; for they were the sons of God already; not by creation only, as angels, and all men are, not merely by profession of religion, but by adopting grace; they were predestinated to the adoption of children, and were taken into this relation in the covenant of grace, Christ had redeemed them from under the law, that they might receive this blessing, and it was actually bestowed upon them by him in conversion: but the sense is, that they might appear to be the children of God, by acting as becomes such; not that they might appear so to themselves, for they were openly and manifestly to themselves the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, and through the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing to their spirits that they were in such a relation to God; but that they might appear so to others, that they were the adopted sons of God, and also begotten again by him, and made partakers of the divine nature; by their being followers of God as dear children, and by their being obedient ones to him in all holiness and godly conversation, yielding a ready and cheerful obedience to his will, without repining at it, or disputing about it; and to be

without rebuke;

not without the rebuke of their heavenly Father, for whom he loves he rebukes, and every son that he receives into his family he scourges and chastises, not in wrath and anger, or with rebukes of fury, but of love; but without the rebuke of men, both of the churches and ministers of Christ, whose business it is to reprove

and rebuke, publicly and privately, as cases and their circumstances require; and of the men of the world, who when they have any occasion, make use of it to speak reproachfully, as a railing Rabshakeh did, when it is a time of rebuke and blasphemy, and to be shunned and guarded against as much possible: especially since the saints live

in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation:

or age and generation, as every age is; saints are like lilies in the valleys, liable to be trampled upon by the foot of every wild beast; like roses among thorns, to be scratched and torn; and like Lots in the midst of Sodom, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: the whole world lies in sin, and the saints are enclosed on every side with wicked men. Philippi, where these saints lived, was a place of wickedness, and so no doubt was the whole region of Macedonia; the inhabitants were evil for the most part; their ways were crooked, and their works perverse, being contrary to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; and therefore the following exhortation to the saints there was very suitable.

Among whom ye shine;

or "shine ye", as it may be rendered,

as lights in the world.

This world is, in a moral sense, what the original chaos was in a natural sense, covered with darkness; the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, of impiety and superstition, has spread itself over the far greater part of the world; the men of it are children of the night, and of darkness; their works are works of darkness, and they are going on in darkness, not knowing where they are going. The saints are the lights of the world, they were once darkness itself, but are made light in and by the Lord; they are called into marvellous light, and are filled with light spiritual and evangelical; they are like the moon and stars, that give light to the world in the night; and as they receive their light from the sun, and communicate it to the world, so do the saints receive theirs from Christ, the sun of righteousness, and show it forth to others, both by doctrine and practice: or rather the churches of Christ are as candlesticks, in which the light of the Gospel is put, and held forth to men, as follows, see (Matthew 5:14-16) .

Philippians 2:16

Holding forth the word of life

By which may be meant, either Christ the essential

Word, in whom life was, and is, and who is called the quick or living Word, (John 1:1 John 1:4) (Hebrews 4:12) ; and here may be styled the Word of life, because he has all life in him; he has a divine life in him, as God, he is the living God; and it is given to him to have life in himself, as Mediator, for all his people; and he ever lives as man to make intercession for them: and because he is the author of life in every sense, of natural life to all men, of spiritual and eternal life to as many as the Father has given him: or else the Gospel is intended, and the doctrines of it; and which are sometimes called the words of eternal life, and of this life, (John 6:68) (Acts 5:20) ; and that because they are a means of quickening dead sinners, they are a savour of life unto life, (2 Corinthians 2:16) , and the Spirit that giveth life, and of enlivening and comforting living saints; they treat of Christ who is the life; by the Gospel, life and immortality are brought to light; that gives an account of everlasting life; points out Christ as the way to it, shows that meetness for it lies in regenerating grace, and a right unto it is in the righteousness of Christ. Now this Word of life is held forth, partly by the preaching of it to a dark world, as by some; and partly by professing it publicly, as it should be by all who are enlightened with it; and also by living lives and conversations becoming and suitable to it.

That I may rejoice in the day of Christ.

The apostle having observed the advantages that would accrue to themselves, and the benefit they might be of to the men of the world, by regarding the several exhortations he had given them, and which ends he mentions as reasons and arguments to enforce them, closes with taking notice of the use and service it would be to himself; it would give him joy and pleasure when Christ should come a second time to judge the world; and when dead in Christ would be raised, and set at his right hand, and these among the rest, to whom the apostle had been useful; and who continued to bear an honourable testimony in the world to Christ, and his Gospel, to the end:

that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain;

being blessed with such converts under his ministry, as were a credit to religion, an honour to the Gospel, and a crown of rejoicing to him. He expresses his ministerial function, and the discharge of it, by running in a race, as the ministry of a person is sometimes called his course, (Acts 13:25) (20:24) (2 Timothy 4:7) ; in allusion to the Olympic games, which the apostle often

refers to, when the conqueror obtained a crown; and it was enough for our apostle, and a crown of rejoicing to him, that his spiritual children walked in the truth, and as became it, to the end: and also by labour, and hard service, as the ministerial work is, when faithfully performed; and especially as his was, which was attended with so many difficulties, and yet with such constancy, diligence, and indefatigableness, all which was not in vain; and he could look back upon it with pleasure, when his followers stood fast in the faith, and adorned the doctrine of Christ.

Philippians 2:17

Yea, and if I be offered

Or “poured out”, as the drink offerings of wine or oil were; meaning the effusion of his blood, which he compares to a libation, or drink offering, which was poured upon the sacrifice; and the laying down of his life for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel: which he knew not how soon might be, though he was in some hopes of a deliverance for the present, and therefore speaks of it in an hypothetical way: yet he expected it sooner or later; and that whenever it was, it would be as the libation upon the offering.

Upon the sacrifice and service of your faith;

he had been the means of bringing them to the faith of Christ, in which they were an offering acceptable to God, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost; see (Romans 15:16) ; and should he suffer and shed his blood in the cause of Christ, it would be as a libation on them, as a sacrifice; it would be for the sake of preaching the doctrine of faith, by which they were brought to believe on Christ; and it would be for the further confirmation of their faith, and as a drink offering acceptable unto God; upon all which accounts it would be matter of joy to him.

Philippians 2:18

For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me.

] He would not have them be sorrowful, should they hear of his death for the sake of the Gospel, and of his blood being poured out in such a cause, since it was as a libation on their faith, and for the confirmation of it, and would be gain to Christ, and his interest, and to the apostle also: and therefore they should be so far from

indulging grief and sorrow on that account, that they should rather joy and rejoice with him, who was ready to be offered up, or poured out; since he had run out his race, and that not in vain, but to so good a purpose, and especially among them.

Philippians 2:19

But I trust in the Lord Jesus

Or “hope”; not in himself, his wisdom, will, resolutions, and purposes; nor in an arm of flesh, in any human aid and power; nor in princes, nor in Nero, the Roman emperor, as expecting a release from bonds by him, when he could the more easily part with Timothy; but in the Lord Jesus, in the Lord whom every tongue shall confess to be so; and in that Jesus, in whose name every knee shall bow; who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the only Saviour and Deliverer of his people; who has the hearts of all men in his hands, and all power in heaven and in earth: he hoped and trusted, that through the goodness and power of Christ, opening a way for him, he should be able

to send Timotheus shortly unto you;

one that had known the Scriptures from his youth, and was very early converted to the Christian faith, was an eminent preacher of the Gospel, and well known to the Philippians. The apostle hoped to send him to them “shortly”, in a very little time; this he said in order to encourage them, and thereby suggesting, that he thought his own deliverance was at hand: this hope did not arise from a sure and certain persuasion of the thing, but from love to these saints; he had a very great affection for them; he knew that a Gospel minister, and particularly Timothy, would be of great comfort and service to them; wherefore, from that love which hopes all things, he hoped he should, in a short time, be able to serve them in love that way: the end he proposed in it is next expressed,

that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state;

not their worldly estate, their secular affairs, and whether they prospered in their trades and business, and increased in riches; nor their corporeal estate, or state of health, and whether they prospered in their bodies, not but that the knowledge of each of these would be welcome to the apostle; nor everyone’s personal spiritual estate, what was the particular case and state of each member; for though it is the business of a pastor of a church to look diligently to the state of

his flock, and learn the case of every particular member, the apostle could not be thought to come at such an exact knowledge of things, who had the care of all the churches upon him; but their ecclesiastical state, their church state in general; how the Gospel stood with them, and they in that; whether they held it fast, and strove for it, and what ground the false teachers got among them; how the ordinances of the Gospel were regarded and attended on by them; with what life and light, and liberty and zeal, their ministers preached the word; and what success they had to the conversion of sinners, and comfort of saints; and how they behaved towards them, in honouring, obeying, and submitting to them, and esteeming them highly for their works’ sake; what an increase of gifts, grace, and numbers there was among them; and what harmony, love, peace, and concord subsisted between them; and what afflictions and persecutions they endured for the sake of Christ; and with what patience, faith, and cheerfulness they bore them. By the return of Timothy he hoped to have knowledge of these things, that so he might “also be of good comfort”; as they would be by the coming of Timothy to them, by his preaching among them, and relating to them the case and circumstances of the apostle, how cheerful he was under his afflictions, and of what use they were to the cause of Christ. The comfort and pleasure of Gospel ministers lie in the good of the churches of Christ; it puts them in good heart and soul, as the word here used signifies, when they hear of their steadfastness in the faith of Christ, of their love to one another, and all the saints, and of their patience under sufferings.

Philippians 2:20

For I have no man likeminded

With myself; as my soul, so the Syriac version renders it. Timothy had a soul like the apostle’s, which none that were with him, besides him, had; he was of the same judgment with him in the doctrines of grace; he received and preached the same Gospel as he did; he preached the same Christ, the Son of God, without yea and nay; he had the same affection for the apostle, and the souls of men, as he had; his soul was knit to his, and they had, as it were, but one soul in two bodies; he was engaged in the same work of the Lord, and pursued it with the same zeal and diligence: he was a second Paul in the pulpit; and there was no man likeminded as he,

or so well disposed to the Philippians as he was, that had their good and cause at heart, and was willing to take so long a journey to do them service; for he had a particular affection for them, having been among them with the apostle, when he first preached the Gospel to them:

who will naturally care for your state.

There were none like him that would; many were like the shepherds of Israel, that fed themselves and not the flock; but he was one that was diligent to know the state of the flock, and looked well to the herd under his care; and had an anxious care and solicitude, as the word signifies, for the good of souls. The work of a faithful Gospel minister is a work of care; one of his characteristics is, that he cares for the church of God; and though anxious care in worldly things is forbidden, yet in the affairs of Christ’s house it is highly commendable, and especially when it is natural, or genuine and sincere, as Timothy’s was: he had a sincere love, an hearty and real concern for their good; and which he would show by delivering to them the sincere milk of the word, by preaching the Gospel in the power and purity of it, with all sincerity and uprightness, with a single eye to the glory of Christ, and the good of their souls; and which is the apostle’s reason for sending him unto them.

Philippians 2:21

For all seek their own

Meaning not every individual, but the greatest part; and not merely such as were manifestly false teachers, but such as were with the apostle, as ministers of the word; and we may suppose him to be stripped, by one means or another, of the more valuable preachers of the Gospel, and to be in much such a case as he describes himself to be, in (2 Timothy 4:10-12) . He had none with him, excepting a very few, but such as he speaks of in the preceding chapter, that preached Christ of envy, strife, and contention; and these chiefly sought their own worldly interest and advantage; they sought great things for themselves, and looked every man for his gain from his quarter, Demas like, loving this present world, (2 Timothy 4:10) ; they sought for dominion and authority over men, and their faith, to lord it over God’s heritage, as Diotrefes, who loved to have the preeminence, (3 John 1:9) ; they sought for popular applause, for honour and glory of men, as the Pharisees of old did; and particularly their own ease and health, and did not choose to undertake such a fatiguing

journey as from Rome to Philippi:

not the things which are Jesus Christ;

they had no true regard to the Gospel of Christ, to the continuance, establishment, and spread of it in the world, or in any particular place; nor any hearty affection for the ordinances of Christ, and the retaining and preserving of them in their purity and simplicity; nor for the churches of Christ, and their spiritual good and welfare, as the Jews formerly, they cared not if the house of God lay waste, provided they dwelt in their ceiled houses; nor had they any concern for the honour and glory of Christ. But Timothy was a man of a quite different spirit and complexion; and which is another reason of the apostle's sending him to this place and people.

Philippians 2:22

But ye know the proof of him

They had had an experiment of him, a trial of his spirit, and a proof of his gifts and ministry, when he was among them with the apostle at his first preaching the Gospel to them, to the conversion of Lydia, and of the jailer, and their households, which laid the foundation of a Gospel church state among them, see (Acts 16:3 Acts 16:12) . The Vulgate Latin version reads in the imperative, "know ye the proof of him"; but the former reading is to be preferred:

that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the Gospel;

he served not the apostle, but with him; he served God as the apostle did, in the Gospel of his Son; he served Jesus Christ, whose Gospel he preached, the interest and spread of which he greatly laboured in with him, as a fellow servant or work fellow; see (Romans 16:21) ; which expresses the modesty of the apostle, and the great honour put upon Timothy, and which was not abused by him; for as a son honours, obeys, and imitates his father, so did he honour the apostle, and give him all respect and reverence that was due to him on account of his office, age, and usefulness; and obeyed his orders cheerfully, going wherever he sent him, and doing whatever he bid him; and imitated him in his ministry, in his constancy, diligence, and zeal, having a true filial affection for him.

Philippians 2:23

Him therefore I hope to send presently

For the reasons now given:

so soon as I shall see how it will go with me;

whether he should be released from his bonds or not; whether he should live or die; whether he should be set free, or be called to suffer martyrdom for the sake of Christ; for he expected, that the matter would be determined in a very short time, when, be it at it would, Timothy would be spared.

Philippians 2:24

But I trust in the Lord

The Syriac version reads, "in my Lord":

that I also myself shall come shortly:

this he adds, partly to let them see, that he still retained a secret hope and persuasion in his own mind of a deliverance, though he could not be certain of it, how things would go with him; and partly, that he might not be thought to put them off with sending Timothy to them; for notwithstanding that, his intention still was, should he be released, to pay them a visit himself. The Alexandrian copy adds, "to you": so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Philippians 2:25

Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus,

&c.] In the mean while, before either he or Timothy could come to them. This man was sent by the Philippians to the apostle with a present, and had been detained at Rome for some time, partly through business, and partly through sickness; but now the apostle thought it proper, he being recovered, to send him to them, who was one of their ministers. One of this name lived at Rome about this time, and was one of Nero's freemen F15, but not the same person here intended. This person has a very high character. The apostle calls him,

my brother;

not in a natural relation, or as being his countryman, and so according to a way of speaking with the Jews, and himself, his brother and kinsman according to the flesh; for by his name and country he seems to be a Greek; but in a spiritual relation, being born again of the same Father, belonging to the same household and family, and also a brother in the ministry, as it follows:

and companion in labour;

in the laborious work of preaching the Gospel. The ministry of the word is a work; it is called the work of the ministry; and it is a laborious one when diligently and faithfully performed: the apostle was a workman that needed not to be ashamed, a labourer in Christ's vineyard, and one that laboured more abundantly than others; and he was not alone, he had companions in his work, and this good man was one of them: he adds,

and fellow soldier;

the life of every believer is a warfare; he is always engaged in a war with sin, and Satan, and the world; and is often called to fight the fight of faith, to contend earnestly against false teachers for the faith once delivered to the saints, to stand up for it, and fast in it; and is provided for with the whole armour of God, with weapons of warfare, which are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty, being enlisted as a volunteer under the great Captain of his salvation, Jesus Christ, under whose banner he fights, and is more than a conqueror through him: but though this is the common case and character of all the saints, it more especially belongs to ministers of the Gospel; who are set for the defence of it, and at the front of the battle, and are called to meet the enemy at the gate, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; and such an one was the apostle; and he had other fellow soldiers, and this person among the rest, who were engaged in the same common cause with the same enemies, under the same Captain, and would enjoy the same crown:

but your messenger;

or "apostle"; meaning either that he was the pastor of them, a preacher to them, a minister among them; for ordinary ministers of the word were sometimes called apostles, as well as extraordinary ones, see (Romans 16:7) ; or rather, that he was their messenger to him, to relieve, comfort, and assist him in his bonds; and such persons were called the messengers of the churches, (2 Corinthians 8:23) , which sense is strengthened by what follows:

and he that ministered to my wants:

to his personal wants in prison, and to the wants of the poor saints, which the apostle reckoned as his own, and which he used to supply; but now not able; and to his ministerial wants, filling up his place in preaching the Gospel to the saints at Rome.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 Artinn. Epictet. l. 1. c. 1, 19, 26. & Aurel. Victor. Epitome Rom. Imp. in Nerone.

Philippians 2:26

For he longed after you

This verse and (Philippians 2:28) contain the reasons of the apostle's sending him; and the first is, because he had a very vehement and longing desire after all of them; to see them, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add, and as it is read in the Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and in others: it was not the city of Philippi he longed to see, which might be his native place, nor his natural relations and family, but the church there; and not the officers of it only, the bishops and deacons, but all the members of it, rich and poor, high and low, strong and weak believers:

and was full of heaviness:

almost pressed down, quite disheartened and dispirited, ready to sink and die away, not so much with his own disorder and illness, as with sorrow on account of the church at Philippi:

because that ye had heard that he had been sick:

he understood that the news of his sickness had reached them, and he knew how distressing it would be to them, that it would cut them to the heart, and press them heavily, fearing they should never see his face, nor hear his voice more. We have here an instance of that mutual love, tender affection and sympathy; which were in the first churches, and what subsisted between ministers and people; see how they loved one another! but, alas! this first love is left.

Philippians 2:27

For indeed he was sick nigh unto death

It was not a mere rumour, or a false alarm, but was real matter of fact; and it was not a light disorder, a slight indisposition, but a very dangerous illness; though the sickness was not unto death, yet near it. Good men, such as Christ loves, as he did Lazarus, are sometimes sick; though their spiritual diseases are healed, and their sins forgiven, so that the inhabitants of Zion have no more reason to say that they are sick, since Christ has took their infirmities, and bore their sickness, yet they are not exempt from bodily disorders; and which are sometimes such as bring them to the brink of the grave,

and, as it were, to the gates of death; and such was this good man's case:

but God had mercy on him:

his disorder was such as was out of the reach of man; his recovery was not by man, but by God, and owing to his power, mercy, and goodness; and indeed, whenever means are made rise of, and they succeed to the restoration of health, it ought to be ascribed to the divine blessing on them. The raising up of this man is reckoned as an instance of mercy to him; as it was the removing of a grievous affliction, a return of him to his delightful work of the ministry, and the continuation of an useful life for the good of others; and so a mercy to him, and to the churches of Christ, and to the apostle also: who adds,

and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow:

one affliction added to another; the death of this brother of his to his bonds: moreover the sickness of this companion of his filled him with sorrow: and had he died, it would have greatly increased it, and which would have had a fresh addition by the loss this church would sustain, and the grief and trouble they would be overwhelmed with: grace, and the doctrine of grace, though they regulate the passions, and restrain them from immoderate sorrow, they do not destroy them, nor deny the proper use of them. Christianity does not countenance a stoical apathy, but requires and encourages a Christian sympathy, and directs us to weep with them that weep within due bounds.

Philippians 2:28

I sent him therefore the more carefully

Or in greater haste, and as soon as possible:

that when ye see him again ye may rejoice;

for this must greatly increase their joy, to see him again after he had been so long from them, and under such a disorder, which had made them to fear they should never see him more. The Syriac version renders it, "that when ye see him ye may rejoice again"; as they had done heretofore in his conversation and ministry, when among them:

and that I may be the less sorrowful;

when he should hear of his safe arrival among them, and of their joyful reception of him to their mutual satisfaction, which would be an alleviation of the

apostle's sorrow in his present circumstances; for he did not expect to be wholly without sorrow while in this life.

Philippians 2:29

Receive him therefore

Not only into their houses, where such as bring the doctrine of Christ should be admitted, and not others; but into their bosoms, into their hearts and affections, as he had reason to believe they would, and into their fellowship and communion, and to the exercise of his office among them, as their minister: and that

in the Lord;

or "for the Lord", as the Arabic version renders it; for his sake, because he was one that was put into the ministry by him, was called unto it, and qualified for it, and sent forth to minister in it by him; or in the name of the Lord, as an ambassador of his, as representing him, and as if he himself was present; for he that receives a minister of Christ, receives Christ himself; see (Luke 10:16) (Galatians 4:14) ;

with all gladness;

with sincere affection, undissembled joy, perfect pleasure, and with all demonstrations of respect unto him, and delight in him at his return to them.

And hold such in reputation:

account such as he precious and valuable; highly esteem of them for their works' sake; reckon them worthy of double honour, and give it to them.

Philippians 2:30

Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death

Meaning either the work the church sent him about, and which he cheerfully undertook, and faithfully performed in carrying of a present to, and visiting the apostle in prison; which is called the work of Christ, because taken by Christ as if it was done to himself; and which, what with the long and fatiguing journey from Philippi to Rome, and the frequent visits he made to the apostle, and the much business besides that lay upon his hands, brought upon him a disorder which greatly threatened his life, and had almost issued in his death: or else the work of preaching the Gospel so frequently and constantly, and with so much zeal and vehemency at Rome; and which may be called the work of Christ, because it is what he calls unto, and qualities for, and in

which his glory is greatly concerned; and on which this good man was so intent, gladly spending himself, and being spent in it, that he was brought through it to the brink of the grave:

not regarding his life:

he was careless of that, and of his health; he loved not his life, nor counted it dear to himself; he rather despised it, and made no account of it, being very willing to deliver it up, and sacrifice it in such a good work and cause:

to supply your lack of service towards me;

to do that in their name, room, and stead, which they, through absence, could not do in person; signifying, that what was done to him, and for him, was but a piece of service and duty to him; and which this good man and faithful minister and messenger of theirs having done for them to the hazard of his life, he ought therefore to be received by them with great joy, and to be highly honoured and respected.

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS III

In this chapter the apostle cautions the Philippians against false teachers, whom he describes as evil men, and exhorts them to walk as they had him, and other faithful ministers for an example. And whereas these judaizing teachers were for drawing them off from Christ, and weakening their joy and glorying in him, he exhorts them in the first place to rejoice in Christ, Php 3:1, and to beware of them, whom he describes as dogs, as evil workers, as the concision, Php 3:2, and opposes to them the characters of real saints, who are truly what they vainly boasted of, really circumcised persons in a Gospel sense, spiritual worshippers of God, joyful believers in Christ, and such as placed no confidence in outward things, Php 3:3, This the apostle illustrates in his own case, who had as much reason for trusting in such things as any man whatever, Php 3:4, of which he gives an enumeration in several particulars, Php 3:5,6, upon which he passes his judgment, and shows of what account, and in what esteem they were with him before, and now; that formerly they were reckoned gain, but now loss, Php 3:7, and which he explains as referring to every thing short of Christ, and in comparison of the knowledge of him, and which he preferred to everything; and this he confirms by his willingness to suffer the loss of all things for him; his ends in which were, that he might win him, and be found in him, without his own righteousness, that legal one the false teachers extolled,

and with the righteousness of God which faith receives, and is the only justifying one; and that he might know more of him, feel more of his power, have more fellowship with him, and conformity to him, Php 3:8-10. His view in all which was, that he might attain to that glorious and happy state of the resurrection of the dead in Christ, Php 3:11, and to prevent mistakes, and anticipate an objection that might be made to him, as if he ascribed perfection to himself in the present state, he owns he had not arrived to it: all he meant was, that it was his desire to enjoy that which Christ had laid hold on him for; in order to which he buried in oblivion what was past, looking and pressing to things before him, even to Christ, and the glory he was called unto, which was with him, Php 3:12-14. Next follow various exhortations, as to be of the same mind with the apostle in pressing after spiritual and heavenly things, to which he exhorts those that had a greater knowledge of them than others; and who, though otherwise minded, the apostle was persuaded would have, the same revealed to them, Php 3:15, and both he exhorts, according to their different attainments, to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing, Php 3:16, and to be followers of him, and of them that walked after his example, Php 3:17, giving this as a reason, because there were men who walked otherwise, to the grief of him, to the dishonour of Christ, and to their own shame and destruction, whom he describes as sensual and earthly minded men, Php 3:18,19, and to engage them to follow him, and others, and not such persons, he draws a character of them opposite unto them; that whereas the minds of those others were carnal and earthly, their minds were spiritual and heavenly; their conversation was in heaven, and they were waiting for Christ from hence, Php 3:20, and the blessedness they expect from him then, is the resurrection of their bodies, which is illustrated by the efficient cause of it, Christ; the subject of it, their vile bodies, as in this life, and in the grave; the exemplar and pattern of it, the glorious body of Christ; and the means by which it will be effected, the energy and power of Christ, who is omnipotent, Php 3:21.

Philippians 3:1

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord

The Syriac version reads, "in our Lord", i.e. Christ. The apostle seems as if he was about to conclude his epistle; and therefore, as if he was taking his farewell of this church, and giving his last advice to them, he

exhorts them in a most affectionate manner, as his dear brethren in a spiritual relation, that they would make Christ their chief joy; that whatever sorrow they might have on account of his bonds, or the sickness of Epaphroditus, yet, he observes they had reason to rejoice in their Lord and Saviour; and however, it might be matter of rejoicing to them to hear of his hope of coming once more to them, and of the recovery of their minister and his return to them, yet Christ should be the principal object of their joy. A believer has always reason to rejoice in Christ; in the greatness of his person, he being in the form of God, and equal to him, and therefore able to save his to the uttermost by his obedience and death, and has interest enough in heaven to make his intercession prevalent and successful and power to keep safe all that are committed to him; and in the fitness of his person to be a Mediator, and daysman, to take care of things pertaining to the glory of God, and to make reconciliation for sin; and in the fulness of his person, he having all grace in him for his people, which is all theirs, and with joy may they draw water out of the full wells of salvation in him; and in the beauty of his person which surpasses all others, a sight of which fills with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. They may, and should rejoice, as they sometimes do, in his salvation; in the contrivance of it by infinite wisdom; in the impetration of it by himself; and in the application of it by his spirit; and that because hereby justice is satisfied, the law is magnified and made honourable, sin is finished, and an everlasting righteousness brought in. Also they are called upon to rejoice in his resurrection, which is for their justification; in his ascension, seeing he then received gifts for men; and in his session at the right hand of God, which is in their nature; and in his intercession which is to their advantage; and in all the relations he stands in to them, as head, husband, father, brother, friend; and in everything that is his, and that belongs unto him, as his Gospel, ordinances, ways, and worship.

To write the same things to you.

The apostle finding he had more time on his hands, or fresh thoughts occurred to him, writes on, and makes an apology for writing the same things, which he had either wrote to other churches, or which he had delivered when first among them, or which he had since wrote to them. For sometimes it is necessary to say and write the same things over and over again, partly that they may be the better understood, and partly that they

may be more strongly fixed in the memory; as also, that the saints may be the more established in the present truth: and which he says,

to me indeed [is] not grievous;

or troublesome; he found no backwardness to it, nor sluggishness in it; he was not loath to do it, nor was it wearisome to him; or made him slothful, as the Arabic renders it; nor was he afraid to repeat what he had wrote, or again to warn them against false teachers, of whom he stood in no fear:

but for you [it is] safe;

or “necessary”, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, being a means of preserving them from the error of the wicked; for though the saints are safe in Christ, and can never finally and totally be deceived, yet the Gospel, and the frequent ministration of it, are a means of keeping them from the deception of evil men; for as the Syriac version renders it, “they make you more cautious”; when truth is repeated, and afresh confirmed, it guards against falling in with damnable heresies. And so the Arabic version renders it, “is a guard”, or “garrison to you”.

Philippians 3:2

Beware of dogs

By whom are meant the “judaizing” teachers, who were for imposing the works and ceremonies of the law upon the Gentiles, as necessary to salvation; and they have the name retorted on them they used to give to the Gentiles; see (Matthew 15:26 Matthew 15:27) ; nor should they think it too severe, since the Jews themselves say F16,

“the face of that generation (in which the Messiah shall come) shall he, (blkh ynpk) , “as the face of a dog”.

The apostle calls them so, because they returned to Judaism, as the dog to its vomit, (2 Peter 2:22) ; and because of the uncleanness in which many of them lived, and the impudence they were guilty of in transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, and putting themselves upon an equal foot with them; as also for their calumny and detraction, their wrangling with the apostles, snarling at their doctrines, and biting them with the devouring words of reproach and scandal: likewise, they may be styled dogs for their covetousness, being such greedy ones as in (Isaiah 56:10) , with feigned words making merchandise of men; and for their love of their, bellies, which they served, and not Christ, and

made a god of, (Philippians 3:19) . Moreover, because they were without, as dogs are, (Revelation 22:15) ; having gone out from the communion of the saints, because they were not of them; or if among them, yet not true members of Christ, nor of his mystical body; all which are so many arguments why the saints should beware of them, and why their persons, conversation, and doctrine should be avoided.

Beware of evil workers:

meaning the same persons, who were deceitful workers, did the work of the Lord unfaithfully, walked in craftiness, and handled the word of God deceitfully, endeavoured to subvert the Gospel of Christ, and the faith of men in it; who worked from bad principles, and with evil views; and notwithstanding their large pretensions to good works, teaching that justification and salvation were by them, which notion the apostle tacitly refers to in this character; yet were of bad a character, and such as Christ will reject another day as workers of iniquity; a character they deservedly bear, if there was no other reason for it than their preaching the doctrine of salvation by men’s own works of righteousness, and who, and their ministry, are by all means to be shunned.

Beware of the concision;

the men of the circumcision, as the Arabic version renders it; they chose to be called so, but the apostle would not give them that name, but calls them the “concision”; or “the concision of the flesh”, as the Syriac version renders it; referring either to the cuttings in the flesh, forbidden (Leviticus 21:5) ; or to the circumcision of the flesh rather, which they valued themselves upon, and were for introducing among the Gentiles, whereby they made sad divisions, and cutting work among the churches; and were some of them at least “cut” off, as the Ethiopic version renders it, from the churches; and who, as much as in them lay, cut themselves off from Christ, and rendered him unprofitable to them; see (Galatians 5:2 Galatians 5:4) .

FOOTNOTES:

F16 Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.

Philippians 3:3

For we are the circumcision

And not they; they have the name, and we the thing, or that which legal circumcision was a shadow of, namely, circumcision of the heart; which lies in being

pricked to the heart under a true sense of sin; in having the hardness of the heart removed, and the iniquity of it laid to open view; in pain and contrition of heart about it, joined with shame for it, and loathing of it, the consequence of which is, a putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, (Colossians 2:11) , according to the former conversation; and also in a renouncing a man’s own righteousness in point of justification before God, and acceptance with him. All which is the work of God, and not man, and is therefore called the circumcision made without hands, (Colossians 2:11) ; it has God, and not man, for its author; and its praise is of God, and not of men; and its seat is in the heart and spirit, and not in the flesh; and such whose hearts are circumcised to love the Lord their God, and fear him, are the true circumcision:

which worship God in the spirit.

The object of worship is “God”, and him only; not a creature animate or inanimate, stocks or stones, beasts, birds, men, or angels; only God, Father, Son, and Spirit: that the Father is to be worshipped, is not disputed, see (John 4:21 John 4:23) ; and the Son is to be worshipped with the same worship the Father is; since he is in the form of God, and equal to him, is the Creator of all the Lord of angels and men, and is to be, and is worshipped by both; prayer is made unto him, baptism is administered in his name, and trust and confidence are placed in him; and so is the Holy Ghost, he being equally God with the Father and the Son, and therefore the same homage is to be given to him as to them: and so some indeed read the words here, “which worship God the Spirit”; or the Spirit, who is God. “Worship” is either inward or outward; inward worship lies in the exercise of grace on God, as of faith, hope, love, fear outward worship is the performance of certain external actions required by God, and both are to be performed: and it is also either private or public; private worship is in the closet, or in the family, and consists of praying, singing of praises public worship lies in tire observance of the outward ordinances of preaching, praying, hearing singing in the church of God; even all such ordinances as God has appointed, which are recorded in the Scriptures, and are confirmed by the authority of Christ. The manner in which worship is to be performed, is “in the Spirit”; either in and with the Spirit of God, without whose grace and assistance no part of it can be performed well. And the Alexandrian copy reads, “which worship in the Spirit of God”; and so the Complutensian edition,

and several copies. Or in and with our own hearts and spirits, which should be engaged in every part of religious worship with much attention, diligence, and fervency; or in a spiritual manner, in opposition to the carnal worship of the Jews, and the bodily exercise of formal professors; and which lies in drawing nigh to God with true hearts, sincere and fervent ones, with grace in them, and that in exercise:

and rejoice in Christ Jesus;

or “glory in” him, and make their boast of him; for a different word is here used from that in (Philippians 3:1) . Such who have a true sense of themselves, and a spiritual sight of Christ, will not glory in themselves, in their wisdom, strength, riches, or righteousness, but in Christ, in his wisdom and strength, in his riches and righteousness, and in his person and grace only:

and have no confidence in the flesh;

in any carnal descent, or birth privilege, as to be of the seed of Abraham, of the of Israel, or of such a tribe, or family, or born of such a parent; nor in circumcision, or any of the carnal ordinances of the ceremonial law; nor in any civil, moral, legal, and external righteousness, for so to do is but to make flesh an arm; or indeed to trust in anything out of Christ, or short of him; and all this makes up the character and description of a true believer in Christ.

Philippians 3:4

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh

This he says, lest it should be objected to him, that the reason why he had no confidence in the flesh, and did not boast of it, was, because he could not; he had nothing to glory of, and put his confidence in, and therefore acted the common part of such persons, who despise what either they have not, or are ignorant of: but this was not the apostle’s case, he had as much reason, and as good a foundation for trust in himself, his privileges and attainments, as any man had, and more; and his meaning here is not, that he might lawfully have confidence in the flesh, for that is criminal in every one, but that he had as good pretensions to it; and were it lawful, might with greater appearance of truth do it than some other persons, or indeed any other:

if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

the sense is, if there were any other person besides the false teachers he speaks of in (Philippians 3:2) ;

that were of the judaizing sect, or any whatever of the Jewish nation, be he who he will, who thought within himself he had, or seemed to others to have (for all such confidence, and the grounds of it, are only in show and appearance, and in imagination, not in reality), reasons for boasting and trusting in himself and in his carnal privileges and performances, the apostle had more, and which he enumerates in (Philippians 3:5 Philippians 3:6) ; not but that he might be exceeded by some in some one particular or another; as for instance, he was not of the tribe of Levi: nor of Judah; he was neither of the house of Aaron, nor of David; neither of the priestly line, nor of the blood royal; but taking all together, there was not a man in whom so many reasons met, for boasting and confidence in the flesh, as in himself.

Philippians 3:5

Circumcised the eighth day

Circumcision was an appointment of God to Abraham, and his male issue; to him and them God gave the covenant of circumcision: this to Abraham personally was a sign and seal, that the righteousness of faith, which he had while he was an uncircumcised person, should come upon the uncircumcised Gentiles in the times or the Messiah, when the Gospel should come among them; and it was a distinguishing character of the Jews from the Gentiles, until the coming of Christ; it was typical of the effusion of his blood to cleanse from all the impurity of original and actual sin, and represented the circumcision of the heart. The Jews valued themselves much upon it, and treated the Gentiles with contempt for the want of it; and would neither converse with them in a civil or religious way, because they were uncircumcised: but the apostle was no Gentile, or an uncircumcised person; he had this mark in his flesh to glory in as well as others, if it had been lawful to trust in it; he was the subject of this ordinance while it was a standing one, and before it was abolished by Christ; and it was performed on him at the precise time fixed in the original institution of it, which was not always observed; for not to take notice of Jewish proselytes; who were circumcised at any age, when they became such, whether in youth, manhood, or old age; and which by the way shows, that the apostle was no proselyte, but a natural Jew; Gershom, the son of Moses, was not circumcised till some years after his birth; and all the while the children of Israel were in the wilderness

this ordinance was neglected, till Joshua had led them into Canaan’s land, and then he circumcised all that generation that was born in the wilderness, some of whom must be near forty years of age; and in after times it was usual with the Jews, for one reason or another, to put off circumcision to a longer time. Take the following story as an illustration of this F17:

“it is a tradition of R. Nathan; once, says he, I went to the cities of the sea, and a woman came to me who had circumcised her first son, and he died; the second, and he died; the third she brought to me; I saw him that he was red, I said unto her, my daughter, “wait a while” for him till his blood is swallowed up in him; she waited for him a while, and circumcised him, and he lived; and they called him Nathan the Babylonian, after my name. And again another time I went to the province of Cappadocia (the Jerusalem Talmud F18 has it Caesarea of Cappadocia), a certain woman came to me, who had circumcised her first son, and he died; the second, and he died; the third, (the above Talmud adds, and he died, the fourth,) she brought to me, I saw that he was green, I inspected him, and the blood of the covenant was not in him, I said unto her, my daughter, (המחיינו) , “tarry a while” for him; (the Jerusalem Talmud has it, זמן להניחו לאחד) , “let him alone to another time”;) till his blood fall in him, she waited for him, and circumcised him, and he lived; and they called him Nathan the Babylonian, after my name.”

The Jewish canon, with regard to the time of circumcision, runs thus {s}:

“an infant may be circumcised at eight days, or at nine, or at ten, or at eleven, or at twelve, neither less nor more (not less than eight, nor more than twelve), how? according to its course at eight. If it is born between the two evenings, it is circumcised on the ninth day; if between the two evenings of the sabbath eve, it is circumcised on the tenth day; if on a feast day after the sabbath, it is circumcised on the eleventh; if on the two days of the beginning of the year, it is circumcised on the twelfth. An infant that is sick, they do not circumcise him until he is recovered.”

And in the last case, they reckon seven days from

the time of the recovery of the child, as Maimonides F20 observes; with whom may be read other cases, in which circumcision was not always performed on the eighth day, but sometimes was deferred, and sometimes it was done the same day the child was born. But circumcision on the eighth day was reckoned most valid and authentic, and according to rule; and therefore it is not without reason, that the apostle mentions the time of his circumcision, and puts an emphasis upon it.

Of the stock of Israel;

this is said to distinguish him from an Ishmaelite, or an Edomite, who were circumcised, and from the son of a proselyte, who might be circumcised on the eighth day; but he was a natural Israelite, to whom the various privileges belonged, mentioned in (Romans 9:4 Romans 9:5) ; and therefore had as much reason to trust in the flesh as any Israelite whatever.

[Of] the tribe of Benjamin;

who was a genuine and legitimate son of Jacob, whom he had by his lawful and beloved wife Rachel. Of which tribe was the first king of Israel, whose name was Saul, (1 Samuel 9:1 1 Samuel 9:2) , and which was the apostle’s first and Jewish name, and which perhaps was common in that tribe on that account. In this tribe stood the city of Jerusalem, and the temple of the Lord; this tribe retained the true worship of God with Judah, when the ten tribes revolted and worshipped the calves at Dan and Bethel, and returned with Judah from captivity, when the others did not. And the apostle was not only able to make himself appear to be of the stock Israel, but could name the tribe to which he belonged, which many of the Jews, that were of one, or rather of the ten tribes, were not able to do, and may be his chief reason for mentioning this circumstance.

An Hebrew of the Hebrews;

not so called only because he could trace his pedigree from Abraham the Hebrew, or understood, and could speak the Hebrew language, which the Hellenistic Jews could not, or was an illustrious one among them, but because both his parents were Hebrews; he was an Hebrew by the father and mother’s side both; he was a genuine Hebrew. The Arabians have the same way of speaking; and with them a genuine Arab is called an Arab of the Arabs F21 as here. Some there were whose mothers were Hebrews, and their fathers Gentiles; such an one was Timothy, (Acts 16:1) ; and there were others whose fathers were Hebrews, and their mothers

Gentiles; and these are thought by some to be the same the Talmudists F23 call, (Mylx) , “profane”: they not being reckoned so holy as such whose fathers and mothers were both Hebrews; of which the latter gloried over the other.

As touching the law, a Pharisee:

with respect to the interpretation and observance of the law, which was according to the traditions of the elders, and not the literal and genuine sense of it, he followed; and was of the sect of the Pharisees, which was strictest sect among the Jews, and in the greatest esteem among the people: and though they had put many false glosses on the Scripture, and held many erroneous principles, and were very tenacious of human traditions, yet they were preferable to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and other things; and were more zealous in their devotion and religion, and more strict in their morals, and external holiness of life and conversation. They separated and distinguished themselves hereby from other people, and hence they had their name; (See Gill on Matthew 3:7). Now the apostle was not only a Pharisee, but the son of one; he was always brought up in that strict sect and severe way, (Acts 23:6).

FOOTNOTES:

F17 T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 47. 2.

F18 T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 7. 4.

F19 Misn. Sabbat, c. 19. sect. 5. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. & Misn. Eracin, c. 2. sect. 2. & Bartenora in ib.

F20 Hilch. Mila, c. 1. 16.

F21 Pocock. Specim. A. ab. Hist. p. 3, 9.

F23 T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 69. 1.

Philippians 3:6

Concerning zeal, persecuting the church

The Vulgate Latin version adds, “of God”, as in (Galatians 1:13). The apostle was very zealous of the traditions of the elders, and for the law of God, and towards God also; though his zeal was not according to knowledge, but blind, ignorant, and furious; which pushed him on to persecute the followers of Christ, and the church of Christ at Jerusalem more especially, in a very violent and outrageous manner; he held the clothes of those that stoned Stephen, (Acts 7:58); he consented unto his death, (Acts 8:1); he made havoc of the church at Jerusalem, haling men and women to prison, (Acts 8:3); he continued breathing out threatenings and

slaughter against the disciples of Christ, (Acts 9:1); gave his voice against them when put to death, punished them frequently in the synagogues by scourging them, (Acts 26:10), and compelled them to blaspheme the name of Christ; was exceeding mad against them, pursued them to strange cities, (Acts 26:11), and persecuted the church of God exceedingly, more than anyone single person besides.

Touching the righteousness which is in, the law, blameless.

This he mentions last, as including the whole of his righteousness, civil, ceremonial, and moral; and which he fancied was so perfect, that whatever righteousness was in the law, or required by it, he had it, and to such a degree, that he was blameless before God and men; that he was justified by it in the sight of God, and could not justly be found fault with by any, or be charged with any defect in his obedience, either to the moral or ceremonial law; which must arise from great ignorance of the righteousness of God, and the strictness of his justice, and of the law of God, and the purity, spirituality, and extent of it, which reaches to the thoughts of the heart, and the first motions of sin; and of himself, the plague of his own heart, of the sin of lust, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, in every instance of it.

Philippians 3:7

But what things were gain to me

As circumcision, and the observance of the ceremonial law, which he thought were necessary to salvation; and his natural and lineal descent from Abraham, which he supposed entitled him to the favour of God, and eternal life, as well as to outward privileges; and his being of that strict sect of religion, a Pharisee, which he doubted not, being brought up and continued in, would secure to him everlasting happiness; and his zeal in persecuting the church of Christ, in which he thought he did God good service, and merited heaven for himself; and his legal righteousness, which he fancied was perfect, and so justified him in the sight of God, and rendered him acceptable to him: for the apostle’s meaning is, not only that these things were judged by him, while in an unconverted state, good in themselves, and in some respects useful, but that they were really gainful, and meritorious of happiness in another world. But being converted, he saw all those things in a different light, and had a different opinion of them:

F24 Sepher Cosri, p. 3, sect. 16. fol. 152. 1.

Philippians 3:8

Yea, doubtless, and I count all things [but] loss

Not only the things before mentioned, but anything, and everything else but Christ, or that stood in competition with him, or were short of him; as his natural and acquired parts; the whole compass of learning he had attained to; all that honour, credit, reputation, and popularity he was in for knowledge and devotion; all worldly substance, the comforts of life, and life itself; and all his righteousness since conversion, as well as before; of this no doubt could be made by those who knew him, his principles and his practices: and all this

for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:

“by the knowledge of Christ” is not meant subjectively the knowledge that is in Christ, or which he has of others, either as God or man; but objectively, that knowledge which believers have of him, who know him not only in his person, as God over all, but as a Saviour and Redeemer, and as theirs; they know him in all his relations, and particularly as their Lord, not by creation only, but by redemption and grace, as the apostle did, putting an emphasis on these words, “my Lord”; thereby expressing his faith of interest in him, his great affection for him, and cheerful subjection to him. And this knowledge is not general, but special, spiritual, and saving; it is a knowledge of approbation of Christ above all others; a fiducial one, which has faith in him joined with it, and is both experimental and, practical, and, at least at times, appropriating; and though imperfect, it is progressive and capable of being increased, and will at last be brought to perfection. It is attained to, not by the light of nature, nor by the help of carnal reason, nor by the law of Moses, but by the Gospel of the grace of God, as a means; and the efficient cause of it is Father, Son, and Spirit; the Father reveals Christ in his saints; the Son gives them an understanding to know him; and the Spirit is a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and this knowledge is very excellent: a spiritual knowledge of Christ is more excellent than a general and notional one, or than a knowledge of Christ after the flesh; and the knowledge of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, though the same in nature, is more excellent than that which was under the legal dispensation, by promises, prophecies,

those I counted loss for Christ;

circumcision he saw was now abolished, and was nothing, and that the circumcision of the heart was the main thing; and that the other was so far from being useful and necessary to salvation, that it was hurtful, was a yoke of bondage, bound men over to keep the whole law, and made Christ of none effect to them; and the same opinion he had of the whole ceremonial law: as for natural descent, which he once valued and trusted in, he now rejected it, well knowing it signified not whether a man was a Greek, or a Jew, a Barbarian, or Scythian, provided he was but a believer in Christ, (Colossians 3:11); and as for any outward form or sect of religion, he knew there was no salvation in it, nor in any other name but that of Christ, (Acts 4:12); and he was so far from thinking, that on account of his zeal in persecuting the church he was deserving of heaven, that for that reason he was not worthy to be called an apostle of Christ; and as for his legal righteousness, he now saw it to be as filthy rags, (Isaiah 64:6); that many things in it were really evil in themselves, such as his observance of the traditions of the elders, whereby the commands of God were transgressed, and his mad zeal in persecuting the followers of Christ; and other things, which had the appearance of good works, were not truly so, did not spring from love, were not done in faith, and with a view to the glory of God; and that the best of them were very imperfect, and exceeding blamable; yea, that if they had been perfect, they could not have been meritorious of eternal life, as he once thought them to be; he saw now they were of no use in justification and salvation; nay, that they were hurtful and pernicious, being trusted to, as keeping persons off from Christ, and his righteousness: wherefore, he gladly suffered the loss of all his legal righteousness, and renounced and disclaimed it, and all pretensions to justification and salvation by it, for the sake of Christ; of life and salvation by him, and in comparison of him; of the knowledge of him, and of his justifying righteousness, as the following verses show. Hence, what before he pleased himself much with, and promised himself much from, he could not now reflect upon with any pleasure and satisfaction of mind; which is the sense of this phrase with Jewish writers F24: so it is observed of a drunken man, when he comes to himself; and it is told him what he did when in liquor, he grieves at it, (xwyr alw doph lkh bvxyw) , “and counts all loss and not gain”; i.e. can take no pleasure in a reflection on it.

FOOTNOTES:

and the ceremonial law, in degree, extensiveness, and clearness; but the most excellent knowledge of Christ is that of the saints in heaven; yea, even there is an excellency in what the saints have here on earth, and a superior one to all other knowledge, if the author and original of it is considered: it is not of ourselves, nor by the assistance of men; it is not in the book of nature, nor in the schools of the philosophers; it is not of earth, nor earthly, but it comes from afar, from above, from heaven, from God the Father of lights; it is a free grace gift, a distinguishing one, and is very comprehensive, unspeakable, and unchangeable: and as to the object of it, it is Christ, the chiefest among ten thousands; who made the heavens, earth, and seas, and all that in them are, the sun, moon, and stars, men and beasts, birds and fishes, fossils, minerals, vegetables, and everything in nature; and therefore the knowledge of him must be superior to the knowledge of everything else; and, which adds to its excellency, it makes Christ precious, engages faith and confidence in him, influences the life and conversation, humbles the soul, and creates in it true pleasure and satisfaction; when all other knowledge fills with self-love, pride, and vanity, and increases sorrow; whereas this is not only useful in life, but supports, as under afflictions, so in the views of death and eternity; through it grace is received now, and by it glory hereafter; for it is the beginning, earnest, and pledge of eternal life. Well may the believer count all things but loss for it, as the apostle did; who adds, for further confirmation of what he had asserted,

for whom I have suffered the loss of all things;

he dropped all confidence in his carnal privileges, and civil, ceremonial, and moral righteousness, for Christ and his righteousness; he parted with all for this pearl of great price; he lost his good name, credit, and reputation among men, and suffered afflictions and persecutions in various shapes; he lost the comforts of life, being often in cold and nakedness, in hunger and thirst, and was ready to suffer the loss of life itself for professing and preaching Christ:

and do count them [but] dung;

or dog's meat; see (Philippians 3:2) ; what is fit only to be cast to dogs, as the word signifies; and intends every thing that is base, mean, and worthless; as the faeces of men, the dregs and lees of liquor, the falling of fruit, chaff, stubble, the dross of metals, dung, and what not: so he esteemed his carnal descent; his form and sect of religion, and zeal in it; his ceremonial and

moral righteousness before and after conversion; and everything of the creature, or what was his own, and but flesh; being of the same opinion with the church of old, who reckoned her righteousnesses, the best, and the whole of them, as "filthy rags". The apostle next expresses his end and views in this,

that I may win Christ;

not get an interest in him, for this he had already, and he knew he had, and that he should never lose it; and besides, an interest in Christ is not a thing that begins in time, but commenced from all eternity; and is not gotten at all, not by good works, nor repentance, nor faith; for these, if right and genuine, are the fruits and effects of an interest in Christ, but is what is freely given. The apostle's meaning is, either that he might gain or acquire a larger knowledge of Christ; and he cared not what pains he took, what expenses he was at, nor what loss he sustained for what he esteemed the most excellent, and for which he had already suffered the loss of all things; and if he had had more to lose, he could willingly part with it for more of this knowledge; compare (Philippians 3:10) ; or his sense is, that he might gain by Christ, or that Christ might be gain to him, as he found him to be, and as he is to every believer; who by parting with all for Christ, gains much by him, as a justifying righteousness, acceptance with God, peace, pardon, life, grace, and glory.

Philippians 3:9

And be found in him

This is another end the apostle had in view, in counting all things loss and dung, and suffering the loss of all for Christ. Calvin, different from other interpreters, reads the words actively, "and may find in him"; and thinks the sense is, that the apostle renounced all things for Christ, that he might recover all in him: and true it is, that for the loss of carnal privileges, he found in Christ spiritual blessings; and for the loss of his own righteousness, another, and a better, even the righteousness of God; and in lieu of external goods, or worldly substance he was stripped of, true and lasting riches; and in the room of outward credit, peace and plenty, true honour, real peace, and spiritual pasture; and instead of the comforts of life, and life itself, spiritual and eternal life; though it is best to read the words passively, "and be found in him"; that is, "be in him", as the Ethiopic version renders it; so the word

found is used in (Galatians 2:17) (Philippians 2:8) ; and he means not a nominal being in Christ, or a being in him by profession, but a real one; and watch is either secret or open: a secret being in Christ he had from everlasting, being chosen in him, given to him, loved by him, betrothed unto him, preserved in him, and represented by him; and an open one he had at conversion, when he became a new creature, and was created in Christ Jesus unto good works: and here he intends a more clear and evident manifestation of his being in Christ; and his desire is, that he might appear to be in him, in life and at death, and at the day of judgment, and in the following manner:

not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law;

by which he means his obedience to the moral, as well as the ceremonial law; for the one was as much his own as the other, and more properly his righteousness: this he calls his "own", because performed by him, and wrought out in his own strength; and which he had an high opinion of, as if it was perfect and blameless; and which he had before put his trust and confidence in; as also to distinguish it from another's righteousness, even that which he had in Christ: he moreover calls it, "the righteousness which is of the law"; which the law required, and he performed in obedience to it, seeking for justification by it; this character distinguishes it from the righteousness of God, which is revealed in the Gospel, and is manifested without the law: and this his own legal righteousness he did not desire to "have", and to be found in; not but that he desired to live soberly and righteously, to have, and do works of righteousness, but not depend on them; he would not have, and account this his moral righteousness, as a justifying one; he knew it was imperfect, filthy, and unprofitable, and that by it he could not be justified and saved, therefore he desired to have another.

But that which is through the faith of Christ;

not through that faith which Christ himself, as man, had and exercised on God, as his God; but that which he is the author and finisher of, and which has him and his righteousness for its object; not through faith, as the cause of it; for the moving cause of justification is the free grace of God, and the efficient cause is God himself: and it appears from hence, that faith is not the matter of our justification, or is not our righteousness; for faith and righteousness are two distinct things, otherwise righteousness could not be said to be "through" faith.

The righteousness of Christ is here meant, and which is the sole matter of justification, and comes to us through faith apprehending, receiving, and embracing it; and which shows, that it must be before faith, or it could not be through it; as water that runs through a bridge must be before and after that bridge through which it runs. This righteousness is further described, as

the righteousness which is of God by faith;

that righteousness which Christ, who is the true God, is the author of, hence it is a pure and perfect one, infinite, and serves for many; which God the Father approves of, and is well pleased with, because his law is magnified, and made honourable by it; and what he graciously gives, and freely imputes without works, to his people: and this is "by faith", which beholds the excellency of it, acknowledges its sufficiency, renounces its own righteousness, and submits to, and lays hold on this, and rejoices in it; and thus men are justified openly and manifestly by faith, receiving the justifying righteousness of Christ: or the words may be rendered "upon faith". This righteousness is as a garment put upon faith, or put upon him by God, who has true faith in Christ; see (Romans 3:22) . This last clause, "by faith", is omitted in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, and seems to be read by them as belonging to the beginning of (Philippians 3:10) . Now this righteousness the apostle desired to have, and be found in; and this he says not, as supposing that a person may be found in Christ, and yet not have his righteousness; nor as if he himself had not this righteousness, and an interest in it; but to show his value for it, and his desire to be continually exercising faith on it, and the trust and confidence he placed in it; well knowing that in this he was safe and secure from all condemnation; this would answer for him in a time to come; being found in this he should not be naked nor speechless, and should have a right and an admission into the kingdom and glory of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:10

That I may know him

The Ethiopic version reads "by faith"; and to the same sense the Syriac. The apostle did know Christ, and that years ago; he knew whom he had believed; he knew him for himself; he knew his personal interest in him; nor did he know any but him in the business of salvation: but his knowledge of Christ, though it was very great, it was, imperfect; he knew but in part, and therefore desired to know more of Christ, of the mystery

and glories of his person, of the unsearchable riches of his grace, of his great salvation, and the benefits of it, of his love, which passes perfect knowledge, and to have a renewed and enlarged experience of communion with him. The apostle here explains what he means by winning Christ, for the sake of which he suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung; it was, that he might attain to a greater knowledge of the person and grace of Christ:

and the power of his resurrection;

not that power which was put forth by his Father, and by himself, in raising him from the dead; but the virtue which arises from it, and the influence it has on many things; as on the resurrection of the saints: it is the procuring cause of it, they shall rise by virtue of union to a risen Jesus; it is the firstfruits, which is the earnest and pledge of their resurrection, as sure as Christ is risen, so sure shall they rise; it is the exemplar and pattern of theirs, their bodies will be raised and fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; and this the apostle desired to know, experience, and attain unto. Christ's resurrection has an influence also on the justification of his people; when Christ died he had the sins of them all upon him, and he died for them, and discharged as their public head and representative, and they in him: hence it is said of him, that "he was raised again for our justification", (Romans 4:25). Now, though the apostle was acquainted with this virtue and influence of Christ's resurrection, he desired to know more of it, for the encouragement of his faith to live upon Christ, as the Lord his righteousness. Moreover, the regeneration of men is owing to the resurrection of Christ; as to the abundant mercy of God, as the moving cause, so to the resurrection of Christ, as the means or virtual cause; and therefore are said to be "begotten again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead", (1 Peter 1:3). This power and virtue the apostle had had an experience of, yet he wanted to feel more of it, in exciting the graces of the spirit to a lively exercise, in raising his affections, and setting them on things above, and in engaging him to seek after them, and set light by things on earth, and in causing him to walk in newness of life, in likeness or imitation of Christ's resurrection, to all which that strongly animates and encourages; see (Colossians 3:1 Colossians 3:2) (Romans 6:4 Romans 6:5).

And the fellowship of his sufferings;

either his personal sufferings, and so signifies a

sharing in, and a participation of the benefits arising from them; such as reconciliation for sin, peace with God, pardon, righteousness, nearness to God or the sufferings of his members for him, and with him, and which Christ reckons his own: these the apostle was willing to take his part in, and lot of, knowing, that those that are partakers of his sufferings in this sense, shall reign with him, and be glorified together. What the Jews deprecated, the apostle was desirous of; namely, sharing in the sorrows and sufferings of the Messiah, and which they reckon the greatest happiness to be delivered from.

"The disciples of R. Eleazar F25 asked him, what a man should do that he may be delivered (xyvm lv wlxm) , "from the sorrows of the Messiah?" he must study in the law, and in beneficence."

And elsewhere they say F26,

"he that keeps the three meals on the sabbath day shall be delivered from three punishments, (xyvm lv wlxm) , "from the sorrows of the Messiah", and from the damnation of hell, and from the war of Gog and Magog."

But our apostle rejoiced in his sufferings for Christ, and was desirous of filling up the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body's sake, the church:

being made conformable unto his death;

either in a spiritual sense dying daily unto sin, (1 Corinthians 15:31) , having the affections, with the lusts, crucified, (Galatians 5:24) , and the deeds of the body mortified, (Romans 8:13) , and so planted in the likeness of his death, (Romans 6:5) ; or rather in a corporeal sense, bearing always in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, (2 Corinthians 4:10) , and being continually exposed to death for his sake, and ready to suffer it whenever called to it.

FOOTNOTES:

F25 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

F26 T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. See Cetubot, fol. 111.

1.

Philippians 3:11

If by any means I, might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

] Not in a figurative sense, the resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace, of which Christ is

the efficient cause, for this the apostle had attained to; unless the consummation of that spiritual life, in perfect holiness, should be intended, than which nothing was more desirable by him; nor in a representative sense, for this also he enjoyed in Christ his head, being risen with him, and in him, when he rose from the dead; but in a literal sense and designs not the general resurrection of the just and unjust, which he believed; for he knew that everyone must, and will attain to this, even Pharaoh, Judas, and the worst of men; but the special and particular resurrection of the righteous, the better resurrection, which will be first, and upon the personal coming of Christ, and by virtue of union to him, and in a glorious manner, and to everlasting life and happiness: and when the apostle says, "if by any means" he might attain to this, it is not to be understood as if he doubted of it, which would be inconsistent with his firm persuasion, that nothing should separate him from the love of God, and with his full assurance of faith, as to interest in Jesus Christ; but it denotes the difficulty of attaining it, since through various afflictions and great tribulations a believer must pass, before he comes to it; and also the apostle's earnest desire of it, and strenuous endeavour for it; not caring what scenes of trouble, or sea of sorrow what fiery trials, severe sufferings, or cruel death he went through, so be it he obtained as he believed he should, the glorious and better resurrection; he counted not his life dear to himself, he loved it not unto death, having in view the blissful and happy state after it.

Philippians 3:12

Not as though I had already attained

Or "received"; he had received much grace out of the fulness of it in Christ; he had received the gift of righteousness, the forgiveness of his sins, and the adoption of children; he had attained to a lively hope of the incorruptible inheritance, and had received a right unto it, and had a meetness for it; but as yet he had not received the thing itself, nor was he come to the end of his race, and so had not received the crown of righteousness laid up for him; he had not yet attained to perfect knowledge, nor perfect holiness, nor perfect happiness: wherefore he adds,

either were already perfect;

he was perfect in comparison of others, that were in a lower class of grace, experience, and knowledge, in

which sense the word is used in (Philippians 3:15) , and in (1 Corinthians 2:6) ; he was so, as perfection intends sincerity, uprightness, and integrity; the root of the matter, the truth of grace was in him; his faith was unfeigned, his love was without dissimulation, his hope was without hypocrisy, his conversation in the world was in godly simplicity, and his preaching and his whole conduct in his ministry were of sincerity, and in the sight of God: he was perfect as a new creature with respect to parts, having Christ formed in him, and all the parts of the new man, though not as to degrees; this new man not being as yet grown up to a perfect man, or to its full growth, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; he was perfect with respect to justification, being perfectly justified from all things, by the righteousness of Christ, but not with respect to sanctification; and though his sanctification was perfect in Christ, yet not in himself; his knowledge was imperfect, something was wanting in his faith, and sin dwelt in him, of which he sometimes grievously complained: now this he says, lest he should be thought to arrogate that to himself, which he had not:

but I follow after;

Christ the forerunner, after perfect knowledge of him, perfect holiness from him, and perfect happiness with him: the metaphor is taken from runners in a race, who pursue it with eagerness, press forward with all might and main, to get up to the mark, in order to receive the prize; accordingly the Syriac version renders it, (ana jhr) , "I run", and so the Arabic: the apostle's sense is, that though he had not yet reached the mark, he pressed forward towards it, he had it in view, he stretched and exerted himself, and followed up very closely to it, in hope of enjoying the prize:

if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus;

he was apprehended of Christ, when he met him in his way to Damascus, stopped him in his journey, laid him prostrate on the ground, and laid hold on him as his own, challenged and claimed his interest in him, (Acts 9:3-6) (26:13-18) , as one that the Father had given him, and he had purchased by his blood; he entered into him, and took possession of him, and took up his residence in him, having dispossessed the strong man armed, and ever since held him as his own; and he apprehended, or laid hold on him, to bring him as he had engaged to do, to a participation of grace here, and glory hereafter; that he might know him himself, and

make him known to others; that he might be made like unto him, have communion with him, and everlastingly enjoy him: and these things the apostle pursued after with great vehemence, that he might apprehend them, and be in full possession of them; and which he did, in the way and manner hereafter described.

Philippians 3:13

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended

That for which he was apprehended of Christ: he had not attained to perfect knowledge, was not come to the mark, had not received the prize, or laid hold on eternal life; though he had received so much grace, and such gifts, as had qualified him for an apostle; and he had been so many years in that office, and had so great a knowledge in the mystery of the Gospel, and had laboured in it more abundantly than others, and with great success; and even though he had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard unspeakable words, not lawful to be uttered, (2 Corinthians 12:2-4) , yet he had no such opinion of himself, as if he was perfect: by which way of speaking, he tacitly strikes at the arrogance and vain confidence of false teachers, that pretended to perfection; and in this way led the brethren to conclude, that they could never have arrived to it, since so great an apostle had not; some copies read not “yet”, and so the Ethiopic version:

but this one thing [I do];

which he was intent upon, constantly attended to, and earnestly pursued; it was the main and principal thing he was set upon, and which he employed himself in; and which engrossed all his thoughts, desires, affections, time, and labour; see (Psalms 27:4) (Luke 10:42) . The Syriac version reads, “this one thing I know”; signifying that whatever he was ignorant of, and however imperfect his knowledge was in other things, this he was full well apprized of, and acquainted with. The Arabic version renders the whole thus, “I do not think that I have now obtained and received anything, but the one thing”; namely, what follows;

forgetting those things which are behind,

meaning not the sins of his past life, which were indeed forgotten by God, and the guilt of which was removed from him, by the application of the blood of Christ, so that he had no more conscience of them; yet they were remembered and made mention of by him,

partly for his own humiliation, and partly to magnify the grace of God: nor earthly and worldly things, which believers are too apt to have respect to, to look back upon, and hanker after, as the Israelites did after the fleshpots in Egypt, (Exodus 16:3) ; though these were forgotten by the apostle, so as not anxiously to care for them, and seek after them, to set his affections on them, or trust in them: nor his fleshly privileges, and legal righteousness, which he pursued, valued, and trusted in before conversion, but now dropped, renounced, disregarded, and counted as loss and dung, (Philippians 3:7 Philippians 3:8) ; but rather his labours and works of righteousness since conversion, which though he times took notice of for the magnifying of the grace of God, for the defence of the Gospel, and to put a stop to the vain boasting of false teachers, yet he forgot them in point of dependence on them, and trust to them; and having put his hand to the plough, he did not look back, nor desist, but went on in his laborious way, not thinking of what he had done and gone through, nor discouraged at what was before him; as also he intends all his growth in grace, and proficiency in divine knowledge, which was very, great; and though he was thankful for these things, and would observe them to the glory of the grace of God, yet he trusted not in them: nor did he sit down easy and satisfied with what he had attained unto, and therefore was

reaching forth unto those things which are before;

to perfection of knowledge, holiness, and happiness, which were before him, and he as yet had not attained unto; but was desirous of, and pursued after with great vehemence and eagerness; the metaphor is taken from runners in a race, who did not stop to look behind them, and see what way they have run, and how far they are before others, but look and move forwards, and stretch themselves out to the uttermost, and run with all their might and main to the mark before them; and so the apostle did in a spiritual sense.

Philippians 3:14

I press toward the mark

The allusion is to the white line, or mark, which the runners in the Olympic games made up to, and to which he that came first received the prize; and by which the apostle intends the Lord Jesus Christ, who is (skopov) , “the scope”, or “mark”, of all the thoughts, purposes, and counsels of God, to which they all aim, and in which they all centre; and of the covenant of grace of which

he is the sum and substance, the Mediator, surety, and messenger, in whom are all the blessings and promises of it; and of the Scriptures of truth, the writings of the Old and New Testament, which all testify of him, and agree in him; and of both law and Gospel, he is the end of the law, and the substance of the Gospel; and of all the graces of the Spirit, in the hearts of his people, faith looks at him, hope is concerned with him, and love has him for its object; and of all the duties believers are concerned in, they all point at him, they are done in his name and strength, through faith in him, and from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory; and so he is of their thoughts, affections, and desires: and to this mark they press, or “run”, as the Syriac version renders it; they look to Jesus, while they are running their Christian race; they keep him in their view, and follow after him, because he is their forerunner, (Hebrews 6:20) , and the Captain of their salvation, (Hebrews 2:10) ; they set him before them as their guide to direct them, according to whom they steer their course, that so they may not lose their way, nor move out of it, to the right hand or the left; and from whom they take great encouragement to go on, and press through the difficulties they do; and besides, they know that there is no coming at the prize, but through the mark, for there is salvation in no other, (Acts 4:12) ; and that whoever comes up to the mark, or believes in Christ, shall enjoy the prize of eternal life, which is next mentioned:

for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus:

by which is meant, the incorruptible crown; the crown of life, righteousness, and glory, that fadeth not away, (James 1:12) (2 Timothy 4:8) (1 Peter 5:4) , styled “the prize of the calling of God”; because it is what God in the effectual calling calls his people to, even to a kingdom and glory, and to eternal glory and happiness; of which they have a sight, though but a glimmering view of it, and are blessed with hope in it; in which they rejoice, and see their right unto it, in the righteousness of Christ, and have a meetness for it: this is named “the high calling of God”, because God is on high, who calls them to it, in allusion to the judge in the Olympic games, who was placed in an exalted situation, near the mark, with the crown in his hand, which he gave to him that came first; and because the grace by which the saints are called is from above, as every good and perfect gift is, (James 1:17) ; and because the prize they are called unto consists of things above, where Jesus is, and is the hope

laid up in heaven, (Colossians 1:5) , and the inheritance reserved there, (1 Peter 1:4) ; and expresses the great honour and dignity of called ones, who are called to a crown and kingdom, are raised from the dunghill, to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory, and are made kings and priests unto God: and may also denote, that the calling to such high honour is from above, and not below; and is owing to the special grace and favour of God, and not to any merits of men; nor is the prize to which they are called, of him that willeth and runneth, but of God’s grace and mercy, (Romans 9:16) : and moreover, this calling is said to be “in Christ Jesus”; for both the purpose and grace, according to which men are called, are in him; the grace by which they are called, and which is implanted in them when called, is all in and from Christ; the blessings of grace, which they then in person enjoy, are spiritual blessings in him; and even the glory they are called unto is in his hands; not only the promise of eternal life, but that itself; the gift of it is with him, and it comes through him; yea, they are called by him, and said to be the called of Christ Jesus; now the prize of this calling, which is what God has prepared from all eternity, which Christ has in his hands, and will give to all his, and which is of immense richness and eternal duration, and shall be bestowed on all Christian runners, or true believers, is what the apostle was pressing for, pursuing after, with much difficulty, through great toil and labour, diligent searching of the Scriptures, frequent wrestling with God in prayer, and constant attendance on the means of grace, and ordinances of the Gospel.

Philippians 3:15

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect

Not absolutely, but comparatively, with respect to other believers, in a lower class of knowledge and experience; and not with respect to degrees, but parts; and regards such who were not children, but of riper age in divine things, unless the words are spoken ironically:

be thus minded;

as the apostle was, to count what were gain to him, loss for Christ; to reckon all things but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; to be willing to suffer the loss of all things, to win him, (Philippians 3:8) ; to desire to be found in him, and in his righteousness, and not a man’s own, (Philippians 3:9) ; to know more of him in his person, righteousness, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead, (

Philippians 3:10) ; and to attain to such a state, and yet to disclaim all perfection, and acknowledge their imperfection, (Philippians 3:11 Philippians 3:12) ; and to forget things behind, and reach to those before, (Philippians 3:13) ; and press towards the mark, Christ, for the prize of eternal glory, (Philippians 3:14) :

and if in anything ye be otherwise minded;

as to seek for justification by the works of the law, or partly by Christ and partly by the law, and to imagine and expect perfection in this life:

God shall reveal even this unto you;

such errors will be made manifest sooner or later; the day will declare them, and such wood, hay, and stubble, will be burnt up by the fire, which will reveal every man's work, (1 Corinthians 3:12 1 Corinthians 3:13) .

Philippians 3:16

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained

Whatever degree of knowledge of Christ, and the truths of his Gospel, is attained to, let it be retained, and not departed from:

let us walk by the same rule;

either the doctrine of justification by Christ's righteousness in particular, which is a rule of judgment concerning other things; for so far as they agree or disagree with this, they are to be received or rejected; or the Scriptures of truth, which are the rule of faith and practice, and the standard and test, to which all are to be brought and tried:

let us mind the same thing;

be of one heart and affection to each other, (Romans 12:10) , and of the same judgment in the doctrines of the Gospel, (1 Corinthians 1:10) , and pursue the same measures; particularly press towards the same mark, and for the same prize the apostle did, (Philippians 3:14) , and be followers of him, as is exhorted to in (Philippians 3:17) .

Philippians 3:17

Brethren, be followers together of me

Not that the apostle set up himself as the head of a party, which is what he always blamed in others; he did not assume a dominion over the faith of men, or seek to lord it over God's heritage; nor did he desire any to

be followers of him, any further than he was a follower of Christ; and in what he was, whether in doctrine or practice, he desires to be followed in: and here he has a particular regard to what went before, concerning reckoning what was gain loss; accounting all things but dung, in comparison of the knowledge of Christ, looking to his righteousness alone for justification, (Philippians 3:9) ; disclaiming perfection, yet forgetting things behind; reaching towards things before, and pressing to the mark for the prize, (Philippians 3:13) ; and walking according to the rule of God's word; in which things he had some that followed him, who were his spiritual children, and to whom he had been useful in conversion and edification; see (1 Corinthians 4:15 1 Corinthians 4:16) (1 Thessalonians 1:6 1 Thessalonians 1:7) ; and he would therefore have these Philippians followers of him, "together" with them; and which contains in it an encouraging reason, or argument, since others were followers of him; or together with one another, he was desirous, that one and all of them might follow him; that they might all go in the same way, profess the same truth, be found in the practice of the same things, worship the Lord with one consent, pursue the same ends, and draw all the same way; and so be as the church was, like a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot, (Song of Solomon 1:9) ;

and mark them which walk so;

as the apostle did, and those that were followers of him; these he would have them mark, observe, attentively look to; not as others, who cause offences and divisions, and obey not the word, in order to shun, avoid, and keep no company with; but to imitate and follow, and next to Christ, the mark, to make use of them as inferior ones:

as ye have us for an ensample,

or "type"; believers should be ensamples one to another, especially ministers of the word; pastors of churches are not to be lords over God's heritage, but to be ensamples to the flock, (1 Peter 5:3) , in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit; in faith, in purity, as the apostle exhorts Timothy, (1 Timothy 4:12) , and in these things they are to be followed by believers.

Philippians 3:18

For many walk

(אחרנייתא) , "otherwise", as the Syriac version adds;

and which truly explains the words, and gives the sense; they walked not as the apostle and his followers; they walked as men, as carnal men, (1 Corinthians 3:3) , according to the course of the world, after their ungodly lusts, (Ephesians 2:2 Ephesians 2:3) ; or according to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation, and not uprightly, and according to the truth of the Gospel: and there were many that walked so; the road both of profaneness and error is a broad one, and many walk therein, which makes it the more dangerous; the examples of many have great force, though a multitude is not to be followed to do evil; the conversation of a great part of professors is not to be imitated; the few names in Sardis that have not defiled their garments with error or immorality should be marked for ensamples, (Revelation 3:4) , and the majority shunned:

of whom I have told you often;

both when present among them by word of mouth, and when absent from them by writing; for the apostle was a faithful watchman and monitor to this church, and to all the churches, the care of which lay upon him; and diligent he was to warn them against false teachers, whose doctrines and practices he knew were of pernicious consequence:

and now tell you even weeping;

partly on account of those evil men, whose state and condition, notwithstanding their profession, was very bad; and partly on account of the glory of God and Christ, and the honour of religion, which suffered much through them; and also on account of the Philippians, lest they should be drawn aside by them; and because they had taken so little notice of his frequent cautions and advice: and that they might the better know the men he spoke of, and avoid them, he describes them by the following characters,

[that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ;

not that, though they might be Jews, they were like the unbelieving Jews, who were open and implacable enemies of a crucified Christ, called Jesus accursed, and anathematized him and his followers, and to whom the preaching of Christ crucified was an offence and stumblingblock, (1 Corinthians 1:23) ; for these were professors of Christ, and pretended to preach Christ, and him crucified: nor were they such heretics that denied that Christ really assumed human nature, and was really crucified and died; and affirmed that all this was only in appearance, or that an image was hung

upon the cross for him, or Simon the Cyrenian was crucified in his room, as some have thought, which was the heresy of Simon Magus, and his disciple Basilides: nor is the sense that they were averse to the crucifixion of the affections with the lusts, though this seems to be their true character, since they were sensual, and minded earthly things; but the meaning is, that they disliked the cross of Christ; they were unwilling to take it up for his sake, and follow him; they studied all ways and means to shun it; they ingratiated themselves into the affections of the unbelieving Jews, by complying with the ceremonies of the law, and bearing hard upon the apostle and his ministry, that so they might not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ; and besides, by enjoining circumcision and an observance of the law as necessary to salvation, they, as much as in them lay, made void the efficacy of the cross and death of Christ, and made that and him unprofitable, and of no effect to the souls of men; and were both doctrinally and practically enemies of the cross of Christ: and so all such professors of Christ, who walk not according to the Gospel, though they are not open and direct enemies to the Gospel, which is the preaching of the cross, yet they are secret and indirect ones, and oftentimes do more mischief to it by their lives, than the keenest adversaries of it can by their pens.

Philippians 3:19

Whose end [is] destruction

Everlasting destruction, the destruction of both body and soul in hell, (Matthew 10:28) ; and this is the end, the reward and issue of bad principles and practices; the broad roads of sin and error lead to destruction, (Matthew 7:13) ; however pleasing such ways may be to men, the end of them is eternal death; destruction and misery are in all the ways of profaneness and heresy; not only immoralities, but heresies, such as strike at the efficacy of Christ's cross, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, are damnable ones, and bring upon men swift destruction, (2 Peter 2:1) ; and how should it otherwise be, for there is no salvation but by the cross of Christ? and if men are enemies to that, and the efficacy of it, and the way of salvation by it, there is no more, nor any other sacrifice for sin, (Hebrews 10:26) , but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, (Hebrews 10:27) ; and this will be the case of all barren and unfruitful professors, who are like the earth, that

brings forth briars and thorns, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned, (Hebrews 6:8) ; for what will the hope of such an one, founded on his profession, though he may have got credit and reputation among men, avail, when God takes away his soul?

whose god [is their] belly;

the belly was the god of the Cyclops, they sacrificed to none but to themselves, and to the greatest of the gods, their own belly F1; as money is the covetous man's god, whom he loves, adores, and puts his confidence in, so the belly is the god of the sensualist, the epicure, and voluptuous person; he has more regard for the service of that, than for the service of God? and of this complexion were these professors; they were lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God, (2 Timothy 3:4) ; all their pretensions to religion, to Christ, and his Gospel, were only to serve themselves, their own bellies, and not the Lord Jesus Christ, and to do good to the souls of men: or their belly may be said to be their god, because they placed religion in the observance of meats and drinks, either allowed or forbidden in the law of Moses, which profited not those that were occupied therein, (Hebrews 9:10) ; for the kingdom of God, the Gospel dispensation, internal religion, and the exercise of it, lies not in these things, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, (Romans 14:17) :

and whose glory [is] in their shame;

in their evil practices committed in secret, of which it was a shame to speak; in their hidden things of dishonesty, crafty walking, and deceitful handling of the word of God, which were vile and scandalous, (2 Corinthians 4:2) ; in corrupting the Gospel, and the churches of Christ, with their false doctrine; in observing and urging the ceremonies of the law, which were dead, and ought to be buried; and particularly circumcision in the flesh, in that part of the body which causes shame, and in this was their glory, (Galatians 6:13) . The idol Baal Peor, and which is no other than the Priapus of the Heathens, is called by this name, (Hosea 9:10) ; so the prophets of Baal are in the Septuagint on (1 Kings 18:19 1 Kings 18:25) called the prophets, (thv aiscunhv) , “of that shame”; it may be the apostle may have a regard to the secret debaucheries of these persons; or because they made their belly their god, he calls it their shame in which they gloried, and which was the name given to the idols of the Gentiles:

who mind earthly things.

The Arabic version renders it, “who entertain earthly opinions”; and some by, “earthly things” understand the ceremonies of the law, called the elements and rudiments of the world, which these false teachers were fond of, and were very diligent to inculcate and urge the observance of; though rather worldly things, such as honour, glory, and popular applause, and wealth, and riches, are meant; for they sought their own things, and not the things of Christ; through covetousness, with feigned words, they made merchandise of men, and amassed to themselves great sums of money; and yet were greedy dogs, could never have enough, everyone looking for his gain from his quarter, (Isaiah 56:11) : and now persons of such characters as these were by no means to be followed, but such who are hereafter described.

FOOTNOTES:

F1 Euripides.

Philippians 3:20

For our conversation is in heaven

The Ethiopic version renders it, “we have our city in heaven”; and the words may be truly rendered, “our citizenship is in heaven”; that is, the city whereof we are freemen is heaven, and we behave ourselves here below, as citizens of that city above: heaven is the saints' city; here they have no continuing city, but they seek one to come, which is permanent and durable; a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God, (Hebrews 11:10) : as yet they are not in it, though fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; they are pilgrims, strangers, and sojourners on earth, (Leviticus 25:23) (Hebrews 11:13) ; but are seeking a better country, an heavenly one, and God has prepared for them a city, (Hebrews 11:16) ; they have a right unto it through the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ, and a meetness for it in him; and their conversation is here beforehand, while their commoration, or temporary residence, is below; their thoughts are often employed about it; their affections are set upon it, (Colossians 3:2) ; their hearts are where their treasure is, (Matthew 6:21) ; the desires of their souls are towards it, and they are seeking things above, and long to be in their own city, and Father's house, where Christ is; and to be at home with him, and for ever with him. This is the work and business of their lives now, and what their hearts are engaged in. The Syriac version renders it, “our work is in heaven”; the business, the exercise of

our lives, and of our graces, tend that way:

from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Christ is now in heaven, at the Father's right hand, (Acts 2:33) , appearing in the presence of God for his people, and making intercession for them, (Hebrews 7:25) ; and so will remain, until the time of the restitution of all things; when he will descend from heaven, and be revealed from thence: and this the saints look for, and expect; they have good reason for it; from his own words, from the words of the angels at the time of his ascension, (Acts 1:11) , and from the writings of the apostles and they expect him not merely as a Judge, under which consideration he will be terrible to the ungodly, but as a Saviour; who as he has already saved their souls from sin, and the dreadful effects of it, from the bondage and curse of the law, from the captivity of Satan, and from eternal ruin and wrath to come, so he will save and redeem their bodies from the grave, corruption, mortality, and death, as follows.

Philippians 3:21

Who shall change our vile body

Which is defiled with sin, attended with frailty, and is mortal; and being dead, is sown and laid in the grave in corruption, weakness, and dishonour: in the Greek text it is, “the body of our humility”; sin has subjected the body to weakness, mortality, and death; and death brings it into a very low estate indeed, which is very humbling and mortifying to the pride and vanity man: now this vile body, in the resurrection morn, shall be stripped of all its vileness, baseness, and meanness; and be changed, not as to its substance, nor as to its form and figure, which shall always remain same, as did the substance and form of our Lord's body after his resurrection; but as to its qualities, it shall be changed from corruption to incorruption, (1 Corinthians 15:42) , from mortality to immortality, from weakness to power, from dishonour to glory, and be free from all sin: so the Jews say F2, that

“the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, goes along with man in the hour of death, but does not return with him when the dead arise:”

and this change will be made by the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall descend from heaven; who as he is the pledge, the first fruits, the exemplar,

and meritorious cause, so he will be the efficient cause of the resurrection of the saints; who will be raised and changed by him, by his power, and by virtue of union to him:

that it might be fashioned like unto his glorious body;

or “the body of his glory”, as it is now in heaven, and of which his transfiguration on the mount was an emblem and pledge; for glory, power, incorruption, and immortality, the bodies of the saints in the resurrection shall be like to Christ's, though not equal to it, and shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The Jews F3 have a notion, that

“the holy blessed God will beautify the bodies of the righteous in future time, like the beauty of the first Adam:”

but their beauty and glory will be greater than that, it will be like the glory of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, whose image they shall then bear: and whereas this requires almighty power, of which Christ is possessed, it will be done

according to the working,

the energy of his power and might; or as the Syriac version renders it, “according to his great power”; which was put forth in raising himself from the dead, and whereby he was declared to be the Son of God: and

whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself;

not only sin, Satan, and the world, but death and the grave; and so consequently able to raise the dead bodies of his saints, and to change the qualities of them, and make them like unto his own: and now who would but follow such persons, who are citizens of heaven, have their conversation there, look for Christ the Saviour from thence, (Philippians 3:20) , who when he comes will raise the dead in Christ first, put such a glory on their bodies as is on his own, (1 Thessalonians 4:16) , and take them to himself, that where he is they may be also? see (14:3) (Hebrews 6:12) .

FOOTNOTES:

F2 Midrash Tillim apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 12. c. 2.

F3 Midrash Hanneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 1.

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS IV

This chapter contains exhortations to various duties

becoming Christians, the apostle's thankfulness to the Philippians for their present to him, and the conclusion of the epistle with the salutations of the brethren: inPhp 4:1; the apostle exhorts the saints with great affection to perseverance in the doctrine and faith of Christ; and inPhp 4:2; mentions some persons by name, and to whom he recommends unity and agreement; and inPhp 4:3; entreats others to assist them therein; and inPhp 4:4; exhorts them all in general to joy in the Lord, and to moderation, enforced by this argument, the Lord being at hand,Php 4:5; and to calmness and quietness of mind, and to prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving,Php 4:6; to which they are encouraged, by the promise of having the peace of God, keeping their minds through Christ,Php 4:7; and to conclude, he exhorts them to everything that is virtuous had commendable; to which he stimulates them, from the consideration of the nature of the things themselves, from his own example, and from the presence of God with them, they might expect to enjoy,Php 4:8,9; and then he proceeds to take notice of the kindness of the Philippians to him, declares his joy on account of it, and expresses it by their care of him again; which he corrects, by observing that it was not for want of care in them before, but of opportunity of showing it,Php 4:10; nor did he take notice of this present of theirs, with so much exultation on account of his own penury, for he had learnt the great lesson of contentment in every state,Php 4:11; which he enlarges upon and explains; namely, that he had been taught, and knew how to behave in fulness and want, in prosperity and adversity; though this was not owing to himself, but to the power and strength of Christ,Php 4:12,13; however, he commends the Philippians for their communicating to him in his affliction, both at the first preaching of the Gospel to them, and at several times since,Php 4:14-16, the reason of which commendation was not because he was covetous of gifts and presents from them, but to encourage them to bring forth fruit, which would turn to their own advantage,Php 4:17; as for himself he had enough, and therefore said not this on his own account, but because such communication was a sacrifice well pleasing to God, and a return would be made by him; who, as he was able to supply all their need, would; of which he assures them, and for which he prays,Php 4:17-19, and to whom he gives the glory of what they had given, and he had received,Php 4:20; and then the epistle is concluded with the salutation of the apostle, and the saints, and brethren with him, and with his usual benediction,Php 4:21,22.

Philippians 4:1

Therefore, my brethren

Not in a natural but spiritual relation; having the same Father, being of the same family, and household of faith: seeing that on the one hand there were false teachers, who stand described by various characters in the preceding chapter, by whom they were in danger of being carried away from the simplicity of the Gospel; and on the other hand, such were the conduct and conversation of the apostle, and other true believers, and such were their expectations of Christ from heaven, and of happiness from him as there expressed; therefore he exhorts to steadfastness in him, and that under the most tender, affectionate, and endearing appellations; given in the uprightness of his soul, without any manner of flattery, to signify his strong affection for them, and to engage them to attend the more to what he was about to exhort them to; and which arose from pure love to them, an hearty concern for their good, and the honour of Christ Jesus:

dearly beloved:

as belonging to Christ, interested in him, members of him, redeemed by him, and bearing his image; and as his brethren, and so not loved with a carnal, but spiritual love:

and longed for;

to see them, converse with them, and impart some spiritual gift to them; being the excellent in the earth, as other saints, towards whom was his desire, and with whom was all his delight. These epithets are joined with the word "brethren", in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and read thus, "my dearly beloved, and longed for brethren"; and in the Ethiopic version, "our beloved brethren": to which are added,

my joy and crown;

they were matter of joy to him, as he had reason to hope well of them; yea, to be confident that the good work was begun, and would be carried on in them; and that they had hitherto continued in the doctrine of the Gospel, and walked worthy of it; and they were his "crown", as they were seals of his ministry; and whom he valued more, and reckoned a greater honour and ornament to him, than the richest diadem, set with the most costly jewels and precious stones, and which he hoped and believed would be his crown of rejoicing

another day; when he, with them, should stand at the hand of Christ triumphing, as victors crowned, ever sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell:

so stand fast in the Lord;

or "by the Lord"; by his power and strength, which is only able to make to stand fast; saints are liable to failing, and would fall, were they not upheld with his right hand, and kept by his power; they only stand fast, as they stand supported by his strength, trusting in his might, and leaning on his arm. Christ is the only foundation where they can stand safe and sure; and such as are rooted and grounded, and built up in him, are established and stand; though they are still in need of being exhorted to hold the head, abide by him, and cleave unto him; to stand fast in his grace, exercising the graces of faith, hope, and love upon him; in the liberty of Christ, in opposition to the bondage of the law, false teachers were for bringing them into; and in the doctrine of faith, and not depart from it in any degree, nor give way in the least to the opposers of it, but continue steadfast in it without wavering, and which is chiefly intended here: so the Arabic version renders it, "so stand in the faith of the Lord"; both in the grace faith, and in the doctrine of it, and in the profession of both: see (1 Corinthians 16:13). The apostle bids them so stand fast; that is, either as they had hitherto done, or as they had him and others for an example; whose views, conversation, and behaviour, are described in the foregoing chapter:

[my] dearly beloved;

this, which otherwise would be a repetition of what is before said, is by some connected with the former clause, and read thus, "so stand fast my dearly beloved in the Lord"; and contains a reason, both why they were dearly beloved by the apostle, because beloved in and by the Lord; and why it became them to stand fast in him, and abide by him, his truths, ordinances, cause, and interest.

Philippians 4:2

I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche

Two women, who were members of this church at Philippi, and who seem to have been at variance; either with each other, on account of some temporal and civil things, as often is the case of the dear children of God, who fall out by the way; and it becomes a very

hard and difficult task to reconcile them, though as here entreated in the most tender and importunate manner to agree: or else with the church, having entertained some sentiments in religion different from it; being drawn aside by false teachers from the simplicity of the Gospel, and their steadfastness in the faith; and this may rather be thought to be the meaning, since the apostle would scarcely take notice of a private difference in so public a manner, and since this exhortation follows so closely the former:

that they be of the same mind in the Lord;

either that they agree together, and be reconciled to each other, considering the relation they stood in to one another, and to the Lord; or that they become of the same mind, and embrace the same truths, and profess and maintain the same principles the church did; and so the Arabic version renders it, "that ye entertain one and the same opinion concerning the faith of the Lord".

Philippians 4:3

And I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow

Not his wife, as some think F4, for he had none, as appears from (1 Corinthians 7:7 1 Corinthians 7:8), at the writing of which epistle he was at Ephesus, where he stayed some little time, and then went to Jerusalem; where he was quickly apprehended, and sent a prisoner to Rome, and where he now was as such; and therefore it is not likely that he should marry a wife within this compass of time, and much less that he should have one at Philippi; besides, the word used is of the masculine gender, and designs a man and not a woman: some think it is the proper name of a man, who was called "Syzygus", and so the Arabic interpreter seems to understand it; and by the apostle, true "Syzygus", signifying that as was his name, so was he, really and in truth, a companion and fellow labourer, that drew in the same yoke with him; the Syriac version renders it, "the son of my yoke", and the Ethiopic version, "my brother and my companion": some think this person was the husband or brother of one of the above women; and therefore is entreated to use his interest, and compose the difference between them, or endeavour to reconcile them to the church; and others that it was the jailer, that was converted by the apostle: but it seems most likely to have been one that was under the same yoke of the Gospel, and who had been employed with him in preaching of it, a fellow labourer; such an one as Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy,

and might be one of those; or rather Epaphroditus, who was minister in this church, and by whom the apostle sent this letter, and whom he might address and importune in this manner; the word may very well be thought to answer to the Hebrew word (הבר), often used in Jewish writings, for an associate, a colleague, and a disciple of the wise men, to which the apostle may allude; see (Philippians 2:25) ;

help those women;

Euodias and Syntyche. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read “them”, referring to the above women; and the Arabic version reads, “help both”; that is, both those women; not by relieving their temporal wants, which it does not appear they were in; but either by composing their differences, or by assisting them with good counsel and advice; and giving them proper instructions in the doctrines of the Gospel, that they might be brought to think the same things the church did: and the rather such pains should be taken with them, since they were such, says the apostle,

which laboured with me in the Gospel;

not in preaching it, for he suffered not a woman to teach in the church, (1 Timothy 2:12) ; but by professing it, and bearing reproach and persecution for it; and by supporting and encouraging, and spreading it with their worldly substance:

with Clement also;

which some think is the same with Clemens Romanus, who was afterwards bishop of Rome, and whose epistle to the Corinthians is still extant; other writings are ascribed to him, but are spurious; however, by his name he seems to be a Roman; and from his being joined with the apostle, as one with whom these women also laboured in the Gospel, he appears to be a preacher of it at Philippi:

and [with] other my fellow labourers;

in the work of the ministry, as Timothy, who was with him at Philippi, when he first preached the Gospel there, (Acts 16:1 Acts 16:12) , and some others:

whose names [are] in the book of life;

the book of God’s eternal purposes and decrees, divine predestination to eternal life; and this being called a “book”, and the names of persons being said to be in it, denote the love of God to his elect, his care of them, his value for them, his remembrance of them, and the exact knowledge which he has of them; as well as imply, that

his eternal election of them is personal and particular, is well known to him, and is sure and unchangeable; being more so than the writing of Pilate on the cross, who said, what I have written, I have written, (John 19:22) ; and is called the “book of life”, because those whose names are written in it, have a spiritual life here, and an eternal one hereafter; to both which they are afore written in this book, or pre-ordained in God’s counsels, and certainly and infallibly enjoy it: now the apostle’s knowledge of these persons being written in this book, did not arise from any special revelation, as being shown the book of life, and the names of the elect in it, when he was caught up into the third heaven, (2 Corinthians 12:2) ; nor was his knowledge of this matter peculiar and limited to these persons only, but common to all that he had reason to hope and believe had received the grace of God in truth, and walked worthy of the calling wherewith they were called, (Ephesians 4:1) ; such persons in a judgment of charity, which hopes and believes all things, he concluded were in this book of life; and the same judgment, faith, and hope, ought all believers to form and entertain one of another, nothing appearing contrary to it, in their faith and conversation.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 30.

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord alway

This is a repetition of the exhortation in the preceding chapter; (See Gill on Philippians 3:1); with this addition “alway”; for there is always cause and matter for rejoicing in Christ, even in times of affliction, distress, and persecution; since he is always the same; his grace is always sufficient; his blood has a continual virtue in it, and always speaks for peace and pardon; his righteousness is an everlasting one, and so is his salvation, and such is his love; though some join this word with what follows,

[and] again, I say, rejoice;

this is what was continually inculcated by him, as being of great importance and use for the comfort of believers, and the honour of Christ.

Philippians 4:5

Let your moderation be known unto all men

The Vulgate Latin reads, “your modesty”. The Syriac and Arabic versions, “your meekness”, or “humility”;

graces which accompany moderation, and are very necessary to it, but not that itself. The Ethiopic version renders it, “your authority”, which by no means agrees; for moderation lies not in exerting authority and power to the uttermost, at least with rigour, but in showing clemency and lenity; not dealing with men according to the severity of laws and strict justice, but according to equity, and with mildness and gentleness; giving up strict and proper right, receding from what is a man’s due, and not rigidly insisting on it; putting up with affronts and injuries, and bearing them with patience; and interpreting things in the best sense, and putting the best constructions on words and actions they will bear; and in using inferiors and equals with all humanity, kindness, and respect: and this is what is here intended, which the apostle would have made “known”; exercised and practised publicly, that it might be seen and known of all, and God might be glorified, by whose name they were called, though their agreeable conversation among men; see (Matthew 5:16) ; and he would not only have this known unto, but exercised towards “all men”; not only to believers, the members of the church, by ruling with gentleness, by bearing the infirmities of the weak, and by forgiving offences; but also to unbelievers, to the men of the world, by not avenging themselves, but giving way to wrath; by patient suffering for well doing, without making any returns of ill, either by words or deeds: this is the moderation here meant, and not moderation in eating and drinking, and in apparel, and in the love and use of, and care for the things of this world; though such moderation highly becomes professors of religion; and much less moderation in religion, or towards the false teachers, thinking and speaking well of them; and interpreting their notions in the best sense, hoping they may mean otherwise than they say, and therefore should treat their persons with great respect, and their principles with tenderness; but this can never be thought to be the apostle’s sense, after he had himself given them such names and characters, as in (Philippians 3:2 Philippians 3:18 Philippians 3:19) ; and besides, though we may, and many times ought, as men and Christians, to give way, and yield up what is our right and due, for the sake of peace, yet we cannot, nor ought to give up anything, that of right belongs to God and Christ, in matters of doctrine or worship; nor in the least abate of our zeal for the same, or give way to false teachers in any respect, nor for any time: moreover, moderation in religion is nothing else but lukewarmness and indifference, than which nothing is

more detestable, or abhorred by Christ. The argument or reason enforcing moderation in the above sense of it follows,

the Lord [is] at hand.

The Syriac version reads, “our Lord”: and the Ethiopic version, “God is at hand”. The sense is, either the Lord is near, he is omnipresent, and sees and observes the conduct of his people, their deportment in the world, and to one another; and therefore, as in his presence, and under his eye, they should behave according to equity, and with kindness and tenderness towards their fellow creatures and fellow Christians: or the Lord is nigh unto them, as he is to all that call upon him in truth, (Psalms 145:18) ; he is a present help in time of trouble, (Psalms 46:1) ; he is in the midst of them, and will help, and that right early, (Psalms 46:5) ; and will avenge his elect, and vindicate their cause, and right all their wrongs in his due time; and therefore they should take all things patiently, and not avenge themselves: or in a little while Christ will come to judgment, when he will plead the cause of his people, and convince ungodly sinners of their ungodly deeds, and hard speeches against him and his, (Jude 1:15) ; and therefore they should leave all to that time, and commit themselves to him that judgeth righteously, (1 Peter 2:23) .

Philippians 4:6

Be careful for nothing

This must be understood not in the most extensive sense, but with a limitation and restriction. There are many things that saints are to be careful for, as men and Christians; they are to be careful of their bodies, as well as of their souls; of the health of them, which is to be preserved by all lawful means, and not exposed to unnecessary danger; and for their families, to provide things honest for them, proper food and raiment, and the necessaries of life; for whoever does not do that, denies the faith, and is worse than an infidel; and even for the things of this world in a moderate way, using all diligence and industry in obtaining them; men ought to be careful to discharge the duties of their calling in civil life, and to care and concern themselves for the honour of God, the interest of religion, and the support of the Gospel; and that they offend not God, by sinning against him: but the carefulness the apostle speaks of, is an anxious solicitude for worldly things, an immoderate concern for the things of life, arising from diffidence, or

negligence, of the power, providence, and faithfulness of God: saints should not be anxiously, or in a distressing manner concerned for the things of this world, but be content, whether they have less or more; nor be over much pressed with what befalls them, but should cast their care upon the Lord, and carry every case to him, and leave it there:

but in everything;

The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, “in every time”: always, constantly, every day, as often as there is opportunity, and need requires. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions join it with the following clause, “in every prayer and supplication”; but the grammatical construction of the words will not admit of such a version; it is best to understand it of every thing, or case, which should be brought to God; whether it be of a temporal or spiritual kind, relating to body or soul, to ourselves or others, to our families, relations, and acquaintance, the church, or the world:

by prayer and supplication:

which may include all sorts of prayer, mental or vocal, private or public, ordinary or extraordinary, and every part of prayer: prayer may design petition, or asking for good things that are wanted; and “supplication”, a deprecating of evils that are feared; though these two are often used together for the same thing, for prayer in general: which ought always to be accompanied

with thanksgiving;

for mercies received; for a man can never come to the throne of grace, to ask for grace and mercy, but he has mercies to bless God for, and so to do is very acceptable to God; nor can a person expect to succeed in the enjoyment of future mercies, when he is not thankful for past and present ones: in this manner therefore, at all times, upon every occasion, in a way of humble petition and supplication, joined with thankfulness for all favours,

let your requests be made known to God;

not to men; fly not to an arm of flesh, but to God, to him only, and that in the most private manor, as not to be known by men; and put up such requests, as there may be reason to hope and believe God will “know” and approve of; such as are agreeable to his will, to the covenant of his grace, and the declaration of his word: use familiarity with God, tell him as you would do a friend, freely and fully, all your case, pour out your souls and your complaints before him. This God would have his

people do, and he expects it from them; and though he knows all their wants, and what are their desires before they express them, yet he will seem not to know them, or take any notice of them, until they open them to him in some way or other; either by vocal prayer, or mental; by ejaculations, or sighs and groans, by chattering as a crane or a swallow, all which he understands: and be the case made known in what way or manner soever, with ever so much weakness, so be it, it is made known, it is enough, it shall be regarded and not despised.

Philippians 4:7

And the peace of God which passeth all understanding

Not that peace which God calls his people to among themselves in their effectual calling; and which he requires of them to cultivate and maintain; and which he encourages in them by the promise of his gracious presence among them; and which indeed he is the author of, and therefore is so called, (Colossians 3:15) ; and which may be said to surpass or exceed all speculative knowledge, and understanding; for the one puffs up and profits nothing, but the other edifies; and much less that peace which God has in himself, who is all peace and love, and which passes all understanding, human and angelic; but either that peace which is made with God by the blood of Christ, and is published in the Gospel of peace, which passes and surprises all understanding of men and angels, that it should be; that the thoughts of God should be concerning it from everlasting; that a council of peace should be called and held between the eternal Three, and a covenant of peace entered into; that Christ should be appointed the peace maker, and the chastisement of it laid on him; that he should make it by the blood of his cross, and for men, while enemies to God and to himself: or else that peace of conscience, which arises from a view of peace made by Christ; of justification by his righteousness, and atonement by his sacrifice; and which may be called “the peace of Christ”, as the Alexandrian copy reads; both because it is founded upon, and springs from him, and is what he is the donor of: and this is what passes the understanding of every natural man; he knows nothing of this peace, what this tranquillity of mind means; he intermeddles not with this joy; it is unaccountable to him how it should be, that such then should have peace, who have so much trouble, are so much reproached, afflicted, and persecuted, and yet have peace in Christ, while they

have tribulation in the world; which

shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ,

or “in Christ Jesus”: some read these words prayer wise, or as a wish, “let it”, or “may it keep”, so the Vulgate Latin; but they are rather a promise, encouraging the saints to the discharge of the above duties; as rejoicing always in the Lord, showing their moderation to all men, avoiding anxious care, and betaking themselves at all times, on all occasions, to prayer to God; in which way they may expect peace, and such as will be of that see vice to them, as here expressed; that is, be a means of their final perseverance; for the peace of God, in either sense, is a preservation of the saints: peace made with God secures them in Christ from all condemnation by the law, sin, Satan, the world, or their own hearts; and peace in their own souls, on so good a foundation as it is, keeps them through Christ as in a garrison, from being overset with the troubles of the world, or the temptations of Satan; and is a means of preserving them from being carried away with the errors and heresies of the wicked, having a witness to truth within themselves; and from every evil way and work, from profaneness and immorality; the grace of God teaching them, and the love of Christ constraining them, which is shed abroad in their hearts, to live and act otherwise.

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true

To close all with respect to the duties of Christianity incumbent on the professors of it, the apostle exhorts to a regard to everything that is true; that is agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, to the Gospel the word of truth, or to the law and light of nature; and whatever was really so, even among the very Heathens, in opposition to falsehood, lying, and hypocrisy

whatsoever things [are] honest;

in the sight of men; or grave, or “venerable” in speech, in action or attire, in opposition to levity, frothiness, or foppery:

whatsoever things [are] just;

between man and man, or with respect both to God and men; giving to God what belongs to him, and to man what is his due; studying to exercise a conscience void of offence to both, in opposition to all impiety, injustice, violence, and oppression:

whatsoever things [are] pure;

or “chaste”, in words and deeds, in opposition to all filthiness and foolish talking, to obscene words and actions. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, “whatsoever things are holy”; which are agreeable to the holy nature, law, and will of God, and which tend to promote holiness of heart and life:

whatsoever [are] lovely;

which are amiable in themselves, and to be found even among mere moral men, as in the young man whom Christ as man is said to love, (Mark 10:21) ; and which serve to cultivate and increase love, friendship, and amity among men; and which things also are grateful to God and lovely in his sight, in opposition to all contention, strife, wrath, and hatred:

whatsoever things [are] of good report;

are well spoken of, and tend to get and establish a good name, which is better than precious ointment, (Ecclesiastes 7:1) ; for though a good name, credit, and reputation among men, are to be sacrificed for the sake of Christ when called for; yet care is to be taken to preserve them by doing things which may secure them, and cause professors of religion to be well reported of; and which beautiful in all, and absolutely necessary in some:

if [there be] any virtue;

anywhere, among any persons whatever, in opposition to vice: and if [there be] any praise; that is praiseworthy among men, and deserves commendation, even though in an unjust steward, (Luke 16:8) , it should be regarded. The Vulgate Latin adds, “of discipline”, without any authority from any copy. The Claromontane manuscript reads, “if any praise of knowledge”:

think on these things:

meditate upon them, revolve them in your minds, seriously consider them, and reason with yourselves about them, in order to put them into practice.

Philippians 4:9

These things which ye have both learned

Meaning from himself, in a doctrinal way: and received;

not only into their heads but hearts, had embraced cordially, with great affection, in the love thereof, as well as given a full assent to:

and heard;

either publicly or privately, from the pulpit, or in conversation; or had heard of him when absent, or from him when present:

and seen in me:

in his life and conversation, which were well known, and were a pattern to them that believe; and therefore he adds,

do;

practise the same things which they had learned from him as their duty, and had heard him urge as such, and had seen exemplified in himself.

and the God of peace shall be with you;

to give that peace which is beyond the conception of a natural man, and the expression of a spiritual one, and is the great preservative through Christ; and to enable to do and to continue to do the above things, and to keep them from all harm, and every enemy of their souls; to favour them with his gracious presence here, and with endless peace hereafter.

Philippians 4:10**But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly**

The apostle proceeds to the last part of this epistle, and to take notice of the present which these Philippians had sent him, on account of which this his rejoicing was; and which was not small but great, and was not of a carnal but spiritual kind; it was a joy in the Holy Ghost, which is opposed to meats and drinks, and earthly enjoyments; it was a joy in the Lord; “in our Lord”, as the Syriac version renders it; it was not so much on account of the nature, substance, quantity or quality of the things sent him, and the suitableness of them to his present necessity; but because this thing was of the Lord, he had put it into their hearts to do it, and had given them not only ability, but a willing mind, and had wrought in them both to will and to do; and because what they did they did for the sake of Christ, and to him as an apostle of his, and in obedience to Christ, and with a view to promote his cause and interest, honour and glory:

that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again;

which supposes that they had formerly, at the first preaching of the Gospel, showed great respect to him, and took great care of him, as appears from (

Philippians 4:15 Philippians 4:16) , but that for some time past, and it seems for a considerable while, they had dropped it, or at least had not shown it; but that now it revived again, and was seen in the present they had now sent him. The allusion is to trees, which in the summer season bear much fruit, in autumn cast their leaves, and in the winter are entirely bare, and in the spring of the year revive again, and put forth leaves and fruit: and just so it is with the saints, they are compared to trees, and are called trees of righteousness, (Isaiah 61:3) , and are fruitful ones, (Jeremiah 23:3) ; but they have their winter seasons, when they are barren and unfruitful, and look as if they were dead; but when it is a spring time with them they revive again, as in the exercise of their faith and hope in Christ, so of their love to him, and to one another, and the ministers of the Gospel; when the south wind of the Spirit blows, the sun of righteousness arises, and, the dews of divine grace fall upon them; and such a revival was now in this church; and this was what the apostle so much rejoiced in, not so much for the gift bestowed on him, as for the fruit that appeared in them; see (Philippians 4:17) ; but whereas he had said that this care of him flourished again, “at last”; lest this should be thought as finding fault with them, and bringing a charge against them, he corrects himself by adding,

wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity;

signifying that he believed they had entertained the same sentiments of him, had the same affection and inward care for him all along; but they had no opportunity of showing it, he being at such a distance, and they having no convenient or proper persons to send to him; or were hindered through multiplicity of business on their hands, that they could not attend to him; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “but ye were busied”, or taken up and employed in business; or it was for want of ability; for the words will bear to be rendered, “but ye lacked ability”; and to this sense does the Syriac version render it, (אלא לא פקינו הויחונ) , “but ye were not sufficient”; or had not a sufficiency, were not able to do it, and therefore to be easily excused.

Philippians 4:11**Not that I speak in respect of want**

Either of want of will in them; of their slowness and backwardness in their care of him, postponing him to others, caring for him last of all; this gave him no

uneasiness, he did not take it ill, knowing and owning himself to be less than the least of all saints: or of his own want before this present came; and his sense is, that he did not express himself with so much joy, because of the penury and distress he was in before the things came to him which they sent; for he was not in want; though he had nothing, he possessed all things, and was as happy, and in as comfortable a frame, and in as much content then as now:

for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, [there-with] to be content;

or “to be sufficient”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; or that that is sufficient for me which I have, as the Syriac version renders it; for the word here used signifies to be self-sufficient, or to have a sufficiency in one’s self, which in the strict sense of the phrase is only true of God, who is “El-shaddai”, God all-sufficient; but, in a lower sense, is true of such who are contented with their present state and condition, with such things as they have, be they more or less, and think that they have enough, as old Jacob did, (Genesis 33:11) ; and such persons have a sort of an all-sufficiency in them; they are thankful for every thing they have, be it little or more, and in every state, whether of adversity or prosperity; and quietly and patiently submit to the will of God, and cheerfully take and bear whatever is assigned them as their portion; and such an one was the apostle: he was not only content with food and raiment, and such things as he had, but even when he had nothing at all; when he had neither bread to eat nor clothes to wear; when he was in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, as was sometimes his case; and therefore he does not say here, that he had learnt to be content with such things as he had, but (en oiv eimi) , “in what I am”: and this he had not by nature, but by grace; it was not natural, but adventitious to him; it was not what he had acquired by his industry, but what he had “learned”; and that not in the school of nature and reason, while an unregenerate man; nor at the feet of Gamaliel, while he was training up under him in the law of Moses, and in the traditions of the elders; but he learned it of God, and was taught it by the revelation of Christ, and under the teachings of the Spirit of God, and that in the school of affliction, by a train of experiences, of many sorrows, afflictions, and distresses; for this lesson is learned quite contrary to all the rules and reasons among men, not by prosperity, but by adversity: many are the things that may excite and encourage to the exercise of this heavenly grace, where

it is wrought; as the consideration of the unalterable will of God, according to which every man’s state and condition is settled, and therefore what God has made crooked can never be made straight; and of our case when we came into the world, and what that will be when we go out of it, naked and bare of this world’s things; and of our unworthiness of the least mercy at the hand of God: add to which, the consideration of God being our portion and exceeding great reward; of having an interest in Christ and all things in him; and of the profits and pleasures of a life of contentment; and of the promises which God has made to such; and of the future glory and happiness which will shortly be enjoyed: so that a believer may say, who has the smallest pittance of earthly enjoyments, this, with a covenant God, with an interest in Christ, with grace here and heaven hereafter, is enough.

Philippians 4:12**I know both how to be abased**

Or “humbled”; to be treated with indignity and contempt, to be trampled upon by man, to suffer hardships and distress, to be in a very mean and low condition, to work with his own hands, and minister to his own and the necessities of others in that way; yea, to be in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and have no certain dwelling place; and he knew how to behave under all this; not to be depressed and cast down, or to fret, repine, and murmur:

and I know how to abound;

or “to excel”; to be in the esteem of men, and to have an affluence of the things of this world, and how to behave in the midst of plenty; so as not to be lifted up, to be proud and haughty, and injurious to fellow creatures; so as not to abuse the good things of life; and so as to use them to the honour of God, the interest of religion, and the good of fellow creatures, and fellow Christians:

every where;

whether among Jews or Gentiles, at Jerusalem or at Rome, or at whatsoever place; or as the Arabic version renders it, “every time”: always, in every season, whether of adversity or prosperity:

and in all things;

in all circumstances of life:

I am instructed;

or “initiated”, as he was by the Gospel; and, ever since

he embraced it, was taught this lesson of contentment, and inured to the exercise of it, and was trained up and instructed how to behave himself in the different changes and vicissitudes he came into:

both to be full, and to be hungry;

to know what it was to have plenty and want, to have a full meal and to want one, and be almost starved and famished, and how to conduct under such different circumstances:

both to abound and to suffer need;

which the apostle repeats for confirmation sake; and the whole of what he here says is an explanation of the lesson of contentment he had learned; and the knowledge he speaks of was not speculative but experimental, and lay not merely in theory, but in practice; and now lest he should be thought guilty of arrogance, and to ascribe too much to himself, he in (Philippians 4:13) attributes all to the power and grace of Christ.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things

Which must not be understood in the greatest latitude, and without any limitation; for the apostle was not omnipotent, either in himself, or by the power of Christ; nor could he do all things that Christ could do; but it must be restrained to the subject matter treated of: the sense is, that he could be content in every state, and could know how to behave himself in adversity and prosperity, amidst both poverty and plenty; yea, it may be extended to all the duties incumbent on him both as a Christian and as an apostle, as to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men; to take the care of all the churches; to labour more abundantly than others in preaching the Gospel; and to bear all afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions for the sake of it; yea, he could willingly and cheerfully endure the most cruel and torturing death for the sake of Christ: all these things he could do, not in his own strength, for no man was more conscious of his own weakness than he was, or knew more of the impotency of human nature; and therefore always directed others to be strong in the Lord, and in, the power of his might, and in the grace that is in Christ, on which he himself always depended, and by which he did what he did; as he adds here,

through Christ which strengtheneth me.

The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out

the word “Christ”, and only read “him”; and so the Alexandrian copy and others; but intend Christ as those that express it: strength to perform duty and to bear sufferings is in Christ, and which he communicates to his people; he strengthens them with strength in their souls, internally, as the word here used signifies; by virtue of which they can do whatever he enjoins them or calls them to, though without him they can do nothing.

Philippians 4:14

Notwithstanding ye have well done

This he says lest they should think he slighted their kindness, and lest they should be discouraged from doing any such thing of this kind another time, either to himself or others; for though he was so well contented with his state, and knew how to be abased and to suffer need, and could do all things through the strength of Christ, yet he observes they did well in communicating to him; for communicating to poor saints or ministers is a considerable branch of well doing; it is a good work when it is done in faith, and from love, and with a view to the glory, honour, and interest of Christ; it is what is agreeable to the will of God, and is an odour of a sweet smell, and acceptable to him:

that ye did communicate with my affliction;

by which is meant, not any affliction of mind, for he was in as comfortable a frame, had as clear views of his interest in God, as his covenant God, and was as contented and satisfied as ever he was in his life; nor any disorder or distemper of body; but he was in prison and penury: these Philippians communicated with him in it, both by sympathizing with him in his tribulation, and by sending their minister to visit him, and with him a present for his relief and support; in doing which they did well.

Philippians 4:15

Now ye Philippians know also

As well as the apostle did, that they not only communicated now, but also had done formerly, and when none else beside them did; wherefore he not only commends them for their present kindness to him, but for their past favours:

that in the beginning of the Gospel;

of the preaching of it by the apostle in the parts of

Macedonia, particularly at Philippi; as soon as ever the Gospel was preached to them, they showed a grateful and beneficent spirit; of which we have an instance in Lydia, the first person we read of converted there, and also in the jailer, who was the next; see (Acts 16:12 Acts 16:14 Acts 16:15 Acts 16:34 Acts 16:40) ; yea, not only while he was with them they communicated to him, but when he was gone from them:

when I departed from Macedonia;

when he went to Corinth and other places, to preach the Gospel in other parts and to other people, they sent the brethren after him with presents which supplied what was lacking to him, and in which other churches were deficient; see (2 Corinthians 11:8 2 Corinthians 11:9) ; the Ethiopic version reads, “when ye went from Macedonia with me”: but is not supported by any copy or other version:

no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only;

the phrase, “giving and receiving”, is the same with (Ntmw avm), which is often used by the Jews for trading and commerce {e}; and the allusion is to the keeping of accounts by men in business, by debtor and creditor, in a book, putting down in one column what is delivered out, and in the other what is received, whereby accounts are kept clear: the apostle’s meaning is, that whereas he and his fellow ministers had delivered out spiritual things to this church, they had in return communicated their carnal things; so that there was a proper account kept, which was not observed by other churches, and which was greatly to the commendation of this.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 Vid. Kimchi in Psal. xv. 3. & Targum in Isa. ix. 4.

Philippians 4:16

For even in Thessalonica

When the apostle was there; for from Philippi he went to Thessalonica; see (Acts 17:1) ;

ye sent once and again unto my necessity;

for his use and service, to support him while he was at that place, and relieve and assist him in his necessities; for the people at Thessalonica were either not able to communicate, or were not of a beneficent disposition, or the apostle did not care to be chargeable to them; and they seem many of them to have been idle and lazy, and therefore he wrought among them with his own hands

to set them an example; and the Philippians hearing and knowing that this was the case, sent frequently, while he was here, some of the brethren with gifts unto him.

Philippians 4:17

Not because I desire a gift

This commendation of them he entered into, not because he desired another present to be made to him, either by them or others; he was not a man of such a disposition, he was not like one of those that could never have enough; he was fully satisfied and highly contented with what he had; he was not like the false teachers, that made merchandise of men; he sought not theirs, but them:

but I desire fruit that may abound to your account;

he had planted them, or had been an instrument in planting of them, as trees of righteousness, (Isaiah 61:3) ; and his great desire was to see fruits of righteousness grow upon them, (Philippians 1:11) ; by which sometimes are meant acts of beneficence, as in (2 Corinthians 9:10) ; and that these might be abundant and turn to their profit and advantage, as such fruit does; for God does not forget to recompense acts of bounty, and labours of love, but if even a cup of cold water is given to a prophet or minister of Christ, on account of his being so, it shall have its reward in the issue of things, upon the casting up of accounts, (Matthew 10:42) ; for the apostle still has reference unto that; his view was, that the balance might be on their side, and that much might be received by them; so that it was not for himself, but for their encouragement and future good, he said this; for as for himself he adds,

Philippians 4:18

But I have all things, and abound

Or “I have received all things”, as the Syriac version renders it; all that they had sent by Epaphroditus; and for which he now gives a receipt; and by virtue of which he now abounded; and which abundance of his was not so much owing to the largeness of their presents, as to the peace of his mind; looking upon this gift of theirs, though it might be but small in itself, a fulness to him; for he adds,

I am full;

as much as he desired, he wanted no more, he had enough:

having received of Epaphroditus the things [which were sent] from you:

and which he acknowledged, that the character of this good man might stand clear, who had been intrusted with this affair:

an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God,

this is said in allusion to the sacrifices under the former dispensation, in which God smelled a sweet savour, (Genesis 8:21) , in reference to which, as the sacrifice of Christ is said to be of a sweet smelling savour, (Ephesians 5:2) , and as the spiritual sacrifices of the saints, as praises and prayers, are called odours, (Revelation 5:8) , and are said to be acceptable unto God, (1 Peter 2:5) ; so acts of beneficence are called sacrifices, with which he is well pleased, (Hebrews 13:16) .

Philippians 4:19

But my God shall supply all your need

Or “fulfil all your need”: the Jews, when they would comfort any, under the loss of any worldly enjoyment, used to say, (Knwrox Kl almy Mwqmh) , “God fulfil”, or “will fulfil thy need” F6. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read these words as a wish or prayer, “but may my God supply” or “fulfil all your need”; I am not able to make you any returns, but I pray that my God would recompence it to you, that as you have supplied my want, he would supply all yours; but we with others, and as the Ethiopic version, read, “shall” or “will supply”; as an assertion by way of promise, though he could not, yet his God would; he who was his God, not only as the God of nature and providence, or as the God of the Israelites, but as the God of all grace; who had loved him as such, had chosen, adopted, regenerated, and sanctified him; who was his God in Christ, and by virtue of the covenant of grace, and which was made known in the effectual calling; whose ambassador he was, and whom he had faithfully served in the Gospel of his Son; this God, who had been his God, was and would be so unto death, in whom he had an interest, and because he had an interest in him, and was thus related to him, be firmly believed, and fully assures these saints, that he would supply their wants who had been so careful of him: believers, though they need nothing as considered in Christ, being complete and filled full in him, having in him all grace, and all spiritual blessings, and under believing views of this at

times, see themselves complete and wanting nothing; yet, in themselves, they are poor and needy, and often want fresh discoveries of the love of God to them, fresh supplies of grace from Christ, stand in need of more light from him, and to be quickened according to his word; they want fresh supplies of strength from him answerable to the service and work they are daily called to; and as their trials and afflictions abound, they have need of renewed comfort to support under them; and have also need of fresh manifestations and applications of pardoning grace to their souls, and fresh views of the righteousness of Christ, as their justifying righteousness before God; and, in a word, need daily food for their souls as for their bodies: now God, who is also their God, is able and willing to supply their wants; and he does so, he withholds no good thing from them, nor do they want any good thing needful for them, for he supplies “all” their need; and this they may expect, since he is the God of all grace, and a fulness of grace is in his Son; and this grace is sufficient for them, and a supply of it is given them by the Spirit;

according to his riches;

God is rich not only in the perfections of his nature, which are inconceivable and incommunicable; and in the works of his hands, of creation and providence, the whole earth is full of his riches, (Psalms 104:24) , and according to these riches of his goodness he supplies the wants of all creatures living; but he is also rich in grace and mercy, (Ephesians 2:4 Ephesians 2:7) , and it is according to the riches of his grace he supplies the spiritual wants of his people, and he does it like himself, according to the riches he has; he gives all things richly to enjoy, plenteously and abundantly:

in glory:

in a glorious manner, so as to show himself glorious, and make his people so, to the glory of his rich grace; and “with glory”, as it may be rendered, with eternal glory; he will not only give grace here, and more of it as is needful, according to the abundance of it in himself and in his Son, but glory hereafter: and all

by Christ Jesus;

and through him, who is full of grace and truth; who is the Mediator in whom the fulness of it lies, and through whose hands, and by whom, it is communicated to the saints: or “with Christ Jesus”; along with him God gives all things freely, all things pertaining to life and godliness: or “for the sake of Christ Jesus”; not for any

worth or merit in men, but for the sake of Christ, in whom they are accepted, and on whose account respect is had to their persons, and so to their wants.

FOOTNOTES:

F6 T. Bab. Betacot, fol. 16. 2. Debarim Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 239. 4.

Philippians 4:20

Now unto God and our Father

To God, who is our Father in Christ,

[be] glory for ever and ever, Amen;

for all the grace he gives now, and for all the glory and happiness expected hereafter; for the supply of every want both temporal and spiritual; seeing every good gift comes from him, and is to be ascribed to his free grace and favour, and not to any deserts of men: and particularly he may mean for what they had sent him, and he had received from them.

Philippians 4:21

Salute every saint in Christ Jesus

Meaning at Philippi, whether rich or poor, lesser or greater believers, common saints, as well as the officers of the church, bishops and deacons; who were in Christ by electing grace, and as their covenant head, and representative from everlasting, and which was manifested and made known by their conversion and the effectual calling:

the brethren which are with me greet you;

such as Timothy; see (Philippians 2:19) ; and Epaphras, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and Lucas; see (Philemon 1:23 Philemon 1:24) ; he makes no mention of Peter anywhere, when he writes from Rome or to it, which shows he was not there then, or a bishop of that place, as the Papists say.

Philippians 4:22

All the saints salute you

The members of the church at Rome,

chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household;

for by means of the apostle’s bonds, which were made manifest in the emperor’s palace, Christ was made known to some there likewise; though Nero, the then reigning emperor, was a very wicked prince, and his court a very debauched one, yet the grace of God

reached some there: who these were cannot be said; as for the conjecture that Seneca the philosopher, Nero’s master, was one of them, it is without foundation; the eight letters of his to the Apostle Paul, and the six letters of the apostle to him, are spurious, though of ancient date, being made mention of by Austin and Jerom F7: a like groundless conjecture is that, that Lucan the poet, Seneca’s brother’s son, was another; for there is nothing in his writings, or in any account of him, any more than in the former, that shows him to be a Christian. Torpes, a man in great favour and dignity in Nero’s court, and Evellius his counsellor, who both suffered martyrdom under him, according to the Roman martyrology, are also mentioned.

FOOTNOTES:

F7 Vid. Fabricii Bibliothec. Latin, p. 69.

Philippians 4:23

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all

The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, “with your spirit”, as in (Galatians 6:18) ; and so the Alexandrian copy and some others read. This is the apostle’s token in all his epistles of the genuineness of them, and which he wrote with his own hand, (2 Thessalonians 3:17 2 Thessalonians 3:18) ; (See Gill on Romans 16:22), (See Gill on Romans 16:24).

Amen:

with which all the epistles are concluded; (See Gill on Romans 16:27).

The subscription is,

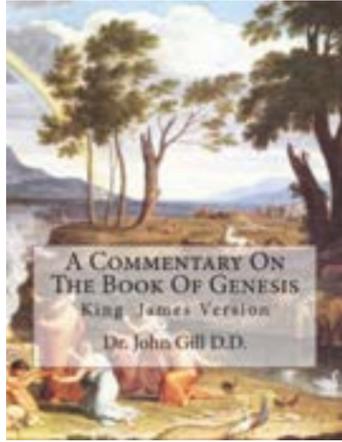
[it was] written [to] the Philippians from Rome, by Epaphroditus;

that this epistle was written to the Philippians by the Apostle Paul, when he was a prisoner at Rome, and sent to them by Epaphroditus their minister, when he returned from him to them.

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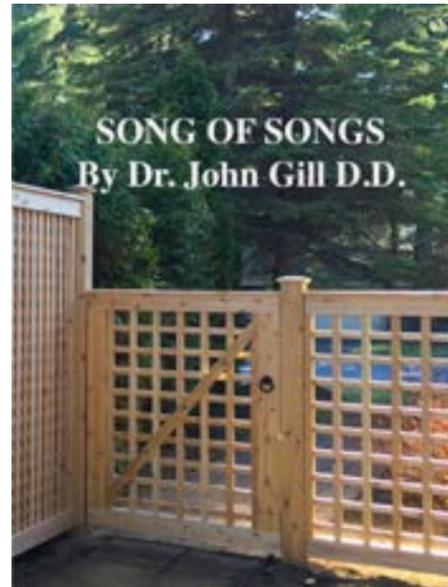
COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS



Dr. John Gil is the only person to write a commentary on every verse of the bible. He was a scholar and read both Hebrew and Greek and was a Particular Baptists minister in London, England, in the 18 century, who taught the doctrines of grace and like all Christian churches the King James Bible was the one used by Christians. All modern versions since 1948 are not translated from the text underlying the King James Version but are from their own translation of Westcott and Hort's 4th Century Greek texts. My final words on this whole matter is, 26 'Oh fools and slow in heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, aught not Christs to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory.27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.' It seems to me that those who reject, cannot or will not receive, the record that God has given in Genesis concerning His Son and the account of the great flood, have been deceived by the Devil. The answer of the Christian to such a temptation is to say, 'Get thee behind me Satan.' And for it is written, 'Man shall not live by bead alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'. Moses wrote of the coming of Christ in to the world in Genesis where it is written 'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Gen 3:15. In order to understand Westcott and Hort have not been faithful to the word of God and introduced great errors we include for your reference the following books 'Which Bible' by Philip Mauro and 'The Modern

Version Incursion', by Ken Matto. David

SONG OF SONGS



The Following Exposition was delivered in one hundred and twenty-two Sermons, to the Congregation where God his providence has placed me, and were designed only for their use, profit, and education. Had I had any thoughts of publishing it to the world when I entered upon it, perhaps it might have appeared with some little more advantage than now it does; nor had it appeared now, had not the importunity of the people to whom I minister, with others, obliged me to it; to which I the more readily complied, considering that the authority and usefulness of this book are called in question in this loose and degenerate age; in which, not only this, but all scripture is ridiculed and burlesqued, and the great doctrines of faith therein contained treated with the utmost sneer and contempt; and therefore would willingly contribute all I can towards the vindicating of this, or any other part of the sacred writings; which, being given by inspiration of God, are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness."

A COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW'S GOSPEL (Part 1)



Matthews gospel was the first published somewhere between 31 and 39 AD. It contains the essence of those things the Lord Jesus commanded his 12 Apostles to teach the whole world. This commentary by Dr. John Gill is a verse by verse commentary on the book of Matthew, in two parts. Dr. John Gill was a Particular Baptist minister born in Kettering, Northamptonshire and published his commentary on whole the New Testament in 1746 -1747. He taught the doctrines of grace and wrote against the Arminianism of John Wesley. He was awarded an Honorary degree by the University of Aberdeen and was the first theologian to publish a commentary on every book of the Old and New Testament scriptures. It is hoped that this publication will assist bible student to understand the teaching of Matthew and the doctrines of grace the gospel declares. It is intended that this will serve Preterist students with clear views of reformed Soteriology.

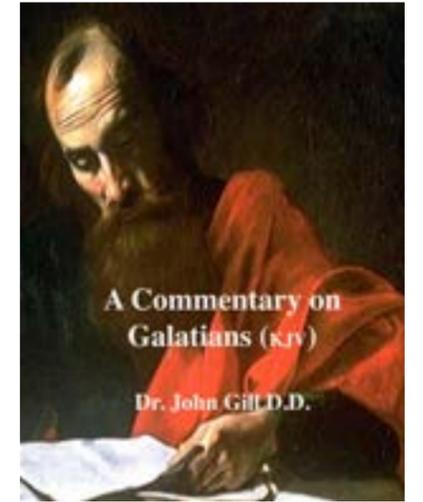
A COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

(Part 2)



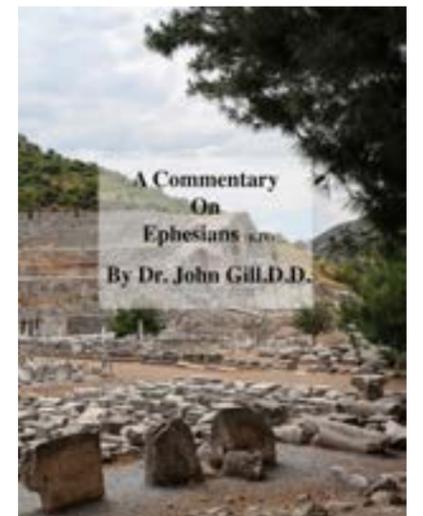
This is Part 2 of the second part of Matthews Gospel.

A COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS



The Galatian epistle was probably the first epistle of Paul the Apostle. It was written to deal with Judaiser's who taught the Gentiles must to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. This was soon after he had been to Galatia on his second missionary journey and had delivered the decrees of the Jerusalem Council. Paul's epistles 1st and 2nd Thessalonians was shortly to follow. It was Written about 51 A.D. John Gill was an 18C theologian and writes his commentary on every verse of this epistle. Dr. John Gill held to high Calvinistic Soteriology and was a Particular Baptists teaching the doctrines of grace. This commentary is that which Gill published in his Commentary of the whole of the New Testament published in 1738.

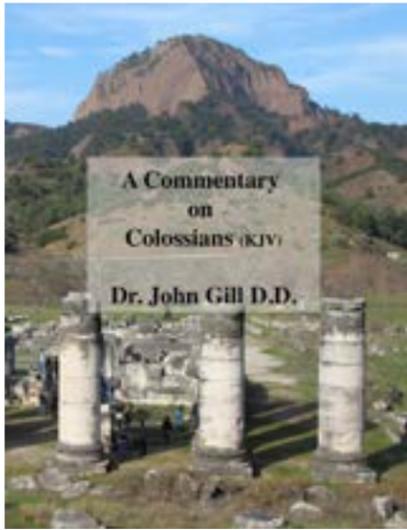
A COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS



The Apostle Paul first went to Ephesus after he had been at Corinth, though he then made but a short stay; when he came thither again, he found twelve disciples,

and was the instrument of making a great many more: here he continued two or three years and formed a Gospel church, very large and flourishing, to whom he writes this epistle; and which was written by him when he was a prisoner at Rome, as appears by several passages in it, Eph 3:1 4:1 6:20, and seems to have been written much about the same time as were the epistles to the Philippians, and to the Colossians, and to Philemon. Dr. Hammond thinks it was written about the year 58, and Dr. Lightfoot places it in 59, and the fifth year off Nero.

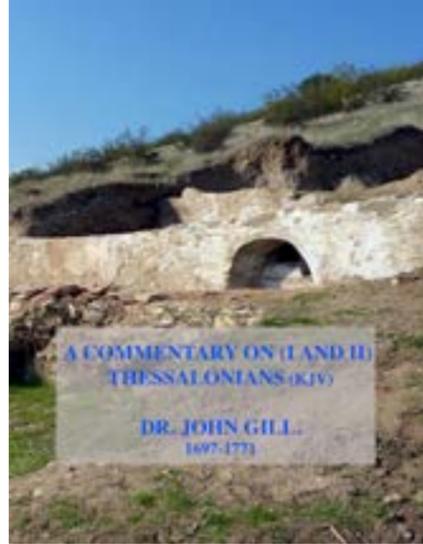
A COMMENTARY ON COLOSSIANS



The Colossians, to whom this epistle is written, were not the Rhodians, by some called Colossians, from Colossus, the large statue of the sun, which stood in the island of Rhodes, and was one of the seven wonders of the world; but the inhabitants of Colosse, a city of the greater Phrygia, in the lesser Asia, near to which stood the cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis, mentioned in this epistle. Pliny {a} speaks of it as one of the chief towns in Phrygia, and {b} Herodotus calls it the great city of Phrygia; it is said to have perished a very little time after the writing of this epistle, with the above cities, by an earthquake, in the year of Christ 66, and in the tenth of Nero {c}; though it was afterwards rebuilt; for Theophylact says, that in his time it was called Chonae. When the Gospel was brought hither, and by whom, is not known, nor who was the founder of the church in this place; for the Apostle Paul was not, since his face had never been seen by them, Col 2:1, though it is said that Epaphras, the same name with Epaphroditus, was fixed by him pastor of this church; and others say Philemon was set over it by him. The occasion of this epistle was this, Epaphras, who had preached the Gospel to the

Colossians, and very likely was the first that did, came to Rome, where the Apostle Paul was a prisoner, and gave him an account of them, how they had heard and received the Gospel, and of their faith Christ, and love to the saints; and also declared to him in what danger they were through some false teachers that had got among them, who were for introducing the philosophy of the Gentiles, the ceremonies of the law of Moses, and some pernicious tenets of the followers of Simon Magus, and the Gnostics; upon which the apostle writes this epistle to them, to confirm them in the faith of the Gospel Epaphras had preached unto them, and which was the same he himself preached; and to warn them against those bad men, and their principles; and to exhort them to a discharge of their duty to God, and men, and one another. It was written by the apostle, when in bonds at Rome, as many passages in it show, and about the same time with those to the Philippians and Ephesians; and the epistle to the latter greatly agrees with this, both as to subject and style. Dr. Lightfoot places it in the year of Christ 60, in the second of the apostle's imprisonment, and in the sixth of Nero's reign.

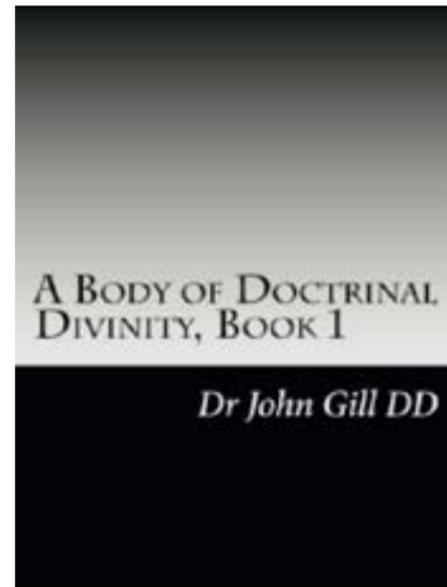
A COMMENTARY ON 1 and 2 THESSALONIANS



The two epistles of the apostle Paul to the Thessalonians were written between A.D. 51 and 53. Paul had taught them about the great tribulation that would usher in the Day of The Lord (Second Coming, Resurrection and Judgment). It was due to the heavy local persecution they were tempted to think the Day of the Lord must have arrived. But Paul reminds them of all those things that were still yet to happen before the Day of the Lord could come. Ed. Stevens in his book, 'The Decade Before the End', writes; The revealing of the

Man of Lawlessness had to occur before the Day of the Lord (the Parousia). Note that this epistle was written in AD 52-53, at least one year before Nero became Emperor (AD 54). His adopted father (Claudius) was still reigning. However, it seems more likely that the Man of Sin was fulfilled by Eleazar b. Ananias, the son of the same Ananias who arrested and tried Apostle Paul in AD 58. This may shed some light on Paul's comments in 2 Thessalonians 2 that the Man of Lawlessness would not be revealed until the revolt in AD 66. Eleazar was the instigator of that revolt. Dr. Gill held historic views on eschatology and it is intended that this publication will lead the reader to study fulfilled views of prophecy.

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY BOOK 1



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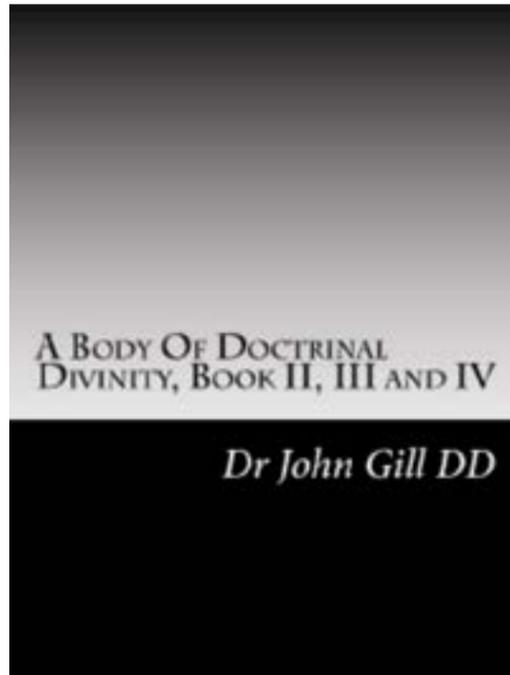
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- 30 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Son.
- 31 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Holy Spirit.

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Chapter III Of The Decree Of Rejection, Of Some Angels, And Of Some Men.

Chapter IV Of The Eternal Union Of The Elect Of God Unto Him.

Chapter V Of Other Eternal And Immanent Acts In God, Particularly Adoption And Justification.

Chapter VI Of The Everlasting Council Between The Three Divine Persons, Concerning The Salvation Of Men.

Chapter VII Of The Everlasting Covenant Of Grace, Between The Father, And The Son, And The Holy Spirit.

Chapter VIII Of The Part Which The Father Takes In The Covenant.

Chapter IX Of The Part The Son Of God, The Second Person, Has Taken In The Covenant.

Chapter X Of Christ, As The Covenant Head Of The Elect

Chapter XI Of Christ, The Mediator Of The Covenant

Chapter XII Of Christ, The Surety Of The Covenant.

Of Christ, The Testator Of The Covenant

Chapter XIV Of The Concern The Spirit Of God Has In The Covenant Of Grace.

Chapter XV Of The Properties Of The Covenant Of Grace

Chapter XVI Of The Complacency And Delight God Had In Himself, And The Divine Persons In Each Other, Before Any Creature Was Brought Into Being.

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Chapter 1 Of Creation In General

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Chapter 3 Of The Creation Of Man

Chapter 4 Of The Providence Of God

Chapter 5 Of The Confirmation Of The Elect Angels, And The Fall Of The Non-Elect.

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Chapter 7 Of The Law Given To Adam, And The Covenant Made With Him In His State Of Innocence; In Which He Was The Federal Head And Representative Of His Posterity.

Chapter 8 Of The Sin And Fall Of Our First Parents.

Chapter 9 Of The Nature, Aggravations, And Sad Effects Of The Sin Of Man.

Chapter 10 Of The Imputation Of Adam's Sin To All His Posterity

Chapter 11 Of The Of The Corruption Of Human Nature.

Chapter 12 Of Actual Sins And Transgressions.

Chapter 13 Of The Punishment Of Sin

Contents Book IV.

Of The Acts Of The Grace Of God Towards And Upon His Elect In Time

Chapter 1 Of The Manifestation And Administration Of The Covenant Of Grace

Chapter 2 Of The Exhibitions Of The Covenant Of Grace In The Patriarchal State

Chapter 3 Of The Exhibitions Of The Covenant Of Grace Under The Mosaic Dispensation

Chapter 4 Of The Covenant Of Grace, As Exhibited In The Times Of David, And The Succeeding Prophets, To The Coming Of Christ

Chapter 5 Of The Abrogation Of The Old Covenant, Or First Administration Of It, And The Introduction Of The New, Or Second Administration Of It.

Chapter 6 Of The Law Of God

Chapter 7 Of The Gospel

Table of Contents Book V

Chapter 1 Of The Incarnation Of Christ

Chapter 2 Of Christ's State Of Humiliation

Chapter 3 Of The Active Obedience Of Christ In His State Of Humiliation

Chapter 4 Of The Passive Obedience Of Christ, Or Of His Sufferings And Death

Chapter 5 Of The Burial Of Christ

Chapter 6 Of The Resurrection Of Christ From The Dead.

Chapter 7 Of The Ascension Of Christ To Heaven

Chapter 8 Of The Session Of Christ At The Right Hand Of God

Chapter 9 Of The Prophetic Office Of Christ

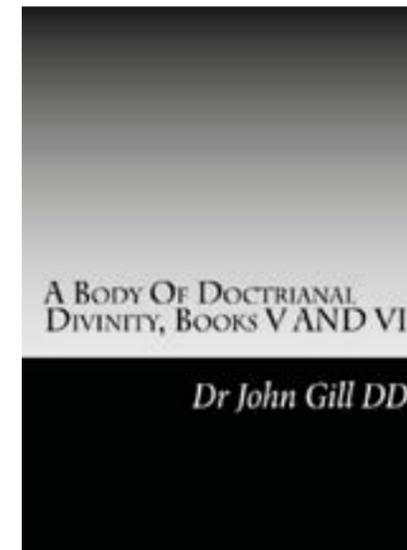
Chapter 10 Of The Priestly Office Of Christ

Chapter 11 Of The Intercession Of Christ

Chapter 12 Of Christ's Blessing His People As A Priest

Chapter 13 Of The Kingly Office Of Christ

Chapter 14 Of The Spiritual Reign Of Christ

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY, V, VI**A System OF Practical Truths****Book V**

Of The Grace Of Christ In His State Of Humiliation And Exaltation, And In The Offices Exercised By Him In Them.

Chapter 1 Of The Incarnation Of Christ

Chapter 2 Of Christ's State Of Humiliation

Chapter 3 Of The Active Obedience Of Christ In His State Of Humiliation.

Chapter 4 Of The Passive Obedience Of Christ, Or Of His Sufferings And Death.

Chapter 5 Of The Burial Of Christ.

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Chapter 11 Of The Intercession Of Christ

Chapter 12 Of Christ's Blessing His People As A Priest

Chapter 13 Of The Kingly Office Of Christ

Chapter 14 Of The Spiritual Reign Of Christ

Book VI

Chapter 1 Of Redemption By Christ

Chapter 2 Of The Causes Of Redemption By Christ

Chapter 3 Of The Objects Of Redemption By Christ

Chapter 4 Of Those Texts Of Scripture Which Seem To Favour Universal Redemption

Chapter 5 Of The Satisfaction Of Christ

Chapter 6 Of Propitiation, Atonement, And Reconciliation, As Ascribed To Christ

Chapter 7 Of The Pardon Of Sin

Chapter 8 Of Justification

Chapter 9 Of Adoption

Chapter 10 Of The Liberty Of The Sons Of God

Chapter 11 Of Regeneration

Chapter 12 Of Effectual Calling

Chapter 13 Of Conversion

Chapter 14 Of Sanctification

Chapter 15 Of The Perseverance Of The Saints

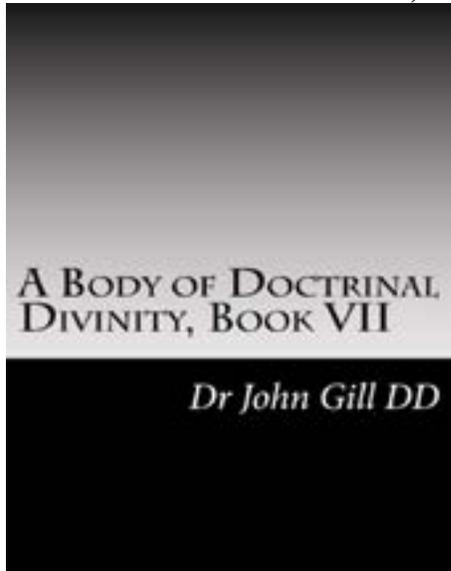
Chapter 9 Of Adoption Of The Liberty Of The Sons Of God

Chapter 11 Of Regeneration

Chapter 12 Of Effectual Calling

Chapter 14 Of Sanctification

Chapter 15 of the perseverance of the saints

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Contents

Chapter 1 Of The Death Of The Body

Chapter 2 Of The Immortality Of The Soul

Chapter 3 Of The Separate State Of The Soul Until The Resurrection, And Its Employment In That State

Chapter 4 Of The Resurrection Of The Body

Chapter 5 Of The Second Coming Of Christ, And His Personal Appearance

Chapter of Of The Conflagration Of The Universe

Chapter 7 Of The New Heavens And Earth, And The Inhabitants Of Them.

Chapter 8 Of The Millennium Or Personal Reign Of Christ With The Saints On The New Earth A Thousand Years

Chapter 9 Of The Last And General Judgment

Chapter 10 Of The Final State Of The Wicked In Hell

Chapter 11 Of The Final State Of The Saints In Heaven