

CHAPTER 6

In this chapter,

I. The apostle proceeds in the exhortation to relative duties which he began in the former, particularly he insists on the duties of children and parents, and of servants and masters (v. 1-9).

II. He exhorts and directs Christians how to behave themselves in the spiritual warfare with the enemies of their souls; and to the exercise of several Christian graces, which he proposes to them as so many pieces of spiritual armour, to preserve and defend them in the conflict (v. 10-18).

III. We have here the conclusion of the epistle, in which he takes his leave of them, recommending himself to the prayers of the believing Ephesians, and praying for them (v. 19-24).

◀ EPHESIANS 6:1-9

DUTIES OF CHILDREN TO PARENTS

Here we have further directions concerning relative duties, in which the apostle is very particular.

I. The duty of children to their parents. *Come, you children, hearken to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* The great duty of children is to obey their parents (v. 1), parents being the instruments of their being, God and nature having given them an authority to command, in subserviency to God; and, if children will be obedient to their pious parents, they will be in a fair way to be pious as they are. That obedience which God demands from their children, in their behalf, includes an inward reverence, as well as the outward expressions and acts. Obey in the Lord. Some take this as a limitation, and understand it thus: “as far as is consistent with your duty to God.” We must not disobey our heavenly Father in obedience to earthly parents; for our obligation to God is prior and superior to all others. I take it rather as a reason: “Children, obey your parents; for the Lord has commanded it: obey them therefore for the Lord's sake, and with an eye to

him.” Or it may be a particular specification of the general duty: “Obey your parents, especially in those things which relate to the Lord. Your parents teach you good manners, and therein you must obey them. They teach you what is for your health, and in this you must obey them: but the chief things in which you are to do it are the things pertaining to the Lord.” Religious parents charge their children to keep the ways of the Lord, ^{<189>}Genesis 18:19. They command them to be found in the way of their duty towards God, and to take heed of those sins most incident to their age; in these things especially they must see that they be obedient. There is a general reason given: *For this is right*, there is a natural equity in it, God has enjoined it, and it highly becomes Christians. It is the order of nature that parents command and children obey. Though this may seem a hard saying, yet it is duty, and it must be done by such as would please God and approve themselves to him. For the proof of this the apostle quotes the law of the fifth commandment, which Christ was so far from designing to abrogate and repeal that he came to confirm it, as appears by his vindicating it, ^{<190>}Matthew 15:4, etc. *Honour thy father and mother* (v. 2), which honour implies reverence, obedience, and relief and maintenance, if these be needed. The apostle adds, *which is the first commandment with promise*. Some little difficulty arises from this, which we should not overlook, because some who plead for the lawfulness of images bring this as a proof that we are not bound by *the second commandment*. But there is no manner of force in the argument. The second commandment has not a particular promise; but only a general declaration or assertion, which relates to the whole law of God's keeping mercy for thousands. And then by this is not meant the first commandment of the decalogue that has a promise, for there is no other after it that has, and therefore it would be improper to say it is the first; but the meaning may be this: “This is a prime or chief commandment, and it has a promise; it is the first commandment in the second table, and it has a promise.” The promise is, *That it may be well with thee*, etc., v. 3. Observe, Whereas the promise in the commandment has reference to the land of Canaan, the apostle hereby shows that this and other promises which we have in the Old Testament relating to the land of Canaan are to be understood more generally. That you may not think that the Jews only, to whom God gave the land of Canaan, were bound by the fifth commandment, he here gives it a further sense, *That it may be well with thee*, etc. Outward prosperity and long life are blessings promised to those who keep this commandment. This is the way to have it well with us, and obedient children are often rewarded with

outward prosperity. Not indeed that it is always so; there are instances of such children who meet with much affliction in this life: but *ordinarily* obedience is thus rewarded, and, where it is not, it is made up with something better. Observe,

1. The gospel has its temporal promises, as well as spiritual ones.
2. Although the authority of God be sufficient to engage us in our duty, yet we are allowed to have respect to the promised reward: and,
3. Though it contains some temporal advantage, even this may be considered as a motive and encouragement to our obedience.

II. The duty of parents: *And you fathers*, v. 4. Or, you parents,

1. “*Do not provoke your children to wrath.* Though God has given you power, you must not abuse that power, remembering that your children are, in a particular manner, pieces of yourselves, and therefore ought to be governed with great tenderness and love. Be not impatient with them, use no unreasonable severities and lay no rigid injunctions upon them. When you caution them, when you counsel them, when you reprove them, do it in such a manner as not to *provoke them to wrath*. In all such cases deal prudently and wisely with them, endeavouring to convince their judgments and to work upon their reason.”

2. “*Bring them up well, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,* in the discipline of proper and of compassionate correction, and in the knowledge of that duty which God requires of them and by which they may become better acquainted with him. Give them a good education.” It is the great duty of parents to be careful in the education of their children: “Not only bring them up, as the brutes do, taking care to provide for them; but bring them up in nurture and admonition, in such a manner as is suitable to their reasonable natures. Nay, not only bring them up as men, in nurture and admonition, but as Christians, in the admonition of the Lord. Let them have a religious education. Instruct them to fear sinning; and inform them of, and excite them to, the whole of their duty towards God.”

III. The duty of servants. This also is summed up in one word, which is, *obedience*. He is largest on this article, as knowing there was the greatest need of it. These servants were generally slaves. Civil servitude is not inconsistent with Christian liberty. Those may be the Lord's freemen who

are slaves to men. “*Your masters according to the flesh* (v. 5), that is, who have the command of your bodies, but not of your souls and consciences: God alone has dominion over these.” Now, with respect to servants, he exhorts,

1. That they obey *with fear and trembling*. They are to reverence those who are over them, fearing to displease them, and trembling lest they should justly incur their anger and indignation.
2. That they be sincere in their obedience: *In singleness of heart*; not pretending obedience when they design disobedience, but serving them with faithfulness.
3. They should have an eye to Jesus Christ in all the service that they perform to their masters (v. 5-7), *doing service as to the Lord, and not to men*; that is, not to men only or principally. When servants, in the discharge of the duty of their places, have an eye to Christ, this puts an honour upon their obedience, and an acceptableness into it. Service done to their earthly masters, with an eye to him, becomes acceptable service to him also. To have an eye to Christ is to remember that he sees them and is ever present with them, and that his authority obliges them to a faithful and conscientious discharge of the duties of their station.
4. They must not serve their masters *with eye-service* (v. 6) — that is, only when their master's eye is upon them; but they must be as conscientious in the discharge of their duty, when they are absent and out of the way, because then their Master in heaven beholds them: and therefore they must not act as *men-pleasers* — as though they had no regard to the pleasing of God, and approving themselves to him, if they can impose upon their masters. Observe, A steady regard to the Lord Jesus Christ will make men faithful and sincere in every station of life.
5. What they do they must do cheerfully: *Doing the will of God from the heart*, serving their masters as God wills they should, not grudgingly, nor by constraint, but from a principle of love to them and their concerns. This is *doing it with good-will* (v. 7), which will make their service easy to themselves, pleasing to their masters, and acceptable to the Lord Christ. There should be *good-will* to their masters, good-will to the families they are in; and especially a readiness to do their duty to God. Observe, Service, performed with conscience, and from a regard to God, though it

be to unrighteous masters, will be accounted by Christ as service done to himself.

6. Let faithful servants trust God for their wages, while they do their duty in his fear: *Knowing that whatsoever good thing* (v. 8), how poor and mean soever it may be, considered in itself, — *the same shall he receive of the Lord*, that is, by a metonymy, the reward of the same. Though his master on earth should neglect or abuse him, instead of rewarding him, he shall certainly be rewarded by the Lord Christ, *whether he be bond or free*, whether he be a poor bond-servant or a freeman or master. Christ regards not these differences of men at present; nor will he in the great and final judgment. You think, “A prince, or a magistrate, or a minister, that does his duty here, will be sure to receive his reward in heaven: but what capacity am I, a poor servant, in, of recommending myself to the favour of God.” Why, God will as certainly reward thee for the meanest drudgery that is done from a sense of duty and with an eye to himself. And what can be said more proper either to engage or to encourage servants to their duty?

IV. The duty of masters: “*And you masters, do the same things unto them* (v. 9); that is, act after the same manner. Be just to them, as you expect they should be to you: show the like good-will and concern for them, and be careful herein to approve yourselves to God.” Observe, Masters are under as strict obligations to discharge their duty to their servants as servants are to be obedient and dutiful to them. “*Forbearing threatening; anientes* — *moderating* threatening, and remitting the evils with which you threaten them. Remember that your servants are made of the same mould with yourselves, and therefore be not tyrannical and imperious over them, *knowing that your Master also is in heaven:*” some copies read, both *your* and *their* Master. “You have a Master to obey who makes this your duty; and you and they are but fellow-servants in respect of Christ. You will be as punishable by him, for the neglect of your duty, or for acting contrary to it, as any others of meaner condition in the world. You are therefore to show favour to others, as ever you expect to find favour with him; and you will never be a match for him, though you may be too hard for your servants.” *Neither is there respect of persons with him;* a rich, a wealthy, and a dignified master, if he be unjust, imperious, and abusive, is not a jot the nearer being accepted of God for his riches, wealth, and honour. He will call masters and servants to an impartial account for their conduct one to another, and will neither spare the former

because they are more advanced nor be severe towards the latter because they are inferior and mean in the world. If both masters and servants would consider their relation and obligation to God and the account they must shortly give to him, they would be more careful of their duty to each other. Thus the apostle concludes his exhortation to relative duties.

EPHESIANS 6:10-18

THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Here is a general exhortation to constancy in our Christian course, and to encourage in our Christian warfare. Is not our life a warfare? It is so; for we struggle with the common calamities of human life. Is not our religion much more a warfare? It is so; for we struggle with the opposition of the powers of darkness, and with many enemies who would keep us from God and heaven. We have enemies to fight against, a captain to fight for, a banner to fight under, and certain rules of war by which we are to govern ourselves. “*Finally, my brethren* (v. 10), it yet remains that you apply yourselves to your work and duty as Christian soldiers.” Now it is requisite that a soldier be both stout-hearted and well armed. If Christians be soldiers of Jesus Christ,

I. They must see that they be stout-hearted. This is prescribed here: *Be strong in the Lord*, etc. Those who have so many battles to fight, and who, in their way to heaven, must dispute every pass, with dint of sword, have need of a great deal of courage. *Be strong therefore*, strong for service, strong for suffering, strong for fighting. Let a soldier be ever so well armed without, if he have not within a good heart, his armour will stand him in little stead. Note, spiritual strength and courage are very necessary for our spiritual warfare. Be strong in the Lord, either in his cause and for his sake or rather in his strength. We have no sufficient strength of our own. Our natural courage is as perfect cowardice, and our natural strength as perfect weakness; but all our sufficiency is of God. In his strength we must go forth and go on. By the actings of faith, we must fetch in grace and help from heaven to enable us to do that which of ourselves we cannot do, in our Christian work and warfare. We should stir up ourselves to resist temptations in a reliance upon God's all-sufficiency and the omnipotence of his might.

II. They must be well armed: “*Put on the whole armour of God* (v. 11), make use of all the proper defensives and weapons for repelling the temptations and stratagems of Satan — get and exercise all the Christian graces, the whole armour, that no part be naked and exposed to the enemy.” Observe, Those who would approve themselves to have true grace must aim at all grace, the whole armour. It is called the armour of God, because he both prepares and bestows it. We have no armour of our own that will be armour of proof in a trying time. Nothing will stand us in stead but the armour of God. This armour is prepared for us, but we must put it on; that is, we must pray for grace, we must use the grace given us, and draw it out into act and exercise as there is occasion. The reason assigned why the Christian should be completely armed is *that he may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil* — that he may be able to hold out, and to overcome, notwithstanding all the devil's assaults, both of force and fraud, all the deceits he puts upon us, all the snares he lays for us, and all his machinations against us. This the apostle enlarges upon here, and shows,

1. What our danger is, and what need we have to put on this whole armour, considering what sort of enemies we have to deal with — the devil and all the powers of darkness: *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood*, etc., v. 12. The combat for which we are to be prepared is not against ordinary human enemies, not barely against men compounded of *flesh and blood*, nor against our own corrupt natures singly considered, but against the several ranks of devils, who have a government which they exercise in this world.

(1.) We have to do with a subtle enemy, an enemy who uses wiles and stratagems, as v. 11. He has a thousand ways of beguiling unstable souls: hence he is called a serpent for subtlety, an old serpent, experienced in the art and trade of tempting.

(2.) He is a powerful enemy: *Principalities*, and *powers*, and *rulers*. They are numerous, they are vigorous; and rule in those heathen nations which are yet in darkness. The dark parts of the world are the seat of Satan's empire. Yea, they are usurping princes over all men who are yet in a state of sin and ignorance. Satan's is a kingdom of darkness; whereas Christ's is a kingdom of light.

(3.) They are spiritual enemies: *Spiritual wickedness in high places*, or wicked spirits, as some translate it. The devil is a spirit, a wicked spirit; and our danger is the greater from our enemies because they are unseen, and assault us ere we are aware of them. The devils are wicked spirits, and they chiefly annoy the saints with, and provoke them to, spiritual wickednesses, pride, envy, malice, etc. These enemies are said to be *in high places*, or in heavenly places, so the word is, taking heaven (as one says) for the whole *expansum*, or spreading out of the air between the earth and the stars, the air being the place from which the devils assault us. Or the meaning may be, “*We wrestle about heavenly places or heavenly things;*” so some of the ancients interpret it. Our enemies strive to prevent our ascent to heaven, to deprive us of heavenly blessings and to obstruct our communion with heaven. They assault us in the things that belong to our souls, and labour to deface the heavenly image in our hearts; and therefore we have need to be upon our guard against them. We have need of faith in our Christian warfare, because we have spiritual enemies to grapple with, as well as of faith in our Christian work, because we have spiritual strength to fetch in. Thus you see your danger.

2. What our duty is: to take and put on the whole armour of God, and then to stand our ground, and withstand our enemies.

(1.) We must *withstand*, v. 13. We must not yield to the devil's allurements and assaults, but oppose them. Satan is said *to stand up against us*, ~~1~~1 Chronicles 21:1. If he stand up against us, we must stand against him; set up, and keep up, an interest in opposition to the devil. Satan is the wicked one, and his kingdom is the kingdom of sin: to stand against Satan is to strive against sin. *That you may be able to withstand in the evil day*, in the day of temptation, or of any sore affliction.

(2.) We must stand our ground: *And, having done all, to stand*. We must resolve, by God's grace, not to yield to Satan. Resist him, and he will flee. If we distrust our cause, or our leader, or our armour, we give him advantage. Our present business is to withstand the assaults of the devil, and to stand it out; and then, having done all that is incumbent on the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, our warfare will be accomplished, and we shall be finally victorious.

(3.) We must stand armed; and this is here most enlarged upon. Here is a Christian in complete armour: and the armour is divine: *Armour of God, armour of light*, ~~1~~Romans 13:12. *Armour of righteousness*, ~~2~~

Corinthians 6:7. The apostle specifies the particulars of this armour, both offensive and defensive. The military girdle or belt, the breast-plate, the greaves (or soldier's shoes), the shield, the helmet, and the sword. It is observable that, among them all, there is none for the back; if we turn our back upon the enemy, we lie exposed.

[1.] Truth or sincerity is our girdle, v. 14. It was prophesied of Christ (^{231B}Isaiah 11:5) that *righteousness should be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins*. That which Christ was girded with all Christians must be girded with. God desires truth, that is, sincerity, in the inward parts. This is the strength of our loins; and it girds on all other pieces of our armour, and therefore is first mentioned. I know no religion without sincerity. Some understand it of the doctrine of the truths of the gospel: they should cleave to us as the girdle does to the loins, ^{243B}Jeremiah 13:11. This will restrain from libertinism and licentiousness, as a girdle restrains and keeps in the body. This is the Christian soldier's belt: ungirded with this, he is unblest.

[2.] Righteousness must be our breast-plate. The breast-plate secures the vitals, shelters the heart. The righteousness of Christ imputed to us is our breast-plate against the arrows of divine wrath. The righteousness of Christ implanted in us is our breast-plate to fortify the heart against the attacks which Satan makes against us. The apostle explains this in ^{258B}1 Thessalonians 5:8, *Putting on the breast-plate of faith and love*. Faith and love include all Christian graces; for by faith we are united to Christ and by love to our brethren. These will infer a diligent observance of our duty to God, and a righteous deportment towards men, in all the offices of justice, truth, and charity.

[3.] Resolution must be as the greaves to our legs: *And their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*, v. 15. Shoes, or greaves of brass, or the like, were formerly part of the military armour (^{276B}1 Samuel 17:6): the use of them was to defend the feet against the gall-traps, and sharp sticks, which were wont to be laid privily in the way, to obstruct the marching of the enemy, those who fell upon them being unfit to march. *The preparation of the gospel of peace* signifies a prepared and resolved frame of heart, to adhere to the gospel and abide by it, which will enable us to walk with a steady pace in the way of religion, notwithstanding the difficulties and dangers that may be in it. It is styled *the gospel of peace* because it brings all sorts of peace, peace with God, with ourselves, and

with one another. It may also be meant of that which prepares for the entertainment of the gospel, namely, repentance. With this our feet must be shod: for by living a life of repentance we are armed against temptations to sin, and the designs of our great enemy. Dr. Whitby thinks this may be the sense of the words: "That you may be ready for the combat, be shod with the gospel of peace, endeavour after that peaceable and quiet mind which the gospel calls for. Be not easily provoked, nor prone to quarrel: but show all gentleness and all long-suffering to all men, and this will certainly preserve you from many great temptations and persecutions, as did those shoes of brass the soldiers from those galltraps," etc.

[4.] Faith must be our shield: *Above all, or chiefly, taking the shield of faith*, v. 16. This is more necessary than any of them. Faith is all in all to us in an hour of temptation. The breast-plate secures the vitals; but with the shield we turn every way. *This is the victory over the world, even our faith*. We are to be fully persuaded of the truth of all God's promises and threatenings, such a faith being of great use against temptations. Consider faith as it is *the evidence of things not seen and the substance of things hoped for*, and it will appear to be of admirable use for this purpose. Faith, as receiving Christ and the benefits of redemption, so deriving grace from him, is like a shield, a sort of universal defence. Our enemy the devil is here called *the wicked one*. He is wicked himself, and he endeavours to make us wicked. His temptations are called *darts*, because of their swift and undiscerned flight, and the deep wounds that they give to the soul; *fiery darts*, by way of allusion to the poisonous darts which were wont to inflame the parts which were wounded with them, and therefore were so called, as the serpents with poisonous stings are called fiery serpents. Violent temptations, by which the soul is set on fire of hell, are the darts which Satan shoots at us. Faith is the shield with which we must quench these fiery darts, wherein we should receive them, and so render them ineffectual, that they may not hit us, or at least that they may not hurt us. Observe, Faith, acted upon the word of God and applying that, acted upon the grace of Christ and improving that, quenches the darts of temptation.

[5.] Salvation must be our helmet (v. 17); that is, *hope*, which has salvation for its object; so ¹ Thessalonians 5:8. The helmet secures the head. A good hope of salvation, well founded and well built, will both purify the soul and keep it from being defiled by Satan, and it will comfort the soul and keep it from being troubled and tormented by Satan. He

would tempt us to despair; but good hope keeps us trusting in God, and rejoicing in him.

[6.] The word of God is the sword of the Spirit. The sword is a very necessary and useful part of a soldier's furniture. The word of God is very necessary, and of great use to the Christian, in order to his maintaining the spiritual warfare and succeeding in it. It is called *the sword of the Spirit*, because it is of the Spirit's inditing and he renders it efficacious and powerful, and *sharper than a two-edged sword*. Like Goliath's sword, none like that; with this we assault the assailants. Scripture-arguments are the most powerful arguments to repel temptation with. Christ himself resisted Satan's temptations with, *It is written*, ^{<406>}Matthew 4:4, 6, 7, 10. This, being hid in the heart, will preserve from sin (^{<404>}Psalm 119:11), and will mortify and kill those lusts and corruptions that are latent there.

[7.] Prayer must buckle on all the other parts of our Christian armour, v. 18. We must join prayer with all these graces, for our defence against these spiritual enemies, imploring help and assistance of God, as the case requires: and we must pray always. Not as though we were to do nothing else but pray, for there are other duties of religion and of our respective stations in the world that are to be done in their place and season; but we should keep up constant times of prayer, and be constant to them. We must pray upon all occasions, and as often as our own and others' necessities call us to it. We must always keep up a disposition to prayer, and should intermix ejaculatory prayers with other duties, and with common business. Though set and solemn prayer may sometimes be unseasonable (as when other duties are to be done), yet pious ejaculations *can* never be so. We must pray *with all prayer and supplication*, with all kinds of prayer: public, private, and secret, social and solitary, solemn and sudden; with all the parts of prayer: confession of sin, petition for mercy, and thanksgivings for favours received. We must pray *in the Spirit*; our spirits must be employed in the duty and we must do it by the grace of God's good Spirit. We must *watch thereunto*, endeavouring to keep our hearts in a praying frame, and taking all occasions, and improving all opportunities, for the duty: we must watch to all the motions of our own hearts towards the duty. When God says, *Seek my face*, our hearts must comply, ^{<427>}Psalm 27:8. This we must do *with all perseverance*. We must abide by the duty of prayer, whatever change there may be in our outward circumstances; and we must continue in it as long as we live in the world. We must persevere in a particular prayer; not cutting it short, when our

hearts are disposed to enlarge, and there is time for it, and our occasions call for it. We must likewise persevere in particular requests, notwithstanding some present discouragements and repulses. And we must pray *with supplication*, not for ourselves only, but *for all saints*; for we are members one of another. Observe, None are so much saints, and in so good a condition in this world, but they need our prayers, and they ought to have them. The apostle passes hence to the conclusion of the epistle.

EPHESIANS 6:19-24

THE CONCLUSION

Here,

I. He desires their prayers for him, v. 19. Having mentioned *supplication for all saints*, he puts himself into the number. We must pray for all saints, and particularly for God's faithful ministers. *Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified.* Observe what it is he would have them pray for in his behalf: "*That utterance may be given unto me; that I may be enlarged from my present restraints, and so have liberty to propagate the faith of Christ; that I may have ability to express myself in a suitable and becoming manner; and that I may open my mouth boldly, that is, that I may deliver the whole counsel of God, without any base fear, shame, or partiality.*" *To make known the mystery of the gospel;* some understand it of that part of the gospel which concerns the calling of the Gentiles, which had hitherto, as a mystery, been concealed. But the whole gospel was a mystery, till made known by divine revelation; and it is the work of Christ's ministers to publish it. Observe, Paul had a great command of language; they called him Mercury, because he was the chief speaker (~~4142~~ Acts 14:12), and yet he would have his friends ask of God the gift of utterance for him. He was a man of great courage, and often signalized himself for it; yet he would have them pray that God would give him boldness. He knew as well what to say as any man; yet he desires them to pray for him, that he may *speak as he ought to speak*. The argument with which he enforces his request is that for the sake of the gospel he was *an ambassador in bonds*, v. 20. He was persecuted and imprisoned for preaching the gospel; though, notwithstanding, he

continued in the embassy committed to him by Christ, and persisted in preaching it. Observe,

1. It is no new thing for Christ's ministers to be in bonds.
2. It is a hard thing for them to speak boldly when that is their case.
3. The best and most eminent ministers have need of, and may receive advantage by, the prayers of good Christians; and therefore should earnestly desire them. Having thus desired their prayers,

II. He recommends Tychicus unto them, v. 21, 22. He sent him with this epistle, that he might acquaint them with what other churches were informed of, namely, how he did, and what he did; how he was used by the Romans in his bonds, and how he behaved himself in his present circumstances. It is desirable to good ministers both that their Christian friends should know their state and that they should be acquainted with the condition of their friends; for by this means they may the better help each other in their prayers. — *And that he might comfort their hearts*, by giving such an account of his sufferings, of the cause of them, and of the temper of his mind and his behaviour under them, as might prevent their fainting at his tribulations and even minister matter of joy and thanksgiving unto them. He tells them that Tychicus was *a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord*. He was a sincere Christian, and so a brother in Christ: he was a faithful minister in the work of Christ, and he was very dear to Paul, which makes Paul's love to these Christian Ephesians the more observable, in that he should now part with so good and dear a friend for their sakes, when his company and conversation must have been peculiarly delightful and serviceable to himself. But the faithful servants of Jesus Christ are wont to prefer the public good to their own private or personal interests.

III. He concludes with his good wishes and prayers for them, and not for them only, but for all the brethren, v. 23, 24. His usual benediction was, *Grace and peace*; here it is, *Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith*. By peace we are to understand all manner of peace — peace with God, peace with conscience, peace among themselves: and all outward prosperity is included in the word; as if he had said, “I wish the continuance and increase of all happiness to you.” *And love with faith*. This in part explains what he means in the following verse by grace; not only grace in the fountain, or the love and favour of God, but grace in the

streams, the grace of the Spirit flowing from that divine principle, faith and love including all the rest. It is the continuance and increase of these that he desires for them, in whom they were already begun. It follows, *from God the Father*, etc. All Grace and blessings are derived to the saints from God, through the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord. The closing benediction is more extensive than the former; for in this he prays for all true believers at Ephesus, and every where else. It is the undoubted character of all the saints that they love our Lord Jesus Christ. Our love to Christ is not acceptable, unless it be in sincerity: indeed there is no such thing as love to Christ, whatever men may pretend, where there is not sincerity. The words may be read, *Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption*, who continue constant in their love to him, so as not to be corrupted out of it by any baits or seductions whatsoever, and whose love to him is uncorrupted by any opposite lust, or the love of any thing displeasing to him. Grace, that is, the favour of God, and all good (spiritual and temporal), that is, the product of it, are and shall be with all those who thus love our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is, or ought to be, the desire and prayer of every lover of Christ that it may be so with all his fellow-christians. *Amen*, so be it.