

Aspiration.] WHAT reason have we to be thankful, that in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed ; that the way of justification and sanctification is opened ; and that sinners are taught to come to Jesus Christ, and to trust in him, through his righteousness and atonement. May this be realized in us ; that we may say, in the language of humble faith, In the Lord have we righteousness and strength. And may we be helped to guard against those vices for which the heathen nations are here branded, and cultivate the opposite virtues, those of justice and temperance, benevolence and contentment, peace and charity, sincerity and humility. If offences arise, may we never be implacable ; but be ready to hearkeit to terms of reconciliation. Preserve us from giving countenance to sinners in their evil ways, and may all our conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.

CHAP. II.

1—16 *The apostle shows, that the Jews were as incapable of being justified by the law of Moses, as the Gentiles were by the law of nature.* 17—29 *He gives a particular account of the sins of the Jews, which refuted all their vain confidence in their external privileges, as if they could recommend them to the divine favour.*

THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest : for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself ; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God ?

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness

and forbearance and longsuffering ; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ?

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God ;

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds :

7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life :

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath,

9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile ;

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile :

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law : and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law ;

13 (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves :

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CHAP. II. Ver. 1—14. *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, &c.*] The Jews disdained and hated the Gentiles, as profane, abominable, and utterly undeserving of God's favour; while they thought themselves a holy people, and justly entitled to all the privileges they enjoyed. The apostle begins here with an inference deduced from what had been said in the foregoing chapter, that those persons, whoever they may be, are inexcusable, who do the things for which they condemn others. "Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest," or pretendest to pass sentence upon others: "for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest," in many instances, "doest the same things." Dr. Whitby has proved, by many quotations from Josephus, that the Jews of that age were guilty of many of those crimes with which the Gentiles are charged in the preceding chapter. "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that commit such things," whatever censures they may pass upon others. "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and still doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" The wickedness of the Jews was enormous at this time; and, idolatry excepted, they copied the worst crimes of the Gentiles, whom they despised; while their superior advantages rendered their guilt more aggravated. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering?" Dost thou, who art a Jew, despise the riches of God's goodness and kindness to thee, whom he has so peculiarly favoured?—God had distinguished the seed of Abraham both by temporal and spiritual favours, though they had always proved rebellious; he still exercised forbearance and longsuffering towards them, and had at length sent the promised Mes-

siah among them; and he ordered the first proposals of the gospel to be made to them. But they, alas! despised all this; "not knowing," says the apostle, "that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." It most certainly ought to operate in this way, and to have this effect. But if thou continuest to rebel, "know, that by this hardness and impenitence of heart, thou art treasuring up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." This righteous judgment is now under a veil, and disregarded, because unseen; but it will be hereafter set forth to view in all its terror, when "God shall render to every man according to his work," how unequal soever the present dispensations of his providence may seem. He will, of his own rich grace and mercy, render the free reward of eternal life to all his servants, who seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, in the way he has appointed. These happy souls are distinguished by "a patient continuance in well doing." This is the character which they bear. But, on the other hand, to them "who are contentious," who perversely oppose the truth, and are obstinately disobedient to it, rejecting the way of salvation which God has revealed, he will render indignation and wrath, with all that can be conceived to be meant by those awful terms; tribulation and anguish shall fall upon every soul of man that continues to do evil; to the Jew first, whose crimes are more aggravated, and also to the Gentile. But glory, honour, and peace shall be to every one that worketh good, from the right principles of faith and love; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.—It is evident, the apostle did not mean, that either Jew or Gentile could be saved by his own works; to suppose this, would be to suppose that he here advances a principle subversive of his own grand argument, through the whole of the epistle. His design is, to point out the characters of the saved; and to show, that obeying the truth, or believing in Jesus Christ, is necessary to salvation; and that the sincerity of faith is evidenced by well-doing. The apostle farther asserts, "that there is no respect of persons with