

here understand the Apostle to speak of such members of the church of Corinth, as had not visibly backslidden, as they whom he elsewhere speaks doubtfully of. Again in the 14th and 15th verses, he speaks of a confidence which he had, that they should be his rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. In all reason we must conclude, there was a visibility of grace, carrying with it an apparent probability in the eyes of the Apostle, which was the ground of this his confidence. Such an apparent probability, and his confidence as built upon it, are both expressed in chap. iii. 3, 4, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, ministered by us; written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart; and such trust have we through Christ to God-ward." And in verse 18, the Apostle speaks of them, with himself and other Christians, as all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and being changed into the same image, from glory to glory.—And in the Epistle to the churches of Galatia, chap. iv. 26, the Apostle speaks of visible Christians, as visibly belonging to heaven, the Jerusalem which is above. And verses 28, 29, represents them to be the children of the promise, as Isaac was; and born after the Spirit. In the 6th verse of the same chapter, he says to the Christian Galatians, *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* And in chap. vi. 1, he speaks of those of them that had not fallen into scandal, as spiritual persons.—In his Epistle to that great church of Ephesus, at the beginning, he blesses God on behalf of the members of that church, as being, together with himself and all the faithful in Christ Jesus, "Chosen in him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blame before him in love, being predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein God had made them accepted in the beloved; in whom they had redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." In chap. i. 13, 14, he thus writes to them, "In whom ye also trusted.—In whom, after ye believed, ye were seated with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." And in chap. ii. at the beginning; "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." With much more, showing that they were, in a charitable esteem, regenerated persons, and heirs of salvation.—So in the Epistle to the members of the church of Philippi, the Apostle saluting them in the beginning of it, tells them, that he "thanks God upon every remembrance of them, for their fellowship in the gospel; being confident of this very thing, that he which had begun a good work in them, would perform it until the day of Christ: Even (says he) as it is meet for me to think this of you all." If it was meet for him to think this of them, and to be confident of it, he had at least some appearing rational probability to found his judgment and confidence upon; for surely it is not meet for reasonable creatures to think at random, and be confident without reason. In verses 25, 26, he speaks of his "confidence that he should come to them for their furtherance and joy of faith, that their rejoicing might be more abundant in Christ Jesus." Which words certainly suppose that they were persons who had already received Christ, and comfort in him; had already obtained faith and joy in Christ, and only needed to have it increased.—In the Epistle to the members of the church of Colosse, the Apostle saluting them in the beginning of the Epistle, "gives thanks for their faith in Christ Jesus, and love to all saints, and the hope laid up for them in heaven;" and speaks of "the gospel's bringing forth fruit in them, since the day they knew the grace of God in truth;" i. e. since the day of their saving conversion. In chap. i. 8, he speaks of "their love in the Spirit." Verses 12, 13,

14, he speaks of them as "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; as being delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; as having redemption through Christ's blood, and the forgiveness of sins." In chap. iii. at the beginning, he speaks of them as "risen with Christ; as being dead [i. e. to the law, to sin, and the world]; as having their life hid with Christ in God;" and being such as "when Christ their life should appear, should appear with him in glory." In verse 7, he speaks of them as "having once walked and lived in lusts, but having now put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him."—In the First Epistle to the members of the church of Thessalonica, in words annexed to his salutation, chap. i. he declares what kind of visibility there was of their election of God, in the appearance there had been of true and saving conversion, and of their consequent holy life, verses 3—7. And in the beginning of the Second Epistle, he speaks of their faith and love greatly increasing; and in verse 7, expresses his confidence of meeting them in eternal rest, when the Lord Jesus Christ should be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. And in chap. ii. 13, he gives thanks to God, that from the beginning he had chosen them to salvation.—In the Epistle to the Christian Hebrews, though the Apostle speaks of some that once belonged to their churches, but had apostatized and proved themselves hypocrites; yet concerning the rest that remained in good standing, he says, chap. vi. 9, *I am persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.* (Where we may again note, his being thus persuaded evidently implies a positive judgment.) And in chap. xii. 22, &c. he speaks of them as visibly belonging to the glorious society of heaven. And in chap. xiii. 5, 6, he speaks of them as those who may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper.*—The Apostle James, writing to the Christians of the twelve tribes which were scattered abroad, speaks of them as regenerated persons (meaning, as I observed before, those which were in good standing), chap. i. 18, "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."—The Apostle Peter writing to the Jewish Christians, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (large countries, and therefore they must in the whole be supposed to be a great multitude of people), to all these the Apostle in the inscription or direction of his First Epistle, gives the title of elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. And in the verses next following, speaks of them as regenerated, "or begotten again to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible," &c. And as "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." And says to them in verses 8, 9, "Whom (namely Christ) having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." And in verse 18, to the end, the Apostle speaks of them as "redeemed from their vain conversation, by the precious blood of Christ.—And as having purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit—Being born again of incorruptible seed," &c. And in the former part of chap. ii. he speaks of them as "living stones, coming to Christ, and on him built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.—And as those that believe, to whom Christ is precious.—As a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, called out of darkness into marvellous light." The church at Babylon, occasionally mentioned in chap. v. 13, is said to be elected together with them. And in his Second Epistle (which appears