his thankfulneſs to God for the ſucceſs attending his miniſtry, and ſpeaks of the Corinthians as his creden­tials, written by the finger of God, (chap. ii. iii. 1— 6.)

3. He treats of the office committed to him of preaching the redemption; and highly prefers it to preaching the law: to which probably his adverſaries had made great pretences. They had ridiculed his ſufferings; which he ſhows to be no diſgrace to the goſpel or its miniſters; and here he gives a ſhort abſtract of the doctrine he preaches, (chap. iii. 6. v. to the end).

He expatiates with great copiouſneſs on the temper with which, in the midſt of afflictions and perſecuticns, he and his brethren executed their important embaſſy; and with great affection, and tenderneſs he exhorts them to avoid the pollution of idolatry, (chap. vi). He en­deavours to win their confidence, by telling them how much he rejoiced in their amendment and welfare, and how ſorry he had been for the diſtreſs which his neceſſafy reproofs had occaſioned, (chap. vii). He then ex­horts them to make liberal contributions for the Chriſtians in Judaea. He recommends to them the ex­ample of the Macedonians, and reminds them of the be­nevolence of the Lord Jeſus. He expreſſes his joy for the readineſs of Titus to aſſiſt in making the collection; and makes alſo honourable mention of other Chriſtian brethren, whom he had joined with Titus in the fame commiſſion, (chap. viii). He then, with admirable ad­dicts, urges a liberal contribution, and recommends them to the divine bleſſing, (chap. ix).

4. Next he obviates ſome reflections which had been thrown upon him for the mildneſs of his conduct, as if it had proceeded from fear. He aſſerts his apoſtolical power and authority, cautioning his opponents againſt urging him to give too ſenſible demonſtrations of it, (chap. x). He vindicates himſelf againſt the inſinuations of ſome of the Corinthians, particularly for having declined pecuniary ſupport from the church; an action which had been ungenerouſly turned to his diſadvan­tage. To ſhow his ſuperiority over thoſe deſigning men who had oppoſed his preaching, he enumerates his ſufferings; gives a detail of ſome extraordinary revela­tions which he had received; and vindicates himſelf from the charge of boaſting, by declaring that he had been forced to it by the deſire of ſupporting his apoſtolical character, (chap. xi. xii.) He cloſes the Epiſtle, by aſſuring them with great tenderneſs how much it would grieve him to demonſtrate his divine commiſſion by ſeverer methods.

The Galatians were deſcended from thoſe Gauls who had formerly invaded Greece, and afterwards ſettled in Lower Aſia. St Paul had preached the goſpel among them in the year 51, ſoon after the council held at Jeruſalem, (Acts xvi. 6). Aſia ſwarmed at that time with zealots for the law of Moſes, who wanted to impoſe it upon the Gentiles, (Acts xv. 1). Soon after St Paul had left the Galatians, theſe falſe teachers had got among them, and wanted them to be circumciſed, &c. This occaſioned the following Epiſtle, which Michaelis thinks was written in the ſame year, before St Paul left Theſſalonica. Dr Lardner dates it about the end of the year 52, or in the very beginning of 53, before St Paul ſet out to go to Jeruſalem by way of Epheſus.

The ſubject of this Epiſtle is much the ſame with that of the Epiſtle to the Romans; only this queſtion is more fully conſidered here, “Whether circumciſion, and an obſervance of the Levitical law, be neceſſary to the ſalvation of a Chriſtian convert?” It appears, theſe Judaizing Chriſtians, whoſe indirect views St Paul expoſes (Acts xv. 1. Gal. v. 3, 9.), at firſt only repreſented circumciſion as neceſſary to ſalvation; but af­terwards they inſiſted upon the Chriſtians receiving the Jewiſh feſtivals, (Gal. iv. 10).

As St Paul had founded the churches of Galatia, and inſtructed them in the Chriſtian religion, he does not ſet before them its principal doctrines, as he had done in the Epiſtle to the Romans; but referring them to what he had already taught (chap. i. 8, 9.), he pro­ceeds at once to the ſubject of the Epiſtle.

As it appears from ſeveral paſſages of this Epiſtle, particularly chap. i. 7, 8, 10. and chap. v. 11. that the Judaizing Chriſtians had endeavoured to perſuade the Galatians that Paul himſelf had changed his opi­nion, and now preached up the Levitical law; he denies that charge, and affirms that the doctrines which he had taught were true, for he had received them from God by immediate revelation. He relates his miraculous converſion; aſſerts his apoſtolical authority, which had been acknowledged by the diſciples of Jeſus; and, as a proof that he had never inculcated a compliance with the Moſaic law, he declares that he had oppoſed Pe­ter at Antioch for yielding to the prejudices of the Jews.

Having now vindicated his character from the ſuſpicion of ſickleneſs, and ſhown that his commiſſion was divine, he argues that the Galatians ought not to ſubmit to the law of Moſes: 1. Becauſe they had received the Holy Ghoſt and the gifts of miracles, not by the law, but by the goſpel, (chap. iii. 1—5).

2. Becauſethe promiſes which God made to Abraham were not reſtricted to his circumciſed deſcendants, but extended to all who are his children by faith, (chap. iii. 6—18). In anſwer to the objection, *To what then ſerveth the law?* he replies, That it was given becauſe of tranſgreſſion; that is, to preſerve them from idolatry till the Meſſiah himſelf ſhould come. 3. Becauſe all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, are made the children of God by faith, or by receiving the Chriſtian religion, and therefore do not ſtand in need of circumciſion, (ch. iii. 26—29.) From the 1ſt verſe of chapter iv. to the 11th, he ar­gues that the law was temporary, being only fitted for a ſtate of infancy; but that the world, having attained a ſtate of manhood under the Meſſiah, the law was of no farther uſe. In the remaining part of chap. iv. he reminds them of their former affection to him, and aſſures them that he was ſtill their ſincere friend. He exhorts them to ſtand faſt in the liberty with which Chriſt had made them free; for the ſons of Agar, that is, thoſe under the law given at Mount Sinai, are in bondage, and to be caſt out; the inheritance being deſigned for thole only who are the free-born ſons of God under the ſpiritual covenant of the goſpel.

The apoſtle next confutes the lalle report which had been ſpread abroad among the Galatians, that Paul himſelf preached up circumciſion. He had already in­directly refuted this calumny by the particular account which he gave of his life; but he now directly and open­ly contradicts it in the following manner: