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St. Paul's Heretic:  
Or, Several Characteristics of an Heretic.  
Collected from St. Paul's Epistle to Titus:  
Address'd to the Reverend Dr. Stebbing,  
And the Reverend Mr. Foster.

Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God.—Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.

We may therefore pay a due regard to the judgment of a Socrates, or a Plato, but Truth should always be reverenced by us, with the most hearty, and profound submission.

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St. Paul's Heretic:

Or, Several Characteristics of an Heretic.

Gentlemen,

Upon reading the controversy lately published between you, concerning the nature of heresy, I was determined to sit down and read St. Paul, and from him form a judgment of it, in the best manner I could; being persuaded that St. Paul bids fairer to set me right in the sense of his own writings, than any commentator whatsoever: at least, I thought I could with more satisfaction form my ideas from St. Paul, than from any other inferior authority. What light I could come at in thus endeavouring to understand what he meant by an heretic, I have discovered in the following method.
thod, which I humbly submit to your consideration.

My design is to consider what St. Paul in his epistle to Titus intends by an HERETIC; as mentioned by him Tit. iii. 10. And I think it denotes, that there were some persons in the world, which in the estimation of St. Paul deserved such a character, viz. that of an heretic, otherwise, his advice following these words, would appear to have been very impertinent.

Again, I take it for granted, that the apostle must intend something by this character, as applied by him to some particular persons; but this his intention, I apprehend, could not be understood even by Titus himself, either from this verse, or the next, unless he had more explicitly explain'd himself before in his letter; and indeed the very form of the diction here used, implies as much, "a man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that an heretic is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Which strongly refers to a character already explained, and marked out; otherwise, the description and advice appear to be very defective, and impertinent.
I shall therefore endeavour to find out the precise meaning of St. Paul about an heretic from the foregoing parts of this epistle of his to Titus, firmly believing that the occasion of such kind of discipline, which he here recommends Titus unto, must be well explain'd by him, before he would give such advice: as knowing it would no way agree with the prudence and caution of St. Paul that he should proceed, in so abrupt, and unintelligible a manner.

Having read over this epistle, I find that the grand design of it is, to detect and censure the conduct of some Jewish zealots; and to direct Titus what doctrines he should teach, and how he should behave, so as to frustrate the ill designs, and measures of these men, whom he at last brands with the infamous, but just character of heretic: from which we may perhaps learn, what are those particular marks, which unite in making up this black character.

The apostle tells Titus a that there were many in Crete who attempted all they could to corrupt the Christian converts from the simplicity of the gospel institution; teaching them to lay the greatest stress on exact and nice distinctions of

\[ \text{a Tit. i. 10, 11.} \]
meats; and drinks; a asserting, that holiness and purity absolutely depend on such observances: and this they did, under the guise and pretence of extraordinary knowledge; something like infallibility; b for they professed to know God, i. e. to be his only people, favour'd with a full and certain knowledge of his will; at the same time that both their temper, and conduct, uniformly gave the lie to this their profession; for by their works they shew'd that they had no such knowledge; being abominable, disobedient, and unto every good work, reprobate, i. e. stupid, or injudicious in it: which character the apostle makes to appear, by afterwards observing, that these very men taught, that the christian institution dissolved, and broke every civil and natural obligation, arising from the relation the christian stood in to others who were of different religious sentiments; and therefore it is, that the apostle directs Titus to speak those things which became sound doctrine, advising to every social and relative duty: c that he should exhort christian servants, or slaves d to be equally obedient, and faithful to heathen masters, as they would be to christian masters; that hereby the chri-

a Ver. 14, 15, 16. b Ver. 16. c Ch. ii. 1,—7. d Ch. ii. 9.
Christian doctrine might appear in its genuine light, as an equal, reasonable, and useful institution. On the same account, I apprehend it is, that he bids Titus put the Christian people in mind, that Christianity did not dissolve, or weaken that subject which the reason of things, and the just laws of society require to princes, and magistrates; but that it demanded of all its true disciples, a due regard to every civil obligation, by which the harmony, and good order of society is supported; so insomuch, as that they should not speak evil of, or revile any man; no, not an inferior, because he was of different sentiments from themselves; but on the contrary, that they should treat all men, with all meekness, and gentleness, as what was absolutely incumbent on every sincere professor of Christianity; and then he goes on to shew, that a contrary temper and conduct could only suit with such a state of ignorance, and vice, from which the Christian revelation had effectually delivered such of them, who were become sincere converts: to which evil dispositions, such as malice, envy, and hatred, many of them had been subject, (even himself also as a persecutor) before they embraced

a Chap. iii.  b Verse 2.  c Chap. iii. 3.
Christianity. He then adds, that the great, and evident design of Christianity, was, not only to recover mankind from such vices; but also to discover to them, that every external distinction is insignificant, and useless, and can no way recommend men to the divine acceptance: but on the contrary that their being made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, thro' the mercy of God, depended on their being careful to maintain good works; or as it is before express'd, on their being conducted by a gentle, and meek temper towards all men. He then adviseth them, to avoid and reject all foolish questions, i.e. such as belong not to the Christian scheme, but are absolutely repugnant to it; and such were all those of these zealots, which respected only the Jewish traditions, pedigrees, and ceremonies; the natural tendency of which, was to raise contentions and strifes, contrary to the known laws of natural religion, and therefore could not but be subversive of the designs of real and pure Christianity. Having thus pointed out these dangerous men in the church of Crete, and advised Titus how to guard against them, he proceeds to fix a stigma on such men,

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* Ver. 4, 5, 6, 7.  b Ver. 8.
under one single, but general appellation,  
A MAN THAT IS AN HERETIC; q. d.  
"a man, or any man in your church at  
"Crete, that deserves such a character,  
"which I have so largely described, and  
"given you rules to guard yourself, and  
"others against; admonish such a man:  
"but if after a second earnest applica-  
"tion to him, he yet retains this wicked,  
"this hurtful disposition, reject him as  
"one unfit for christian society; and you  
"may very safely do it, because such a  
"one is evidently an enemy to all that is  
"good, and cannot belong to God's fa-  
"mily in the relation of a child; for he  
"professedly, and allowedly unreins every  
"hurtful passion, and conducts himself on  
"the most destructive principles: thus he  
"sineth, as one that is born of God  
"cannot sin, and is condemned of him-  
"self." Nor can the apostle conclude  
his epistle but by keeping his eye steady  
on this heretic, to which character he  
had all along had a reference, for al-  
 tho' one might have expected, that he  
had clos'd his design of advising about  
these hurtful men; especially when he  
beginns, as it were, his postscript, which  
is only a relation of whom he would send  
to Crete, in order to give Titus leave and  
opportunity to come and pay him a visit  
B  
at
at Nicopolis, and a direction given Titus, whom he should bring along with him; just as if St. Paul could not pronounce his valediction, 'till he had again returned to his subject, he repeats the advice; and, let ours also learn to maintain good works. The conjunction copulative (and) can have no reference at all to the verses immediately preceding, or the subject of them, viz. directions to Titus about his journey; but as if these were only a parenthesis: in the mind of St. Paul, we shall find that the and had there a strong reference: q. d. "Titus if thou hast any respect for me, or would see me with pleasure, fail not to attempt to secure the grand end of this my letter to thee, viz. by exhorting such christians as are in any danger of being deluded by these heretics, that they learn to maintain good works, i. e. be constant in the exercise of an undistinguished beneficence towards others, on all needful occasions; being merciful, as their Father in heaven is merciful; and not suffering their good will to become limited, and con- fin'd to particular sentiments and parties; lest the righteous judge of men should esteem them to belong to the

— Chap. iii. 12, 13. b Verse 14.
"unfruitful or unprofitable: the favour of
"God be with you all. Amen."

Having thus briefly trac'd and explain'd
the design of St. Paul in this epistle, more
immediately as it respected the character
under consideration, I shall in the next
place more distinctly delineate, or rather
copy out the heretic from St. Paul's ori-
ginal,

First, By shewing what are his false;
and, secondly, what are his true and ge-
nuine characteristics.

And, first, for any one man to receive
different ideas, or form different sentiments
from another, upon any speculative princi-
ple, is no part of the description of St. Paul's heretic: nor indeed can it be, be-
cause whatever proposition is found, con-
cerning which men may receive different
ideas, or form different sentiments, that
proposition has nothing in itself that can
determine any one man faulty more than
another; insomuch, as it will admit of
such variety, among sincere and honest
enquirers after the true meaning of it;
for since men may differ upon a com-
mon ratio, i. e. as having different degrees
of strength, and clearness in their intelli-
gent faculties, and as having for the sub-
ject of enquiry, a proposition, which in its
own nature will admit of different appre-
B 2 hensions
hensions about it; it hence follows, that that difference is occasion'd by, and conse-
quently may be defended upon that com-
mon ratio. For instance, six men having
received six different ideas of the nature
of a proposition, if these six were careful
in forming their sentiments, they are e-
qually right; altho' none of them should
happen to find out the true nature of
the proposition. Or supposing that some
one of the six should happen to have
formed his sentiments so as to quadrat
exactly with the truth of the proposition,
yet since the proposition was capable of
different ideas, and every one of the six
formed the best sentiments they could about
it, the different and distinct ideas of the
erring five would be of equal value to
them; as his ideas could be to him who
happened right. Nor does such a pro-
position leave the least room for any one
of the six to condemn his differing com-
panion for that his difference, it being
the unavoidable consequence of his en-
quiry: but each individual has equal au-
thority to censure the sentiment that dif-
fers from his own; because number one,
differs from number two, as much as
number two, differs from number one, and
so of the rest.

Let
Let me add, that the consent of ten thousand to the truth of a proposition, don't determine any one single dissenter to be an heretic; nor will a general Opinion, be any proof of the truth of a proposition; numbers adding no weight to truth, for truth is but one, and is unalterable, and yet may be mistaken by ten thousand, as well as by one individual.

Neither, secondly, can he be an heretic, who dissent from the truth of any proposition, altho' of the greatest importance in itself, and when rightly understood; if the man so dissenting be of a benevolent temper, and conducts himself virtuously: because, the value of any principle is only proportionate to the tendency it has to promote a benevolent temper, and a virtuous conduct. For instance, no principle can be of greater importance than this, viz. that inherent, or personal holiness is absolutely necessary to happiness: and yet there are some who aboslutely deny this; and say, that it is no qualification at all: but that Christ Jesus is imputatively made sanctification or holiness to all such as are saved, and that it is dangerous to regard personal obedience: at the same time some of these very men don't act in, but out of principle, and conduct themselves in such a manner, as if personal holiness was the only prerequi-
site to salvation: from hence I think, we may fairly infer, that a mere dissent from the truth of a proposition, altho' of the greatest importance, will not determine any man an heretic.

But, again, orthodoxy is generally connected with power, and therefore it is, that establishments have took place; i.e. some certain tenets, or doctrines have been recommended under the ban of publick authority, as a common standard of truth; to differ from which, some men have branded as herefy, and treated the dissenter as if he was an heretic. But surely nothing can be more absurd, nor can it take place in any breast, one would think, but where an uncommon ignorance, and an excess of folly characteriseth the man: for let any man but examine the history of any nation, or age of the world, and he'll soon see, that power and dominion can add no real value to any principle, or alter in the least the nature of truth; because if it could, one tenet might be a truth in England, the contrary of which at the very same time, and under the very same authority, is a truth in Scotland: one tenet may be a truth at Rome, which is absolutely a lie in England, as well as false in the nature of things. So that if establishment added any
any thing to the nature of truth, or the reason of things, the old gentleman at Rome might then, indeed, make a wafer into a God for ought I know, i.e. if the reason of things would bow the knee, and give way to authority: but, alas! the pretence is only a piece of artificial colouring,— for truth is invariable, and inflexible in its nature; so that power and dominion cannot at all influence it, nor will it admit the least alteration from any authority whatsoever. On the other hand, I own, that truth is much more likely to be disguised and corrupted by power, and authority, then when unassisted and unbiassed by these, it is left to make its way in the world: because, authority and power give the greatest opportunity to favour any designs which men may have, arising from interests and views wholly foreign to those of truth. And thus it has always been with mankind; for, where power and dominion have undertaken to support principles of any kind, there has always been an invasion made on the rights of men; but never any impartial proceedings in favour of the sincere, and disinterested enquirer. Nor can it be otherwise; because authority, and power have always thrown into the balance some advantages in favour of those schemes
schemes which that power and authority have established: and not only so, but as if men were most earnest for supporting such authority, discouragements have been always added; apparently on purpose to suppress such enquiries as were likely to shake, or disturb the foundation of such established articles, or tenets. — Hence it appears to me, that merely to dissent from the truth of any established principles, because established by any humane authority, will not prove a man an heretic.

Lastly, a man's being rejected, i. e. excluded, or excommunicated from any christian communion, will not prove him an heretic; no, not if he was so excluded by Titus, or any other bishop, or even by St Paul himself; except the person so excluding him had undoubted evidence, that the man so excluded, was subverted, and sinned, and was condemned of himself: for such a knowledge the apostle has made the justifying reason of Titus's rejecting an heretic: knowing, says he, that he that is such, i. e. that is an heretic, and as such, one whom thou mayest reject, knowing that such an one is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. Nor is there any thing appears more evident to me from hence, than that an heretic cannot be
be one whom God can approve: because no man can justly be denominated an heretic, or rejected from Christian communion, as such; but one who is an undoubted enemy to truth and virtue. Hence therefore I conclude, that it is not in the power of any man, or any set of men, to make or constitute a man an heretic, by excluding him their communion: and hence I infer also, that the Greek word, render'd condemned of himself, cannot signify one that accuses himself; and is, or may be accused of the church, as an heretic, at the same time he may not be one in the sight of God; except we must call every innocent, sincere, and good man an heretic, who has had the misfortune to become a sacrifice to the pride and villainy of imperious and wicked ecclesiastics: of which unhappy number, we may reckon all those who have been confessors and martyrs to the cause of truth and virtue; whose deaths have stained the history of so many blood-thirsty priests and princes. This cannot then be the true sense of the Words; but must intend one whom Titus knew to be self-condemned; i.e. knew to be one, who could have no confidence towards God. Which knowledge of the hearts of men might probably be one of
of those extraordinary gifts confin’d to
the apostolic age.

Having thus far given a description of
the false characteristics of St. Paul’s he-
retic, I shall, in the second place, point
out some of the true and genuine ones.

And, first, An heretic is one who pro-
feßeth such principles, and then practiseth
upon them, which the reason of things,
and the law of his own mind, must con-
demn; for instance, that man is an heretic
who profeßeth to believe, that the revela-
tion of Jesus Christ is from God, and yet
afferts that that revelation lays more stress
upon a man’s observing ritual, and cere-
monial distinctions in meats and drinks,
or any other indifferent things, than
upon the eternal laws of justice and
benevolence. Thus St. Paul’s heretic is de-
scribed as having such a regard to the
Jewish tables, respecting such things as
these, as was prior to all other considera-
tions which relate to holiness of heart
and life, Tit. i. 14, 15. This indeed must
lesßen the importance of every sentiment
we can form of the perfections of Deity,
and confound the reason, and diffe-
rence of things; but can no way con-
sist with any reasonable disquisition.—

Secondly, An heretic is that man, who
from a pretension of his being elected, or
chosen
chosen of God to eternal life, afferts an unbounded liberty to practise every vice: as much, as such a man, cannot but know, the supreme Being is a perfectly regular Being, who observes inviolably the laws of justice and mercy; and that consequent-
ly, a conduct so repugnant to those perfections of Deity, cannot be any proof of God's favour towards him, or approbation of him, but the very reverse; on account of which consideration, he must needs be condemned of himself.

Thirdly, An heretic is one who pretends to acknowledge the christian scheme as a part of divine revelation, and yet afferts both by doctrine and practice, that it can dispense with those obligations which arise from the relations in which we stand to other beings. So St. Paul's heretic taught, that servants might refuse fidelity to their masters, if those their masters were of a different religion from the christian, as may be learnt from Tit. ii. 9, 10. by which documents they would have expos'd the noblest plan of religion in the world to the utmost contempt: and not only so, but they taught also, that the christian might refuse allegiance and subjection to his sovereign.

\[\text{Tit. i. 16.}\]

C 2

\[\text{prince.}\]
prince, or governor; a hereby introducing an idea of christianity as a most hurtful scheme to the weal of society.

Nay, I add, St. Paul's heretic was one who taught men to speak evil of dignities; and to treat all men, of every class who differ'd from them, with malice, envy, and hatred: b which conduct is an evident contradiction not only to the law of Jesus, but to the plain reason, and nature of things also: and consequently, such a man must deserve the character St. Paul gives him, to wit, that of an heretic: since he is apparently subverted, i. e. overturned, or in a state of ruin, and destruction; sinning with such an high hand, as to leave no room for any man to doubt, but that he is condemned of himself.

Again, St. Paul's heretics were such who pretended to recommend their hurtful doctrines and practices under the mark of a knowledge of God, and acquaintance with his will; as may be learnt also from chap. i. 16. at the same time, both their temper, and conduct prov'd, that they were wholly untaught or unskilful in the ways of virtue. And, indeed, this has been that too successful

a Tit. iii. 1. b Ver. 2, 3.
device in all ages, whereby hereby has made its way among the vicious, and ignorant. But how preposterous is it, for men to pretend that they know God, and understand his will, and are fit to instruct others in the nature of truth and virtue; when neither truth, nor virtue can be discovered to have the least place or interest in their minds, or views? but on the contrary, they appear to be abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate! Would to God that men would shake off every prejudice to which they are thus enslaved, and that they would judge of things according to their reason, and fitness, and not suffer the haughty, the imperious, the avaricious priest to persuade them, that persecution; i.e. pecuniary mulcts, &c. or massacres and slaughters can afford assistance to the cause of truth; or should ever be esteem’d any real friends to the interest of virtue: but that the reverse is undoubtedly true, viz. that whoever inculcates such doctrines are absolute strangers to the spirit and genius of Christianity, and are all the while offering sacrifice to Baal, and not to God!

Finally, St. Paul’s heretic, must have been a very wicked man, even an obstinate, hardened wretch, enslaved to vicious
passions, and appetites; yea, become perfectly callous to, and unimpressive by every rational and kind admonition: an heretic after the second admonition reject; knowing, &c. And indeed, nothing less than this can be intended, if we consider, that every member of society has a right to the benefits, and privileges of such society of which he is a member; unless, or until he has forfeited that right, by violating those cardinal laws on which the good order of the society is supported: the cardinal laws on which Christianity is supported, is those of charity, and justice or righteousness: but the law of charity and justice too must have been violated by Titus, if he had censured, and rejected a man as an heretic, of whose insincerity and dishonesty he had the least reason to doubt; for this Christian law, or principle, influences its subjects to suffer long, and to be kind,—to think no evil,—to hope all things.—

To make it more fully appear that nothing less than allowed and obstinate wickedness could characterize the heretic, I would observe, in the first place, that it could not be on account of the man's prejudices, or prepossessions, that Titus was to reject him; for then this would not only have been repugnant to the mild and
and forbearing spirit of christianity, but also very reverse, and contradictory to the conduct of St. Paul himself, who circumcised Timothy, and came into several other very great concessions; becoming all things, to all men that he might win them over by benevolence, cool reasoning, and a proper degree of complaisance to those their prejudices: these were the methods he himself took to loose and untie the chains and cords with which men were bound, and never pretended to apply rigorous, or severe measures to remove them.

Much less, secondly, (as has been already observ'd,) could it be a mere difference in sentiment that could warrant such discipline which St. Paul advises Titus unto. No; the apostle could not but know better, being well assured that not one religious society could be form'd on any plan, either by himself, or any other, but there would yet remain a variety of sentiments among the members that composed it, pretty near equal to its numbers.

I might further remark, that altho' in the New Testament, hereby is a word made use of to signify sect, yet whenever it is so used merely to denominate a sect, or

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\(^2\) Acts xvi. 3.
party, it is no noxious thing, nor in the least culpable: so far from this, that St. Paul in 1 Cor. xi. 19. expressly allows, that there must be sects, or heresies among christians: and that a valuable end was to be answered thereby, viz. (i. e. as I understand it) that men may approve themselves true christians, by exercising that noblest virtue or fruit of the spirit, viz. love, or charity towards every differing brother. Besides, if heresy was of an ill signification in the usage of the New Testament, then christianity was whilst in its minority a noxious or hurtful thing also: for St. Paul says, that after the way which the world called heresy, so he worshipped the God of his Fathers, i. e. as belonging to the sect of the Nazarenes, and in this his heresy, or difference in sentiment from the established religion of his country, he gloried! Therefore, I take it for granted that the apostle must intend by an heretic in his epistle to Titus, nothing less than a very wicked man; or, one that was become unfit, by his wickedness for christian communion, of which he professed himself a member.

I shall in the next place, briefly enquire which way he was to reject, or, what is intended by Titus's rejecting this heretic.

And,
And, first, Titus could not be directed to reject the heretic, by making the terms of christian communion narrower than what would agree with the grand design of christianity, which is a scheme of doctrines intended to include all nations, people, and languages, and to become an universal blessing to mankind; for the very excellency of this institution consists in its being calculated to cement societies, and to strengthen and spread friendships, so that the terms, on which it can reject any, can be only such on which men will be absolutely excluded the happiness of the after state; to prepare for which happiness this institution is in its whole economy peculiarly adapted. How preposterous then must it be for any christian to teach, that any man is disqualified, and should thereupon be excluded christian communion and fellowship here on earth, on account of some punctilious, or pretended reasons, which heaven won't insist on as reasons or terms on which it will exclude any? One would think that this is to carry the point to an extravagant pitch of purity in discipline, and implicitly to condemn the care, the purity and regularity of the upper world. — Whereas nothing is more plain, than that the laws of admission in the church below ought
to be more lax, in proportion as men's capacities of distinguishing sincerity from hypocrisy differ from the enlarged understanding of him who has the keys of the invisible world;—men being capable of judging of one another here, no further than that rule of our Saviour's will direct them, viz. By their fruits ye shall know them.

Nor, secondly, could St. Paul mean, by advising Titus to reject the heretic, that he should exterminate, or extirpate the heretic: I know it is said in Mat. vii. 19, That every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, men esteem as only fit for fuel;—from whence some may infer the fitness of an inquisition. But I fancy we shall soon find, upon a little enquiry, that the metaphor will not bear such a transition; nor that the church ever did or could receive such authority from Christ, from which they might justify an extermination of heretics, altho' obstinate vice enters into their character.—In order to settle this point with greater certainty, let us examine what Jesus Christ has elsewhere expressly taught his disciples; and methinks there is no scripture more pertinent and à propos, than the parable he delivered concerning the tares, Mat. xiii. in which he represents his doctrine as the good seed that
that he had sown in the field of the world, which turned many to righteousness, or sprung up so, as to denominate it a field that he had sown; but the tares as the seed sown by the Devil; i.e. wicked men not regarding his doctrine.—He tells us that some of his over-officious servants, who knew not of what spirit they were of, when they saw the tares among the wheat came to him, and said, Sir, Wilt thou then that we go, and gather (or root) them up? To which their wise and righteous master replied, No; by no means, lest whilst ye gather up the tares, or what you take to be so, you root up the wheat also with them; let both grow together, or in the same field, till harvest, and in the time of harvest, I will direct the reapers, both how to separate them, and then how to dispose of them, when separated:——which affords this plain instruction, viz. That the state of Christ's church, whilst here on earth, has no reaping time belonging to any period of it: the general resurrection, or end of the world, is the harvest for reaping, but begins not till then. It teaches us also, that Christ intended not to employ any of his apostles, or succeeding ministers, in the work of houghing, or weeding of tares; both wheat and tares are to grow together till
'till harvest. Neither has Christ qualified any men whatsoever for the work; apostles, as well as others, might pluck up the wheat with the tares: lest whilst ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. It further informs us, that the business or work of separating, with its consequences, is allotted for the angels, who are to be the reapers; and to whom he will himself give proper instructions. Hence I think it is plain, that extermination or extirpation is not intended by rejection.—

But positively, it can only intend an exclusion from church-fellowship, whilst he, i.e. the heretic, continued impenitently wicked; but as in the case of the incestuous person, whom St. Paul had ordered to be excommunicated out of the church of Corinth, in like manner should he be treated, for as soon as he discover’d his penitency, St. Paul becomes his advocate, and pleads not only that the church would forgive him, but that they would also express due care to comfort him, lest his sorrow should press too hard upon him, and Satan get thereby an advantage, i.e. left he should lose the command of his passion, or the exercise of his reason, and fall into despair: in which circumstances every
every rational address might have been lost upon him a.

I confess I cannot deny, but that St. Paul's heretic, as described by him, might make himself the head of a party with a vile design, or from base ends, such as worldly interest, &c. according to Tit. i. 11. Teaching things which he ought not for filthy lucre's sake. But I rather think, that altho' this gives us the spring, and motive of his action, yet it does not fully convey to us an idea of the make, constitution and frame of the man, so described by St. Paul as an heretic: nevertheless, lust of riches, or power, and dominion, enter so far into the character of an heretic; that I question whether it is possible for any man to deserve the character, that is not actuated by these, as the grand principles of his action: so that wherever such vices prevail in any man, that man is to be suspected as having the fundamentals of an heretic.

From the whole, I would conclude, that an heretic, if there be any such among christians now, is one, who would wickedly impose or practise upon any scheme, subversive of the right of private judgment, and destructive of the welfare of

a Compare 1 Cor. v. with 2 Cor. ii.

society.
society. And, indeed, where men boldly assert their sentiments to be infallibly right, and condemn all such as differ from them; these bid fair for the character, inasmuch as they lay a sufficiently wide foundation for the induction of every evil and hurtful disposition and practice.

Whoever therefore would merit the character St. Paul gives of an heretic; let him indulge to ill-nature, anger, passion, pride, and hatred; let him treat his fellow creatures who differ from him with fury, and resentment; let him resolve to abridge every man of his liberty who thinks not as he does; and let him reject any such, i.e. expel him from his religious society, as a schismatic, altho' he expresseth in a strong light the temper and virtues of the christian character; yea, let him curtail, at least, if not further persecute him in his property: thus shall he richly deserve the title of heretic, and become a fit object of the contempt of every sincere and genuine disciple of Jesus.

But on the contrary, if any man would avoid the character of an heretic, let him be clothed with humility, let him always express a gentle and meek disposition towards all men; not daring to censure, condemn, or persecute for the sake of difference in sentiment; but as becomes a true christian, let
let him keep the unity of the spirit in, or by the bond of peace: being convinced, that the unity of the spirit is to be kept no other ways, than by the exercise of universal charity and benevolence; that uniformity of worship, has never yet secured the unity of the spirit, nor never will; and that unanimity in sentiments is too idle a dream, to have ever yet obtained any certain existence, among any sort of religionists: but as he sees that it is impossible, in the nature of things, that these should secure the unity of the spirit; let him practice upon the method revelation has prescribed, that is, by securing the bond, cement, or tie of a peaceable or benevolent disposition, which, whoever expresses, cannot be an heretic, because he in reality keeps the unity of the spirit.

Lastly, I apprehend that more especially the principles of the Romish Church, her maxims, and her spirit exactly tally with St. Paul's heretic. — Let then every true christian, as he would adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour, avoid her as a subverted, sinning, and self-condemned communion. — And endeavour to support the interest of Protestantism, which is the interest of true christian liberty, by constantly breathing the spirit of the gospel, and giving proof of it to
to all men, by an unbounded benevolence.

And now, Gentlemen, having given you the best account of a heretic I could collect from St. Paul's letter to Titus, I humbly beg leave as a conclusion, to offer one word of advice; which is this, that since you are both publickly employ'd in recommending the doctrines of Christianity to mankind, that you would constantly discover in all your debates, that truth and virtue are your chief aim; and that your highest ambition is to emulate in benevolence: for pride, arrogance, or a lust of dominion over the judgments, or consciences of men, are such vices that wherever they are discovered, will betray a spirit unacquainted with the genius of the christian institution. Therefore as you wish well to the true interest of Christianity, and would not share the character of heretics yourselves, speak no evil one of another; but be gentle, shewing all-meekness unto all men: and so far as this temper governs your views, and actions, all good men will wish you prosperity; as well as he sincerely does, who is,

Gentlemen,
Your Humble Servant,
Philaleutheros.

FINIS.