

CHAP. 2

In this chapter the apostle proceeds with the narrative of himself, and gives an account of another journey of his to Jerusalem, where he had a conversation with the chief of the apostles; in which they approved of his ministry, allowed of his commission, and took him into fellowship with them, but gave him no new instructions, nor added to his spiritual light and knowledge; from whence it appeared that the Gospel he preached was not after men, or received from men, as he had asserted in the preceding chapter; and he also gives an account of his meeting with Peter at Antioch, and how he reprov'd him for some judaizing practices; which leads him to assert the doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to the works of the law; which is the grand point he had in view to establish in this epistle, and which he vindicates from the charge of licentiousness. He begins with an account of another journey of his to Jerusalem, the circumstances of which he relates, as the time when, fourteen years ago; the persons he look with him as his companions, Barnabas and Titus, ver. 1 what moved him to it, a revelation from God; and the business he did when come thither, he communicated the Gospel, and that not to any but to such that were of reputation, and not publicly but privately; his end was, that it might appear how successful he had been in his ministry, and had not laboured in vain, ver. 2 then follows a narrative of a particular event relating to Titus, who is described as one of his companions, and by his nation, a Greek; and who though an uncircumcised person, yet the apostles and elders at Jerusalem did not oblige him to be circumcised, which shewed that they were of the same mind with the apostle in this

point, ver. 3 and the reason of it was because of the false teachers, that they might not give them any handle; who are described by their character, false brethren, by their private manner of getting in among the saints, and by their ends and views, which were to spy out their Christian liberty and bring them into bondage, ver. 4 to whom the apostle opposed himself, and would not give way for the least space of time; for this end, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with the Gentiles, ver. 5 and as for the apostles, though they were men of great character and reputation, nor would the apostle detract from it; yet they added nothing to him, he received nothing from them, ver. 6 but, on the other hand, partly because they saw that as the Gospel to be preached to the Jews was committed to Peter, so the same. Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles was committed to Paul; and partly because of the same efficacy and success in the ministry of the one as in the ministry of the other; as also because they perceived what gifts of grace were bestowed on the apostle; they gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, as a token of their mutual agreement, and as being of the same society, ver. 7, 8, 9 nor did they give him and Barnabas any thing in charge, but only to remember the poor, to which he was forward enough of himself, ver. 10 after which follows an account of an opposition made by the apostle to Peter, which was done at Antioch, and to his face, and not without reason, ver. 11 for whereas he had some time before ate with the Gentiles, which was commendable in him, he afterwards declined conversation with them, moved to it by fear of the converted Jews, ver. 12 and such was the force of his example, that other Jews, who before did not scruple eating with the Gentiles, separated

likewise, and even Barnabas himself, Paul's companion, ver. 13 wherefore seeing this was not walking according to the Gospel of Christ, and with that integrity and uprightness which became such persons, the apostle publicly reproved Peter, and expostulated with him; partly on account of his former conversation with the Gentiles, though he himself was a Jew, and therefore it was absurd and contradictory in him to oblige the Gentiles to live as the Jews did, ver. 14 and partly on account of the knowledge which he and Peter and others who were Jews, and not sinners of the Gentiles, had of the doctrine of justification; that it was not by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ; for to this end they had believed in Christ that they might be justified, not by the one, but by the other; which doctrine is confirmed by a passage referred to in Psal. 143:2 ver. 15, 16 and whereas it might be objected that this doctrine of free justification opened a door to licentiousness, the apostle answers to it by an abhorrence of it, ver. 17 and by observing that this would build up what he had destroyed, ver. 18 besides, he argues the contrary from his being dead to the law, that he might live unto God, ver. 19 and from his crucifixion with Christ, and of the old man with his deeds; and from Christ's living in him, and his living by faith upon him, ver. 20 and for the further confirmation of the doctrine of justification being by faith, and not by works, he suggests, were it otherwise, both the grace of God would be frustrated and made void, and the death of Christ be in vain, ver. 21.