

The
Handy Commentary

CORINTHIANS.

EDITED BY

C. J. Ellicott, D. D.

Bishop of Gloucester & Bristol.

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THE
NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY.





ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES TO THE

Corinthians.

THE FIRST EPISTLE,

WITH COMMENTARY BY

T. TEIGNMOUTH SHORE, M.A.,

*Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen,
and Incumbent of Berkeley Chapel, Mayfair.*

THE SECOND EPISTLE,

WITH COMMENTARY BY

E. H. PLUMPTRE, D.D.,

Dean of Wells.

EDITED BY CHARLES JOHN ELLICOTT, D.D.,

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THIS Volume is practically a reprint, carefully revised, of the "Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians," in the NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY FOR ENGLISH READERS. A General Index has been added, which it is hoped will prove helpful to the student as well as to the general reader.



INTRODUCTION

TO

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

To describe briefly the relation in which St. Paul stood to the Corinthian Church, and the circumstances under which he wrote this Epistle, will, I think, be the best and most efficient help to the ordinary reader.

After a stay at Athens of some few months, St. Paul, towards the end (probably) of the year A.D. 51, left that city for Corinth. At Athens, the centre of philosophic thought and culture, St. Paul had preached Christianity. The wide question of the relation of God's providence to the heathen world in times past—Christ crucified and raised from the dead—all these topics had been dwelt on by the Apostle in a speech which still remains a model of the subtlest rhetorical skill and of the most earnest eloquence. Judged, however, by immediate results, the speech on Mars Hill, and the other addresses at Athens, of which we have no record, but which were probably on the same lines, were not successful. Only a few converts were won to Christ.

The Apostle dwells with no fond recollection on his work here. A single sentence* sums up the

results of his labour in a city where the successful planting of the Church would have been of such vast importance: "Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed; among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." There is an undertone of sadness and disappointment in these words of St. Paul's companion and friend, St. Luke.

The Apostle left Athens downcast and thoughtful. The subtle skill, the earnest eloquence, had been employed apparently in vain. The inestimable value which that great exposition of God's dealings with man, as well in the world at large as in the more sacred enclosure of the Christian faith, might have—as we know now it has had—for Christendom, did not present itself to the Apostle's mind as any consolation for the want of practical results at the moment. Athens was a sad memory to St. Paul. He never mentions her name in an Epistle. He sends no words of greeting to any of her children.

From the Piræus—the port of Athens—St. Paul sails for Corinth. It being late in autumn (probably October or November), it is most

* Acts xvii. 34.

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likely that the Apostle landed at Cenchræa, a seaport town on the Saronic Bay.* The experience which he had at Athens, and its bearing on the work on which he was now about to enter in the capital of Achaia, were doubtless the uppermost thoughts in the Apostle's mind during this brief journey. He sees that the power of the gospel to win men to Christ lies in the message itself, and not in the method and style of its delivery. He resolves to lay aside the rhetoric and the merely human eloquence, and in the new field of his missionary labours "to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."† This vow he probably made as he landed at Cenchræa; and when, a year and a half afterwards, he embarked at the same port on his return journey, he could look back with satisfaction and with thanksgiving on the resolution which he had formed, and the glorious results which had followed in Achaia from his preaching.

A journey of nine miles from Cenchræa brought the Apostle to Corinth, which was situated in the south-west end of the isthmus, and

at the northern base of the Acrocorinthus. The two things which in older days had made Corinth famous in Grecian history still rendered her a place of supreme importance. From a military point of view, she might be regarded as the key to the Peloponnesus, and commercially she was the central point of the vast trade which was carried on between Asia and Europe. The storms which so constantly raged on the southern shore of Greece drove the vast tide of commerce into the safer overland route, which lay through Cenchræa and Lechæum, which latter port was only a mile and a half distant from Corinth. It was at Corinth that, in B.C. 146, the Achaïans made their last stand against the Romans, and were finally defeated by Mummius. After this, Achaia became a Roman province, and Corinth for a century remained in the condition of utter desolation to which the sword and fire of the victorious consul had reduced it. Some years before the birth of Christ (B.C. 44) Julius Cæsar restored Corinth, and, under the Emperor Claudius, the direct rule of the province was transferred from the emperor to the senate; and hence we find at the time when St. Paul arrived its government was administered by a proconsul.* As St. Paul entered Corinth his eyes might for a moment have rested on the grave of Lais amid the cypress grove outside the walls, and the monument of Diogenes which stood by the gate—fit types of the cynical, worldly philosophy, and the gross, yet attractive, sensuality with which the society of that day and city were permeated.

* I assume that St. Paul went by sea, and not by land, as the words (Acts xviii. 1), "Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth," seem to imply a brief and uninterrupted journey. Had he gone by land he would have passed through other towns on the way, some mention of which it would be natural to expect.

† See 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2, and Note there. The word "you," repeated in both these verses, seems emphatic, as if the Apostle meant to bring out a contrast between his former style of teaching among others, and that which he had resolved should be his style of teaching amongst them. The only point on which he had determined when coming to them was, "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," as the subject-matter of his teaching.

* Acts xviii. 12.

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Within the city, most of the buildings were comparatively modern, "run up" within the last century by the imported population of Roman freed-men; while only here and there, in the stately magnificence of an older style of architecture, stood an occasional edifice which had survived the "fire" that had "tried every man's work" in the great conflagration which had swept away the inferior structures of "wood, hay, stubble" when the conquering troops of Mummius had captured Corinth.* The population of Corinth was composed of many and diverse elements. There were Greeks, who thought, by their delight in a tawdry rhetoric and in a sham and shallow philosophy, to revive the historic glory of a past age. There were a thousand corrupt and shameless priestesses attached to the temple of Aphrodite, which crowned the neighbouring hill. There were the families of the Roman freed-men whom Julius Cæsar had sent to rebuild and recolonise the town. There were traders from Asia and from Italy, and all that nondescript element naturally to be found in a city which was practically a great commercial seaport and the scene, every fourth year, of those Isthmian games which attracted among the athletes the best, and among some of the spectators the worst, of the population of the surrounding provinces. All these, like so many streams of human life, mingled together here, and at this particular juncture were met by the vast returning tide of Jews expelled from Rome by Claudius, † and so formed that turbulent

and seething flood of human life on which the barque of Christ's Church was launched at Corinth.

Amongst those who had lately come from Italy were Aquila and Priscilla, his wife. With them the Apostle lodged, joining with them in their occupation of tent-making. Pontus,* the native country of Aquila, and Cilicia, † the native country of St. Paul, were both renowned for the manufacture of the goat's-hair cloth from which the tent-coverings were made. It is probable, however, that an affinity of faith, as well as an identity of occupation, led to the Apostle's intimate association with these friends. If this man and his wife had not been converted to Christianity before this they would scarcely have allowed St. Paul to join himself so intimately with them. The very circumstances of their expulsion from Rome would have embittered them against a Christian. From a remark in Suetonius, we find that the expulsion of the Jews had to do with their riots with Christian converts. Rome cared nothing about the religious opinions of these rival sects; but when their differences led to public riots Rome was then as vigorous and decisive in action as before she had been indifferent. ‡ Having left Italy under such circumstances, Aquila and Priscilla would, if unconverted

* Acts xviii. 2.

† Acts xxi. 39.

‡ "Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome on account of their continual tumults instigated by Chrestus." The name Christus, in pronunciation nearly identical with Chrestus, was mixed up in the riots somehow. That was quite sufficient for the authorities to assume that some person of that name was the author of them.

* See St. Paul's recollection of this in the imagery employed in 1 Cor. iii. 10-13.

† Acts xviii. 2.

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Jews, have certainly not taken a Christian as a partner in their home and work; whereas, if already Christians, and suffering expulsion thus from Rome, they would gladly welcome such a convert as Paul. These considerations are confirmed by the course of events at the outset of St. Paul's preaching at Corinth. The Apostle first preaches to the Jews and those proselytes (called "Greeks")* who had at least accepted Judaism so far as to attend the synagogue. He is met with opposition and blasphemy by them, and then turns unto the Gentiles, and teaches in a house close by the synagogue, winning many converts to the faith, amongst others, Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, Gaius, and Stephanas and his household, who received their baptism at the hand of the Apostle himself.† Silas and Timothy joined the Apostle during the earlier part of his sojourn, and probably brought with them some pecuniary help from the Philippians, which was doubly acceptable because of a famine then prevalent and of the Apostle's unflinching determination to take nothing from the Corinthians.‡

Some time in A.D. 53, M. Annæus Novatus, the brother of the philosopher Seneca, arrives at Corinth as proconsul of Achaia. He was called Gallio, having been adopted into the family of that name. His kindly and loving disposition § gave the Jewish faction some hope that they might make him the uncon-

scious tool by which they would wreak their intensifying rage on St. Paul and his Christian companions. Gallio, with the imperturbable calmness of a Roman governor, refuses to allow himself to be dragged into a religious dispute between two sects. In retaliation for this conduct on the part of the Jews, the Greeks take Sosthenes, who had succeeded Crispus as chief ruler of the synagogue—here, no doubt, the ringleader in the persecution of St. Paul—and beat him.* When the same Sosthenes became a convert it was not strange that he and St. Paul should become firm friends. Both had been active enemies of the faith which they now preached, and the two converted persecutors are joined together in the opening of this Epistle to the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. i. 1). For some considerable time the Apostle remains and teaches at Corinth, and then returns to Syria by Cenchreæ. The vow made on landing there had been kept.† Jesus Christ and His cruci-

* In Acts xviii. 17, the words "the Greeks" do not occur in the best MSS., and some commentators conclude that it was the Jewish faction who took Sosthenes and beat him, suspecting him of some leanings towards the faith which he afterwards embraced. I think it more natural to assume that it was the Greek mob who acted thus towards the leader of the defeated faction of the Jews. If it were the Jews writhing under their defeat, surely they would have taken vengeance on some avowed Christian like Paul or Aquila.

† Acts xviii. 18. The words here may, as a mere matter of grammar, refer to either Paul or Aquila; but the whole sense of the passage refers them to the former. The fact that Paul goes on to Jerusalem, and Aquila remains at Ephesus, is almost in itself sufficient to indicate Paul as the one having some solemn obligation to fulfil. I have already indicated that in the solemn vow made by the Apostle, and which was carried out

* Acts xviii. 4.

† 1 Cor. i. 14—16.

‡ See 2 Cor. xi. 7—12; Phil. iv. 15.

§ Seneca says of Gallio, "He was loved much even by those who had little power to love;" and, "No mortal is so dear to me as Gallio to all men."

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fixion had been the sole subject and strength of the Apostle's teaching. With what feelings of profound thankfulness must St. Paul, as he sailed from Cenchreæ, have looked back on the work and the success of those intervening months. With Aquila and Priscilla, he arrives at Ephesus, and leaves them there. After a somewhat prolonged tour through Galatia and Phrygia, and a visit to Jerusalem, St. Paul returns to Ephesus, probably in the year A.D. 54. Meanwhile, during the absence of St. Paul on his journey visiting the churches in Galatia and Phrygia, a man arrives at Ephesus who is destined to have a remarkable influence in the future on St. Paul's relation with the Corinthian Church. Apollos, a Jew by religion and an Alexandrian by birth, had been brought up in a city where commerce brought together various races, and where philosophy attracted varied schools of thought. Alexandria, famous also as the place where the Greek translation of the Old Testament had been made, became naturally the seat of an intellectual school of scriptural interpretation, as well as the abode of Greek philosophy. Amid such surroundings, Apollos, gifted with natural eloquence, became "mighty in the scriptures," and was "instructed in the way of the Lord," possibly by some of those Alexandrian Jews who, in their disputes with Stephen,* had become ac-

quainted with the elementary principles of Christianity. His imperfect acquaintance with the Christian faith—limited to the tenets of the Baptist*—is supplemented and completed by the instruction which he receives from Aquila and Priscilla, who were attracted by the eloquence and fervour with which he preached in the synagogue at Ephesus his imperfect gospel. The days spent with St. Paul at Corinth were fresh in the memory of these Christians. The incidents of those days were doubtless often recalled in many a conversation with Apollos, and what he hears fires his earnest soul with a desire to preach the gospel in Achaia. To the various churches—including, of course, Corinth—he receives letters of commendation from the Ephesian Christians, and his preaching is attended with great blessing, "helping them much which had believed through grace." His style of teaching was strikingly different from that which St. Paul—in accordance with his vow "to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified,"—had adopted at Corinth. With more intellectual eloquence, and with a wider and more philosophic range of thought, he opened up the deeper spiritual meaning of the Old Testament scriptures, showing from them that Jesus was Christ.† The philosophic school of thought in which he had been educated could be traced in the style of his eloquence, which won many converts amongst those classes to whom the simplicity of Paul's preaching had not been acceptable, and who, on that account, had continued to the end his active opponents.

apparently according to the law of the Nazarite vow (see Num. vi.), was included a resolve as to his teaching at Corinth. What, if any, other motives for the vow the Apostle could have had, must, of course, be matter of the merest conjecture.

* Acts vi. 9.

* Acts xviii. 25.

† Acts xviii. 28.

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While the eloquent Alexandrian is preaching in Corinth—watering* where Paul had planted, building up where Paul had laid the foundation, giving strong meat to those whom, in their spiritual infancy, Paul had fed with milk, and winning some new converts amongst those whose Jewish and intellectual prejudices had hitherto been invincible—St. Paul rejoins Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus.† This is not the place to dwell upon St. Paul's work at Ephesus (of which a full account is given in Acts xix.), only so far as it directly bears upon his Epistle to Corinth. During his stay at Ephesus he is constantly hearing news of the Corinthians by those whose business necessitated constant journeyings between these two commercial capitals. The Apostle himself also, during the earlier part of his sojourn, pays a brief visit to Corinth, of which we have no record, and of which we should know nothing but for the casual allusion in his Second Epistle that he is coming to them the *third* time.‡ After some two years' residence at Ephesus, the Apostle determines, after some time, to proceed directly by sea to Corinth, and making it his head-quarters, visit the churches in Macedonia, returning after this tour to Corinth again, on his way back to Jerusalem,§

from whence, finally, he hoped to visit Rome.* This plan is, however, entirely upset by the course of events which we have now to narrate.

Rumours, more or less vague at first, reach St. Paul of a bad state of affairs in the Corinthian Church. The Corinthian Christians were living in the midst of a heathen society. The religion of heathendom, and the sensual license and indulgence which formed a part of it, pervaded all the social customs and entered into the very fibre of the social life of the country. To define, therefore, the precise position which Christians should assume in relation to the political conditions and the domestic institutions of the heathen was a matter of the utmost delicacy and difficulty. Christian thought and practice perpetually oscillated between the license into which human nature easily transformed the liberty of the gospel, and the rigid rejection of every custom which was tainted with heathen approval. To steady in the line of right that trembling pendulum of vibrating religious thought required all the spiritual skill and all the fine delicacy of touch which were characteristic of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. When the earliest rumours reach him of the unsatisfactory condition of some of the Corinthian Christians, he writes a letter to them, in which he probably mentions his intention of visiting them on his way to Macedonia; and he warns them of the great danger of moral contamination to which they would infallibly be subject if they allowed any of the immoral practices of the heathen to receive any sanction

* 1 Cor. iii. 1, 6, 10.

† Acts xix. 1.

‡ I place the unrecorded visit of St. Paul thus early during his residence at Ephesus because it seems to have occurred before the matter treated of in the First Epistle to the Corinthians assumed a serious aspect; otherwise we can scarcely imagine that there should be no allusion in this Epistle to some definite rebuke or instruction for which that visit would have afforded an opportunity.

§ 2 Cor. i. 15, 16.

* Acts xix. 21.

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from the Christian Church. Whatever the heathen might think of the lawfulness of sinful indulgence which their own faith surrounded with a distorting moral atmosphere of religious sanction, Christians were to allow no trace of such immorality within the boundaries of the Church. This Epistle has been lost; we can only conjecture its general contents from the circumstances under which it was written, and the reference to it in what is now the First of St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians.*

The Apostle still adheres to his intention of visiting Corinth and Macedonia, and sends Timothy and Erastus to prepare the various churches in Macedonia and Achaia for his coming, and, above all, to set things right at Corinth by, as St. Paul says, "bringing you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church."†

After the despatch of Timothy and Erastus, more alarming news reaches St. Paul. The household of Chloe‡—some Christian resident, either at Corinth or Ephesus, evidently well known to the Corinthians—report to the Apostle that the Church is disorganised with sectarian strife, and defiled by sanctioning a marriage between a Christian man and a heathen woman who had been his step-mother, and was now divorced from his father. A letter also arrives § from the Corinthians to St. Paul, which was in part a reply to St. Paul's lost Epistle, and which contained various questions regarding doctrine and practice which revealed the disintegrated condition

of religious thought and life in Christian Corinth.* The letter was probably brought to Ephesus by Stephanas and his companions, who supplemented the information which it contained by their own knowledge, based upon personal and recent observation. The arrival of this letter, which called for an immediate answer, and the receipt of this intelligence of a state of affairs which required to be dealt with immediately and vigorously, led to a change in the Apostle's plans. He abandons his intention of going direct to Corinth, so as to give time for a change for the better in the state of that Church; and he can no longer, now that he realises the full extent of the evil, leave it to be dealt with by one of Timothy's gentle disposition. He therefore writes this (Second) First Epistle to the Corinthians, and sends with it Titus, who, going direct to Corinth, would reach that city probably before the arrival of Timothy, who would be delayed visiting other churches *en route*. Titus—whom we may call St. Paul's companion in determination, as Timothy was

* My reason for thinking that the letter from the Corinthians was in part a reply to St. Paul's lost Epistle is that the Apostle says (1 Cor. v. 9) emphatically, "I wrote to you in *the Epistle*,"—*i.e.*, the Epistle to which you refer. They had probably taken exception to his strict injunction, and said in reply, "If we are not to keep company at all with fornicators, then we must go out of the world altogether." His words seem to me to be an answer to some such captious criticism, and not a voluntary modification or explanation of what he had no reason to suppose should be misunderstood. It has been suggested by some commentators that the lost Epistle had been sent by Timothy. But St. Paul seems to assume as certain that the letter has reached them (1 Cor. v. 9), and to be doubtful whether Timothy was there or not (1 Cor. xvi. 10).

* See 1 Cor. v. 9.

† 1 Cor. iv. 17.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 11.

§ 1 Cor. viii. 1.

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St. Paul's companion in conciliation—was far more competent to meet the difficulties which would present themselves in such a state of affairs as existed then at Corinth. Moreover, Titus was a Gentile, whereas Timothy was half Jewish by birth; and so there would be no danger of the most hostile faction in Corinth—the Jewish—awakening any sympathy for themselves in him. How judicious the selection of Titus was is evident by the success of his mission, which we read of afterwards when he rejoined Paul in Macedonia.*

The Epistle was written and despatched probably about Easter, A.D. 57,† and the Apostle's intention is now to remain at Ephesus until after Pentecost, and then proceed, visiting the churches in Macedonia before going to Corinth. This would leave time for this Epistle to have the desired effect, and for St. Paul to meet Titus somewhere—probably at Troas. This Epistle divides itself into two parts. The first Section, extending to chap. vi. 20, deals with the reports which had reached St. Paul as to the condition of the Corinthian Church; and the second Section, which occupies the remainder of the Epistle, is a reply to the letter received from Corinth, including directions for the collection for the saints at Jerusalem and the usual salutations from the brethren.

With characteristic courtesy, the Epistle opens with words of approval and congratulation,‡ which show that the writer's subsequent

censures arise from no desire to see merely what is bad in the Corinthians, but are forced from him by the serious nature of the evils which have to be checked. Three evils are then rebuked—viz., THE SPIRIT OF FACTION,* THE CASE OF PROHIBITED MARRIAGE,† THE APPEALS OF CHRISTIANS TO HEATHEN COURTS.‡ The general principles of the relation of Christianity to heathenism, out of which the advice given under the last two heads has grown, are then solemnly reiterated;§ and the first Section of the Epistle closes with these words of earnest warning.

From the second Section of this Epistle we can discover what were the topics concerning which the Corinthians had written to St. Paul. He would doubtless treat of these subjects in the same sequence as they occurred in the letter to which this is the answer. The questions asked were probably these: IS IT RIGHT TO MARRY? The answer to this|| is,—that, owing to the exceptional state of circumstances then existing, the unmarried state is better. This advice is, however, to be modified in its practical application in the cases of those who have an irresistible natural desire for marriage and those who have already contracted it.

The second question was: IS IT LAWFUL FOR A CHRISTIAN TO EAT THE FLESH WHICH HAS BEEN ALREADY USED FOR SACRIFICIAL PURPOSES BY THE HEATHEN? To this the answer¶ is, in general terms, that there is no harm in eating such meat, but that in practice this wide principle of Christian liberty must

* See 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

† See 1 Cor. v. 7, and Note there, and chap. xvi. 18, showing that it was written before Pentecost, and probably at Passover time.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 1—9.

* 1 Cor. i. 10—iv. 21.

† 1 Cor. v. 1—13. ‡ 1 Cor. vi. 1—9.

§ 1 Cor. vi. 5—20.

|| 1 Cor. vii.

¶ 1 Cor. viii. 1—xi. 1.

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be limited by regard to the general welfare of others and their tenderness of conscience.

The third inquiry was: **WHAT IS THE BECOMING DRESS OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC WORSHIP?** This question was rendered necessary by some women pushing the freedom of the faith so far as to appear in public unveiled—a practice which might easily be mistaken by the heathen as the indication of a loose morality. To this the Apostle replies * practically that our Christianity is not to make us transgress the social order and customs of the community in which we live.

The fourth question was: **WHAT IS THE PROPER ORDER OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER?** In his answer to this question † the Apostle severely censures the scenes of riot and debauch into which the Love Feasts—with which the Lord's Supper was practically united, though not identical—had fallen, and gives stringent and exact directions as to the means of avoiding such scandal in the future.‡

The fifth question was: **WHICH IS THE MOST VALUABLE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS?** The discussion of this matter § involves the condemnation of the extravagant value attached by some to the gift of tongues, and the enunciation of the principle that the value of a gift

depends on its utility for the good of the whole Church.

The sixth, and last, inquiry was: **IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD A VITAL DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIANITY?** The reply to this* is an elaborate exposition and vindication of the doctrine of the resurrection. The collection for the saints at Jerusalem, information regarding his own change of plans, and some personal matters, occupy the concluding chapter of the Epistle.

After despatching this Epistle, St. Paul is full of fears lest it may have been written with too much severity, and possibly may have exactly the opposite effect from that which he desired. It may fail to reconcile to him the Church so dear to his heart—it may only widen the breach and embitter opponents. The Apostle leaves Ephesus after Pentecost, but his fears increase. Even an "open door" at Troas † cannot detain him in his restless anxiety. No new love could make up for the possible loss of the old one at Corinth in that large and tender heart of St. Paul. He passes over into Macedonia—full of care: there are the echoes of tumults at Ephesus behind him—there is the fear of coming disruption with Corinth before him. At last at Philippi, he meets Titus, who brings him the joyful news that, on the whole, the letter has been successful.‡ The Corinthian Christians are penitent, the chief offender has been expelled, and there is nothing now to prevent the Apostle taking back into his confidence and love the Church to which he was so warmly attached. A

* 1 Cor. xi. 2—16.

† 1 Cor. xi. 17—34.

‡ It seems impossible to us that drunkenness could arise from the abuse of the Eucharistic wine as administered in our own day. A remarkable instance is mentioned in Mrs. Brassey's *Voyage of the "Sunbeam"* (p. 234) of a church which they visited in Tahiti, where cocoa-nut milk was used in the Holy Communion in the place of wine, owing to abuses of the cup which had arisen.

§ 1 Cor. xii. 1—xiv. 40.

* 1 Cor. xv. † 2 Cor. ii. 12.

‡ 2 Cor. ii. 14.

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second letter*—to express his joy and gratitude, to reiterate his exhortations, and to finally prepare the Corinthians for his coming (which he explains had been delayed from no personal caprice, but for their sakes †)—is written, and the last trace of the cloud which, by separating him from them had cast so terrible a darkness over his own soul, is completely and finally removed.

The authenticity of this Epistle has never been seriously disputed; indeed, to deny it would almost involve a disbelief in the historical existence of the Corinthian Church and in the personality of St. Paul. The earliest fathers refer to it as the recognised letter of the Apostle. Clement of Rome, Polycarp, and Irenæus quote passages from it as St. Paul's writing. All throughout this Epistle we have the heart as well as the intellect of the Apostle displayed to us; the Holy Spirit of God not setting aside, but controlling and guiding those good gifts of which, though we call them "natural," He is the Author and the Giver.

Many of the subjects treated of here were local and personal. The combination of circumstances which give rise to them cannot possibly occur again in Christendom; but the principles on which the Apostle decided these matters are imperishable and of universal obligation. They can guide the Church amid the complex civilisation of the nineteenth century as truly and as clearly as they indicated to her the path of safety in the infancy of the Christian faith.

The following works will be found useful by those who desire to enter into a more detailed and exhaustive study of this Epistle:—

The Greek Testament, with a Critically-revised Text, &c., by Dean Alford. Vol. II. Rivingtons, 1871.

The Greek Testament, with Notes, by Bishop Wordsworth.

Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament. Göttingen (Eng. Trans., Clark, 1877).

The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians, with Critical Notes and Dissertations, by Dean Stanley. John Murray, 1876.

The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, by W. J. Conybeare and the Very Rev. J. S. Howson, Dean of Chester. New Edition. Longmans.

The Hulsean Lectures for 1862, by the Very Rev. J. S. Howson. Third Edition. Strahan & Co.

The Metaphors of St. Paul, by the Very Rev. J. S. Howson.

The Companions of St. Paul, by the Very Rev. J. S. Howson. Isbister, 1874.

Expository Lectures on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, by the late F. W. Robertson. Smith and Elder, 1870.

The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, by Thomas Lewin, M.A. 2 Vols. Third Edition. George Bell & Sons, 1875.

The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. Vols. IV. and V. of the Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church. Parker, 1839.

G. B. Winer's *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms* (English Translation, by Dr. W. F. Moulton. Eighth Edition. T. & T. Clark, 1877).

* 2 Corinthians.

† 2 Cor. i. 23.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

<p>CHAPTER I.—⁽¹⁾ Paul, <small>Chap. i. 1—3.</small> called <i>to be</i> Salutation and an apostle of <small>address.</small> Jesus Christ through the will of God,</p>	A. D. 59. <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> a Acts 15. 9.	and Sosthenes <i>our</i> brother, ⁽²⁾ unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, ^a called <i>to be</i>
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⁽¹⁾ Paul, called to be an apostle.—Better, a *called Apostle of Jesus Christ*. His apostolic authority, which was questioned by some in Corinth, is thus set out at the commencement of the Epistle.

And Sosthenes our brother.—*Sosthenes the brother*, probably the Sosthenes (see Note on verse 16) the chief ruler of the synagogue mentioned in Acts xviii. 17, one of the brethren well known to the Corinthians. From his name being thus joined with that of the Apostle, we may conjecture that he was his amanuensis in writing this Epistle, the salutation only (chap. xvi. 21) having been written by St. Paul's hand.

⁽²⁾ Church of God.—St. Chrysostom remarks how these opening words are a protest against the party-spirit prevailing at Corinth: "The Church of God—not of this or that man."

Them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus.—This is not another class of persons, but a description of those who compose "the Church"—who are further

described as "called to be saints"—*i.e.*, "holy." The term "saints" is never used by St. Paul with its restricted modern meaning, but is applied to the whole baptised Church. The English word which most nearly expresses the apostolic idea is "Christians"—used in its most comprehensive sense.

With all that in every place.—Better translated, *with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, both theirs and ours*. The teaching of the Epistle is thus addressed to the Church at large, which is composed of all who call upon the Lord Jesus, whether it be in Corinth ("our" country—the Apostle identifying himself with his converts) or elsewhere. This idea of the Church, put forward in the very opening of the Epistle, at once directs the reader's mind from the narrow spirit of faction which was exhibiting itself at Corinth. The words of this verse contain a strong testimony to the worship of Christ, not only as being practised in the Apostolic Church, but as being one

saints,^a with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's: ⁽³⁾ Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

^a Rom. i. 7.

which is given you by Jesus Christ; ⁽⁶⁾ that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge; ⁽⁶⁾ even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: ⁽⁷⁾ so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming¹ of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁽⁸⁾ who shall also confirm you unto

⁽⁴⁾ I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God

¹ Gr. revelation.

Chap. i. 4-9.
Introductory
commendation.

of the very marks of true union with the Church.

⁽³⁾ **Grace be unto you, and peace.**—This is the usual style of apostolic greeting (Gal. i. 3; Eph. i. 2), and with these words the address and greeting which open the Epistle conclude.

⁽⁴⁾ **I thank my God.**—Expressions of thankfulness (verses 4-9), serving also to secure at the very outset the attention of those to whom the Apostle is writing. He thus shows that he is not blind to, or forgetful of, their good qualities, although this Epistle is specially written to rebuke their present sins; and also that he is not about to utter words of hopeless condemnation, but of wholesome warning. The emphatic use of the singular, *I thank my God*, in contrast to the plural in the previous verses, indicates that St. Paul does not join Sosthenes with him as the author of the Epistle, but that it is written in his name alone and with his sole authority.

The grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.
—Better, *the grace of God given*

you in Christ Jesus—i.e., given to you as being in Christ.

⁽⁵⁾ **Ye are enriched.**—Literally, *ye were enriched*. “Utterance” is the power of outward expression of that “knowledge” which dwells within.

⁽⁶⁾ **Even as the testimony of Christ.**—The testimony which St. Paul bore to Christ, and from Christ, was confirmed among them by this full bestowal of spiritual gifts.

⁽⁷⁾ **So that ye come.**—Not exactly as in the English, “so that ye come behind” (or, *are wanting*) “in no gift,” but “the result being that ye come behind *others* in no gift.” You have as fully as any others those spiritual gifts which sustain you and enable you to wait for the revelation (i.e., the second visible appearance, which the early Church expected would soon occur) of our Lord Jesus Christ, not with fear, or with impatience, but with a calm trustfulness (Luke xvii. 30; Titus ii. 13).

⁽⁸⁾ **Who.**—The use of the words “day of our Lord Jesus Christ,” instead of “His day,” has been regarded by some as a sufficient

the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁽⁹⁾ God is faithful,^a by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

^a 1 Thess. 5. 24.

¹ Gr. schisms.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions¹

Chaps. i. 10—iv. 20. The Corinthian factions.

evidence that "who" does not refer to Christ. This by itself would scarcely be so, for there are examples elsewhere of St. Paul using our Lord's name where the possessive pronoun would have seemed more natural (Eph. iv. 12; Col. ii. 11). The general sense of the passage, however, and especially of the following verse, shows that the antecedent to "who" is not "Christ," in verse 7, but "God," in verse 4.

Three distinct periods are referred to in these verses—(1) the time when the grace of God was given them (verse 4); (2) the present time while they wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus, endowed as they are with the qualities described in verses 5—7; and (3) the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is still future—if preserved blameless until that, then they are finally and for ever safe; and that they will be so preserved by God the Apostle has no doubt for the reason stated in the next verse. (See chap. iv. 3.)

⁽⁹⁾ **God is faithful.**—The One who called them "unto the communion of His Son" is faithful, and therefore He will complete His work; no trials and sufferings need make them doubt that all will at last be well. The same confidence is expressed in Phil. i. 6, and 1 Thess. v. 24.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **Now I beseech you, brethren.**—With these words the Apostle introduces the topic which is indeed one of the chief reasons of his writing this Epistle (see *Introduction*), viz., the PARTY-SPIRIT existing in the Corinthian Church. The treatment of this subject occupies to chap. iv. verse 20. It is important to remember that the factions rebuked by St. Paul were not sects who separated themselves from the Church, but those who within the Church divided themselves into parties, each calling itself by the name of some Apostle whose teaching and practice were most highly esteemed. The nature and cause of these divisions we shall understand as we consider the Apostle's exhortation to unity, and his rebuke of the spirit which gave rise to them.

By the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—By his previous remark that they had been called unto "the communion" of this Holy Name, the writer has led up to the mention of Christ's name—not in the form of an adjuration, but as reminding them of it. That very name adds strength to his exhortation to "speak the same thing"—*i.e.*, to call themselves by this one name, and not each (as in verse 12) by a different designation, and that there should be no "schisms" among them.

among you ; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ⁽¹¹⁾ For it hath been declared unto

me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

⁽¹²⁾ Now this I say, that

The word translated "divisions," signifies literally a "rent," in which sense it occurs in Mark ii. 21 ("the rent is made worse"), and is used three times in St. John's Gospel in the sense of schism or difference of opinion (vii. 43 ; ix. 16 ; x. 19). See Note on chap. vii. 43, as to the moral application of the word having probably come from Ephesus ; and the idea of a tear or rent is carried on in the words, "be perfectly joined together," which in the original signifies the repair of something which was torn, as in Matt. iv. 21 we have the word rendered "*were mending their nets.*" The church at Corinth presents to the Apostle's mind the idea of a seamless robe rent and torn into pieces, and he desires its complete and entire restoration by their returning to a united temper of mind and judgment as to word and deed.

⁽¹¹⁾ **The house of Chloe.**—Who Chloe was we cannot tell. Her name was evidently well known to the Corinthians, and some slaves of her household, probably travelling between Ephesus and Corinth on their owner's business, had brought to St. Paul the account of the distracted state of the church in their city.

⁽¹²⁾ **Now this I say.**—Better, *What I mean is, that, &c.* The following words, "every one of you saith," show how party-spirit pervaded the whole Christian community. It may be well to mention

here briefly what we may consider to have been the distinctive characteristics of the factions which called themselves respectively the party of Paul, of Cephas, of Apollos, and of Christ.

1. **ST. PAUL** places first that section of the Church which called themselves by his name—thus at the outset showing that it is not for the sole purpose of silencing opponents, or from a jealousy of the influence of other teachers, that he writes so strenuously against the disturbances in the Corinthian community. It is the spirit of separation and of faction which he condemns—rebuking it as strongly when it has led to the undue exaltation of his own name, as when it attempted to depreciate his gifts and ministry as compared with those of Apollos or of Cephas. He thus wins at once the attention and confidence of every candid reader. The Pauline party would no doubt have consisted chiefly of those who were the personal converts of the Apostle. Their esteem for him who had been the means of their conversion, seems to have been carried to excess in the manner in which it displayed itself. This would be increased by the hostility which their opponents' disparagement of the Apostle naturally excited in them. They allowed St. Paul's teaching of the liberty wherewith Christ made them free, to develop in them an unchristian license and a mode of

every one of you saith, I ^{a Acts 18. 24.} am of Paul; and I of Apollos;^a and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

treatment of others essentially illiberal, thus denying by their actions the very principles which they professed to hold dear. They "judged" and "set at nought" (Rom. xiv. 10) brethren who could not take so essentially spiritual a view of Christianity, but who still clung to some of the outward forms of Judaism.

2. APOLLOS was a Jew of Alexandria—"an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures." He came to Ephesus during St. Paul's absence from that city, and taught what he knew of the "things of the Lord." While here he was instructed further in "the way of God" by Aquila and Priscilla, he having previously only the inadequate knowledge which was possessed by the disciples of John (Acts xxviii. 24—28). Having preached in parts of Achaia, he came to Corinth. That he came there after St. Paul we may conclude from the Apostle's reference to himself as having "planted" and Apollos having "watered" (chap. iii. 6), and again to himself as having "laid the foundation" (chap. ii. 10). To Corinth Apollos brought with him the arts of the rhetorician, and the culture of a Greek philosopher; and while preaching Christ crucified, these gifts and knowledge rendered him more acceptable than St. Paul had been, with his studied simplicity of style, to a certain class of intellectual and rationalising hearers in Corinth. When Apollos left, a section of the Church unduly magnified the importance

of his gifts and of his manner of teaching. They did so to the depreciation of the simplicity of the gospel. This all led to the development of evils which we shall see more in detail in our examination of verses 18—31 and chap. ii. It ought to be remembered that Apollos was in no sense "the founder of a party." It was the exaggeration and perversion of Apollos' teaching, by some of the converts, that really founded the party. To the end he and Paul remained friends. He was probably with the Apostle while the Epistle was being written, and (chap. xvi. 12) refused, even when St. Paul suggested it, to go so soon again to Corinth, lest his presence should in the least tend to keep that party-spirit alive; and when, ten years (A.D. 67) later, the Apostle writes to Titus, he exhorts him "to bring Apollos on his journey diligently, that nothing be wanting to him" (Titus iii. 13).

3. The third faction in Corinth professed themselves followers of ST. PETER—or, as he was always called, "Cephas." This was the name by which our Lord addressed him in Matt. xvi. 18, and by this name (and not by his Greek name, Peter) he would have been spoken of by the Apostles and early Christians. In the New Testament writings he is designated most frequently Peter, as his Greek name would be more intelligible to the larger world for which these writings were intended. This faction of the Corinthian Church still clung to many Jewish ceremonial

(13) Is Christ divided? | was Paul crucified for you?

ideas, from which St. Paul was entirely free. They seem not to have quite passed *through* the cloud. They exalted St. Peter as more worthy of honour than St. Paul, because he had personally been with Christ, and been called "Cephas" (*rock*) by Him. They insinuated that St. Paul's supporting himself was not so dignified as the maintenance of St. Peter and others by the Church in accordance with their Lord's command (chap. ix. 4—6; 2 Cor. xi. 9, 10); and they unfavourably contrasted St. Paul's celibacy with the married state of St. Peter, and of "the brethren of the Lord" (chap. ix. 5). It is probable that their animosity towards St. Paul was not a little increased by the knowledge that there were certain matters in which he considered St. Peter to be in error, and "withstood him to the face" (Gal. ii. 2). To the detailed difficulties and errors of this section of the Corinthian Church reference is to be found in the chaps. vii.—xi. 1.

4. There was still one other party or faction which dared to arrogate to themselves the name of CHRIST Himself. These over-estimated the importance and value of having seen Christ in the flesh, and despised St. Paul as one who had subsequently joined the Apostolate. Contempt for all human teachers was by them exalted into a virtue. Their greatest sin was that the very name which should have been the common bond of union, the name by the thought and memory of which the Apostle would plead for a restoration of

unity, was degraded by them into the exclusive party-badge of a narrow section. We do not find any very definite and detailed allusion to this section in this Epistle, though in the second Epistle a reference to them can be traced in chap. x. 7. There is no need for such at any length. Their condemnation is written in every chapter, the whole of the Epistle is a denunciation of the spirit of faction—of the sin of schism—which in their case reached a climax, inasmuch as they consecrated their sin with the very name of Christ. Such, briefly, were the four schisms which were rending the Corinthian Church. We might call them—1, The Party of Liberty (PAUL); 2, The Intellectual Party (APOLLOS); 3, The Judaizing Party (CEPHAS); 4, The Exclusive Party (who said "I am of CHRIST").

I of Christ.—It has been suggested that this is not the designation of a fourth party in the Church, but an affirmation by the Apostle, "I am of Christ," in contradistinction to those referred to before who called themselves after the names of men. But in addition to the fact that there is no change in form of expression to indicate a change of sense, we find evident traces of the existence of such a party (chap. ix. 1; 2 Cor. x. 7).

(13) **Is Christ divided?**—Better, *Christ is divided*. Christ, in the communion of the Church, is rent, torn in fragments by you. The mention of the sacred name as a party-cry makes the Apostle burst into that impassioned exclamation. Then there is a momentary pause.

or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? ⁽¹⁴⁾ I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; ^a ⁽¹⁵⁾ lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. ⁽¹⁶⁾ And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: be-

^a Acts 18.
8; Rom.
16. 23.
^b 2 Pet. 1.
16.
¹ Or,
speech.

sides, I know not whether I baptized any other. ⁽¹⁷⁾ For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom ^b of words, ¹ lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

and the Apostle goes back from his sudden denunciation of the "Christ" party, to those whom he had originally selected for typical treatment, viz., those who bore his own name, the two streams of thought, as it were, mingling and rushing together; and he asks (with a mind still full of the burning indignation aroused by the mention of the name of union as a symbol of disunion), "Was Paul crucified for you?" "Was your baptism in the name of Paul?" To each of which the answer must of necessity be "No."

Paul being the founder of the Church, these questions apply more forcibly to the others also.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **I thank God.**—"I am thankful to God that it was not so." For if he had baptized a great many, some might have said he had created originally a party in his own name. Crispus (see Acts xviii. 8), a "ruler of the synagogue," Gaius (or Caius, his Roman name), "mine host, and of the whole Church" (Rom. xvi. 23): the evident importance and position of these two, and that they were the first converts, may account for the Apostle having departed from his usual practice in baptising them.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **Stephanas.**—The mention of Stephanas and his household

was, from the words preceding, evidently a subsequent correction by the Apostle. He had forgotten them, and was reminded of it possibly by Sosthenes, who was writing from his dictation, and would naturally have known the fact, for Stephanas was the "first-fruits of Achaia" (chap. xvi. 15), and Sosthenes had been chief ruler of the synagogue (Acts xviii. 17) when Paul had been brought before Gallio, deputy of Achaia. Stephanas himself was at Ephesus with St. Paul when this letter was written, and doubtless in daily intercourse both with him and with Sosthenes (chap. xvi. 17). Finding how his memory had failed him on this point, the Apostle adds, "And I know not," &c. (*i.e.*, I don't remember) so as to prevent any cavil from hypercritical opponents.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **Not to baptize.**—Preaching was eminently the work of the Apostles. The deacons used to baptise (Acts x. 48). The mention of "the preaching of the glad tidings" affords an opportunity for the Apostle stating in vindication of himself why that, and not philosophy, was the subject of his preaching, "lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." Such, and not inability

(18) For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power^a of God. (19) For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,^b and will bring to nothing the understanding of the

^c Isa. 33. 18.

^a Rom. 1. 16.

^b Isa. 29. 14.

^d Rom. 1. 20.

prudent. (20) Where *is* the wise? ^c where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (21) For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God,^d it pleased God by

or ignorance, was the grand cause of his simplicity.

(18) **For the preaching.**—In the original the contrast comes out more strongly between this and the previous statement, the same phrase being repeated, thus, “For the *word* of the cross,” in contrast to “the wisdom of mere *words*” above. This is the word of real power.

Them that perish.—Better, *those that are perishing*, and *us who are being saved*, the former referring to those who have not received the gospel, and the latter to those who have (2 Cor. ii. 15; iv. 3).

The power of God.—The cross and all that it represents is the greatest display of the power of God (Acts viii. 10).

(19) **For it is written.**—This is a further explanation of why the word of the gospel, and not the word of merely human wisdom, is “the power of God.” The quotation which follows consists of two passages in Isaiah, and is taken from the LXX., one word being altered. We have here “bring to nothing,” instead of “I will conceal.” Words which originally applied to those who assumed to be the guides of the Jewish race (Isa. xxix. 14), apply with greater force to those who would presume to be Christian leaders.

(20) To the second quotation, which was originally a song of triumph over the enemies of Israel, the Apostle gives a general application.

The wise.—The general reference in this word is to those who would exalt human knowledge, while “the scribe” indicates the Jew, and the “disputer” the Greek, who discussed philosophy (Acts vi. 9; ix. 29).

Of this world.—These words qualify all three mentioned, and not exclusively “the disputer.” “World” (more literally, *age*) does not here mean the physical world, but, in an ethical sense, “this age,” in contrast to that which is “to come” (Matt. xii. 32; Mark x. 30). It is employed afterwards (last word of verse 20, and in verse 21) to designate all who are outside the Christian communion, as in the next verse it is contrasted with “them that believe.”

(21) **For.**—This is an explanation and evidence of how God made the wisdom of the world to be only “folly.”

After that (better, *inasmuch as*) is not here a note of time, but of casual relation.

In the wisdom of God.—These words can scarcely be taken as an expression of a kind of

the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

(22) For the Jews require a sign,^a and the Greeks seek after wisdom : (23) but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ; (24) but unto

^a Matt. 12. 38.

them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men ; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how

approval of God's wisdom in so arranging the method of revelation, but they rather refer to God's wisdom evidenced in nature, and in the teachings of lawgivers and prophets. The world by its wisdom did not attain to a knowledge of God in His wisdom displayed in creation (Acts xvii. 26 ; Rom. i. 19).

It pleased God.—The world having thus failed to gain a true knowledge of God in His wisdom, He gave them such knowledge through that very proclamation of "the cross" which those "that perish" call foolishness. The contrast so strikingly put here is between (1) the *failure* of the world by means of its wisdom to know God, in His wisdom displayed to all in His mighty works, and to the Jews in His great teachers ; and (2) the *success* of this "folly" of the gospel, as they called it, in saving all who believed it (Rom. i. 16).

(22) **For.**—This is a further unfolding of the fact of the simplicity of the preaching of the Cross. It pandered neither to Jewish-minded persons (not in the Greek "*the Jews*," "*the Gentiles*," but simply "*Jews*," "*Gentiles*") who desired visible portents to support the teaching, nor to those of Greek taste who desired an actual and clear philosophic proof of it. (See

Matt. xii. 38 ; Mark viii. 11 ; Luke xi. 16 ; John iv. 48).

(23) **But we preach.**—The gospel of Christ crucified made its way by those very qualities which they regarded as "weakness and folly," vindicating itself as "the power of God," more mighty than any "sign" a Jew might ask for ; and "the wisdom of God," surpassing any merely intellectual "wisdom" which a Greek might desire.

(24) **Them which are called.**—St. Paul always speaks of all Christians as "the called," not using that word in the narrower sense to which some modern religious sects have restricted it.

(25) **Because.**—This introduces the reason why Christ, as being crucified, is the power and wisdom of God, viz., because God's folly (as they call it) is wiser, not "than the wisdom of men," as some understand this passage, but than men themselves—embracing in that word all that men can know or hope ever to know ; and the weakness of God (as they regard it) is stronger than men.

(26) **For ye see your calling.**—Better, imperative (as in chaps. viii. 9 ; x. 18 ; xvi. 10), *For see your calling*. The Apostle directs them to look at the facts regarding

that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called : ⁽²⁷⁾ but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are

mighty ; ⁽²⁸⁾ and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are : ⁽²⁹⁾ that no flesh should glory in his presence. ⁽³⁰⁾ But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God

their own calling to Christianity, as an illustration of the truth of what he has just written, viz., that though there were, perhaps, a few of high birth and education who were called, and responded to that call, yet that these are "not many." It has been well remarked, "the ancient Christians were, for the greater part, slaves and persons of humble rank; the whole history of the progress of the Church is in fact a gradual triumph of the unlearned over the learned, of the lowly over the great, until the emperor himself cast his crown at the foot of Christ's cross" (Ols-hausen); or, as an English writer puts it, "Christianity with the irresistible might of its weakness shook the world."

⁽²⁷⁾ **Foolish things.**—The neuter is used probably for the purpose of generalising, and it expresses the qualities of the men whom God has chosen—"the wise" is masculine in the Greek, showing that it is still of "persons" the Apostle is speaking.

⁽²⁸⁾ **And things which are not.**—This climax loses somewhat of its force by the insertion of the word "and," which is not in some of the best MSS., and "yea," which

is not in any MS. Omitting the word "and," the sentence is not an addition to the things already mentioned, but a general and emphatic summary of all the things which have been already contrasted with their opposites. After the words "hath God chosen" there is a slight pause, and then the Apostle describes all those things which he has declared to be God's choice, as things which "are not"—*i.e.*, do not in men's estimation even exist (Rom. iv. 17; ix. 25; see also Job xxxiv. 19, 24).

⁽³⁰⁾ **But.**—So far from boasting in His presence, we all owe all to Him. He is the author of the spiritual life of us who are in union with Christ, "who *was* (not "is") made wisdom unto us *from* God." The past tense here refers us back to the fact of the Incarnation; in it Christ became to us God's revelation of Himself, thus giving us a wisdom from the source of all wisdom, which surpasses utterly any wisdom we could have derived from nature or from man. Not only is Christ the source of whatever true wisdom we have, but also (so adds the Apostle) of whatever "righteousness" and "holiness" we have—spiritual

is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: ⁽³¹⁾ that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.^a

A.D. 59.

CHAPTER II.—⁽¹⁾ And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom,^b declaring unto you the testimony of God. ⁽²⁾ For I determined not to

b ch. 1. 17.

a Jer. 9. 22.

gifts, as well as gifts of knowledge, come all from Him—and beyond all that, he is also our redemption, the “ransom” paid for us, by which we are redeemed from the bondage and slavery of sin. (See John viii. 34; Rom. vi. 18, 20; viii. 21, 23; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.)

⁽³¹⁾ **That.**—So that it might be as the prophet wrote, “He that boasteth, let him boast in the Lord.” This is not a literal quotation, but only an adaptation and paraphrase from the LXX. of Jer. ix. 23, 24. Our only true boasting before God is that we are in Christ, that all we have we owe entirely to Him; we can only glory in, not ourselves or what we have or are, but in the fact that He is our benefactor. Thus, in St. Chrysostom’s quaint words, Paul “always fasteneth them on with nails to the name of Christ.”

This concludes St. Paul’s general explanation of God’s method, and he then turns to his own conduct, to show how entirely it was in harmony with God’s plan, which he has just explained and vindicated.

II.

⁽¹⁾ **And I.**—The Apostle now proceeds to show how he personally, in both the matter and manner of his teaching at Corinth, had acted in accordance with those great

principles which he has already explained as God’s method. “The testimony of God” is St. Paul’s testimony concerning God in Christ (chap. i. 6; 2 Tim. i. 8).

⁽²⁾ **I determined not to know.**—Better, *I did not determine to know.* The only subject of teaching concerning which the Apostle had formed a determined resolve in his mind when coming to Corinth was the preaching Christ, and Him as being crucified. We have here a statement of what was ever the subject-matter of apostolic teaching. St. Paul did not dwell on the miraculous in the life of Christ, which would have pandered to the Jewish longing for a “sign”; nor did he put forward elaborate “theories” of the gospel, which would have been a concession to the Greek’s longing after “wisdom”; but he preached a personal Christ, and especially dwelt on the fact that He had been crucified (chap. i. 17, 23; Gal. vi. 14; Phil. ii. 8). We can scarcely realise now the stumbling-block which the preaching of a crucified Christ must have been to Jews and Greeks, the enormous temptation to keep the cross in the background which the early teachers would naturally have felt, and the sublime and confident faith which must have nerved St. Paul to make it the central fact of all his teaching. For us the cross is

know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ⁽³⁾ And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. ⁽⁴⁾ And my

¹ Or, *persuasive*.
^a ² Pet. i. 16.

speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing¹ words of man's wisdom,^a but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: ⁽⁵⁾ that your faith should

illuminated with the glories of eighteen centuries of civilisation, and consecrated with the memory of all that is best and noblest in the history of Christendom. To every Jew and to every Gentile it conveyed but one idea, that of the most revolting and most degrading punishment. The remembrance of this fact will enable us to realise how uncompromising was the Apostle's teaching—how it never "accommodated itself" to any existing desire or prejudice. This surely is no small evidence of the divine origin of the religion of which the Apostles were the heralds!

⁽³⁾ **And I was with you.**—To show that the real force of his teaching lay in its subject-matter, and not in any power with which he may have proclaimed the gospel, the Apostle now dwells upon his own physical weakness. The "weakness and fear and trembling" of which St. Paul speaks here had in it probably a large element of that self-distrust which so noble and sensitive a nature would feel in the fulfilment of such an exalted mission as the preaching of the Cross. I cannot think, however, the allusion is only to that. There is, I believe, a reference also to what we may call a physical apprehension of danger. The bravest are not those who do not experience any sensation of fear, but

rather those who keenly appreciate danger, who have an instinctive shrinking from it, and yet eventually by their moral might conquer this dread. There are traces of this element in St. Paul's character to be found in several places, as, for example, in Acts xviii. 9, when the Lord encourages him when labouring at Corinth with the hopeful words, "Be not afraid;" again in Acts xxiii. 11, when the terrible scene before Ananias had depressed him, the Lord is with him to strengthen him, "Be of good cheer, Paul;" and in Acts xxvii. 24, when the angel of the Lord appears to him amid the storm and shipwreck, "Fear not, Paul."

⁽⁴⁾ **And my speech.**—The result which necessarily followed from this weakness and trembling was that neither his "speech" (*i.e.*, the style of his teaching), nor his "preaching" (*i.e.*, the subject-matter of his teaching) were of such a kind as to appeal to the natural tastes of the Corinthians.

Demonstration of the Spirit.—The Apostle's demonstration of the truth of the gospel was the result of no human art or skill, but came from the Spirit and power of God, and therefore the Corinthians could glory in no human teacher, but only in the power of God, which was the true source of the success of the gospel amongst them.

not stand¹ in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

⁽⁶⁾ Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world,

¹ Gr. *be.* that come to nought: ⁽⁷⁾ but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: ⁽⁸⁾ which none of the princes of this world knew:

⁽⁶⁾ **Howbeit we speak wisdom.**—Nevertheless, there is a wisdom in the gospel. The assertion is in the Greek a more striking contrast to verse 4 than appears in the English. In the original (verse 4) the word is “wisdom,” and not “*man’s* wisdom,” as in the English. Thus the statement here is a verbal contradiction of that in verse 4. In using the plural “we,” St. Paul implies that he did not stand alone among the Apostles in the method of his teaching.

Them that are perfect—*i.e.*, those who are grown up, and not “babes” (chap. iii. 1; see also xiv. 20). The “wisdom” of the gospel is that deep spiritual truth which only those whose spiritual natures have been trained and cultivated were capable of understanding. This “wisdom,” however, the Apostle had not taught the Corinthians; he had only taught them the alphabet of Christianity, for they were still but “babes”—they were still only “fleshly” (chap. iii. 3). That the Apostle himself not only grasped the higher truths which he designates the “wisdom” of the gospel, but taught them gladly when there were hearers capable of appreciating them, is evident from many passages in the Epistles to the Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians,

where he unfolds the “mysteries” of the gospel. (See Rom. xi. 25; xvi. 25.)

Yet not.—Better, *a wisdom, however, not of this world.*

That come to nought.—Better, *which are being brought to nought*, the reference here being, not to the inherent transitoriness of human wisdom and teachers, but to the fact that they are being brought to nought by God’s rejection of them, and His choice of the “weak” things as the means of spreading the gospel (chap. i. 28).

⁽⁷⁾ **In a mystery.**—The writer explains in these words the plan on which his speaking of God’s wisdom proceeded, that he dealt with it as the ancient mysteries were dealt with, explaining certain truths only to the initiated, and not to all (chap. iv. 1; Col. i. 26).

Hidden.—Heretofore unrevealed, but now made manifest in Christ and by His teachers (Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. iii. 10). And this has been in accordance with what God ordained “before the beginning of time,” to our *glory*, as distinct from the humiliation of the world’s teaching, which is coming to nought.

⁽⁸⁾ **They would not have crucified.**—The conduct of the princes and rulers of this world, alike Jewish and Gentile, illustrates

For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁽⁹⁾ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,^a neither have entered into the heart of man,

^a Isa. 64.
4.

the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. ⁽¹⁰⁾ But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit :
For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep

and proves the previous assertion (John viii. 19 ; xix. 9).

Lord of glory.—In striking contrast to the ignominy of the crucifixion.

⁽⁹⁾ **As it is written.**—Where do the words which follow occur ? They are not to be found as here given anywhere in the Old Testament. It has therefore been suggested (Origen) that they are from some apocryphal book, or some book which has been lost, as is supposed many have been. Chrysostom also suggests that it may be a reference, not to a writing, but to historical facts, as in Matt. ii. 23. None of these explanations would justify the use of that phrase, “it is written,” with which these words are introduced, and which in the apostolic writings is confined to quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures. It is not used where the words are taken from other sources (see *e.g.*, Jude 9, 14). Although the words given here are not to be found in the same sequence in any passage in the Old Testament, still there are phrases scattered through the writings of Isaiah (see Isa. lxiv. 4 ; lxv. 17 ; see also lxii. 15 in the LXX.), which would easily be joined together in memory and resemble even verbally the passage as written here by the Apostle. This is not the only place in which St. Paul

would seem to thus refer to the Old Testament Scriptures (see chap. i. 19, 20) when he is not basing any argument upon a particular sentence in the Scriptures, but merely availing himself of some thoughts or words in the Old Testament as an illustration of some truth which he is enforcing.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **But God hath revealed them unto us.**—Here the emphatic word is “us.” The latter part of verses 8 and 9 are parenthetical, and the sense goes back to the beginning of verse 8. “None of the princes of this age know these things, but God hath revealed them unto us His apostles and teachers” (Matt. xiii. 11 ; xvi. 17 ; 2 Cor. xii. 1). This revelation of spiritual truth is made by the Holy Spirit of God to our spirits (Rom. viii. 16). The Apostle gives two proofs that the Apostles have this knowledge, and that the Holy Spirit is the source of it : 1 (verses 10 and 11), because the Holy Spirit alone is capable of imparting this knowledge ; and 2 (verses 12—16), because the Holy Spirit has been given to us the Apostles.

Searcheth all things.—The word “searcheth” here does not convey the idea of inquiry for the purpose of acquiring knowledge, but rather complete and accurate knowledge itself, as in Rom. viii. 27 ; see also Ps. cxxxix. 1.

things of God. ⁽¹¹⁾ For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

⁽¹²⁾ Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which

is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God ⁽¹³⁾ Which things also we speak, ^{a 2 Pet. 1 16.} not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ⁽¹⁴⁾ But the

⁽¹¹⁾ What man . . . —Better, *Who of men knoweth the things of a man? but the spirit of the man which is in him knoweth them.*

The things of God knoweth no man.—These words cannot be taken as an assertion that man cannot have any knowledge of the things of God; but the Apostle urges that man, as man, cannot know the things of God, but that his knowledge of these things is in virtue of his having the Spirit of God dwelling in him.

⁽¹²⁾ **We.**—This must not be confined to the Apostles exclusively. Though referring primarily to them, it includes all the members of the Christian Church as one with its teachers and rulers. The "things freely given us of God" mean all spiritual things.

⁽¹³⁾ **Not in the words.**—Not only the gospel truths themselves, but the very form and manner in which those truths are taught is the result of spiritual insight.

Comparing spiritual things with spiritual.—Better, *explaining spiritual things in spiritual language*; really only another more pointed form of stating what he has just said. The word translated here "comparing" in our Authorised version is used in the sense of

expounding or teaching in the LXX. (Gen. xl. 8, 16; Dan. v. 12), especially of dreams, where the dream is, so to speak, "compared" with the interpretation. So here, the spiritual things are "compared" with the spiritual language in which they are stated. Another meaning—*explaining spiritual things to spiritual men*—has been suggested, but that adopted would seem to be the more simple and natural. This second interpretation, would make these words the introduction to the remark which follows about "the spiritual man," but it involves a use of the word in which it is not found elsewhere in the New Testament.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **But the natural man.**—To understand this and other passages in which St. Paul speaks of "natural" and "spiritual" men, it is important to recollect that our ordinary manner of speaking of man as consisting of "soul and body"—unless "soul" be taken in an untechnical sense to denote the whole immaterial portion—is altogether inaccurate. True psychology regards man as a trinity of natures. (See Matt. x. 28.) In accordance with this, St. Paul speaks of man as consisting of body (*soma*), soul (*psyche*), and spirit

natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. (15) But he that is spiritual judgeth¹ all things,^a yet he himself is judged² of no man. (16) For who hath

A. D. 59.
 1 Isa. 40, 13 ;
 Rom. 11. 34.
 3 Gr. shall.
 1 Or, discerneth
 a Prov. 28. 5.
 2 Or, discerned.

known the mind of the Lord,^b that he may³ instruct him ? But we have the mind of Christ.

CHAPTER III.—

(1) And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes

(*pneuma*) ; the *soma* is our physical nature ; the *psyche* is our intellectual nature, embracing also our desires and human affections ; the *pneuma* is our spiritual nature. Thus in each of us there is a somatical man, a psychical man, and a pneumatical man ; and according as any one of those parts of the nature dominates over the other, so is the character of the individual person. One in whom the *soma* is strongest is a “carnal,” or “fleshly,” man ; one in whom the intellect or affections predominate is a “natural,” or “psychic,” man ; and one in whom the spirit rules (which it can do only when enlightened and guided by the Spirit of God, which acts on it) is a “spiritual” man. (See 1 Thess. v. 23.)

Natural.—That is, literally, that part of our nature which we call “mind,” and hence signifies that man in whom pure intellectual reason and the merely natural affections predominate. Now such a one cannot grasp spiritual truth any more than the physical nature, which is made to discern physical things, can grasp intellectual things. Spiritual truth appeals to the spirit of the man, and therefore is intelligible only to those who are “spiritual,” *i.e.*, in whom the

pneuma is not dormant, but quickened by the Holy *Pneuma*.

(15) **He that is spiritual.**—The spiritual man judges all spiritual truth, but he himself is judged by none who are not spiritual. (See chap. xiv. 29 ; 1 John iv. 1.)

(16) **For.**—This is the proof that the enlightened spiritual man cannot be judged by any one who is not thus enlightened. “Who (thus uninstructed) can know the mind of the Lord Jesus, that he may instruct Him ?”

But we.—That is, spiritual men, including the Apostles. The Apostle here identifies Christ with the Spirit, whom he has previously spoken of as the Teacher of spiritual things. He does not mean to assert that the Apostles knew all that the mind of Christ knew, but that all things which they did know were from Him and spiritual (John xv. 15).

III.

(1) **And I.**—Again, as in chap. ii. 6, the Apostle shows how general principles which he had just explained were exemplified in his own conduct. In the closing verses of chap. ii. St. Paul has enunciated the general method of teaching

in Christ. ⁽²⁾ I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. ⁽³⁾ For ye are yet carnal.

¹ Or, factions.
² Gr. according to man?

For whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions,¹ are ye not carnal, and walk as men?² ⁽⁴⁾ For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another,

spiritual truth as being dependent upon the receptive powers of those who are being taught. He now proceeds to point out to them that their own character, as being wanting in spirituality, was the real hindrance to his teaching them the higher spiritual truth which may be called "the wisdom" of the gospel.

As unto carnal.—Better, *as being carnal.* Our version may seem to imply that the Apostle spoke to them *as if* they were carnal, though they really were not so; but the force of the passage is that they were indeed carnal, and that the Apostle taught them not as if they were such, but as being such. "Carnal" is here the opposite of "spiritual," and does not involve any reference to what we would commonly speak of as carnal sin.

Babes in Christ.—This is the opposite of the "full grown" in chap. ii. 6, to whom the "wisdom" could be taught. (See also Col. i. 28, "full grown in Christ.") It may be an interesting indication of the "manliness" of St. Paul's character and his high estimate of it in others, that he constantly uses the words "babe" and "childhood" in a depreciatory sense. (See Rom. ii. 20; Gal. iv. 3; Eph. iv. 14.)

⁽²⁾ **Milk . . . meat.**—The use of the word "infant" naturally suggests these two images for the higher wisdom and for the simpler truths of the gospel respectively.

Hitherto ye were not able.—Better, *for ye were not yet able.* Up to this point the Apostle has been speaking of the condition in which he found the Corinthians when he came first to Corinth, and he proceeds from this to rebuke them for continuing in this condition. He does not blame them for having been "babes" at the outset, but he does in the following passage blame them for not having yet grown up out of infancy.

^(2, 3) **Neither yet now are ye able, for ye are yet carnal.**—Better, *but not even now are ye able, for ye are still carnal.* It is for this absence of growth—for their continuing up to this time in the same condition—that the Apostle reproaches them; and he shows that the fault which they find with him for not having given them more advanced teaching really lies at their own door.

⁽³⁾ **For whereas.**—Better, *For since there is.*

As men.—Better, *after the manner of man—i.e.,* after a merely human and not after a spiritually enlightened manner. In Rom. iii. 5; Gal. i. 2; also Rom. xiv. 5, the opposite condition is expressed by the same Greek particle used with our Lord's name, "according to Jesus Christ."

⁽⁴⁾ **One saith, I am of Paul.**—These and the following words explain exactly what the Apostle means by their being "carnal," and

I am of Apollos ; are ye not carnal ?

(5) Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to

every man ? (6) I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase.

(7) So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth ;

walking after a merely human manner. Only two of the factions—those of Paul and of Apollos—are mentioned as types of the rest. The factious spirit was in each and all the “parties” the same, but the particular difference between the teaching of the higher wisdom and the simpler truths of the gospel was best illustrated by these two.

The selection for rebuke of those who called themselves by the Apostle’s own name was, no doubt, intended by him to show that it was no matter of personal jealousy on his part. He specially condemns those who magnified his name. It is for his Master alone that he is jealous.

Are ye not carnal ?—Better, *are ye not only men ?* carrying on the idea expressed in verse 3.

(6) The Apostle now proceeds to explain (verses 5—9) what is the true position and work of Christian ministers. He asserts that all alike—both those who teach the simpler truths and those who build up upon that primary knowledge—are only instruments in God’s hand ; and in verses 10—15 (replying to those who sneered at and despised his simple teaching as compared to the higher instruction of Apollos) he points out that though all are only instruments used by God, yet that if there be any difference of honour or utility in the various kinds of work for which God so uses His ministers, the greater work is the planting the seed, or the

laying the foundation. There can be only one foundation—it is alike necessary and unvarying—many others may build upon it, with varied material and with different results.

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos ?—Better, *What then is Apollos ? what is Paul ?* and to these abrupt and startling questions the answer is, “Merely those whom Christ used, according as He gave to each his own peculiar powers as the means of your conversion.” (Such is the force of the word “believed” here as in Rom. xiii. 11). It is therefore absurd that you should exalt them into heads of parties. They are only instruments—each used as the great Master thought best.

(6) **I have planted, Apollos watered.**—By an image borrowed from the processes of agriculture the Apostle explains the relation in which his teaching stood to that of Apollos—and how all the results were from God. This indication of St. Paul having been the founder, and Apollos the subsequent instructor, of the Corinthian Church, is in complete harmony with what we read of the early history of that Church in Acts xviii. 27 and xix. 1. After St. Paul had been at Corinth (Acts xviii. 1), Apollos, who had been taught by Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, came there and “helped them much which had already believed.”

(7) **Any thing—i.e., “anything**

but God that giveth the increase. ⁽⁸⁾ Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.^a ⁽⁹⁾ For

¹ Or, till-age.

^a Ps. 62. 12; Gal. 6. 5.

we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry,¹ ye are God's building.

⁽¹⁰⁾ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-

worth mentioning" (chap. x. 19; Gal. ii. 6 and vi. 3).

⁽⁸⁾ **Are one.**—The planter and the waterer are one in that they are both working in the same cause. "But," says the Apostle (not "and," as in our version), "each man shall receive his own reward from God, not from man, according to his labour." There is an individuality as well as a unity in the work of the ministry. This is, however, not a thing to be noticed by men, but it will be recognised by the great Master.

⁽⁹⁾ Thrice in this verse the Apostle repeats the name of God with emphasis, to explain and to impress the assertion of the previous verse, that men are to recognise the unity, and God alone the diversity, in the ministerial work and office. "*We* are God's fellow-labourers; *you* are God's field—God's house." The image is thus suddenly altered from agriculture to architecture, as the latter can be more amplified, and will better illustrate the great variety of work of which the Apostle proceeds subsequently to speak. This sudden change of metaphor is a characteristic of St. Paul's style; a similar instance is to be found in 2 Cor. x. 4—8, where the illustration given from architecture is used instead of the military metaphor which is employed in the earlier verses of that passage.

See also 1 Cor. ix. 7, and Eph. iii. 17, and Col. ii. 6—7, where there is the introduction of three distinct images in rapid succession in so many sentences. It has been suggested that possibly the use of the word "field," in the Greek "Georgion," was the cause of the Christian name "George" becoming so popular in the Church.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **According to the grace of God.**—The Apostle being about to speak of himself as "a wise masterbuilder," takes care by commencing his statement with these words to show that he is not indulging in self-laudation, but merely pointing out what God had given him the grace to do. (See Rom. i. 5 and xii. 3).

Wise—*i.e.*, skilful or judicious.

Another buildeth thereon.—The sequence of the work here is the same as in the planting and watering of the previous illustration. The use of the indefinite word "another" avoids what might be considered the invidiously frequent repetition of the name of Apollos, and also indicates that there were others also who came after Paul, as is evident from chap. iv. 15. (See Rom. xv. 20.)

But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.—Better, *But let each one see in what manner he buildeth thereon.* The argument in this and the

builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon.

But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. ⁽¹¹⁾ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus

^{1 Gr. is revealed.}

Christ. ⁽¹²⁾ Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; ⁽¹³⁾ every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed¹ by

following verse is that there can be only one foundation in the spiritual building — namely, the personal Jesus Christ. That foundation the Apostle has laid. None can alter it or add to it as a foundation; but there may be an immense variety in the materials with which those who come after the laying of the foundation may build up the superstructure. Therefore their own work and “how” they build (*i.e.*, with what materials), and not the one foundation once for all and unalterably laid, should be the subject of their thought and care.

⁽¹²⁾ Now if any man . . . — Better, *But if any man.*

Precious stones.—Not gems, but grand and costly stones, such as marble. “Hay,” dried grass used to fill up chinks in the walls. “Stubble,” stalks with the ears of corn cut off, and used for making a roof of thatch.

Many ingenious attempts have been made to apply the imagery of this passage in detail to various doctrines or Christian virtues, but it seems best to regard it as broadly and in outline bringing before the reader the two great ideas of permanent and ephemeral work, and the striking contrast between them. The truth brought forward is primarily, if not exclusively, for teachers. The image is taken from what

would have met the eye of a traveller in Ephesus where St. Paul now was, or in Corinth where his letter was to be first read. It is such a contrast as may be seen (though not in precisely the same striking form of difference) in London even now. There were stately palaces of marble and of granite, with roof and column glittering with gold and silver decorations, and close by these the wretched hovels of the poor and outcast, the walls made of laths of wood, with the interstices stuffed with straw, and a thatched roof above. Then arose before the Apostle's vision the thought of a city being visited by a mighty conflagration, such as desolated Corinth itself in the time of Mummius. The mean structures of perishable wood and straw would be utterly consumed, while, as was actually the case in Corinth, the mighty palaces and temples would stand after the fire had exhausted itself. Thus, says St. Paul, it will be with the work of Christian teachers when the “day of the Lord is revealed in fire.” The fire of that day will prove and test the quality of each work.

⁽¹³⁾ Revealed by fire.—Better, *revealed in fire.* For the general scope of this passage, see verse 12 above. The day of the coming of

fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. ⁽¹⁴⁾ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. ⁽¹⁵⁾ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire.

^a ch. 6.
^{19.}

¹ Or,
destroy.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God,^a and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? ⁽¹⁷⁾ If any man defile¹ the temple of God, him shall God destroy ; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Let no man deceive

the Lord is always thus represented as bursting suddenly with a rush of light and blaze of fire upon the earth. (See Mal. iii. 1, 2, 3; iv. 1; 2 Thess. i. 8; ii. 8.)

⁽¹⁴⁾ This is the general application to Christian teachers of what has gone before. Those who have built well shall have their reward in their work having survived the trial of the fire; those who have built otherwise shall lose everything—their work, which should have remained as their reward, will perish in the fire—and they themselves will be as men who only make good their escape by rushing through a conflagration, leaving all that was theirs to be destroyed. (See Mark ix. 49.)

⁽¹⁵⁾ **So as.**—These words remind us that the whole passage, and especially the reference to fire, is to be regarded as metaphorical, and not to be understood in a literal and physical sense. Forgetting this, Roman divines have evolved from these words the doctrine of purgatory.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **The temple of God.**—From the thought of grand edifices in general the Apostle goes on to the particular case of a building which is not only splendid but "holy"—the temple of God—thus

reminding the reader that the rich and valuable metals and stones spoken of previously are to represent spiritual attainments. He introduces the passage with the words "Do ye not know," implying that their conduct was such as could only be pursued by those who were either ignorant or forgetful of the truth of which he now reminds them.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **If any man defile.**—Better, *If any man destroy*—the opposite of "building up," which should be the work of the Christian teacher; the architectural image being still in view.

Which temple ye are.—Literally, *the which are ye*, "which" referring rather to holy than to the temple; the argument being that as they are "holy" by the indwelling of God's Spirit, therefore they are the temple of God. As God commanded the punishment of death to be inflicted on whoever defiled the actual Temple (see Ex. xxviii. 43; Lev. xvi. 2), because it was holy unto the Lord, and His presence dwelt there; so they, having the same Spirit in them, were a temple also holy unto the Lord, and God would not leave him unpunished who destroyed or marred this spiritual temple.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Passing from the difference

himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. ⁽¹⁹⁾ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. ^a ⁽²⁰⁾ And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of

^b Ps. 94
11.

the wise, ^b that they are vain. ⁽²¹⁾ Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's ; ⁽²²⁾ whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are your's ; ⁽²³⁾ and ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's.

^a Job. 5
13.

between the work of one teacher and that of another, which has occupied him since verse 5, the Apostle now returns to the subject from which he branched off there (the magnifying of one teacher above another), and proceeds to show (verses 18—21) that merely human wisdom is in itself worthless for spiritual purposes, and, therefore, that the possession of it alone is no reason for the exaltation of the teacher who is endowed with it. For the full meaning of the "wisdom" which the Apostle speaks of here, see chap. i. 20.

Let him become a fool—*i.e.*, in the sight of the world, in order that he may become "wise" in the sight of God.

⁽¹⁹⁾ With God.—Better, *in the sight of God* (Rom. ii. 13).

For it is written.—By two passages, one from Job, and the other from the Psalms, St. Paul proves the truth of his previous assertion regarding God's estimate of mere "worldly wisdom." It may be noticed that with the exception of the reference in Jas. v. 11 to the "proverbial patience" of Job, of which the writer says "ye have *heard*" (not *read*), this is the only allusion to the book of Job

or to Job in the New Testament.

⁽²¹⁾ Therefore.—Not because of what has been mentioned, but introducing what he is about to mention. Let party-spirit cease. Do not degrade yourselves by calling yourselves after the names of any man, for everything is yours—these teachers only exist for you. The enthusiasm of the Apostle, as he speaks of the privileges of Christians, leads him on beyond the bare assertion necessary to the logical conclusion of the argument, and enlarging the idea he dwells, in a few brief and impressive utterances, on the limitless possessions—in life and in death, in the present life and that which is future—which belong to those who are united with Christ. But they must remember that all this is theirs because they "are Christ's." They are possessors because possessed by Him. "His *service* is their perfect *freedom*," as the Collect in the English Prayer Book puts it, or, more strikingly, as it occurs in the Latin version, "Whom to serve, is to reign."

⁽²³⁾ And Christ is God's.—Probably these words were added, not only as being the great climax

CHAPTER IV.—⁽¹⁾ Let | ^{A.D. 59.} | and stewards of the myster-
 a man so account of us, as | | teries of God. ⁽²⁾ More-
 of the ministers of Christ, | | over it is required in

of the gradual ascent up which the Apostle's thoughts and language have gone in the whole passage, but as avoiding any danger of the party who called themselves by the name of Christ, arrogating anything to themselves from the previous words, "Ye are Christ's," if the passage had concluded with them. Christ is God's as being Mediator (as John xiv. 28, and xvii. 3). There was no danger, in that early age of the Church, of these words being misunderstood (as some have endeavoured to misunderstand them since) as in the least implying a want of absolute identity between the Son, in regard of His Divine Nature, and the Father.

IV.

(1-5) The first five verses of this chapter contain a further argument against party-spirit as it existed in the Corinthian Church—viz., that God alone can judge of any man's work whether it be worthy, and that God, unlike man, who selects only some one for praise, will give to every worker his own proper share of approval.

(1) **Man.**—In a generic sense means "every one" (as in chap. xi. 28, and Gal. vi. 1).

Us—*i.e.*, Paul himself and Apollos.

As of the ministers of Christ.—Better, *as ministers of Christ.* The word used for "ministers" here expresses more strongly the idea of subordination than the word which occurs in chap. iii. 5.

It implies not only those who are under one superior, but those who are in a still inferior position—the officer who has to obey orders, as in Matt. v. 25—a "servant" (Matt. xxvi. 58). Though servants, their office is one of great trust; they are "stewards" to whom the owner of the house has entrusted the care of those sacred things—"mysteries"—which heretofore have been hidden, but are now made known to them, his faithful subordinates. It is to be remembered that even the steward in a Greek household was generally a slave.

(2) **Moreover it is required** . . .—Better, *Moreover here* (on earth) *inquiry is made in the case of stewards, in order that it may be found that one is faithful;* the word "found" having the force of "discovered," or "proved to be" (as in Matt. i. 18; Rom. vii. 10). The argument is here that, as in the case of an earthly steward, inquiry is made into his character as to whether he be trustworthy—so it will be with them who are stewards of the mysteries of God. That inquiry is, of course, made in regard to an earthly steward by his master in whose service he is; and so the Lord alone, whose stewards the Apostles were, shall be the inquirer into *their* faithfulness. If we take verse 2 as it is in our English version, it would seem to imply that on this point of faithfulness the Church might prefer one steward to another. This would be to suggest

stewards, that a man be found faithful. ⁽³⁾ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment :¹ yea, I judge

¹ Gr. *day*.

not mine own self. ⁽⁴⁾ For I know nothing by myself ; yet am I not hereby justified : but he that judgeth me is the Lord. ⁽⁵⁾ Therefore judge nothing before

that to some extent, therefore, party-spirit might exist, which would be contrary to the whole argument from the commencement of the Epistle, and strikingly at variance with the remarks which immediately follow in verse 5. The rendering adopted above is a more literal translation of the best Greek texts, and also perfectly in harmony with the general sense of the passage.

⁽³⁾ **But with me it is a very small thing . . .**—As, however, the Corinthians had actually “judged” various of their teachers, the Apostle assures them that *their* judgment—or the judgment of the world generally—is to him “a very small matter”—nay, no earthly judgment is of any concern to him. He does not even judge himself as worthy and faithful because he is not conscious of any unfaithfulness; yet that is no justification to him—his only judge is the Lord.

Man's judgment.—The literal translation is *man's day*. Some have thought they saw in it a provincialism or a Hebraism. Probably, however, the explanation is that St. Paul lived with the idea of the day of the Lord as the judgment day so constantly before him, that he uses the words as synonymous. (Comp. also chap. iii. 13, “the day shall declare it.”)

⁽⁴⁾ **For I know nothing by myself.**—The general meaning of this passage is given in the previous

Notes. The Greek of the words rendered, “I know nothing of myself” is clearly “I am not conscious in myself” of having been unfaithful; the word being almost invariably used in classical Greek in a bad sense. In the English version the word “by” is used in a sense now nearly obsolete. To an English reader the passage at first sight seems to assert that St. Paul of his own power possessed no knowledge. In old English, however, the word “by” meant (not necessarily the instrument *by* which) frequently “in connection with” or “concerning.” In this sense it is found in Deut. xxvii. 16; Ezek. xxii. 7. In Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* a woman under examination is accused of having “spoken evil words *by* the queen.” It is still common to speak of one place being “by” (*i.e.*, in close contiguity to) another, and a “*bye-lane*” is a passage connected with a thoroughfare. The word “by” does not seem to have had necessarily the meaning of “against” which some have attributed to it; the sense of “concerning” would suit all the passages given above better than “against.”

⁽⁵⁾ **Before the time.**—This is explained by the following words to be “the day of the Lord.” When this arrives the truth will be ascertainable, for God will bring into light all the things at present hidden in the darkness, and will

the time,^a until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts : and then shall every man have praise of God.

(6) And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes ; that ye might learn in us

^a Matt. 7. 1; Rom. 2. 1.

¹ Gr. *distinguisheth thee.*

not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. (7) For who maketh thee to differ from another?¹ and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

(8) Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned

show forth the inner motives of each heart. Then every man (and not only one party leader, as at Corinth) shall have his due and proper praise from God—not from man.

(6) **These things**—*i. e.*, all that he has written about the factions. He only mentioned himself and Apollos (and not the other heads of parties), so that his motive in rebuking this schismatic spirit may not be misunderstood—which possibly it might have been had he written strongly and directly regarding Cephas and his admirers—and that those who read the Epistle might learn a lesson of humility. All that was said in condemnation of the spirit which exalted the Apostle and Apollos into party leaders, would apply with equal or greater force to all others; for they, as the planter and the waterer of the Corinthian vineyard, the layer of the foundation and the builder up of the Corinthian spiritual temple, were certainly the two whose exaltation by their followers might have seemed most pardonable.

That ye might learn in us

. . . —*i. e.*, “by our examples” you should learn not to go beyond what is written in the Scriptures—not to be found in any one particular passage, but in the general tone and scope of the Old Testament writings, which ever ascribe glory to God alone (as found in the passages referred to in chaps. i. 19, 31 ; iii. 19)—that none of you be puffed up on behalf of one (*i. e.*, Apollos) against another (*i. e.*, Paul), and *vice versa*. The Apostle here touches on the fact that this exaltation of teachers was really a gratification of their own pride. It was not that they “puffed up” the teacher, but themselves.

(7) **For . . .**—This is the explanation of why such “puffing up” is absurd. Even if one possess some gift or power, he has not attained it by his own excellence or power; it is the free gift of God.

(8) **Now ye are full.**—These three following sentences are ironical. The emphasis is on the word “now.” Ye are already (as distinct from us Apostles) full, rich kings. You act as if you had

as kings without us : and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. ⁽⁹⁾ For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death : for we are made a spectacle² unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

² Gr.
theatre.

⁽¹⁰⁾ We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but ye *are* wise in Christ ; we *are* weak, but ye *are* strong ; ye *are* honourable, but we *are* despised.

⁽¹¹⁾ Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have

already attained the crowning point in the Christian course. "Piety is an insatiable thing," says Chrysostom on this passage, "and it argues a childish mind to imagine from just the beginnings that you have attained the whole; and for men who are not even yet in the prelude of a matter to be highminded, as if they had laid hold of the end."

Without us.—The Apostle would have his converts be to him as his crown of rejoicing; but they now assume to have "come into the kingdom" without any connection with him who had won them to God.

And I would to God.—Here the irony is dropped, and these words are written with intense feeling and humility. The Apostle, reminded, as it were, by the word "reign," that the time will come when the war and controversies of the Church militant shall end, expresses his deep longing for that blessed change. (See chaps. iii. 22 and ix. 23, where similarly the Apostle shows that in rebuking the folly of the Corinthian Church he does not under-estimate their privileges.)

⁽⁹⁾ **For . . .**—This introduces the reason why he may well express the devout wish which he has just

uttered for the coming of the kingdom of his Lord. The imagery of this passage would be easily understood by the Corinthians, familiar as they were with the arena. The writer, in a few striking phrases, pictures himself and his apostolic brethren forming the "last and most worthless" band brought forth to struggle and die in the great arena, where the whole world, including men and angels, sit, spectators of the fight. There is, perhaps, a slight contrast intended here between the Corinthians sitting by criticising, and the Apostles engaging actually in the struggle against evil—a contrast which is brought out more strikingly in the brief and emphatic sentence forming verse 10.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **We are fools.**—This verse is charged with irony. Our connection with Christ, as His Apostles and preachers, may make us fools; you are, on the contrary, "wise Christians; we are weak Christians, ye strong; ye are glorified, made leaders of factions and churches, we are despised."

⁽¹¹⁾ **We both hunger.**—From the strong irony of the last verse, the Apostle here passes, in the pathetic and sad description which occupies verses 11—13, to show how

no certain dwelling place ;
 (12) and labour,^a working
 with our own hands :
 being reviled, we bless ;
 being persecuted, we suffer
 it : (13) being defamed,^b we

a Acts
 20. 34 ;
 1 Thess.
 2. 9 ;
 2 Thess.
 3. 8.

b Matt. 5.
 44.

intreat : we are made as
 the filth of the world, *and*
are the offscouring of all
 things unto this day.

(14) I write not these
 things to shame you, but

intensely true that last word "de-
 spised" was, as expressing his own
 position, not only in time past, but
 at the very hour of his writing.
 Here still there is an implied con-
 trast between their condition
 ("full," "rich," "kings," of verse
 8) and that of St. Paul himself.

Are naked.—The better read-
 ing is, *we are in need of sufficient*
clothing (as 2 Cor. xi. 27).

Are buffeted—*i.e.*, are treated
 like slaves, and not like "kings,"
 as you are.

**Have no certain dwelling-
 place.**—To be without a fixed
 home was a peculiar sign of want
 and degradation. (See Matt. viii.
 20 ; x. 23.)

(12) **And labour.**—While at
 Ephesus, whence this letter was
 written, the Apostle supported him-
 self by working with Aquila and
 Priscilla at tent-making. This
 labour was no recreation or pastime
 with St. Paul, it was hard and
 earnest work. (See 1 Thess. ii. 8,
 9 ; 2 Thess. iii. 8.) That this
 labour was rendered more excessive
 from the Apostle's characteristic
 generosity to others, we may con-
 clude from the expression used in
 his farewell to the Ephesian elders
 (Acts xx. 17—38), "Ye yourselves
 know that these hands have minis-
 tered unto my necessities, and to
 them that were with me."

Being reviled, we bless.—
 A striking contrast to the way in
 which the Corinthians would act

under similar circumstances, and
 yet a literal obedience to the teach-
 ing of the Master (Matt. v. 39,
 44). Thus the Apostle became in
 the eyes of the world "a fool" for
 Christ's sake.

(13) **The filth of the world.**
 —The word here used for "filth"
 occurs only in one other passage in
 the LXX., Prov. xxi. 18, where it
 has the idea of an additional expia-
 tory sacrifice. Perhaps the word
 is used here by the Apostle to in-
 clude that idea in the sufferings,
 the description of which here
 reaches a climax. It is not only
 that we are the filth and offscour-
 ing of all men, but we are so for
 the sake of others.

(14) **I write not these things
 to shame you.**—Better, *I write*
these things not as one making you
ashamed, but I am warning you as
beloved children. The mingled irony
 and reproach of the preceding
 verses here ceases, and from indig-
 nant expostulation the writer now
 turns to make a tender and touch-
 ing appeal to their better nature
 and their sympathy. This abrupt
 and sudden change in style is
 characteristic of the writings of
 St. Paul. Similar passages are
 nowhere to be found in the writings
 of the other Apostles. The follow-
 ing verses to the end of this chapter
 soften the severity of this early
 part of the Epistle by explaining
 in what spirit he has written, and
 the right which he has as their

as my beloved sons I warn you. ⁽¹⁵⁾ For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers : for in Christ Jesus I have begot-

ten you through the gospel. ⁽¹⁶⁾ Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. ⁽¹⁷⁾ For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and

“father in the faith” to so address them.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **For.**—The reason why he has a right to address them as a father would his children. They may have had since their conversion a host of instructors, but they could have only one father who begot them in Jesus Christ. That father was Paul. “I have begotten you.” *I*, emphatic as opposed to “many.” The word rendered “instructors” originally signified the slave who led the child to school, but subsequently had the larger meaning, which we attach to the word pedagogue. (See Gal. iii. 24, 25.) There is a contrast implied between the harsh severity of a pedagogue and the loving tenderness of a father.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **Wherefore.** — Because I stand in this relation I call you to preserve, as it were, in a moral sense, that family likeness which would naturally accompany such a relationship (Gal. iv. 12; Eph. v. 1; Phil. iii. 17).

⁽¹⁷⁾ **For this cause.**—When St. Paul contemplated a visit to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia he sent Timothy and Erastus in advance (Acts xix. 21, 22). It is to this fact allusion is here made—from xvi. 10, we see that the Apostle did not calculate on Timothy’s arrival in Corinth until after this letter had reached them. The rumours of the existence of factions in Corinth had reached St.

Paul before Timothy had departed, and were the cause of his desire that before himself visiting Corinth Timothy should do so, and bring the Corinthians to a better frame of mind before the Apostle’s arrival. After Timothy’s departure from Ephesus the Apostle heard from the household of Chloe how very much worse than he had imagined from the previous rumours was the state of affairs at Corinth. It would not do to let such a condition of things continue to grow and intensify until Timothy should arrive there, delayed as he would be in visiting other places in Macedonia and Achaia *en route*. Nor, indeed, would it be safe to leave one of Timothy’s nervous (chap. xvi. 10) and gentle temperament (perhaps the result of his having been brought up and educated entirely by women, 2 Tim i. 5) to deal with such a state of anarchy as the Apostle now knew to exist in Corinth. Further, the letter from Corinth had arrived since Timothy had left, and it required an immediate answer. Such reason, doubtless, influenced St. Paul in sending this letter to Corinth at once so as to anticipate the arrival of Timothy there. That you might return to the dutiful position of sons, I sent you one who is a son—a beloved and a faithful spiritual child—who will not be an addition to the too numerous instructors already at Corinth, but will, by what he says,

faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. ⁽¹⁹⁾ But I will come to you shortly,^a

^b Jas. 4.
15.

if the Lord will,^b and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. ⁽²⁰⁾ For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

⁽²¹⁾ What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the spirit of meekness?

^u Acts
19. 21.

and by his own example, remind you of my teaching (see 2 Tim. iii. 10), which he fully understands, and which never varies, being the same to every church. The emphatic use of the word "my son" here in reference to Timothy, taken in connection with the clear expression in verse 15 of what was involved in that spiritual relationship, shows that St. Paul had converted Timothy to the faith (Acts xvi. 1). In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul speaks of Timothy as his "brother" (2 Cor. i. 1).

⁽¹⁸⁾ Now some are puffed up.—Some of those in Corinth who were puffed up were in the habit of saying that the Apostle would not come and visit the Corinthian Church. The moment they heard the announcement that he was sending Timothy, they would naturally say, That is a proof of the truth of our assertion. He is afraid to come himself, so he sends Timothy in his stead. "But," says St. Paul, "I will come to you shortly, God willing"—his intention was to remain at Ephesus until after Pentecost (see chap. xvi. 8—"and then I shall take cognisance of spiritual power, and not of empty and boastful words; for that

kingdom which Christ founded, and which we, His ambassadors, are establishing, does not consist in mere words, but in spiritual might."

⁽²¹⁾ What will ye?—I give you a choice. I am coming to you as a father in any case. But shall I come as a father comes with a rod (Isa. xi. 4), and going to inflict punishment with it (such is the force of the Greek, "*in* a rod"); or as a father would come when no faults on the child's part need interfere with the perfect and unrestricted outflowing of his gentleness and love? The pathos of these last few words sufficiently indicate what the Apostle would himself prefer. The choice, however, rested with them. His love would be no love, if without any change on their part, it led him to show no displeasure where correction was for their sake absolutely needed. This is a great and striking example of St. Paul having the "mind of God." He treats the Corinthians as God ever treats His children.

This verse at once concludes this first part of the Epistle, in which the party-spirit and the evils resulting from it in Corinth are treated of, and naturally introduces

CHAPTER V.—⁽¹⁾ It is

A.D. 59.

Chap. v. 1—13.
The case of marriage with a step-mother.

reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such

fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.
⁽²⁾ And ye are puffed up,

the second topic to be discussed, viz., the case of incest which had occurred, it being one of the things which would compel the Apostle to visit Corinth, not "in love and in the spirit of meekness," but "with a rod."

V.

An entirely new subject, to which the concluding words of the last chapter form a natural introduction, is now treated of. Intelligence has reached the Apostle, through the members of Chloe's household (chap. i. 11), or through general report, that a member of the Corinthian Church has caused grave scandal by marrying his stepmother. This was aggravated by the fact that her husband, his father, was yet alive (2 Cor. vii. 12). Throughout the Roman empire such a union was regarded with abhorrence, and the toleration of it by the Christian community was calculated seriously to imperil the character of the early Church. Such a state of morals would be promptly seized upon by opponents, as an example of what must result from the "freedom of the gospel." Seeing what enormous interests were thus at stake, and how the success of Christianity itself would be imperilled by such conduct, the Apostle addresses the Corinthians on this topic with an almost startling severity and vehemence.

⁽¹⁾ It is reported commonly. —Better, *There is absolutely said to*

be fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles. All the best MSS. omit the word "named." The force of the statement is that the fornication was of such a kind (with a step-mother) as even the Gentile world, immoral as it was, regarded with disgust, and how infinitely worse, then, was it to find such tolerated amongst Christians, whose moral standard ought to be much higher.

One should have his father's wife.—The word "have" here used always implies in the New Testament actual marriage. It is, therefore, probable that she had been divorced from his father. The word for "his father's wife" is the Hebrew form of expression for stepmother. St. Chrysostom suggests "he said not his 'step-mother,' but 'his father's wife,' so as to strike much more severely;" but probably St. Paul used the Hebrew phrase instead of the ordinary Greek word for "step-mother," as it was in this phraseology that such a union was forbidden by the law of Moses (Lev. xviii. 8).

⁽²⁾ And ye are puffed up.—Better, *And are ye puffed up?* &c. We have instances of similar sentences beginning with "and," Luke x. 29. The Apostle cannot mean that they actually gloried in this act of sin, but that their temper of mind was of that kind which he has already described in the earlier chapters, puffing

and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. ⁽³⁾ For I verily,^a as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged¹ already, as though I were

^a Col. 2.

5.

¹ Or, determined.

present, concerning him that hath so done this deed.

⁽⁴⁾ In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus

themselves up, one against another, in party rivalry, instead of being united in one common grief by this common cause, which would lead them as one man to remove from among them the person who had done this deed.

⁽³⁾ For I verily.—The Apostle had fully made up his mind that this offender must be removed, and insists on the Corinthians doing it. So that the previous words imply they might as well have done it without waiting for his interference.

As absent in body.—Better, omit, “as,” which is not in the best MSS.

^(4, 5) In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . and my spirit.—These two verses contain the apostolic sentence on the offender, and may read thus: “I have already myself decided, in the name of our Lord Jesus, you being gathered together, and my spirit (as in chap. v. 3), in the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one,” &c.

The opening words were probably the form used in all public acts of the Church as a body, and “the power of our Lord Jesus” refers to that continual presence which Christ had promised His Church, and particular power which He had delegated to the Apostles to punish (Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18,

20; xxviii. 20). In this sentence we recognise, not merely a formal excommunication from church-fellowship, but a more severe punishment, which could only be inflicted by apostolic authority and power. Satan was regarded as the origin of all physical evil—hence the afflicted woman, in Luke xiii. 16, is spoken of as one “whom Satan hath bound these eighteen years.” St. Paul’s own bodily suffering is a “messenger of Satan” (2 Cor. xii. 7). The blindness of Elymas (Acts xiii. 8), and the death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v. 5), are instances of the infliction of bodily suffering by the Apostles. The deliverance of an offender unto Satan would therefore mean the expulsion of such a one from the Christian communion, and if that failed the actual infliction of some bodily suffering such as would destroy the flesh (not the body, but the flesh, the source and origin of the evil). Explicit directions for the excommunication by the Church of an offender, are given in chap. vii., but there is no direct instruction to inflict the further punishment spoken of here. It is, indeed, probable that the lesser punishment had the desired effect (see 2 Cor. ii. 6), and we subsequently find St. Paul pleading for the loving re-admission of the

Christ, ⁽⁵⁾ to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh,^b that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

⁽⁶⁾ Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?^a ⁽⁷⁾ Purge

^b 1 Tim. 1. 20.

¹ Or, *is slain.*

² Or, *holyday*

^a Gal. 5. 9.

out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed¹ for us: ⁽⁸⁾ therefore let us keep the feast,² not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and

offender into all the privileges of Christian communion.

⁽⁵⁾ **That the spirit may be saved.**—The object of this punishment was the destruction of the flesh, and the salvation of the man.

⁽⁶⁾ **Your glorying is not good.**—There is possibly a reference here to some boasting regarding their spiritual state contained in the letter which had reached St. Paul from Corinth, and to which part of this Epistle is a reply. (See chap. vii. 1.) So long as there is that one bad person amongst you it gives a bad character to the whole community, as leaven, though it may not have pervaded the entire lump, still makes it not the unleavened bread which was necessary for the Paschal Feast. This Epistle being written shortly before Pentecost (chap. xvi. 8), it was very likely some time about or soon after Easter, hence the leaven and the Paschal Feast naturally suggest themselves as illustrations. The Apostle passes on rapidly from the mention of the leaven to the whole scene of the feast. As with the most minute and scrupulous care the Jew would remove every atom of leaven when the Paschal lamb was to be eaten, so our Paschal Lamb having been slain, we must take care that no moral leaven

remains in the sacred household of the Church while she keeps her perpetual feast of prayer and thanksgiving.

⁽⁷⁾ **Purge out therefore the old leaven.**—It is not the offending man who is here spoken of, but it is the spirit in the Church which tolerated the evil, and which is to be purged out of their midst that they may become actually (a new lump) as they are by profession (unleavened).

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.—Better, *Christ our passover is slain*; “for us” is not in the best MSS. The word translated “sacrifice” is generally used in the New Testament in the sense simply of “slaying” or “killing” (Matt. xxii. 4; John x. 10; Acts x. 1, 13; xi. 7); and in the similar expressions regarding our Lord (Rev. v. 6, 12) the word is “wounded.”

⁽⁸⁾ **Old leaven**—*i.e.*, in their old state generally; and then the Apostle proceeds to particularise. Sincerity and truth are to take the place of malice and wickedness in the continuous life of the Christian. St. Chrysostom well remarks: “He said ‘Let us keep the feast’ as pointing out that the whole of time is a festival unto Christians, because of the excellence

wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

⁽⁹⁾ I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: ⁽¹⁰⁾ yet not altogether with the

fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. ⁽¹¹⁾ But now I have written unto you not to keep com-

of the good things which have been given."

⁽⁹⁾ I wrote unto you in an epistle.—These words have given rise to some controversy as to whether the Apostle here refers to some former Epistle addressed to the Corinthian Church, and which has not been preserved, or whether the reference is not to this Epistle itself. It has been suggested by some who adopt the latter view that these words may have been added as an interpolation after the completion of the Epistle, and be intended to intensify the remarks made by the Apostle on this subject in chaps. v. 6—8, and vi. 9—20. Such an interpretation, however, seems rather strained. It is more natural to suppose that the reference is to an Epistle written to the Corinthians, probably from Ephesus, after a visit paid to Corinth of which we have no record, for in 2 Cor. xii. 14, and xiii. 1, we read of a third visit being contemplated, whereas only one previous one is recorded. (See also *Introduction*.) The condition of the Church which caused the Apostle that "heaviness," which he connects with this visit in 2 Cor. ii. 1, would naturally have given rise to an Epistle containing the kind of direction here referred to.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world.

—This is a limitation and explanation of the command given not to associate with fornicators. It would have been almost impossible for the command to be literally obeyed without the Christian withdrawing altogether from the business of life, so the Apostle explains that it is the fair fame and purity of the Church which he is anxious to preserve. There are so many fornicators, and covetous, and idolaters in this world (*i.e.*, the heathen world) that men *must* meet with them. But the Christian must tolerate no such sins among themselves; they must exclude from the social circle any brother who, bearing the name of Christ, indulges in the vices of the heathen world. The Church is to be the light of the world, and not the recipient of the world's darkness.

⁽¹¹⁾ But now I have written unto you . . .—*i.e.*, "But what I meant was" that you were not to associate with a Christian guilty of these things. It may seem strange that the word "idolater" should be included in this category; for in what sense could a brother be a worshipper of idols? It is probable that the word "idolater" has involved in it the idea, not merely of worshipping an image, but of the sensuality which accompanied various forms of heathen worship, and of which evidently some of the

pany, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. ⁽¹²⁾ For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? ⁽¹³⁾ But them that

are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

A.D. 59.

CHAPTER VI.—

⁽¹⁾ Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not

Chap. vi. 1—11. The settlement of disputes amongst Christians.

Corinthian brethren were partakers. (See Eph. v. 5, and Col. iii. 5, where "idolatry" is identified with a vice kindred to lasciviousness.)

⁽¹²⁾ For what have I to do . . . ?—The Apostle in this verse at once explains the grounds of the limitation of his remarks to Christians, and seems to hint also, by the form of expression here, that the Corinthian Church ought to have been able to have understood his remarks as only applicable to themselves and not to the heathen.

Them also that are without.—The heathen. It was a common form of expression amongst the Jews to designate the Gentile world (Mark iv. 11).

Do not ye judge them that are within?—As the Christian Church could sit in judgment only on its own members, so they should have concluded that only on them had St. Paul passed judgment.

⁽¹³⁾ God judgeth.—In the best MSS. the verb is in the future tense: *God will judge*. He is the judge of the whole earth; we are to leave the heathen world in His hands.

Therefore put away . . . —Better omit "therefore." The Apostle in this passage adopts the

form of pronouncing sentence on great criminals, with which especially the Jewish converts would be familiar (Deut. xiii. 5; xvii. 7; xxiv. 7).

VI.

⁽¹⁾ Dare any of you.—Having rebuked the Corinthian Christians for any attempt to judge those who are outside the Church—*i.e.*, the heathen—St. Paul now insists, on the other hand, on the importance of their not submitting their affairs for decision to the heathen tribunals. Jewish converts would have more easily understood that they should settle disputes among themselves, as the Roman power had, as we learn from Gallio's remarks (Acts xviii. 14, 15), given this liberty to the Jews. The Gentile converts, however, would have been naturally inclined to continue to bring disputes before the tribunals with which they had been so familiar in a proverbially litigious condition of society before their conversion. We can well imagine how detrimental to the best interests of Christianity it would be for the Christian communion, founded as it was on principles of unity and love, to be perpetually, through the

before the saints? ⁽²⁾ Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the

world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge

hasty temper and weakness of individual members, held up to the scorn of the heathen, as a scene of intestine strife. Repeated lawsuits before heathen judges would have had the further evil effect of practically obliterating the broad line of demarcation which then really existed between the principles of Roman jurisprudence, and the loftier Christian conceptions of self-sacrifice and charity by which the followers of Jesus Christ should, in accordance with His teaching, control their life. These considerations rendered necessary the warnings which the Apostle here commences with the emphatic word "Dare," of which it has been well said (Bengel), "Treason against Christians is denoted by this high-sounding word."

Unjust saints.—These words convey here no essentially moral ideas. They merely signify respectively "heathen" and "members of the Christian Church." These phrases remind us that the state of things when St. Paul wrote this was entirely different from what exists in any Christian country now. The teaching has nothing whatever to do with the adjudication of the courts of a Christian country. The cases to which St. Paul's injunctions would be applicable in the present day would be possible only in a heathen country. If, for example, in India there existed heathen tribunals, it would certainly be wrong, and a source of grave scandal, for native

Christians to submit questions between themselves for decision to such courts, instead of bringing them before the legal tribunals established by Christian England. It is not probable that at so early a period there were any regular and recognised tribunals amongst the Christians, and certainly their decisions could scarcely have had any legal force. There is, however, historical evidence of the existence of such in the middle of the second century. The principles here laid down would naturally have led to their establishment. (See chap. v. 4.)

⁽²⁾ **Do ye not know . . . ?**

—The knowledge which they possessed of the great future which was in store for the Church of Christ was the strongest argument against the humiliating degradation to which their conduct was subjecting it.

The saints shall judge the world.—The Apostle here claims for all Christians the glorious prerogative which Christ had Himself promised to His immediate personal followers (Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30). Bearing in mind the deep conviction of the early Church that the second personal advent of Christ was near at hand, we may take these words as referring primarily to the conquest of the world by Christianity, which has since been accomplished, though by slower and more spiritual processes than were then anticipated, and indirectly to that final triumph of Christ and His body, the Church,

the smallest matters ?
 (3) Know ye not that we shall judge angels ? how much more things that pertain to this life ? (4) If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this

life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

(5) I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you ? no, not one that shall be able

of which every success here on earth is at once the type and the pledge.

To judge the smallest matters.—Better, *to pronounce the most trivial judgments*, as compared with the great judgments which you shall pronounce hereafter. The nature of the things which form the subject of those judgments is explained in the following verse.

(3) **We shall judge angels.**—Many conjectures have been made as to the exact significance of the word “angels” here. Some suggest that it must signify bad angels; but this would be an unusual use of the word without any qualifying adjective. It is better, perhaps, to regard the passage as a climax arising out of the Apostle’s intense realisation of the unity of Christ and His Church triumphant—a point which seems ever present to the mind of St. Paul when he speaks of the dignity of Christianity. In this sense, redeemed humanity will be superior to, and judges of, the spiritual world. That the words have some such large significance, and are not the expression of a hard and literal fact regarding some members of the angelic host, is, I think, borne out by the subsequent words, where the contrast to “angels” is not “men,” but “things” relating to this life.

(4) **If then ye have judgments . . .**—Better, *If, however, you choose to have judgments to be given on matters of this life.* The last words show that the questions which are alluded to are purely worldly and not spiritual matters. The Apostle subsequently urges that such disputes ought not to arise at all amongst Christians, and that if they do they ought to be settled by the interposition of some mutual friend. Here he says, with something of sarcasm, “The very meanest of those who are to be exalted above angels, and to be judges of spiritual existences, is of sufficient authority to settle such matters as you are bringing before legal tribunals.”

(5) **I speak to your shame.**—Better, *I say this to cause you to feel ashamed.* From the latent irony of the previous words, the Apostle turns to ask solemnly whether it be a fact that in the whole Christian community at Corinth, which boasted of their superior wisdom, there is not to be found even one man sufficiently esteemed for his wisdom to be trusted by the brethren with the settlement of their disputes.

Shall be able to judge . . .—Better, *shall be able to arbitrate*, in contrast to the “going to law” of the next verse, the words for these two expressions being different in the original.

to judge between his brethren? ⁽⁶⁾ But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. ⁽⁷⁾ Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather *suffer yourselves to be defrauded*? ⁽⁸⁾ Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your brethren.*

⁽⁹⁾ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ⁽¹⁰⁾ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ⁽¹¹⁾ And such were some of you: but ye are washed,

⁽⁶⁾ But brother goeth to law with brother.—“It would almost seem as if it were not so. Your dragging these disputes before tribunals of the heathen would imply that it is not possible to find a Christian friend whom you can trust to settle these trivial disputes.” Thus the Apostle answers his question of the previous verse.

⁽⁷⁾ A fault.—Better, *a falling short* of your privilege and dignity as Christians. It is the same word as is rendered “diminishing” in Rom. xi. 12. The Apostle in this verse goes one step farther, and condemns the Corinthians, not only on the ground of the tribunals to which they resorted being heathen, but further condemns the spirit of litigation itself. He reminds them of how such a temper of mind is the very opposite of that which the Lord Himself had commended to His followers (Matt. v. 40).

⁽⁸⁾ Nay, ye do wrong.—Better, *No, but you yourselves do wrong.*

⁽⁹⁾ Know ye not that the unrighteous . . .?—The force

of this question comes out more strikingly in the original, where the word rendered “unrighteous” is the same as “ye do wrong” of verse 8. “You do wrong, apparently forgetting that no wrongdoers shall inherit God’s kingdom.”

Be not deceived.—There was great danger of their being led to think lightly of sins which were daily committed by those amongst whom they lived, hence these words of warning with which the sentence opens, as in chap. xv. 33. The mention of gross sensual sins in connection with idolaters points to the fact that they were practically associated in the ritual of the heathen, which, of course, intensified the danger against which the Apostle warns the Corinthians. The prevalence of such scandalous crimes in the heathen world is constantly referred to in the Epistles to Gentile churches (Rom. xiii. 13, Gal. v. 19, 20; 1 Tim. i. 9, 10; Titus i. 12).

⁽¹¹⁾ Such were some of you.—The Greek for “such” is in the

but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

⁽¹²⁾ All things are lawful unto me, but all things

¹ Or, *profitable*. are not expedient: ¹ all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the

Chap. vi. 12—20. The application of the doctrine of Christian freedom to sensual indulgence condemned.

neuter, and implies “of such a description were some of you.”

Ye are washed.—Better, *ye washed them off*, referring to the fact that their baptism was a voluntary act (Acts xxii. 16). The words “sanctified” and “justified” as used here do not point to those definite stages in the Christian course to which they generally refer in theological language. The sanctification is here mentioned before the justification, which is not the actual sequence, and it must not therefore be taken as signifying a gradual progress in holiness. What the Apostle urges is, that as they washed themselves in the waters of baptism, so they, by the power of Christ’s name and the Holy Spirit, became holy and righteous, thus putting aside, washing off as it were, that impurity and that unrighteousness which once were theirs, and with which they could not enter into the kingdom.

⁽¹²⁾ **All things are lawful unto me.**—This was probably a statement which the Apostle had himself made; at all events, the freedom which it expresses was very dear to him, and it may have been misused by some as an argument for universal license. St. Paul, therefore, boldly repeats it, and proceeds to show that it is a maxim of Christian liberty, which does not refer to matters which are absolutely wrong, and that even in its application to indifferent matters

it must be limited, and guarded by other Christian principles. “The eating of things sacrificed to idols (see Note on chap. viii. 4), and the committing fornication,” were two subjects of discussion closely connected with heathen worship; and it may seem astonishing to us now that because St. Paul had maintained the right of individual liberty concerning the former, he should perhaps have been quoted as an authority for liberty regarding the latter, yet it is a matter of fact that such a mode of reasoning was not uncommon. They were both regarded as part and parcel of heathen worship, and therefore as it were, to stand or fall together, as being matters vital or indifferent. (See Acts xv. 29, and Rev. xi. 14, as illustrations of the union of the two for purposes respectively of condemnation and of improper toleration.) We must not regard the use of the singular “me” as being in any sense a limitation of the principle to the Apostle personally. “Paul often speaks in the first person singular, which has the force of a moral maxim, especially in this Epistle (verse 15; vii. 7; viii. 13; x. 23, 29, 30; xiv. 11)” (Bengel). The words refer to all Christians.

All things are not expedient.—Better, *all things are not profitable*. The word “expedient” in its highest sense is a proper translation of the Greek, but in

power of any. ⁽¹³⁾ Meats
for the belly, and the belly
for meats : but God shall

destroy both it and them.
Now the body *is* not for
fornication, but for the

modern use it has a somewhat lower and depreciatory meaning generally attached to it.

All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.—There is a verbal contrast in the Greek here which can scarcely be rendered fully in English. The Greek words for “unlawful” and “be brought under the power of” are cognate words. What the Apostle say is, “All things are lawful for me, but I am not the one to allow them therefore to become a law over me.” There is such a thing as becoming the slave of liberty itself. If we sacrifice the power of choice which is implied in the thought of liberty, we cease to be free ; we are brought *under* the power of that which should be *in* our power.

⁽¹³⁾ Meats for the belly.—The Apostle proceeds now to show that the question of eating meats offered to idols does come into that catalogue of indifferent things on which an exercise of Christian freedom is permissible, and that the question of fornication does not. Lawful matters are to be decided upon the highest principle of expediency ; but fornication is an unlawful matter, and therefore the question of its expediency does not arise at all. The stomach is adapted to the digestion of food, and food is adapted to it. This is, however, only for this life ; both shall be destroyed by death. But the person (“body” being equivalent to “us” in verse 14) of the

man is enduring. No food which enters defiles *the man*. Fornication is not a mere transitory gratification ; it affects *the man*. The use of the stomach is to receive and digest food, and only the animal organisation is affected by that. It cannot be said that the man is made for fornication. The person of each is made for the Lord ; the whole Church is His body ; each baptised person is a limb of that body ; and the Lord is for the body. He came to earth and died for it, and for each member of it ; therefore what effects that body, or any member of that body (*i.e.*, any Christian), cannot be an indifferent matter. Neither shall the man perish, as meats and the belly shall ; he is immortal. (See chap. xv. 51, 52.) Such seems to be the argument by which St. Paul maintains liberty to be right regarding meats, and shows that the same principle does not apply to sensual indulgence. It may be put argumentatively thus :

1. Eating meats offered to idols is an “indifferent matter,” because—

(a) Meats only affect the particular organ designed for them ;

(b) Meats and that organ shall perish together.

2. Fornication is not an “indifferent matter,” because—

(a) It affects the man, and he is not designed for the purpose of this indulgence ;

(b) The man is immortal, and therefore the moral effect of the fornication on his nature does not perish at his death.

Lord ; and the Lord for the body. ⁽¹⁴⁾ And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. ⁽¹⁵⁾ Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and

make *them* the members of an harlot ? God forbid. ⁽¹⁶⁾ What ? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body ? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. ⁽¹⁷⁾ But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. ⁽¹⁸⁾ Flee forni-

Conclusion. — Only indifferent matters are to be the subject of Christian liberty ; and the decision must be according to the utility of each act. Fornication is not an indifferent matter ; therefore it is not so to be decided upon.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **Will also raise up us.**—This phrase is remarkable as one of the few which show that the Apostle, while he in common with the early Church expected the early advent of Christ, did not think that it would necessarily occur in his own lifetime. Here, as ever, the resurrection of the dead, when we shall receive our spiritual body instead of the natural body, is joined with the fact of the resurrection of Christ the firstfruits.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **Shall I then . . . ?**—Having shown the great dignity which attaches to our bodies as immortal members of Christ, the Apostle asks with indignant emphasis, “ Shall I take them out from that high and holy membership, and make them members of an harlot ? ” The double act of taking them away from their glorious union with Christ, and joining them to a base body, is implied in the Greek.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **What ?**—As if some one might question and resent the strength of the previous words, and wish them “ watered down.”

“ Do you not know that my strong assertion is true ? It is not merely my statement ; it is to be found in the Old Testament, ‘ Two shall be one flesh.’ ” This was originally (Gen. ii. 24) applied to marriage, as showing the intimacy of that sacred union, but here St. Paul applies it to one aspect of a union which, in one respect, was identical with marriage. Of course the other parts of the Apostle’s argument do not apply to marriage, the union being a sacred one ; two becoming one flesh in marriage is no degradation of a member of Christ—nay, it is a sacred illustration of the complete unity of Christ and His body the Church. (Comp. chap. xi. 29, and Notes there.)

⁽¹⁷⁾ **One spirit.**—The union betwixt Christ and each member of His Church is a spiritual one. This explains the sense in which we are the Lord’s body, and intensifies the argument against any degradation of one who shares so holy and intimate a union.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **Flee fornication.**—These last three verses of the chapter contain a solemn exhortation to purity, arising out of the previous argument.

Without the body.—The word “ body ” is still to be understood as used of the whole “ human

cation. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

⁽¹⁹⁾ What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you,

Which ye have of God,

and ye are not your own?

⁽²⁰⁾ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

A. D. 59.

CHAPTER VII.—

⁽¹⁾ Now concerning the Chap. vii. 1—18.
Marriage.

nature," which is spoken of in verse 19 as the temple of the Holy Ghost. Other sins may profane only outer courts of the temple; this sin penetrates with its deadly foulness into the very holy of holies—

"It hardens a' within, and petrifies the feelings."

There is a deep significance and profound truth in the solemn words of the Litany, "From fornication, and all other *deadly* sin, good Lord, deliver us."

^(19, 20) What? know ye not . . . ?—These verses read better rendered thus: *Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you? Which you have from God, and you are not your own. For you were bought with a price. Glorify God then in your body.*

There are two reasons why we are not our own. (1) The Spirit which has possession of our bodies is not our own, but given us "of God." (2) We have been bought with a price, even the blood of Christ; it is a completed purchase (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). Our bodies not being our own to do as we like with, we have no right to give them

over unto sin. The last words of the verse are not a cold logical deduction from the previous argument, but rather an earnest exhortation suggested by the solemn thought of our oneness with Christ, and the price paid by Him to make us His.

The words "and in your spirits," which are in the Authorised version, are not in the older Greek MSS. They were probably added to give a kind of verbal completeness to the exhortation. They only tend, however, to weaken the force of the passage as St. Paul wrote it. The dignity of the body is the subject of the previous passage, and the necessity for its purity the sole theme of the entire argument.

VII.

Concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me.—Some members of the Church having written to St. Paul to ask his counsel on matters concerning which there existed a difference of opinion at Corinth, the Apostle now proceeds to answer these inquiries, and his reply occupies the remainder of the Epistle (to chap. xvi. 4) The subjects concerning

things whereof ye wrote unto me : *It is good for a*

which the Corinthians sought for St. Paul's opinion are treated of in the following order :

I. MARRIAGE, chap. vii.

II. THE EATING OF MEAT OFFERED TO IDOLS, chaps. viii.—xi. 1.

III. THE ATTIRE OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC WORSHIP, chap. xi. 2—16.

IV. THE LORD'S SUPPER, chap. xi. 17—34.

V. SPIRITUAL GIFTS, chaps. xii. 1—xiv. 40.

VI. THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION, chap. xv. 1—58.

VII. THE COLLECTION FOR THE POOR IN JUDÆA, chap. xvi. 1—4.

In the consideration of each of these subjects various collateral matters are introduced, and the great principles which guided the Apostle, and which ever should guide the Church and individuals, are set forth. Many of the subjects were of purely local and temporary interest. The particular combination of circumstances which for the moment rendered them important has ceased to exist, and can never arise again; but the principles on which the Apostle based his arguments, and which he enunciates as the ground of his decisions, are eternal. To apply the injunctions of the Apostle in these chapters with a rigid and unyielding literalism to the Church in all ages, is to violate those very principles which guided St. Paul in enunciating them, and to exalt the dead and death-bearing letter at the sacrifice of the living and life-giving spirit of the apostolic teaching. As we proceed with our examination of St. Paul's reply to the Corinthians'

letter we shall have little real difficulty in distinguishing between those practical injunctions which were of local and temporary application, and the wider and larger truths which are of universal and lasting obligation; for the Apostle himself is always careful to point out when a command is based upon some particular necessity of the day, and when it arises from some unchanging Christian principle.

The first subject concerning which the Corinthians sought advice was MARRIAGE. From the opening words of St. Paul's reply, "It is good for a man not to marry" (such is the force of the word rendered "touch," Gen. xx. 6; Prov. vi. 29), it would seem that those who wrote for the Apostle's advice were inclined to regard celibacy as preferable to the married state: so much so, indeed, that they had scruples as to whether even those who had been married should not separate (verses 3—5). We may, therefore, conclude that it was probably from the Pauline party that the inquiry came. It would be improbable that those who exalted some other teacher would have written to St. Paul to ask his guidance upon matters of controversy; and the tone of the Apostle's replies on such questions as marriage, and the meats offered to idols (from which we can conjecture the line taken in the letter addressed to him), leads to the same conclusion. It would be natural for the Pauline party unduly to exaggerate the importance of celibacy and to undervalue matrimony. St. Paul's own example, and his strong preference for the unmarried

man not to touch a woman. (2) Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. (3) Let the husband render unto the wife

due benevolence : and likewise also the wife unto the husband. (4) The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband : and likewise also the husband hath not power of

state, would have easily come to be regarded by his followers as matters of moral import, and not of merely temporary advantage and personal predilection. It is likely, also, as we know from other religious controversies, that the opposition of the Petrine party would drive the Pauline party into more extreme views. They would quote the example of their leader as a married man in opposition to the conduct of St. Paul (chap. ix. 5, and Matt. viii. 14).

Good for a man.—We must not, on the one hand, force this statement into meaning that it is merely expedient, nor must we, on the other, attach to it so great a moral import as to imply that the opposite is morally wrong (as St. Jerome, "*ergo est malum tangere*"). The English word "good," in its most general sense, accurately conveys the meaning. It is laid down as a proposition that it is in St. Paul's opinion a good thing to remain unmarried. But that general proposition is immediately limited in its application by what follows. St. Chrysostom paraphrases this and the following verse thus: "For if thou inquire what is the excellent and greatly superior course, it is better not to have any connection whatever with a woman; but if, what is safe and helpful to thine own infirmity, be connected by marriage."

(2) **To avoid fornication.**—Better, *because of the (prevalent) fornication.* This was so general in Corinth, and so little regarded as sin, that the unmarried were liable to be led into it.

It may at first sight appear as if the Apostle thus put marriage upon very low and merely utilitarian ground: but we must remember that he is here writing with a definite and limited aim, and does not enter into a general discussion of the subject. St. Paul gives a reason why those who wrote to him should marry, and the force of the argument does not extend beyond the immediate object in view. St. Paul's view of the higher aspects of matrimony are fully set forth when he treats of that subject generally (2 Cor. xi. 2; Rom. vii. 4; Eph. v. 25—32).

(3) **Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence.**—Rather, *Let the husband render unto the wife her due*—such being the reading of the better MSS. In this verse the Apostle answers the scruples of those who already were married, and who doubted whether they should continue so.

(4) **Of her own body.**—Bengel notices that these words, "She has not power of her own body," form an elegant paradox, bringing out the equal rights of both.

his own body, but the wife.

⁽⁵⁾ Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and

come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. ⁽⁶⁾ But

I speak this by permission, *and* not of commandment.

⁽⁷⁾ For I would that all

⁽⁵⁾ Except it be . . . that ye may give yourselves—*i.e.*, that ye may have leisure. Any such separation should be temporary, and with consent of both parties. Even then it must not be from mere caprice, but for some religious purpose, such as a special season of prayer. (See Ex. xix. 15; 1 Sam. xxi. 4.) The alteration in the Greek text of the word “give” into the present tense, so as to make the word “prayer” refer to daily devotions, and not to special and exceptional seasons, and the interpolation of the word “fasting”—not found in the older MSS.—are a striking example of how the ascetic tendencies of a particular ecclesiastical school of thought led to their “amending” the sacred text so as to make it be in harmony with their own views, instead of reverently regarding it as that by which those very views should be corrected.

And come together again.—Better (as in the best MSS.), *and be together again*. This is still an explanation of the purpose of the separation, not to be a lasting one, but that we may again return to the state of union. The text here bears further traces of having been altered so as to make it seem that the Apostle meant that the return to matrimonial life should be only to a temporary union, and not to a continuous state of life. The proper reading implies the latter,

the word “be” being used as in Acts ii. 44.

For your incontinency.—Better, *because of your incontinency*; the reference being, as in verse 2, to the moral condition surrounding them, and to the influence to which a man thus separated would be subject. The Corinthian Christians are here solemnly reminded that this sin, as all sin, is from Satan—because the Corinthians at large did not regard it as sin at all, but even mingled sensuality with worship.

⁽⁶⁾ **But I speak this by permission.**—Better, *Now I say this as a permission, and not as a command*. As the passage is given in our English version, it might seem as if the Apostle implied that he had no actual command, but only a permission to write this, which is not at all his meaning. What he does say is, that the foregoing instructions are not to be considered as absolute commands from him, but as general permissive instruction, to be applied by each individual according to circumstances.

It has been much discussed as to what part of the previous passage the word “this” refers. It is perhaps best to take it as referring to the leading thought of the whole passage, which is that marriage is allowable, expressed especially in verse 2.

⁽⁷⁾ **For I would that all**

men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. ⁽⁸⁾ I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for

them if they abide even as I. ⁽⁹⁾ But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

⁽¹⁰⁾ And unto the married I command, yet not I, but

men were even as I myself. —Better, *I wish rather that all men were as I myself.* These words do not mean that the Apostle wished that every one was unmarried, but that every one had the same grace of continence which he himself was endowed with, so that they might without risk of sin remain unmarried (see verse 26). Yet, he adds, there are many gifts, and God has given to each man his own gift, so that, though you may not have the particular gift of continence which I have, you have some other. One has one kind of gift; another has another kind.

⁽⁸⁾ I say therefore.—Better, *Now what I say is, . . .* Widows are here joined with those who have not been married, otherwise discussion might have arisen as to whether the Apostle had intended his advice for them also. It has been curiously conjectured (by Luther amongst others), from the passage where St. Paul recommends widows to “abide even as I,” that the Apostle was himself a widower. This, however, requires the word “unmarried” to be restricted to widowers, which is quite inadmissible; and even if such were admissible, the deduction from it that St. Paul was a widower could scarcely be considered logical. The almost universal tradition of the early Church

was that St. Paul was never married, and unless we can imagine his having been married, and his wife dead before the stoning of St. Stephen, which is scarcely possible (Acts vii. 58), the truth of that tradition is evident. (See Phil. iv. 3.) “Even as I;” that is, unmarried.

⁽⁹⁾ It is better . . .—Because to be influenced with unlawful desire is a sin, and to marry is no sin.

⁽¹⁰⁾ And unto the married . . .—The Apostle has concluded his instruction to the unmarried and widows, and in verses 10 and 11 gives his advice to those married persons who had been troubled with doubts as to whether they ought (if marriage were undesirable) to continue in that state.

I command, yet not I, but the Lord.—The contrast which is commenced here, and again brought out in verse 12, is not between commands given by St. Paul as an inspired Apostle, and St. Paul as a private individual. In chap. xiv. 37 the Apostle expressly claims that all his commands as an Apostle should be regarded as “the commandments of the Lord,” and in 1 Thess. iv. 15 the Apostle speaks of that knowledge into which he was guided by the Holy Spirit as given “by the word of the Lord.” St. Paul must therefore not be regarded

the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband :
⁽¹¹⁾ but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried,

or be reconciled to *her* husband : and let not the husband put away *his* wife.

as here claiming for some of his instructions apostolic authority, and not claiming it for others. The real point of the contrast is between a subject on which our Lord Himself while on earth gave direct verbal instruction, and another subject on which He now gives His commands through His Apostle St. Paul. Christ had given directions regarding divorce (Matt. v. 31 ; xix. 3—9 ; Mark x. 2—12), and the Apostle here has only to reiterate what the Lord had already commanded.

Let not the wife depart from her husband.—Better, *Let her not be separated.* The account of our Lord's words given here differs in two respects from the record given of them by St. Matthew (v. 32 and xix. 9), where the reference is, first and more prominently, to the man putting away his wife—not, as here, to the wife separating herself from her husband—and the exception made, "except it be because of fornication," is here omitted. The fact that St. Paul only knew from others what our Lord had said, and that the Evangelists wrote what they had heard themselves, would not sufficiently account for this difference; for surely these very Evangelists, or others who like them had heard the Lord's words, would have been St. Paul's informants. The reason of the variety in the two accounts is to be found, not in inaccurate knowledge on St. Paul's part, which we have no reason to suppose,

but in the particular circumstances to which the Apostle was applying the teaching of Christ; and this verbal difference is an instructive indication to us of how the Apostles understood that even in the case of the Lord Himself it was the living spirit of His teaching, and not its merely verbal form, which was of abiding and universal obligation. There was no necessity here to introduce the one exceptional cause of divorce which Christ had allowed, for the subject under consideration is a separation voluntarily made, and not as the result of sin on the part of either husband or wife; so the mention here of that ground of exception would have been inapplicable, and have tended only to confuse.

The other point of difference—viz., the mention here of the woman more prominently as separating from the husband—does not in any way affect the principle of the teaching, and indeed our Lord probably did put the case in both ways. (See Mark x. 12). It may be also that in the letter to which St. Paul was replying the doubt had been suggested by women, who were—as their sex is often still—more anxiously scrupulous about details of what they conceived to be religious duty; and the question having been asked concerning a woman's duty, the Apostle answers it accordingly, and adds the same instruction for the husband (verse 11).

⁽¹¹⁾ **But and if she depart.**—Better, *but if she have actually sepa-*

(12) But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him,

let him not put her away.
(13) And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her,

rated. These words, from "but" to "husband," are a parenthesis, and the concluding words, "and let not the husband put away his wife," are the completion of the Lord's command given in verse 10. The Apostle, in case such a separation should already have taken place, anticipates the difficult question which might then arise by parenthetically remarking that in such a case the woman must not marry again, but ought to be reunited to her former husband.

(12) **But to the rest.**—Up to this point the writer has alluded only to Christians; he has spoken of the duties of unmarried persons, of widows, and of those already married. There still remains one class of marriages concerning which differences of opinion existed—viz., mixed marriages. In a church like Corinth there would have been, no doubt, many cases where one of the partners was a heathen and the other a Christian, arising from the subsequent conversion of only one of the married couple. This subject is treated of in verses 12—16. The words are emphatically, "If any man *have already* a wife," &c. The case of a Christian marrying a heathen is not alluded to. In 2 Cor. vi. 14, the marriage of a Christian to a heathen is forbidden.

Speak I, not the Lord.—The Apostle has no word of Christ's to quote on this point, it being one which did not arise during our Lord's life. (See Note on verse 10.)

It is to be noticed that the Apostle, in giving his own apostolic instruction on this point, does not use the word "command," which he applied to our Lord's teaching, but the less authoritative "speak."

A wife that believeth not.—That is, a heathen. In some modern religious circles this whole passage has been used (as also 2 Cor. vi. 14) as if by "unbeliever" St. Paul meant a careless Christian, or one who, in modern phraseology, was not "converted." The Apostle is referring under this designation to heathens, and the only case to which his teaching could now or ever apply would be when two heathens had been married, and subsequently only one had embraced the Christian faith. It is to be noticed that both here and in verse 13 the being "pleased to dwell" is put only in reference to the partner who is a heathen, for the Apostle takes for granted that after the instructions he here gives to the Christian partner, no such desire for separation will arise on the part of a Christian.

(13) **Let her not leave him.**—Better, *let her not put him away*; the Greek being the same as is applied to the husband in verse 12. Under Roman law—and St. Paul was writing to those who were under such law—the wife, as well as the husband, was permitted to obtain a divorce. It is therefore probable that St. Paul uses the stronger term here in reference to

let her not leave him.
 (14) For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband : else were your

children unclean ; but now are they holy.

(15) But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such

the woman's action in the matter, instead of repeating the same word as in verse 10. Some have suggested that the reason St. Paul applies this word to the action of the woman in the matter is that, in the case under consideration, the fact of the wife being a Christian inverts, in St. Paul's opinion, the natural order, and makes her the superior. This is wholly inadmissible, and quite contrary to St. Paul's view of the absolute superiority of the husband. (See chap. xi. 3 ; Eph. v. 22 ; 1 Tim. ii. 11.)

(14) **The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife.**—Any scruple which a Christian might have felt as to whether matrimonial union with an unbeliever would be defiling is here removed, and the purity of the former teaching justified. In contrast to that other union in which the connection is defiling (chap. vi. 16), the purity of the believing partner in this union, being a lawful one, as it were, entirely overweighs the impurity of the unbeliever, it being not a moral, but a kind of ceremonial impurity. The children of such marriages were considered to be Christian children ; and the fruit being holy, so must we regard as holy the tree from which it springs. It must be remembered that the "sanctification" and "holiness" here spoken of is not that inward sanctification which springs from

the action of the Holy Spirit in the individual heart, but that consecration which arises from being in the body of Christ, which is the Christian Church (Rom. xi. 16).

(15) **But if the unbelieving depart.**—Supposing, however, the desire for separation arises from the unbelieving partner, how is the Christian partner to act? If the married life, for example, be made intolerable by the unbeliever urging the believer to join in such religious acts as conscience cannot approve, the Apostle's previous commands for continued union do not hold good : a brother or a sister, in such cases, is not bound to insist upon the continuation of the union. "Let the unbeliever, if he so desire, depart."

This permission is in no way contrary to our Lord's permission of divorce on only one ground, for the Apostle has carefully reminded his readers that our Lord's command does not apply to the case of a marriage between a believer and a heathen. In such cases we have no command from Him.

A brother or a sister—i.e., a Christian. In such cases, when the unbelieving partner wishes to depart, let him or her do so. The Christian partner is not, under such circumstances, bound by the marriage to continue together. Their doing so might destroy that very peace in which (not "to peace" as in the English) God has called us.

cases : but God hath called us to peace.¹ ⁽¹⁶⁾ For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save

¹ Gr. in peace.

thy husband ? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save *thy* wife ? ⁽¹⁷⁾ But as God

⁽¹⁶⁾ For what knowest thou, O wife . . . ?—This verse has been very generally regarded as a kind of modification of the previous one, as if the Apostle suggested that it might be advisable not to let the unbelieving partner depart from the marriage union when he so desired, in any case where there was even a chance of the believing partner effecting his or her conversion. The true meaning of the passage is, however, precisely the opposite. The Apostle declares that the remote contingency of the unbeliever's conversion is too vague a matter for which to risk the peace which is so essential an element in the Christian life. If the unbelieving partner will depart, do not let any thought as to the possible influence you may exercise over his religious convictions—about which you cannot *know* anything, but only at most vaguely speculate—cause you to insist upon his remaining.

Some historical results, arising from the view that this is a suggestion of the good which may result from such union being continued, are interestingly alluded to by Stanley in his note on this passage :—“ This passage, thus interpreted, probably had a direct influence on the marriage of Clotilda with Clovis, and Bertha with Ethelbert, and consequently on the subsequent conversion of the two great kingdoms of France and England to the Christian faith.”

⁽¹⁷⁾ But as God hath distri-

buted . . .—Regarding verse 16 as a kind of parenthesis, these words follow on from verse 15 as a general principle to be ever borne in mind, as limiting in practice the very broad liberty which the Apostle has given regarding separation in cases of mixed marriages. It is to be noticed that in verse 15 the unbelieving partner is the only one who is spoken of as taking an active part in the separation; the believer is, merely for the sake of peace, to acquiesce in it; he is never to cause or promote a separation, for he is to be guided by the great principle that we are to continue to walk in those social and political relations by which we were bound when God called us. Christianity does not destroy them, but purifies and exalts them, and thus makes them more binding on us than before. According as the Lord has divided to each man his portion in life, and as God has called each man, so in that condition let him continue to walk as a Christian. Let him not try to change it for another. The words “ God ” and “ Lord ” have been transposed by later copyists. The order in the English version is different from that in the older MSS. It is important to preserve the accurate reading here, for it speaks of Christ—“ the Lord ”—as the one who allots to men their natural condition in life, while “ God ” calls them from heathenism to the Christian faith.

And so ordain I in all

hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

Chap. vii. 18—⁽¹⁸⁾ Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised.

24. Relation of Christianity to various conditions of life.

Is any man called being circumcised? let him

Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. ⁽²⁰⁾ Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

churches.—This principle was of universal application, and the Apostle lays it down authoritatively for all churches. The *I* is emphatic, as the writer speaks with apostolic authority. It is noticeable that in some few later MSS. there is an attempt to weaken its force by the substitution of “I teach” for “I appoint or direct.” (See chap. xvi. 1.)

⁽¹⁸⁾ Is any man called being circumcised?—Better, *Was any one called having been circumcised?* The previous general rule is now illustrated by, and applied to, two conditions of life—CIRCUMCISION (verses 18—20) and SLAVERY (verses 20—24). If any man was converted after having been circumcised, he was not, as some over-zealous Christians might have been anxious to do, to remove every trace of his external connection with Judaism (Gal. v. 2).

⁽¹⁹⁾ Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing.—Often those who regard some ceremony as unimportant magnify the very disregard of it into a necessary virtue. The Apostle carefully guards against that by expressing the nothingness of both circumcision and uncircumcision (Rom. ii. 25; Gal. v. 6; vi. 15).

The circumcision of Timothy, and the refusal to circumcise Titus by St. Paul himself, are illustrations at once of the application of the truth here enforced, and of the Apostle’s scrupulous adherence to the principles of his own teaching. To have refused to circumcise Timothy would have attached some value to non-circumcision. To have circumcised Titus would have attached some value to circumcision. (See Acts xvi. 3; Gal. ii. 3.)

But the keeping of the commandments of God is *everything*, understood. The teaching here is, practically, “To obey is better than sacrifice.”

⁽²⁰⁾ Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.—This is an emphatic repetition of the principle on which the previous practical instruction is based. “Calling,” must not here be regarded in the modern sense of profession or condition in life; it is nowhere so used in the New Testament, but always signifies God’s calling of us. (See Rom. xi. 29; Eph. i. 18.) Continue to be Christians of the kind which God’s call to Christianity made you. If you were circumcised—and so God’s call into the Christian Church made you a cir-

(21) Art thou called *being* |
a servant? care not for |

it: but if thou mayest be |
made free, use *it* rather. |

cumcised Christian—continue so; don't do anything which would seem to imply that some other change in addition to your "call" was necessary to complete your admission to the Church.

(21) **Art thou called being a servant?**—Better, *Were you called while a slave? Do not let that make you anxious.* The fact of your being in slavery does not affect the reality or completeness of your conversion; and so you need have no anxiety to try and escape from servitude. In this and the following three verses the subject of SLAVERY is treated of as the second illustration of the general principle laid down in verse 17—viz., that a man's conversion to Christianity should not lead him to change his national or social condition.

But if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.—These words may seem to imply that if a slave could obtain his liberty he was to avail himself of the opportunity to do so. Such an interpretation, however, is entirely at variance with the whole drift of the argument, which is, that he is *not* to seek such a change. What the Apostle does say is, that (so far from letting the servitude be a cause of distress to you) if you can even be free, prefer to use it, *i.e.*, your condition as a converted slave. It, as well at any other position in life, can be used to God's glory. Such an interpretation is most in accordance with the construction of the sentence in the original Greek; and it is in perfect harmony, not only with the rest of this passage, but with

all St. Paul's teaching and his universal practice on this subject.

It may be well here briefly to notice the attitude which the Apostle of the Gentiles maintains towards the great question of SLAVERY. While there were many points in which ancient slavery under the Greek and Roman Governments was similar to what has existed in modern days, there were also some striking points of difference. The slaves at such a place as Corinth would have been under Roman law, but many of its harsher provisions would doubtless have been practically modified by the traditional leniency of Greek servitude and by general usage. Although a master could sell his slave, punish him, and even put him to death, if he did so unjustly he would himself be liable to certain penalties. The power which a master could exercise over his slave was not so evidently objectionable in an age when parents had almost similar power over their children. Amongst the class called slaves were to be found, not only the commonest class who performed menial offices, but also literary men, doctors, midwives, and artificers, who were constantly employed in work suited to their ability and acquirements. Still, the fact remains that the master could sell his slave as he could sell any other species of property; and such a state of things was calculated greatly to degrade both those who trafficked and those who were trafficked in, and was contrary to those Christian principles which taught the brotherhood of men,

(22) For he that is called in ^{1 Gr. made free.} | is the Lord's freeman :¹
 the Lord, *being* a servant, | likewise also he that is

and exalted every living soul into the high dignity of having direct communion with its Father.

How, then, are we to account for St. Paul, with his vivid realisation of the brotherhood of men in Christ, and his righteous intolerance of intolerance, never having condemned this servile system, and having here insisted on the duty of a converted slave to remain in servitude ; or for his having on one occasion sent back a Christian slave to his Christian master without asking for his freedom, although he counted him his master's "brother" ? (See Ep. to Philemon.)

One point which would certainly have weighed with the Apostle in considering this question was his own belief in the near approach of the end of this dispensation. If all existing relations would be overthrown in a few years, even such a relation as was involved in slavery would not be of so great importance as if it had been regarded as a permanent institution.

But there were other grave considerations, of a more positive and imperative nature. If one single word from Christian teaching could have been quoted at Rome as tending to excite the slaves to revolt, it would have set the Roman Power in direct and active hostility to the new faith. Had St. Paul's teaching led (as it probably would, had he urged the cessation of servitude) to a rising of the slaves—that rising and the Christian Church, which would have been identified with it, would have been crushed together. Rome would not have

tolerated a repetition of those servile wars which had, twice in the previous century, deluged Sicily with blood.

Nor would the danger of preaching the abolition of servitude have been confined to that arising from external violence on the part of the Roman Government ; it would have been pregnant with danger to the purity of the Church itself. Many might have been led, from wrong motives, to join a communion which would have aided them in securing their social and political freedom.

In these considerations we may find, I think, ample reasons for the position of non-interference which the Apostle maintains in regard to slavery. If men then say that Christianity approved of slavery, we would point them to the fact that it is Christianity that has abolished it. Under a particular and exceptional condition of circumstances, which cannot again arise, St. Paul, for wise reasons, did not interfere with it. To have done so would have been worse than useless. But he taught fearlessly those imperishable principles which led in after ages to its extinction. The object of Christianity—and this St. Paul over and over again insisted on—was not to overturn and destroy existing political and social institutions, but to leaven them with new principles. He did not propose to abolish slavery, but to Christianise it ; and when slavery is Christianised it must cease to exist. Christianised slavery is liberty.

(22) For he that is called in

called, *being* free, is Christ's servant. ⁽²³⁾ Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. ⁽²⁴⁾ Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

⁽²⁵⁾ Now concerning vir-

gins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

Chap. vii. 25—38.
Duty of parents concerning the marriage of their daughters.

⁽²⁶⁾ I suppose therefore

the Lord, being a servant, . . .—Better, *For he that was converted as a slave is Christ's freedman; and, similarly, the one who was converted as a freeman is Christ's slave.* Therefore, no one need trouble himself as to his mere earthly servitude or freedom. If he be a slave, let him be cheered by remembering that he is a freedman belonging to Christ; and if he be a freeman, let him not despise the state of the one in servitude, realising that he himself is Christ's slave. A "freedman," as distinct from a "freeman," was one who had been in bondage but was now free.

⁽²³⁾ Ye are bought with a price . . .—Better, *You were bought with a price, therefore become not slaves of men.* This carries on the idea of freedmen of the previous verse. With a great price—even the blood of Christ—they have been purchased by Him as freedmen: therefore, do not become slaves of men—do not yield to their views by seeking to change the condition of your calling.

⁽²⁴⁾ Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called.—Better, *was called.* Here we have an earnest reiteration of the principle underlying the previous instruction. Let the converted man abide, as regards his social or political state,

as he was; in doing so, he will be with God. They were brought near to God by their conversion, whether free or slave; let them so remain.

⁽²⁵⁾ Now concerning virgins . . .—A new subject is here introduced—viz., the duty of parents regarding their young unmarried daughters. Ought they to give them in marriage? The answer occupies to verse 38. On this subject the Apostle states that he has no actual command from Christ. It was a point to which our Lord had not directly alluded in His teaching, and so the Apostle gives his opinion as one who has obtained mercy to be a faithful instructor. The contrast here is not between Paul inspired by the Lord and Paul not inspired, but, as in verse 12, between Paul quoting the words of Christ and Paul himself instructing as an inspired Apostle.

⁽²⁶⁾ I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress.—Better, *I think then that it is good because of the impending distress—that it is good for a person to be so—i.e., to continue in the state in which he is, married or unmarried, as the case may be.*

The construction of this sentence is strikingly characteristic of a writing which has been taken down

that this is good for the present distress,¹ *I say*, that *it is good* for a man so to be. ⁽²⁷⁾ Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not

¹ Or, necessity

a wife. ⁽²⁸⁾ But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

from dictation. The speaker commences the sentence, and afterwards commences it over again: "I think it is good," &c., and then, "I say I think it is good."

From this verse to the end of verse 35 the Apostle deals again with the general question of marriage, introducing a new element of consideration—"the impending distress"; and at verse 36 he returns to the immediate subject with which he had started in verse 25, viz., duty of parents regarding their young unmarried daughters. The "impending distress" is that foretold by Christ, Matt. xxiv. 8 *et seq.* The Apostle regarded the coming of Christ as no distant event, and in the calamities already threatening the Church, such as the famine in the time of Claudius (Acts xi. 28), and in the gathering persecutions, he heard the first mutterings of the storm which should burst upon the world before the sign of the Son of Man should appear in the heavens.

It is good for a man.—It is most important to remember how much stress St. Paul lays upon this point as the ground of his preference for celibacy. As the reason for the preference has ceased to exist, so the advice, so far as it springs from that cause, is no longer of binding obligation (see verses 29—31).

⁽²⁷⁾ **Art thou bound unto a wife?**—This is an explanation and re-assertion of the previous words "so to be." Being "loosed from a wife" does not mean a separation after marriage, but simply "unmarried."

⁽²⁸⁾ **But and if thou marry.**—Better, *If, however, thou hast married.* The teaching here is not for some who will, after this advice, persist in marrying, but the reference is still to those who are actually married, and a further and clearer statement to them that the question is not one of sin, but merely of desirability.

If a virgin marry.—In the original it is emphatically "If *the* virgin have married." It is possible that in the letter from Corinth some particular case was referred to in which a Christian parent had scruples as to allowing his daughter to marry, and while dealing, in reply, with the subject generally, the Apostle refers immediately here to the particular case which had given rise to the inquiry. He says that if she have married she will have committed no sin; but that she and those who, like her, have married, will have troubles in the flesh, *i.e.*, earthly troubles. It is not a spiritual question.

But I spare you.—This might, at first sight, seem to imply that he does not desire to harass them

(29) But this I say, brethren, | remaineth, that both they
 ren, the time is short: it | that have wives be as

by any detail of their troubles just referred to; but the true meaning, however, is that the Apostle states his desire in giving this advice, is to spare them their troubles. Matrimony will involve you in earthly troubles when the expected distress comes; therefore, in advising you to remain unmarried, my desire is to spare you them.

(29) **But this I say, brethren.**—This does not introduce a reiteration of what he has said already, but commences a solemn and affectionate warning, urging on them earnestly that, whether they applied or did not apply the principle to marriage, still that it is true, and of vast importance in regulating all life,—that men should live as ever expecting the return of the Lord. Let us not for one moment think that this principle was evolved by St. Paul from a mistaken belief that the Second Advent was close at hand. This principle of life was taught by Christ Himself. He warned men against living carelessly because they thought “the Lord delayeth His coming.” They were to be ever on the watch, as servants for the unexpected return of their master—as guests for the coming of the bridegroom. It was not the opinion that Christ would soon come which led St. Paul to hold and teach this principle of Christian life. Perhaps it was his intense realisation of this eternal truth which the Lord had taught, his assimilation of it as part of his very being, from which the conviction arose that the Advent was not only in theory always, but, as

a matter of fact, then near at hand. Hope and belief mysteriously mingled together in one longing unity of feeling.

It may be asked, if the Apostles were mistaken on this point, may they not have been mistaken about other things also? The best answer to such a question, perhaps, is that this was just *the* one point on which our Lord had said they *should not* be informed, and it is the one point on which they *were not* informed. “Times and seasons” were to be excluded from their knowledge (Acts i. 7).

The time is short: it remaineth . . .—Better, *The time that remains is shortened, so that both they that have wives, &c.* (The Greek word for “remain” (*to loipon*) is used frequently by St. Paul in a sort of adverbial way, 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Eph. vi. 10; Phil. iv. 8). The words “so that” do not introduce a series of apostolic exhortations based upon and growing out of the previous statement regarding the brevity of the remaining time, but they express what was God’s intention in thus making the time short. St. Paul regards everything as having its place and purpose in the divine economy. If the time were long (and the teaching applies equally—for the principle is the same—to the brevity of life), then, indeed, men might live as having “much goods laid up for many years” (Luke xii. 19); but the time of life is short, that each may keep himself from being the slave of the external conditions and relationships of life. Such is the force of the series of striking

though they had none ;
 (30) and they that weep, as
 though they wept not ;
 and they that rejoice, as
 though they rejoiced not ;
 and they that buy, as
 though they possessed not ;

(31) and they that use this
 world, as not abusing it :
 for the fashion of this world
 passeth away.

(32) But I would have you
 without carefulness. He
 that is unmarried careth

contrasts with which the Apostle now illustrates the habit of life which God intended to follow from the shortening of the time.

(31) **Not abusing it.**—We can scarcely find a better word in English than “abusing” by which to render the Greek of this passage. But this word implies, in modern language, an abuse arising from misuse, and not, as in the original here, an abuse arising from overmuch use. All the things mentioned in this series by the Apostle are right things; and the warning is against being in bondage to those things which are in themselves right and good, and not against any criminal use of them. Though they are not wrong in themselves, we are not to become slaves of them; we are to renounce them, “so as not to follow nor be led by them.”

For the fashion of this world passeth away.—Better, *for the outward form of this world is passing away* (the word translated “fashion” occurs only here and in Phil. ii. 8). The allusion is not a merely general reference to the ephemeral nature of things temporal, but arises from the Apostle’s conviction that the last days were already commencing, when the outward temporal form of things was being superseded (Rom. viii. 19; Rev. xxi. 1). The word “for”

does not introduce a reason for the immediately preceding injunction, but carries us back to the previous statement in verse 29, “the time is short,” the intervening series of illustrative exhortations being parenthetical.

(32) **But I would have you . . .**—These words seem to take up again the form of expression in verse 28. I would spare you trouble; I also wish to have you free from anxious care. That is my reason for so advising you. And here the Apostle returns to the subject immediately under consideration, and shows here what he has been saying bears upon it. This element of anxious care must be borne in mind in considering the desirability or otherwise of marriage.

There are some important variations in the readings of these verses (32, 33, 34) in the Greek MSS. The emendations required in the Greek text, from which the Authorised Version is translated, are, I think, as follows:—Omit the full-stop after verse 33, connecting it with verse 34 by the insertion of the word “and.” Insert “and” in verse 34 before “a wife,” and the word “unmarried” after “a wife.” The whole passage will then stand thus (rendering the Greek verb as it is in chap. i. 13, “divided,” and, not, as in the English version

for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: ⁽³³⁾ but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife. ⁽³⁴⁾ There is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmar-

ried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband. ⁽³⁵⁾ And this I speak for your own profit; not that

here, "a difference between"): *The unmarried man careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But the married man careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and is divided in his interests (i.e., distracted). Also the wife that is unmarried (i.e., a widow, or divorced), and the unmarried virgin (i.e., the maid who is free from any contract of marriage), cares for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit. But she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.*

The whole force of the passage is that married persons have, in the fulfilment of their obligations to each other, an additional interest and concern from which the unmarried are free. It must ever be distinctly borne in mind that this advice was given solely under the impression that the end of all earthly things was impending, and that the great trial and desolation was beginning to darken over the world. The Apostle who wrote these words of warning himself expressly condemns those who applied them as involving general moral obligations, and not as suited merely to temporary requirements (1 Tim. iv. 1, 3). He had himself at this time a strong personal inclination

for a celibate life; but still he could enjoy and show a preference for the companionship of those who were evidently otherwise minded—he abode and wrought with Aquila and Priscilla his wife, at Corinth (Acts xviii. 3). We can still imagine circumstances arising in individual cases to which the principle enforced by the Apostle would apply. A man might feel it his duty to devote his life to some missionary enterprise, in which marriage would hamper his movements and impede his usefulness. Such an exceptional case would hence only establish the general rule. "It may not be out of place to recall" (writes Stanley, in his *Exposition of St. Paul's View of Celibacy*) "a celebrated instance of a similarly emphatic preference for celibacy on precisely similar grounds—not of abstract right, but of special expediency—in the well-known speech of our great Protestant Queen, when she declared that England was her husband, and all Englishmen her children, and that she desired no higher character or fairer remembrance of her to be transmitted to posterity than this inscription engraved upon her tombstone: 'Here lies Elizabeth, who lived and died a maiden queen.'" ⁽³⁵⁾ And this I speak for

I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

⁽³⁶⁾ But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of *her* age, and need so re-

quire, let him do what he will, he sinneth not : let them marry. ⁽³⁷⁾ Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. ⁽³⁸⁾ So

your own profit.—The reference is to the preceding passage, commencing with verse 32; and the writer explains that these instructions are given, not to please himself, but for (emphatically) *your own* advantage; not to entangle you in a noose, and so take away your liberty, but with a view to comeliness (or, *honesty*, Rom. xiii. 13), and to your waiting upon the Lord without being cumbered with earthly things (as, in Luke x. 40, Martha was “cumbered”).

⁽³⁶⁾ **But if any man think.**—Here the writer turns to the duty of parents, and there is a further explanation to such that the previous expressions are not binding commandments, but apostolic advice. If the case arises that a parent thinks he would be acting unfairly towards his unmarried daughter (*i.e.*, exposing her to temptation) by withholding his permission for her marriage, he ought to do as he feels inclined—*i.e.*, let the lover and his daughter marry.

Let him do what he will.—This sentence does not—as it may at first sight in the English appear to do—imply that he may consent or not, and whichever course he adopts he does right. It is implied, in the earlier part of the sentence,

that he thinks he ought to give his consent, and therefore that is what he wishes to do. Let him do that which he so wills, says St. Paul, and he need not in doing so fear that he does wrong.

⁽³⁷⁾ **Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart.**—The previous verse must not be understood as applying to any other cases than those to which it is strictly limited—*viz.*, those where positive harm is likely to result from the parent withholding his consent. Where no such necessity arises, but the parent has power over his own will (in contrast to the parent whose will must be under the control of the external necessity of the case), and has made this resolution in his heart, the result of which is to keep his daughter with him unmarried, will do well (future tense, see next Note).

⁽³⁸⁾ **So then . . .**—Better, *So then he that gives his daughter in marriage does well, and (not “but”) he that giveth her not shall do better.* It is worth noticing how, in the case of the one who gives his daughter in marriage, we have the present tense “does well”—as if the good he did began and ended there; and, in the other case, the

then he that giveth *her* in marriage doeth well ; but he that giveth *her* not in marriage doeth better.

⁽³⁹⁾ The wife is bound Chap. vii. 39, by the law as ⁴⁰ Marriage of widows. long as her husband liveth ; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will ; only in the

Lord. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment : and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

A. D. 59. (c)
CHAPTER VIII.—

⁽¹⁾ Now as touching things offered unto Chap. viii. 1—13. idols, we The eating of meat which had been used by the heathen for sacrificial purposes. know that we all have

future “ shall do ” (in verse 37 also) —the good result of his action continuing while the girl remains with her parent. This passage clearly shows how St. Paul has not been contrasting right and wrong, but comparative degrees of what is expedient.

All throughout this passage the Apostle takes for granted the absolute control of the parent over the child, in accordance with the principles of both Greek and Jewish jurisprudence. Hence, no advice is given to the young maiden herself, but only to her father.

^(39, 40) **The wife.**—The question of the re-marriage of widows is here considered. It was probably a matter in which his opinion had been asked, and, in any case, naturally completes the subject of marriage. The widow may be married again if she desire, but “ only in the Lord ”—*i.e.*, not to a heathen. She, being a Christian, should marry a Christian.

The words “ by the law ” are not in the best MSS. The opening sentence, asserting the marriage union to be dissoluble only by

death, is to guard against any married woman applying these words to herself, they having reference only to widows.

St. Paul explains that she is happier to continue a widow (her case coming under the same considerations as referred to the unmarried in the previous verses).

I think also that I have the Spirit of God.—This is no expression of doubt as to whether he had the Spirit of God, but an assurance of his confidence that he, as well as other teachers (who, perhaps, boast more about it), had the Spirit of God to guide him in cases where no direct command has been given by Christ.

VIII.

⁽¹⁾ **Now as touching things offered unto idols.**—A new subject is here introduced, and occupies the whole of this chapter. In Corinth and other cities meat was offered for sale which had been used for sacrificial purposes in the heathen temples, having been sold to the dealers by the priests, who received a large share of the sacrifices for themselves, or by the

knowledge. (Knowledge | | puffeth up, but charity edi-

individuals who offered them, and had more remaining of their own share than they could use themselves. Thus, a Christian might unconsciously eat of meat, either at the house of a friend (see chap. x. 27) or by purchasing it himself in the public shambles, which had been previously brought in contact by sacrificial usage with an idol. There were some in Corinth who felt no scruple on the subject. An idol was nothing in their opinion. It could neither consecrate nor pollute that which was offered in its temple. Such Christians would, to show how completely and effectively their Christianity had dispelled all their previous heathen superstition, buy meat without caring whence it came, partake of a heathen friend's hospitality, regardless of what use the meat had been put to, and even join in a repast held in the outer court of a heathen temple (verse 10), where the meat would almost certainly be what had been saved after the sacrifice. That St. Paul would have done so himself, so far as his own personal feelings alone were concerned, we can scarcely doubt. To him, therefore, those who acted upon his authority appealed upon this subject.

There were others at Corinth, however, who felt some scruples upon the subject. There were heathen converts who had not completely got rid of every vestige of the old superstition, or whose conscience would accuse them of not having wholly given up idolatry if they took any part even in its social aspect; for many social acts, as well as purely religious

ceremonies, were in the heathen mind included in acts of worship. And there were Jews, the intensity of whose traditional hatred of idolatry could not allow them to regard as "nothing" that against which Jehovah had uttered His most terrible denunciations, and against which He had preserved their race as a living witness.

To both these sections of the Church the conduct of the more liberal party would prove a serious stumbling-block. The argument used by those who asked St. Paul's advice was evidently that the Christians have knowledge enough to feel that an idol is nothing, and that, therefore, there can be no harm in partaking of what has been offered to "nothing." "We know," says St. Paul, in reply, taking up the words of their own letter, "we know that we all have knowledge: we know that an idol is nothing." The last clause of verse 1 and verses 2 and 3 form a parenthesis; and in verse 4 the opening words of verse 1 are repeated, and the line of thought which this parenthesis interrupted is again resumed.

Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.—Those who grounded everything on knowledge are reminded parenthetically that knowledge by itself may have a bad effect, and also (verses 2, 3) that there is an element in the consciousness of our knowledge which destroys the truth and purity of that knowledge itself. Knowledge puffs up the man himself. Love builds up the whole Church. The word "edify" has now only a moral significance. Originally

fieth. ⁽²⁾ And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

⁽³⁾ But if any man love God, the same is known of

him.) ⁽⁴⁾ As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and

it could be applied to moral conduct only figuratively. The substantive "edifice" has retained its original literal meaning. In Spenser "edify" is used in its literal sense; and in Hakluyt's *Travels* (1553) the "edification" of the Castle of Corfu is mentioned. The use made by St. Paul of this figure is of some importance. The word is used only by St. Paul, and once by St. Luke (Acts ix. 31), and the idea which it conveys is not so much the improvement of the individual as the building-up of the whole Christian edifice. We have come to speak of an "edifying discourse" if it helps the individual. St. Paul would have spoken of an "edifying work" if it built up the Church. "We are sometimes too apt to treat Christianity as if it were *monolithic*" (Howson). (See chaps. xii. 19; xiv. 3, 5, 12, 17; Eph. iv. 12—16; 1 Thess. v. 11.) It is worth noting that the word used in the original in Heb. iii. 3, 4, and ix. 11, is quite different from the word employed, here and elsewhere, by St. Paul.

⁽²⁾ If any man think that he knoweth any thing

—There must be a moral as well as a merely intellectual element in knowledge if it is to be true knowledge. Without love to guide us in its use it is not an operative knowledge, and so does not fulfil the true end of knowledge.

It has been suggested (Stanley

in loc.) that "not yet" has here the force of "not in the infirmities of their mortal state;" but such an interpretation introduces altogether a new element of thought, to which there is no antithetical explanation in what follows.

⁽³⁾ If any man love God.—This explains the nature of the love which edifies. Love to God, and therefore love to man, builds up the whole Christian communion. The man gets outside the mere selfish thought of his own indulgence in his liberty. There is the under-thought in these words ("the same is known of Him") of the identity between knowing God and being known of Him. The latter is the source of the former. Like water rising to its own level, the love and the knowledge rise as high as their source.

⁽⁴⁾ As concerning therefore the eating of those things.—See verse 1. The subject resumed after the parenthesis. We have, perhaps, in this repetition of the words a characteristic of a letter written by another from the author's dictation, as was the case with this and other epistles.

An idol is nothing in the world.—It is nothing in itself but a piece of wood or metal, and it really represents nothing, for we know that there is "no God but one." The word "other" was inserted in later MSS., probably from a recollec-

that *there is* none other God but one. ⁽⁵⁾ For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) ⁽⁶⁾ but to us *there is but*

^a Rom. 11. 36.
1 Or, for him.

one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things,^a and we in him; ¹ and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him. ⁽⁷⁾ Howbeit *there is* not in every man that know-

tion of the words of the first commandment.

⁽⁵⁾ For though there be . . . —This is an hypothetic argument. “Be” is the emphatic word of the supposition. Even assuming that there do exist those beings which are called “gods” (we have a right to make such a supposition, for Deut. x. 17, Ps. cxv. 2, 3, speaks of “gods and lords” of another kind), the difference between the heathen, “gods many” and the “lords and gods” of whom the Old Testament speaks, is that the former are deities, and the latter only a casual way of speaking of angels and other spiritual subjects and servants of the one God. This is brought out in the following verse.

⁽⁶⁾ But to us.—Though this be so, yet for us Christians there exists but one God, the Father, from whom alone every created thing has come, and for (not “in”) whom alone we exist; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are created (John i. 3), and we Christians created spiritually by Him. All creation is of the Father through the Son. All creation is for the Father and likewise for the Son. (See Col. i. 16.) The words “we by Him” must not be regarded as a repetition of part of the thought of the previous sentence; but as the words “by whom are all things”

express the fact of physical creation, so the words, “we by Him,” attribute our spiritual re-creation as Christians to the same source. (See Gal. vi. 15; Eph. ii. 10.) This sixth verse then sweeps away completely any pantheistic conception which might have been thought to be in the previous words. Even granting, for argument sake, that such gods or lords do exist, we have but one God, one Lord.

⁽⁷⁾ Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge. —The Apostle had admitted that in theory all have knowledge which should render the eating of things offered to idols a matter beyond question; but there are some who, as a matter of fact, are not fully grown—have not practically attained that knowledge.

Some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol.—Better, *some, through their familiarity with the idol, even up to this time eat it as offered to an idol.*

The weight of MS. evidence is in favour of the word “familiarity” instead of the word “conscience,” and joins “even up to this time,” not with “eat,” but with the previous words. Thus the allusion is to heathen converts, who, from their previous lifelong belief in the reality of the idol as representing a god, have not been

ledge ; for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol ; and their conscience being weak is defiled. ⁽⁸⁾ But meat commendeth us not to God : for neither, if we

¹ Or, *have we the more.*

² Or, *have we the less.*

³ Or, *power.*

eat, are we the better ; ¹ neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. ²

⁽⁹⁾ But take heed lest by any means this liberty ³ of your's become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. ⁽¹⁰⁾ For if any man

able fully to realise the non-existence of the person thus represented, though they have come to believe that it is not God ; and therefore, they regard the meat as offered to some kind of reality, even though it be a demon. (See chap. x. 20, 21.) The Apostle admits that this is a sign of a weak conscience ; and the defilement arises from its being weak.

⁽⁸⁾ **But meat . . .**—By showing that the eating is a matter of indifference, the Apostle introduces his reason for yielding to the weakness of another. If the weakness involved a matter of our vital relation to God, then to yield would be wrong. But meat will not (future) affect our relationship to God. The concluding words of this verse are inverted in later MSS., as in the English version, and the better order is : “ Neither, if we eat not, do we lose anything in our relation to God ; nor, if we eat, do we gain anything in our relation to Him.”

⁽⁹⁾ **But take heed.**—On this very account, because the matter is one which *is* indifferent, because there is no right or wrong in it, you must look elsewhere for your guide as to how you ought to act. In things which are not indifferent, right or wrong is the sole test of

action. In things indifferent you must look for some other guide, and you must regulate your conduct by the effect it may have on others. Your liberty, which arises from the bare fact of the indifferent nature of the thing, may become a stumbling-block to others, may be the cause of their taking a false step in the Christian course.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **For if any man** (*i.e.*, any of the weak brethren) **see thee which hast knowledge.**—The fact of your being avowedly advanced in the knowledge of the faith will make your example the more dangerous, because more effective.

Sit at meat in the idol's temple.—Some went so far as to not only eat, but eat in the precincts of the heathen temple. The Apostle being concerned now only with the point of the eating, does not rebuke this practice here, but he does so fully in chap. x. 14—22. He probably mentions the fact here as an instance in which there could be no salving of his conscience by the heathen convert thinking that it was not certain whence the meat had come.

Be emboldened.—Better, *be built up*. The people addressed had probably argued that the force of their example would build up

see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened¹ to eat those things which are offered to idols; ⁽¹¹⁾ and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ

¹ Gr. *edified.*

died? ⁽¹²⁾ But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. ⁽¹³⁾ Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

others. Yes, says St. Paul, with irony, it will build him up—to do what, being weak, he cannot do without sin.

⁽¹¹⁾ **And through thy knowledge shall . . .**—Better, *and by means of thy knowledge the weak one perishes—the brother for whom Christ died.* It is not, as in the English version, a question, but it is the expansion and interpretation of the previous statement. There is a great variety of readings in the MSS., but the weight of evidence is in favour of this reading. Christ *died* for him. The sarcasm passes away in words of solemn and pathetic reproof. You won't give up your liberty for him. You will indulge yourself, and so prevent Christ's death being *his* redemption. A sacrifice of conscience destroys spiritual life.

⁽¹²⁾ **When ye sin so.**—When you sin in this way—and he explains further what the sin is, “Striking a blow upon their weak consciences” — you sin against Christ. You wound a member of that body which is His. (See Matt. xxv. 40).

⁽¹³⁾ **Wherefore.**—He states his own solemn determination, arising from the considerations which have just been urged. If a matter of

food cause a brother to fall in his Christian course, I will certainly never again eat any kind of flesh, lest I should be the cause of so making him to fall.

It is noticeable that St. Paul in discussing this question makes no reference whatever to the decision of the Council at Jerusalem (see Acts xv. 29), that the Christians should abstain from “meats offered to idols, and from things strangled, and from blood.” Probably, the Apostle felt the importance of maintaining his own apostolic authority in a Church where it was questioned by some, and he felt that to base his instruction upon the decision of the Church at Jerusalem might have seemed to imply that he had obtained authority from them, and not directly from the Lord. It was also more in accordance with St. Paul's usual style of instruction to base the smallest details of conduct upon that highest of all principles—our union as Christians with Christ. An appeal to the letter sent from Jerusalem would have been no step in the ascending argument, which reaches its great climax in the 11th and 12th verses, and which, in verse 13, the Apostle enunciates as the guide of his own life.

CHAPTER IX.—^{A.D. 59.}

(a) Am I not an apostle ?

am I not free ? have I not seen Jesus Christ our

IX.

The assertion in the last verse of chap. viii. of his willingness to sacrifice for ever his own right to eat meat, about which he had himself no conscientious scruple, out of a tender regard to the spiritual welfare of others, seems to have reminded the Apostle that another act of self-sacrifice on his part had not only been unappreciated, but made the grounds of an unworthy attempt on the part of some (probably the Jewish Christians) to depreciate and even call in question his apostolic dignity and authority. At Corinth (Acts xviii. 3), and elsewhere (Acts xx. 34, and 2 Thess. iii. 7—9), the Apostle, instead of depending upon the Church for support, had laboured as a tent-maker. *Cilicium*, a kind of cloth used for tent-coverings, took its name from Cilicia, where the goats out of whose hair it was made were found in abundance; and the manufacture of it was naturally the handicraft which a native of Tarsus in Cilicia would, according to general custom, have learnt in his boyhood. The followers of St. Peter, with maliciously ingenious logic, argued from this practice of St. Paul's that his dignity and authority were thereby proved to be somewhat inferior to that of St. Peter and the Lord's brethren, who were supported by the Christian Church. It is to this subject the Apostle now turns, and the chapter (ix.) is occupied with his reply to their insinuations. If we remember that so long an epistle could not have been written at a

single sitting, but probably occupied many days in its composition, such change in subject and style as we have an example of in the last verse of chap. viii. and the first verse of this chapter, will not seem so abrupt and startling as at first sight they may appear. This chapter deals with its subject in a style eminently characteristic of the Apostle. While in the earlier part the style is argumentative, with here and there flashes of sarcasm or of passionate appeal, towards the end it is full of earnest and loving pathos. The subject of the entire chapter is "The vindication of his personal conduct as an Apostle," and this is arranged in the following order:—

I. VERSES 1—18. THE ASSERTION OF HIS RIGHTS AS AN APOSTLE, AND HIS VOLUNTARY ABNEGATION OF THEM.

(1) Verses 1—3. The assertion of his apostolic dignity.

(2) Verses 4—14. The assertion of his right to be supported by the Church, and that he did not avail himself of it.

This right is maintained from the following considerations:—

(a) Verses 4—6. The fact that others and their wives are so supported.

(b) Verse 7. An appeal to the facts of ordinary life, illustrated by the cases of a soldier, a vine-keeper, and a shepherd.

(c) Verses 8—10. A reference to the principles of Jewish law.

Lord? are not ye my work
 Chap. ix. 1—12. in the Lord?
 The apostolic (2) If I be not
 right of mainten- an apostle
 ance.

unto others, yet doubt-
 less I am to you: for
 the seal of mine apostle-
 ship are ye in the Lord.

(d) Verses 11, 12. The treat-
 ment of other Christian
 teachers.

(e) Verse 13. The support of
 the Jewish priesthood.

(f) Verse 14. The command
 of Christ Himself.

(3) Verses 15—18. The cause
 and motive of the Apostle's
 voluntary abnegation of
 this right.

II. Verses 19—27. IN OTHER MAT-
 TERS AS WELL AS IN THIS, THE
 APOSTLE WAS INFLUENCED BY
 A REGARD FOR OTHERS.

(1) Verses 19—22. The various
 forms which this self-sacrifice
 assumed for their sakes.

(2) Verses 22—27. The bearing
 of it on himself personally.

(1) **Am I not an apostle?**—
 Better, *Am I not free? am I not an
 Apostle?* such being the order of
 the words in the better MSS. Thus
 the thought grows more naturally
 out of the previous chapter than it
 seems to do in the English version.
 He had mentioned his solemn re-
 solve to give up a freedom to which
 he had a right in regard to eating
 meat. He had on another occasion,
 in regard to his right of mainten-
 ance by the Church, also voluntarily
 sacrificed his freedom, and the
 Jewish party had in consequence
 denied the existence of the rights,
 and questioned his apostolic dignity.
 He asks, with abrupt emphasis,
 "Was it because I am not free to
 demand such support? My freedom
 in this case is as real as in that

other case when you questioned it,
 and to which I shall now refer.
 Was it because I am not an
 Apostle?"

**Have I not seen Jesus
 Christ our Lord?**—To have
 seen Christ was a necessary quali-
 fication for the Apostolate (Acts i.
 21). From the manner in which
 the Apostle here asks the question,
 and does not answer it, it would
 seem that although some small mi-
 nority might, for some party pur-
 pose, have at some time questioned
 it, yet that the fact was generally
 admitted and universally known
 that St. Paul did actually see the
 Lord at the time of his conversion
 (Acts ix. 4), and on other occasions
 (Acts xviii. 9; xxii. 17).

**Are not ye my work in the
 Lord?**—This is a further proof of
 his Apostleship, and therefore of
 his right or freedom to have de-
 manded support from the Church.
 (See chap. iv. 15.)

(2) **If I be not an apostle
 unto others.**—The allusion here
 is probably to some who may have
 arrived at Corinth subsequent to
 St. Paul's departure, and who, not
 recognising his Apostleship in re-
 lation to themselves, stirred up
 some of the Corinthians to repudiate
 it also. So the Apostle says, "Even
 if I am not an Apostle to these
 others, I am, at all events, to you;
 for you are yourselves the very
 proof and witness—the seal affixed
 to my appointment to the Aposto-
 late." The repetition of the words
 "in the Lord" in both these verses

(3) Mine answer to them
that do examine me is
this, (4) Have we not

power to eat and to
drink? (5) Have we not
power to lead about a

expresses the strong conviction, which is characteristic of the Apostle, that the source of all power and of all success is Christ Himself.

(3) **Mine answer**—The verse refers to what has gone before, and not to what follows. *That* (emphatic) *is my answer to those who examine me as to the truth of my Apostleship.* Both the words “answer” and “examine” are in the Greek the technical terms for a legal defence and examination before a tribunal.

(4) **Have we not power . . . ?**—This follows chap. vii. after the parenthetical argument contained in verses 2, 3. Having established his right to be called an Apostle by the fact that he had seen the Lord, and had been instrumental in their conversion, he now in the same interrogative style asserts his rights as an Apostle. The use of the plural “we” carries on the thought that he is claiming this right as being one of the Apostles—all of whom have, as Apostles, such a right. The form in which the question is asked implies, Surely we have this right. This verse, taken in connection with chap. viii. 9, where the same word in the Greek, “liberty,” occurs in connection with eating, shows how this line of thought has grown out of the preceding subject. The question there, however, was that of eating meat offered to idols; the question here is the right to eat and drink (*i.e.*, live) at the expense of the Church (Luke x. 7).

(5) **To lead about a sister, a wife—*i.e.*,** to take with us on our journeys a Christian woman as a wife. Roman divines have interpreted this as referring to “the custom of Christian matrons attending as sisters upon the Apostles.” But as the Apostle illustrates his meaning by a reference to Peter, who we know had a wife, such an interpretation is inadmissible. St. Paul, in this verse, carries his statement of apostolic right to support one step further. Not only had he a right to be supported himself, but the support of the married Apostles and their wives by the Church implied the same right on the part of all. A practice which grew out of a misapprehension of the real meaning of this passage, led to grave scandal, and was finally condemned by the first Council of Nicæa (A.D. 325).

The brethren of the Lord, and Cephas.—These are mentioned specially, not as distinct from the Apostles (for Cephas, of course, was one), but as examples which would have great weight with the particular Jewish faction to whom this argument was adduced. James was Bishop of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 13; xxi. 18). The other brethren of our Lord were Joses, Simon, and Judas (Matt. xiii. 55). They were not of the twelve Apostles, even after their conversion being mentioned as distinct from the Twelve (Acts i. 14), although James subsequently occupied an apostolic position (Gal. ii. 9). Various and ingenious sug-

sister, a wife, ¹ as well as other apostles, and <i>as</i> the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? ⁽⁶⁾ Or I only and	¹ Or, <i>woman.</i>	Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? ⁽⁷⁾ Who goeth a warfare any time at his own
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gestions have been made as to who these "brethren of the Lord" were; amongst others, that they were cousins, or that they were children of Joseph by a former marriage. These views grew out of a desire to establish the perpetual virginity of Mary. The natural conclusion from a study of the mention of their names in the Gospels, without preconceived prejudice, would be that Joseph and Mary lived together after the miraculous birth of Christ, and that these were their children. This, too, is supported by the use of the word "*first-born*" in reference to our Lord (Matt. i. 25; Luke ii. 7), and the word "till" (Matt. i. 25), and "before they came together" (Matt. i. 18), and the repeated mention of them as brethren in connection with His mother Mary. (See Matt. xii. 46.)

⁽⁶⁾ **Or I only and Barnabas.**

—"Or" here does not introduce a question which implies a new right in addition to the rights already claimed, but it completes the argument. Granting the existence of the rights established by the previous questions, the Apostle now says—still preserving the interrogative form—"These things being so, the only way you can possibly do away with this right is by making exceptions of myself and Barnabas." The form in which the question is put shows the impossibility of any such arbitrary exception being made. They as well as the others *had* the

right to abstain from working for their living. Barnabas' early association with St. Paul (Acts xi. 30; xii. 25; xv. 35) probably led him to adopt the Apostle's practice of supporting himself, and not being dependent on his fellow-Christians. The word "only" implies that all the other Apostles and brethren of the Lord exercised their right of maintenance by the Church.

⁽⁷⁾ **Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?**

Three illustrations from human life and business show that the principle which has been adopted in the Christian Church is not exceptional. A soldier receives his pay; the planter of a vineyard eats the fruit of it; and the owner of a flock is supported by selling the milk. The best MSS. omit the word "of" before "fruit." It probably crept into later texts from the occurrence of that word with the "milk;" but a vineyard owner actually eats his fruit, whereas not only would it be strange to speak of "eating" milk, but the owner of flocks would really be sustained chiefly by the sale of the milk and the purchase of food with the money so obtained. He would eat "of" the milk. It is worth noticing that St. Paul never (with the one exception of Acts xx. 28, 29) takes up the image supplied by the Lord Himself of Christ being the Shepherd, and the Church His flock. Even here, where the occurrence of the word "flock" must have suggested it, it

charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? ⁽⁸⁾ Say I these things as a man? or saith

^a Deut.
25. 4.

not the law the same also? ⁽⁹⁾ For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.^a Doth God take care for oxen? ⁽¹⁰⁾ Or saith

is not alluded to. On the other hand, St. Peter's favourite image is that of "the flock." The command, "Feed My flock," would have made it touchingly familiar to him. St. Paul's imagery from nature and country life are on the practical rather than the poetic side; whereas his images from military, political, and social life have the vivid reality which we should expect from one whose life was spent chiefly in towns. It has been observed that St. Paul's vindication falls naturally into three divisions:—(1) The argument from induction, verses 1—6; (2) that from analogy, verse 7; (3) that from authority, verse 8.

⁽⁸⁾ **Say I these things as a man?**—He proceeds to show that his appeal is not to a human principle, but to the recognition by men of a principle which is itself divine. The divinely-given Law also says these things.

⁽⁹⁾ **The ox that treadeth out the corn.**—Better, *the ox while treading out the corn.* In this verse the question of the previous one is answered. The Law does say the same: "For it is written in the Law of Moses," etc. The pointed and emphatic mention of the Law of Moses would give the words great weight with Jewish opponents. On a space of hard ground called a threshing-floor

the oxen were driven to and fro over the corn collected there, and thus the separation of the grain from the husk was accomplished.

Doth God take care for oxen?—We must not take these and the following words as a denial of the divine regard for the brute creation, which runs through the Mosaic law and is exemplified in Jon. iv. 11, but as an expression of the Apostle's belief as to the ultimate and highest object of God's love. The good which such a provision as the Law achieved for the oxen was nothing compared to the good which it accomplished for man. God did not do this simply as a provision for the ox, but to teach us men humanity—to teach us that it is a divine principle that the labourer should have his reward.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **That he that ploweth should plow in hope.**—There is considerable variation in the MSS. here. The best rendering of the text is; *that the plougher is bound to plough in hope, and the thresher (to thresh) in the hope of having his share.* It has been much discussed whether this passage is to be taken literally as referring to actual ploughing and threshing, or whether we are to give them a spiritual significance. I think it is, perhaps, best to take them

he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. ⁽¹¹⁾ If we have sown unto you spiritual things,^a *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal

^a Rom. 15. 27.

things? ⁽¹²⁾ If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather?

Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. ⁽¹³⁾ Do

Chap. ix. 12—27. St. Paul's reason for not availing himself of this right.

literally, as expressing the sanction given by God in the legal provision previously mentioned to the divine principle which unites earthly labour and reward; and the argument, of course, is that this principle applies *à fortiori* to the higher work of a spiritual nature; and this application is brought out clearly in the next verse.

⁽¹¹⁾ **If we have sown unto you spiritual things.**—The two sentences in this verse contain a striking double antithesis, the “we” and “you” being emphatic, and “spiritual” being opposed to “carnal.” The spiritual things are, of course, the things of the Spirit of God, by which their spiritual natures are sustained; the carnal things those which the teachers might expect in return, the ordinary support of their physical nature. The force of the climax will be better realised if we notice that the previous argument proved the right of a labourer to receive a remuneration the same in kind as was the quality of his labour. A plougher or a sower would have his reward in a harvest of the same kind as he had sown.

That being the principle recognised in civilised life, and sanctioned by the object which the Law of God had in view, the Apostle adds, with a slight touch of sarcasm—Such being an ordinary thing in life, is it a *great* thing for us to have a reward as inferior to our work as carnal things are to spiritual things?

⁽¹²⁾ **If others be partakers**—You do recognise this principle in regard to other teachers, and they actually partake of this right to be supported by you; we, your first teachers, have a stronger right. St. Paul had been literally their “planter” (chap. iii. 6).

But suffer all things—i.e., We endure all kinds of hard work and privation rather than use a power which I have demonstrated we possess, and which others actually avail themselves of, lest our doing so might, in a way, hinder the progress of Christ's gospel by giving enemies any even apparent reason for attributing our zeal to unworthy motives.

⁽¹³⁾ **Do ye not know.**—The Apostle now turns to appeal to an argument which would have weight

ye not know that they which minister about holy things live¹ of the things of the temple?^a and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

¹ Or, feed.
^a Deut. 18. 1.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. ⁽¹⁵⁾ But I have used none of these things : neither have I

with them as Christians. The rights of the ministry to be supported by the Church have already been established by an appeal to ordinary life and to the Jewish law; and the statement has been made that the Apostle having that right, did not, for wise reasons, use it. There is one higher step in the argument. It was not only a principle of Jewish law which Christ might have abrogated, but it was a provision of the Jewish economy which Christ Himself formally perpetuated.

They which minister
—Better, *They which minister about the holy things eat from the temple, and they which serve at the altar have their share with the altar.* The first part of this passage refers to the general principle that the priests who were engaged in the Temple services were supported from the various offerings which were brought there, and the second clause more definitely alludes to the particular fact that when a sacrifice was offered on the altar, the sacrificing priests, as well as the altar, had a share of the animal. (See Lev. vi. 16, 26; vii. 6; Num. v. 9, 10; xviii. 9; Deut. xviii. 3.) A suggestion that the allusion might be to the custom of the heathen priests is wholly inadmissible, for such would have no force for Christians, and would entirely destroy the sequence of the next verse.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **Even so.**—These words explain why the Apostle again referred to Jewish law, after having in verse 9 already made use of an appeal to the Law as an argument. It is now again referred to only to introduce the crowning argument that Christ Himself perpetuated this law in its application to the Christian ministry. (See Matt. x. 10; Luke x. 7.)

They which preach the gospel.—The preaching of the gospel is in the Christian ministry the function which corresponds to the offering of sacrifice in the Jewish priesthood. Bengel well remarks, “If the Mass were a sacrifice, Paul would undoubtedly have accommodated to it the apodosis here.”

⁽¹⁵⁾ **But I.**—Again, after the assertion of the right, we have the statement that though he had vindicated the right by the highest and unquestionable authority of Christ Himself, the Apostle had not seen fit to avail himself of it.

Neither have I written these things.—Better, *neither am I writing.* The Apostle in these words carefully guards against the possibility of their taking these arguments used here as an indication of any intention on his part to give up now the independent position which he had hitherto assumed.

It were better for me to die.—The meaning of these words

written these things, that it should be so done unto me : for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

⁽¹⁶⁾ For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of : for necessity is laid upon me ; (yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel !) ⁽¹⁷⁾ For if I

is evidently that the Apostle would rather die than make void his right to boast or glory in his unremunerated work in the Church—which would be the case if he now or ever condescended to receive, as others did, any support from them. There is, however, a great variety of readings as to the actual mode of expression of this thought. One suggestion is that the words may read thus:—"It were better for me to die than (receive reward from you) ; no man shall make my ground of boasting void." Another is, "It were better for me to die, rather than any one should make my ground of boasting void." There is great weight in favour of both of these readings. The following have also been suggested as possible readings of the passage:—"It were better for me to die than that my ground of boasting should die ; no one shall make it void ;" and "It were better for me to die than that my ground of boasting — ; no man shall make it void." In this last case the Apostle pauses in the middle of his impassioned declaration, and leaves the sentence unfinished, as he flings aside the thought that his ground of boasting could be removed, and exclaims earnestly and emphatically, "No man *shall* make it void." Perhaps, on the whole, especially having regard to the character of the writer, this last rendering is most likely to be the true one. In any

case, the general drift and meaning of the passage is the same. The Apostle would rather die than lose his ground of boasting, and he boldly asserts his determination to let no one deprive him of it.

⁽¹⁶⁾ For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of.—Better, *For though I preach the gospel, I have no ground of boasting.* St. Paul proceeds now to show how his maintenance by the Church would deprive him of his right to boast or glory in his work. The mere preaching of the gospel supplies no ground of boasting ; it is a necessity ; God's woe would await him in the judgment if he did not so. A man can have no ground of boasting in doing that which he *must* do.

⁽¹⁷⁾ For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward.—The previous words, "Yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel," are a parenthesis ; and now the writer proves the truth of his assertion—that the necessity of preaching the gospel deprives the mere act itself of any grounds of boasting—by showing that if there were no necessity there would be a ground of boasting. The argument is this:—Suppose it to be otherwise, and that there is no such necessity, then, by voluntarily undertaking it, I have a reward. The undertaking it of my own free will would entitle me to a reward. But if (as is the case) not of my

do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. ⁽¹⁸⁾ What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without

charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

⁽¹⁹⁾ For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. ⁽²⁰⁾ And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the

free will, but of necessity, then I am merely a steward—a slave doing his duty (chap. iv. 1; Luke xvii. 7—10).

A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.—Better, *I am entrusted with a stewardship.*

⁽¹⁸⁾ What is my reward then?—It seems better to transpose the note of interrogation to the end of the sentence, and read the whole verse thus:—*What reward then is to be mine, so that (i.e., which induces me) in preaching the gospel I make the gospel without charge (to my hearers), so that I use not my power in the gospel?* The “power” being the right to support maintained in verses 6, 12.

⁽¹⁹⁾ For.—The question is here answered. His reward was to gain the greater number of converts—Jews (verse 20), Gentiles (verse 21), weak ones (verse 22). The only reward he sought for or looked for in adopting that course of conduct, for pursuing which they taunted him with selfishness, was, after all, their good.

The word “For,” introducing the answer, would seem to imply that the reward must be a greater one. “For” though an Apostle, I became a slave of all that I might

gain the greater number. The words “greater number” probably include the two ideas, viz., a greater number than he could have gained had he used his rights as an Apostle, and also a greater number of converts than was gained by any other Apostle.

⁽²⁰⁾ And unto the Jews I became as a Jew.—This and the following verses are a categorical explanation of the previous statements. They show in detail both how he became the slave of all and the reward he had in view in doing so.

For example, of St. Paul’s conformity to Jewish law, see Acts xvi. 3; xviii. 18; xx. 6; xxi. 26.

To them that are under the law . . . —Better, *To them that are under the Law, as under the Law, not being myself under the Law.* These last words are found in all the best MSS., but have been omitted by an oversight of the copyist in the text from which our own translation is made. Those spoken of as “Jews” are, of course, Jews by birth and religion; those “under the Law” are probably proselytes to Judaism. In neither case do they mean Christian converts, for the object of St. Paul’s conduct towards those of whom he here speaks was to win them to the

Jews ; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law ; ⁽²¹⁾ to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might

gain them that are without law. ⁽²²⁾ To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak : I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.

⁽²³⁾ And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might

Faith of Christ. He himself was no longer "under the Law," being a Christian (Gal. ii. 19).

⁽²¹⁾ **To them that are without law.**—*i.e.*, the heathen. St. Paul adapted himself to their habits and mode of thought when necessary. He quoted from their literature (Acts xvii. 28) ; he based an argument on the inscriptions on their altars (Acts xvii. 23) ; and he did not require them to adopt Jewish ceremonies (Gal. ii. 9, 11). The parenthesis explains in what sense only St. Paul was "without" the Law, so as to prevent the possibility of this statement being used as a justification of lawlessness. As being one with Christ, he was indeed under the law of God as revealed in the person, work, and teaching of the Lord. (See Gal. vi. 2.)

⁽²²⁾ **To the weak.**—We can scarcely take this (as some do) to refer to weak Christians, of whom he has spoken in chap. viii. The whole passage treats of the attitude which the Apostle assumed towards various classes outside the Christian Church, that he might gain them as converts. The words "I became," which have introduced the various classes in verse 20, are here again repeated, and this passage seems to be an ex-

planation and reiteration of what had gone before. "It was to the weak points (not to the strong points) of Jews, proselytes, and Gentiles that I assimilated myself. To the weak ones among all these classes I became weak, that I might gain those weak ones."

I am made all things to all . . .—Better, *I am become all things to all men that I should save at least some.* Although he had thus accommodated himself, so far as was possible, consistently with Christian duty, to the weaknesses of all, he could only hope to win some of them. The natural climax would have been—"I become all things to all men that I might win *all*." But the Apostle's humility could not let him dare to hope for so great a reward as that. All the self-sacrifice he could make was necessary to gain "at all events some," and that would be his ample reward. The word "save" means "win over to Christianity," as in chap. vii. 16, and is used here instead of the previous word "gain," being repeated to prevent any possible perversion of the Apostle's meaning as to "gaining men." His object was not, as enemies might suggest, to win them to himself—but to Christ.

⁽²³⁾ **And this I do . . .**—

be partaker thereof with you. ⁽²⁴⁾ Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that

ye may obtain. ⁽²⁵⁾ And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a cor-

Better, *And all things I do for the gospel's sake*: such being the reading of the best MSS. Here a new thought is introduced. From them for whom he labours, the Apostle turns for a moment to himself. After all, the highest reward even an Apostle can have is to be a sharer in that common salvation which has been brought to light by the gospel. With argument and illustration, St. Paul had vigorously and unflinchingly maintained the dignity and rights of his office. The pathetic words with which he now concludes show that in defending the dignity of his Apostolate he had not been forgetful of that personal humility which every Christian minister feels more and more deeply in proportion as he realises the greatness of his office.

⁽²⁴⁾ **Know ye not . . .**—The illustration which follows refers to those Isthmian games (so called from their taking place in the isthmus where Corinth stood) with which his readers would be familiar. These, like the other games of Greece—the Olympian, Pythian, and Nemean—included every form of athletic exercise, and stood on an entirely different footing from anything of the kind in modern times. For the Greek, these contests were great national and religious festivals. None but freemen could enter the lists, and they only after they had satisfied the appointed officers that they had for

ten months undergone the necessary preliminary training. For thirty days previous to the contest the candidates had to attend the exercises at the gymnasium, and only after the fulfilment of these conditions were they allowed, when the time arrived, to contend in the sight of assembled Greece. Proclamation was made of the name and country of each competitor by a herald. The victor was crowned with a garland of pine-leaves or ivy. The family of the conqueror was honoured by his victory, and when he returned to his native town he would enter it through a breach in the walls, the object of this being to symbolise that for a town which was honoured with such a citizen no walls of defence were needful (Plutarch). Pindar, or some other great poet, would immortalise the victorious hero's name in his verse, and in all future festivals the foremost seats would be occupied by the heroes of former contests.

So run—*i.e.*, run in the way referred to, so that you may gain a prize.

⁽²⁵⁾ **Every man that striveth for the mastery.**—Better, *Every one that enters into the contest*. The Greek word *agonizomenos* is identical with the English "agonise." Hence the use in devotional works of the phrase "to agonise in prayer," etc.

Is temperate in all things.—He fulfils not only some, but all of the necessary preliminary con-

ruptible crown ; but we an incorruptible. ⁽²³⁾ I therefore so run, not as uncertainly ; so fight I, not as

one that beateth the air : ⁽²⁷⁾ but I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection : lest that by

ditions. He indulges self in no way.

They do it to obtain a corruptible crown.—There are two striking points of contrast between the earthly race and the spiritual course. There is but one obtains a reward in the earthly contest ; none need fail of it in the heavenly race. That reward in the one case is perishable ; in the other it is imperishable. If, then—such is St. Paul's argument—men show such extraordinary devotion and self-sacrifice for a reward which is merely perishable, and which each has only a chance of gaining, what should not be the devotion and self-sacrifice of those for all of whom an imperishable reward is certain !

⁽²⁶⁾ **I therefore so run.**—The Apostle appeals to his own conduct as an illustration of the lesson which he is teaching, and by means of it reminds the reader that the whole of this chapter has been a vindication of his own self-denial, and that he has a clear and definite object in view.

So fight I.—The illustration is changed from running to boxing, both being included in the word used in ver. 25, "contending." He has an adversary to contend against, and he strikes him, and does not wildly and impotently strike at him, and so only beat the air.

⁽²⁷⁾ **But I keep under my body.**—Better, *but I bruise my body.* The word is very strong, and implies to beat the flesh until it becomes black and blue. The

only other place the word occurs is in Luke xviii. 5. The body is spoken of as his adversary, or the seat of those lusts and appetites which "war against the mind" (Rom. vii. 23 ; Gal. v. 17).

Bring it into subjection.—Better, *and make it a slave.* The idea is carried on that the body is not only conquered, but led captive. We must remember that the language all throughout this passage is figurative, and the statement here refers, not to the infliction of actual pain on the body, but to the subduing of the appetites and passions which are located in it. The true position of our natural appetites is that they should be entirely our servants, and not our masters ; that we "should not follow or be led by them," but that they should follow and be led by us.

Lest that by any means.—Better, *lest having been a herald to others, I myself should be rejected.* The image is carried on, and the Apostle says that he has a further motive to live a life of self-denial—viz., that he having acted as a herald, proclaiming the conditions of the contest and the requisite preliminaries for it, should not be found to have himself fulfilled them. It is the same image kept up still of this race, and of the herald who announced the name of the victor, and the fact that he had fulfilled the necessary conditions. It was not the custom for the herald to join in the contest, but the Apostle was himself *both a*

any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.

CHAPTER X. —

(¹) Moreover, brethren, I

would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea ;

Chap. x. 1—xi. 1. Further warning and direction regarding the eating of meat offered to idols.

A. D. '59.

runner in the Christian course, and a herald of the conditions of that race to others. Hence, naturally, he speaks of the two characters, which in the actual illustration would be distinct, as united in one when applied spiritually to himself. The word "castaway" conveys a wrong impression. The Greek word signifies one who had not behaved according to the prescribed regulations.

X.

(¹) Moreover, brethren, . . .

—Better, *For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant.* From the strong statement of personal self-distrust with which the previous chapter concludes, the Apostle now passes on to show that Jewish history contains solemn examples of the falling away of those who seemed to stand strong in divine favour and privilege. The same kind of dangers still beset God's people, but they will never be greater than the strength which God will give to bear them. These thoughts are then applied to the immediate subject in hand, viz., the partaking of meat which had been used in the heathen temples. The subject is, as it were, taken up from chap. viii. 13, where an expression of personal willingness to forego a right, led the writer aside to the subject which occupies chap.

ix. Uniting chap. xi. 1 with the last verse of this chapter, the general outline of the argument is as follows:—

Chap. x. 1—11. The history of the Jewish Church contains examples which ought to be warnings against self-confidence.

Verses 12—14. These thoughts should make the Christians distrustful of themselves, but not hopeless.

Verses 15—17. The unity of the Christian body with Christ, as expressed and realised in the Holy Communion, renders impossible a communion of the same body with the objects of idolatrous worship.

Verses 18—22. Any partaking of idolatrous feasts would involve union to such extent as would compromise, just as Israel's partaking of sacrificial offerings involved union with the altar of Jehovah.

Verse 23—chap. xi. 1. An enunciation of the principles deduced from the foregoing considerations which should guide the Corinthian Christians in their partaking of meat which might have been offered to idols.

That ye should be ignorant.

(²) and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea ; (³) and did all eat the same spiritual ¹ Or, *went with them.* meat ; (⁴) and did all drink the same spiritual drink : for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed ¹

—The thought here is not that his readers were at all likely to be ignorant of the mere historical fact which he now recalls, and with which they were doubtless quite familiar, but that they were probably unmindful of the spiritual lessons which are to be learnt from such a grouping of the facts as the Apostle now gives, and of the striking contrast between the enjoyment of great privileges by *all* (five times emphatically repeated) and the apostacy of the greater part of them. The Apostle assumes their familiarity with the facts referred to, and does not feel it needful to mention that of the “all,” literally only two (Joshua and Caleb) gained the ultimate approval of Jehovah.

Our fathers.—These words need not limit the reference of this teaching to the Jewish Christians only. It would include all Christians by right of spiritual descent.

(²) **Were all baptized unto Moses.**—The weight of evidence is in favour of the middle voice for the Greek verb here used, signifying that they all voluntarily had themselves baptised to Moses. Moses was God’s representative under the Law, and so they were baptised unto him in their voluntarily joining with that “Church” of God which marched beneath the shadow of the cloud, and passed through the waters of the sea—as Christians are baptised unto Jesus Christ,—He being (in a higher sense both

in kind and in degree) God’s representative in the New Dispensation.

The “cloud” and the “sea” refer to the cloud that overshadowed the Israelites (Ex. xiii. 21, and see Num. xiv. 14), and the passage through the Red Sea (Ex. xiv. 22; Num. xxxiii. 8).

(³) **Spiritual meat.**—The manna (Ex. xvi. 14) was not natural food, for it was not produced in the natural way, but it was supplied by the Spirit and power of God. Bread from earth would be natural bread, but this was bread from heaven (John vi. 31). Our Lord (John vi. 50) had already made the Christian Church familiar with the “true bread,” of which that food had been the typical forecast.

(⁴) **That spiritual Rock that followed them.**—There was a Jewish tradition that the Rock—*i.e.*, a fragment broken off from the rock smitten by Moses—followed the Israelites through their journey, and St. Paul, for the purpose of illustration, adopts that account instead of the statement in Num. xx. 11. The emphatic repetition of the word “spiritual” before “drink” and “rock” reminds the reader that it is the spiritual and not the historic aspect of the fact which is present to St. Paul’s mind. The traditional account of the Rock was a more complete illustration of the abiding presence of God, which was the point that the Apostle here desires to bring forward.

them : and that Rock was Christ. ⁽⁵⁾ But with many of them God was not well pleased : for they were overthrown in the wilderness. ⁽⁶⁾ Now these things were our examples,¹ to the

1 Gr. *our figures.*
a Ex. 32.
6: Ps. 106. 14.

intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. ⁽⁷⁾ Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them ; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink,^a and rose up to

And that Rock was Christ.
—As Christ was “ God manifest in the flesh ” in the New Dispensation, so God manifest in the Rock (the source of sustaining life) was the Christ of the Old Dispensation. The Jews had become familiar with the thought of God as a Rock. (See 1 Sam. ii. 2 ; Ps. xv. 1 ; Isa. xxxii. 2.) Though the Jews may have recognised the Rock poetically as God, they knew not that it was, as a manifestation of God’s presence, typical of the manifestation which was yet to be given in the Incarnation. Such seems to be the force of the statement and of the word “ But ” which emphatically introduces it. *But* though they thought it only a Rock, or applied the word poetically to Jehovah, that Rock *was* Christ.

⁽⁵⁾ **But with many of them.**
—Better, *Nevertheless not with the greater part of them was God pleased.* This introduces the point from which the Apostle seeks to draw the great lesson of self-distrust. *All had all* these privileges—privileges of a baptism and a spiritual meat and drink which correspond with the sacramental ordinances which are proofs and pledges of all the privileges of us Christians ; and yet with the greater part—in fact, with all except two—of that vast multitude God was not pleased, as is proved by the fact that (Num.

xiv. 30) all except Caleb and Joshua perished in the wilderness.

⁽⁶⁾ **Now these things were our examples.**—Better, *Now these things were types of us.* “ Now ” introduces the contrast between the physical Israel and the spiritual Israel, between the physical death which befell the majority of the former, and the spiritual death which, if privileges be neglected or abused, must befall the latter.

To the intent.—St. Paul regards everything that has happened in history as having a divine purpose of blessing for others. All this material suffering on their part will not be in vain if it teaches us the spiritual lesson which God would have us learn from it.

We should not lust after evil things.—The Apostle now sets forth the causes with which the majority of the Israelites neutralised the great advantages in which all had shared. The lusting after evil things must be taken as applying to their general conduct (evidenced especially in the circumstances mentioned in Num. xi. 4, 18). “ As they also ” directly connects the sins which the Corinthians were in danger of with the sins which led to the overthrow of the Israelites. The idolatry and eating and drinking and committing fornication all refer to kinds

play. ⁽⁸⁾ Neither let us ^{a Num. 25. 9.} commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty ^{b Num. 21. 6.} thousand.^a ⁽⁹⁾ Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.^b

of sin which the Corinthians were liable to commit if they did not keep themselves perfectly distinct from the heathen. (See chap. vi. 12.)

⁽⁸⁾ **And fell in one day three and twenty thousand.**—In Num. xxv. 9 the statement is that twenty-four thousand perished. Various and ingenious attempts have been made to reconcile these two accounts of the actual numbers. The explanation most in harmony with the character of the writer, and the utterly unessential nature of the point historically, is, I venture to think, that either the Apostle quoted from memory a fact of no great importance, or else that he referred for his figures to some copy of the LXX., in which the numbers might be specified as here.

⁽⁹⁾ **Neither let us tempt Christ.**—Better, *Neither let us tempt the Lord, as some of them tempted, and perished by serpents.* There is much controversy as to whether the word here is "God" or "Christ" or "the Lord," each having a certain amount of MS. support. On the whole, the reading here adopted (the Lord) seems from internal evidence to have been most likely the true reading. It is possible that the word "God" crept into the text, having been put as a marginal explanation to get over the supposed difficulty involved in applying the words which follow, "they also tempted," to Christ. For in what sense could it have been said that the Israelites

tempted Christ? There is no reason, however, for connecting "some of them tempted" (the word "also" is not in the original) with the object of the previous clause: and it is noticeable that the second word translated "tempted" is not the same as the first. "Let us not tempt" is in the original an intensified form of the verb which is used in its simple form in "some of them tempted." The reading "Christ" may have come into the text as being an explanation that by the word "Lord" St. Paul meant the Redeemer.

The real meaning of the passage, however, is evident. The Israelites had, by their longing after the things left behind in Egypt, tried God so that God had asserted Himself in visiting them with punishment; and so Christians must be on their guard, with such a warning before them, not to tempt their Lord by hankering after those worldly and physical pleasures from which He by His death has delivered them. (See Num. xxi. 4—6.) Some of the Corinthian Christians seemed by their conduct, as regards eating and drinking and indulging in sensuality, to long for that liberty in reference to things which they had enjoyed before conversion, instead of enjoying these spiritual blessings and feeding on the spiritual sustenance which Christ had provided for them.

Were destroyed of serpents.—Better, *and were destroyed by the serpents.* The article before "ser-

(10) Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.^a (11) Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples¹ :

^a Num. 14. 37.

¹ Or. types.

and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

(12) Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth

pents" indicates that the reference is to a particular and well-known fact.

(10) **Neither murmur ye.**—The reference here is to Num. xvi. 41—47, and the historical event alluded to—viz., the murmuring of the Israelites against their God-given leaders, Moses and Aaron—is analogous to the murmuring of the Corinthians against their Apostle, St. Paul. It is noticeable that St. Paul attributes the death of the people to the Destroyer—i.e., God's messenger sent to destroy—while in Numbers they are said to have perished by the "plague." Every pestilence that swept over nations to purify them was a messenger from God. Thus in Ps. lxxviii. 50, God is said to give "their life over to the pestilence," which in Ex. xii. 23 is spoken of as "the destroyer."

(11) **Happened unto them for ensamples.**—Better, *happened unto them typically; and it was written for our admonition.* The verb "happened" is plural, referring to the multiplied occurrences which the Apostle has just mentioned; but "written" is singular, referring to the sacred record in which the historical facts are handed down. The Apostle does not state that the purpose which God had in view in allowing these sins and judgments was that they might serve "for ensamples" for after-generations, as may at

first sight seem to be the meaning of the English, but the real point of the passage is—These things which occurred to them are to be looked upon by us, not merely as interesting historical events, but as having a typical significance. Their record remains as a standing warning that great privileges may be enjoyed by many, and used by them to their destruction. The temporal blessings of the Jewish nation foreshadow the greater blessings of the Christian Church.

The ends of the world.—Better, *the ends of the ages* (Matt. xiii. 39).

(12) **Wherefore.**—This is the practical conclusion of the whole matter. We are to look back on that strange record of splendid privilege and of terrible fall, and learn from it the solemn lesson of self-distrust. Led forth by divinely-appointed leaders, overshadowed by the Divine Presence, supported by divinely-given food and drink, the vast hosts of Israel had passed from the bondage of Egypt into the glorious liberty of children of the living God; yet amid all those who seemed to stand so secure in their relation to God, but a few fell not. Christians, called forth from a more deadly bondage into a more glorious liberty, are in like peril. Let the one who thinks that he stands secure take great heed lest he fall. The murmuring against their apostolic teachers,

take heed lest he fall.

(13) There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common¹ to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able;

¹ Or, moderate.

but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (14) Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

(15) I speak as to wise

the longing to go so far as they could in indulgence without committing actual sin, were terribly significant indications in the Corinthian Church. When we feel ourselves beginning to dislike those who warn us against sin, and when we find ourselves measuring with minute casuistry what is the smallest distance that we can place between ourselves and some desired object of indulgence without actually sinning, then "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

(13) **There hath no temptation taken you.**—What is meant by a "temptation common to man" (or rather, *suius generis*) is explained further on as a temptation which one is "able to bear." From the warning and exhortation of the previous verse, the Apostle passes on to words of encouragement, "You need not be hopeless or despairing." God permits the temptation by allowing the circumstances which create temptation to arise, but He takes care that no Fate bars the path of retreat. With each temptation He makes a way to escape from it. And that is so, must be so, because God is faithful. The state of salvation to which God has called us would be a delusion if there were an insuperable difficulty to our continuing in it. We have in this verse, perhaps,

the most practical and therefore the clearest exposition to be found of the doctrine of free-will in relation to God's overruling power. God makes an open road, but then man himself must *walk* in it. God controls circumstances, but man uses them. That is where *his* responsibility lies.

(14) **Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.**—These words show that through all the previous argument and warning the writer had in view the particular dangers arising from their contact with the heathen world, and especially the partaking in the sacrificial feasts. Not because they were enemies, but because they are his "beloved," he had written thus to them. Because God is a faithful God—because He makes it possible for you to escape these dangers and sins—*flee* from idolatry. Do not be trying how *near* you can get to it, but rather how *far* you can get *from* it.

(15) **I speak as to wise men.**—These words are not hypothetical; they imply the point of view from which the Apostle is now regarding his readers—viz., competent to recognise the force of his argument. Having warned them against any participation in idolatry, even such as would be involved in joining in the sacrificial feasts, as dangerous to themselves, he now proceeds to

men; judge ye what I say.

⁽¹⁶⁾ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? ⁽¹⁷⁾ For we

being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

show that such a participation would be derogatory to, and incompatible with, their union with Christ. The identity and intimacy of that union is first established by a reference to the Holy Communion, in partaking of which both the unity of the Church and its union with Christ are vividly expressed.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **The cup of blessing which we bless.**—In other passages the cup is mentioned after the bread, and not, as here, before it. The order in which they are placed here has been variously accounted for, as arising either (Stanley) from the analogy to the heathen feasts, in which the libation came before the food, or (Meyer) because the Apostle intends to dwell at greater length upon the bread. The use of the plural “we” in reference to both the blessing of the cup and the breaking of the bread, clearly indicates that it was in virtue of his representing the entire company present, and not as individually possessed of some miraculous gift, that the one who presided at a Communion performed the act of consecration. On the whole subject of the Eucharistic feasts in Corinth, see Notes on chap. xi. 17. Communion with the body and blood of Christ is established and

asserted in this partaking of the bread and of the cup.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **For we being many are one bread.**—Better, *For it is one bread, and we, the many, are one body, for we all take a portion of that one bread.* This verse explains how “the breaking” of the bread was the significant act which expressed sacramentally the communion of the body of Christ. There is one bread; it is broken into many pieces; and as we all (though each only receives a fragment) partake of the one bread which unbroken consisted of these pieces, we, though many individuals, are one body, even the Body of Christ with whom, as well as with each other, we have communion in that act.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **Behold Israel after the flesh**—*i.e.*, Israel in its merely human aspect, not the spiritual Israel (Rom. ii. 28; Gal. iv. 29; vi. 16). The sacrifice was divided—a portion offered upon the altar and a portion taken and eaten (Deut. xii. 18): so whcever ate a portion of the same sacrifice was a partaker in common *with* (not “of,” as in the English translation) the altar. This is another argument against partaking of the heathen feasts. You cannot do so without connection with the heathen altar. The example of Israel proves that.

(19) What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? (20) But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice,^a they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. (21) Ye cannot

^a Deut.
32. 17;
Ps. 106.
37.

drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. (22) Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

(23) All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things

(19) **What say I then?**—It might have been argued from the preceding verse that the Apostle admitted the heathen offerings and the idols to which they were offered to be as real as were the offerings and Being to whom the altar was erected by Israel, whereas in chap. viii. 4 he had asserted the contrary.

(20) **But I say.**—Better, *No; but that the things which they sacrifice they sacrifice to devils, and not to God.*

The word "devils" means evil spirits. The heathen world is regarded by the Christian Church as under the dominion of the Evil Spirit and his emissaries (Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12); and in reminding the Corinthians that in Israel an eater of the sacrificial meat became a partaker with the altar of God, the Apostle meant to warn them that they would, if they partook of sacrificial meats offered on an altar of devils, become a sharer with that altar and the beings to whom the altar appertained.

(21, 22) **Ye cannot . . .**—Here follows the special reason why the Apostle desires them not to partake of the wine poured forth in libation to devils, or the table on which

meat sacrificed to these devils was spread out as food. Such would deprive them of their participation in the cup of the Lord and the table on which the Lord's Supper was placed. Of course the impossibility was moral, not physical. So the Apostle adds the warning question, "Do you in fact do so? Do you do that which is morally impossible, and so provoke the jealousy of our jealous God, who will have no divided allegiance? Surely we are not stronger than He? To such a question there can be but one answer. These words, which are the climax of the argument, are naturally suggested by the passage in Deuteronomy (xxxii. 15—18), which was evidently in the Apostle's mind all through this argument, containing as it does the striking words, "Rock of his salvation." "They sacrifice unto devils and not to God," and "they provoked Him to jealousy."

(23) **All things are lawful for me.**—The Apostle now proceeds to conclude, with some practical direction and advice, the question of the eating of meat offered to idols, from which immediate subject the strong expression

are lawful for me, but all things edify not. ⁽²⁴⁾ Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*.

⁽²⁵⁾ Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, *that* eat, asking no question for conscience sake: ⁽²⁶⁾ for the

of personal feeling in chap. viii. 13 had led him to branch off into the various aspects of collateral matters which have occupied him since, and to which the subject treated of in verses 14—22 of this chapter naturally lead back the thoughts of the writer. He repeats here the great principle of Christian liberty, "All things are lawful for me" (see chap. vi. 12), but insists, as before, that its application must be limited by a regard (1) to the effect which each action has upon ourselves, and (2) its influence on the Church at large. "Does this act tend to my own spiritual profit? Does it tend to build up others?" should be the practical rules of Christian life.

⁽²⁴⁾ **But every man another's wealth.**—Better, *but each one another's good*. The English word "wealth" has, in process of time, come to bear a limited significance, such as did not originally belong to it. By "wealth" we now mean temporal possessions or advantage; it originally meant "good," including more especially "moral welfare," as in the collect for the Queen in the Prayer Book, "Grant her in health and wealth long to live."

⁽²⁵⁾ **Whatsoever is sold in the shambles.**—Here is the practical application of the principle laid down. When a Christian sees meat exposed for sale in the public market, let him buy it and eat it; he need not ask any question to satisfy his conscience on the sub-

ject. Some of the meat which had been used for sacrificial purposes was afterwards sold in the markets. The weaker Christians feared lest if they unconsciously bought and ate some of that meat they would become thereby defiled. The Apostle's view is that when once sent into the public market it becomes simply meat, and its previous use gives it no significance. You buy it as meat, and not as part of a sacrifice. Thus the advice here is not at variance with the previous argument in verses 20, 21. The act which is there condemned as a "partaking of the table of devils" is the eating of sacrificial meat at one of the feasts given in the court of the heathen temple, when the meat was avowedly and significantly a portion of the sacrifice. The words "for conscience sake" have been variously interpreted as meaning, (1) Enter into no inquiry, so that your conscience may not be troubled, as it would be if you learned that the meat had been used for sacrifice; or (2) Ask no question, lest some weak person's conscience be defiled if they hear that it is sacrificial meat and yet see you eat it. This latter interpretation must be rejected, as the Apostle clearly points out in verse 28 that he has been here speaking of the person's own conscience, and only there proceeds to speak of a brother's conscience.

⁽²⁶⁾ **The earth is the Lord's.** . . .—All food that earth brings

earth is the Lord's,^a and the fulness thereof. ⁽²⁷⁾ If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feast*, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. ⁽²⁸⁾ But if any man say unto you, This

^a Deut. 10. 14; P's. 24. 1.

^b Deut. 10. 14; P's. 24. 1.

is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's,^b and the fulness thereof: ⁽²⁹⁾ conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another *man's*

forth or nourishes is God's gift, and therefore good. It was merely when regarded as an actual sacrifice that any meat could be considered that "of devils." This great truth, recognised in the Old Testament as well as in the New, is the reason of the previous statement that conscience need not come into the matter at all.

⁽²⁷⁾ **If any of them that believe not**—How should a Christian act if a heathen friend invited him to a feast? Should he inquire whether there was any sacrificial meat at the feast, and so avoid eating it? No. The same principle applies here—no question need be asked.

⁽²⁸⁾ **But if any man**—If, however, some weak brother present points out that it is sacrificial meat, do not eat for his sake and for conscience sake (see verse 29). Here your personal liberty is to be modified by the principle mentioned in verse 24. If the weak brother see you eat the flesh which he has just informed you was used as a sacrifice, he may be led by your example to eat it himself, though the very fact of his having called your attention to it showed that he thinks it wrong, and so his conscience is defiled.

The word (*hierothuton*) here used (according to the best MSS.) for "offered to an idol" is different from the condemnatory word (*eidolothuton*) elsewhere used; as natural courtesy would lead a Christian at the table of a heathen to use an epithet which would not be offensive to his host. A lesson in controversy—Don't conceal your conscientious convictions, but don't express them in language unnecessarily painful to your opponent.

The repetition of the words "The earth is the Lord's," &c., in this verse is an interpolation not found in the best MSS., and tends to interrupt the thought which is carried on in verse 29.

⁽²⁹⁾ **Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other.**—In the previous verse there is nothing to indicate that the obligation not to eat the meat under such circumstances arises from a consideration of the tenderness of the other's conscience. Here any danger of mistake as to whose conscience is meant is removed. Of course (says St. Paul), I mean *his* conscience, not *yours*. For no other man's scruples are to bind my conscience. While the opinion or weakness of another is never to make my conscience waver from

conscience? ⁽³⁰⁾ For if I by grace¹ be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? ⁽³¹⁾ Whether therefore ye eat, or drink,

¹ Or, *thanksgiving.*

² Gr. *Greeks.*

or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. ⁽³²⁾ Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles,² nor to the church of God: ⁽³³⁾ even

what it knows to be true, it may often be a reason for our sacrificing in act some personal indulgence.

⁽³⁰⁾ For if I by grace be a partaker.—Better, *If I thankfully partake, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?* Such a question might be asked by some who object to the restriction on their liberty which the advice just given implies. To the querulous objector the Apostle gives no definitely limited reply. He lays down in the following verses the great principles which should guide all Christian life, and by which therefore every detail of it should be regulated.

⁽³¹⁾ Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do.—These words embrace all life. The definite acts of eating and drinking are mentioned expressly, as they are the subject immediately under consideration. They are, however, to be regulated by the same principle which guides all true life. The modern idea of some acts being religious and some secular is neither here nor elsewhere recognised by St. Paul. No act of life is in itself either religious or secular. The quality of each act depends on the spirit which guides it, and the motive from which it springs. The commonest thing may be done in a high Christian spirit. The greatest deed may spring from a low and selfish motive. A religious act done in a

secular spirit is secular. A secular thing done in a religious spirit is religious. This is "the great first principle" of Christian life.

⁽³²⁾ Give none offence.—A practical test of whether any course of conduct is to the glory of God. If it cause any human being to offend, then it is not to God's glory. Heretofore St. Paul had spoken only of the edification of the Christian Church, and the avoidance of any offence to a Christian brother. Here the sphere of moral obligation is enlarged. Jew and Greek, as well as the Christian Church, are to be objects of our Christian solicitude.

⁽³³⁾ Even as I please all men . . .—Better, *even as I in all things am seeking to please all men, not seeking my own profit, but that of the many—i.e., the whole great mass of men, and not as the English seems to imply, merely "a great number."* This is the same idea as "I am made all things to all men." (See chap. ix. 22.)

With the last verse of this chapter we must connect the first verse of chap. xi., "Become imitators of me, even as I am of Christ." This is the completion of the exhortation. The Apostle refers to his own example, but only to lead his readers up to Christ as the great example of One who "pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 3). His own example is valuable, inasmuch as it is the example of one who is striving to

as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

CHAPTER XI.—⁽¹⁾ Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

¹ Or, *traditions*, A.D. 59.

⁽²⁾ Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances,¹ as I delivered *them* to you. ⁽³⁾ But I would have you know, that the head of

Chap. xi. 2—16. The duty of women to cover their heads in public.

conform to the image of his Lord. With the mention of the holiest Example and the most sacred Name, the whole of this argument and exhortation reaches its natural climax and conclusion.

XI.

⁽¹⁾ Be ye followers of me.—See concluding Note on chap. x.

⁽²⁾ Now I praise you.—A new subject is here introduced, and occupies to verse 16. The exhortation of the previous verse probably recalled to the Apostle's mind that to a certain extent the Corinthians did follow his teaching and example; and had possibly in their letter, to which he was now replying, boasted of their obedience. The rebuke which he is about to administer is, with characteristic courtesy, introduced with words of commendation. While there is a likeness in form in the original in the words "imitators" and "remember," the latter is weaker in its significance. He exhorts them to be "imitators." He praises them only for bearing him in mind in all things to the extent of obeying certain practical directions which he had given them. The word "ordinances" or *traditions*, here refers to matters of Christian dis-

cipline (as in Acts xvi. 4; 2 Thess. iii. 6).

⁽³⁾ But I would have you know.—After the general commendation in the previous verse, the reproof for neglecting, or desiring to neglect, his precepts in one particular case, is thus introduced. The subject treated of, viz., the uncovering of their heads by women in assemblies for worship, was of ephemeral moment, and as we all now would regard it, of trivial importance. Every circumstance, however, which could in the least degree cause the principles of Christianity to be perverted or misunderstood by the heathen world was of vital importance in those early days of the Church, and hence we find the Apostle, who most fearlessly taught the principles of Christian liberty, condemning most earnestly every application of those principles which might be detrimental to the best interests of the Christian faith. To feel bound to assert your liberty in every detail of social and political life is to cease to be free—the very liberty becomes a bondage.

The head of every man is Christ.—The Apostle does not merely treat of the outward practice on which his advice has been sought, but proceeds to lay down

every man is Christ ; and
the head of the woman is
the man ; and the head of

Christ is God. ⁽⁴⁾ Every
man praying or prophesy-
ing, having *his* head covered,

the principles which are opposed to the principle of that absolute and essential equality, which found its expression and assertion in the practice of women uncovering their heads in public assemblies.

The allusion here is not to Christ as the Head of the whole human race and of all things (as in Eph. i. 22 ; Col. i. 16 ; ii. 10), but as the Head of "the Body," the Christian Church : and this thought introduces the general argument regarding the practical subordination of woman, by reminding the Corinthians that though there is in the Church a perfect spiritual equality (as taught in Gal. iii. 28), yet that it is an equality which is of order and not of disorder—that it is an equality which can only be preserved by remembering that each is not an isolated irresponsible atom, but a part of an organic whole. There is a Head to the Church, therefore it is not a machine composed of various parts, but a body consisting of various members. As there is a subordination of the whole body to Christ, so there is in that body a subordination of woman to man. The last clause, "the Head of Christ is God," gives (as is St. Paul's custom, see chaps. iii. 23 ; viii. 6 ; xv. 25) completeness to the thought. As the Head of the Church—*i.e.*, as the man Christ Jesus—Christ is subordinate to the Father, and, indeed, perhaps the idea is carried farther into the mystery of the divine nature itself, as consisting of three Persons co-eternal

and co-equal, yet being designated with an unvarying sequence as "first," and "second," and "third."

⁽⁴⁾ **Every man praying or prophesying.**—The reference here is to public prayer and teaching (the word "prophesying" is used in its less restricted sense). The Apostle probably does not allude to any case in Corinth where a man had actually taken part in a religious meeting with covered head. The Greek practice was for men to have their heads uncovered when joining in religious ceremonies (Grotius *in loc.*). To this practice St. Paul would incline, as being the national custom of the country, and as also being typical of the distinction between the sexes which he has just laid down. The Apostle's teaching on this subject is a remarkable illustration of how completely he had overcome his old Jewish prejudice, and how the whole of his nature had become leavened with the freedom of the gospel—for it was the custom amongst the Jews for the man to pray with covered head, and the face veiled with the *Tallith*, as an expression of his unworthiness to speak face to face with God. It was a profound insight into human nature which enabled the Apostle to realise how an external symbol would infallibly tend to modify doctrine, and how thus the perpetuating of such a custom in the Christian Church might have hindered the full recognition of the great truth of the personal and

dishonoureth his head.
 (5) But every woman that
 prayeth or prophesieth with
 her head uncovered dis-

honoureth her head: for
 that is even all one as if
 she were shaven. (6) For
 if the woman be not

direct communion of every individual soul with the Father.

Dishonoureth his head.—He dishonours his own head inasmuch as it is the part of his body from which Christ has taken His title as “Head of the Body,” the Church—and thus he dishonours his Spiritual Head, even Christ.

(5) **But every woman that prayeth . . .**—From the hypothetical case of the man praying or teaching with covered head (which was mentioned first for the sake of introducing the antithesis), the Apostle comes now to the actual case of which he has to treat, viz., the woman uncovering her head. At first sight the permission here implied for a woman to pray and teach in public may seem at variance with the teaching in chap. xiv. 34, where she is commanded to observe silence, and the injunction in 1 Tim. ii. 12, that women should not “teach.” In these passages, however, it is the public meeting of the whole Church that is spoken of, and in such the women were to be silent—but the meetings spoken of here, though public as distinguished from the private devotions of individuals, were probably only smaller gatherings such as are indicated in Rom. xvi. 5; Col. iv. 15; Philem. verse 2. It has been suggested by some writers that the command in chap. xiv. 34 does forbid the practice which is here assumed to be allowable only for the sake of argument; but surely St. Paul would not have occupied himself and his

readers here with the elaborate, and merely forensic, discussion of the conditions under which certain functions were to be performed which he was about subsequently to condemn, as not allowable under any restriction whatever?

Dishonoureth her head.—Both among Jews and Greeks the long tresses of a woman were her glory. Only in times of mourning (Deut. xxi. 12), or when convicted of shameful sin, was a woman to have her hair cut short.

Here, again, the word “head” must be taken in its double significance. A woman with uncovered head dishonours that head itself by making it thus in the sight of others the type of a shame which is really not hers, and as her head typically is her husband, so she dishonours him also.

(6) **Let her also be shorn.**—The force of this argument depends on the fact that a woman’s head being uncovered would be regarded by others as implying the same shame as was indicated by a woman’s hair being cut short (*i.e.*, shorn), or altogether removed (*i.e.*, shaven). It is as if the Apostle said—If a woman insists on her right to pray and speak in an assembly with uncovered head, let her carry out this principle to its logical result; let her insist on her right to have her hair cut short, so as to show her equality with man—and what would be thought of her then! No woman with a spark of shame in her would think

covered, let her also be shorn : but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. ⁽⁷⁾ For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of

God : but the woman is the glory of the man. ⁽⁸⁾ For the man is not of the woman ; but the woman of the man. ⁽⁹⁾ Neither was the man created for the woman ; but the woman for the man. ⁽¹⁰⁾ For this

of doing that. Accordingly you admit that this principle of sexual equality does not apply in all such matters ; and it is illogical to argue in favour of any general principle as if it were of universal obligation, when you yourselves admit that it is not applicable in some cases.

⁽⁷⁾ **For a man indeed.**—In verses 4—7 the argument against the woman's head being uncovered was based upon (a) the woman's relation to man, and (b) the man's relation to Christ in the Church. In the three following verses, 7, 8, and 9, the ground of the argument is changed, and the same conclusion is arrived at from a review of (a) the woman's relation to man, and (b) man's relation to God in the physical creation. The external form of this argument is the same as that adopted previously. The Apostle first states what the man must not do, and then conversely what the woman must do. The Apostle here takes up the order of creation mentioned in Gen. i. and ii., and the argument runs thus :—Man was made in the image of God, and is the glory of God ; but woman is the glory of the man (for woman was made out of man, and also man was not created for woman, but woman for—i.e., as a help-meet for—man). Therefore man, as a created being, according

to the accepted order of creation, is the direct representative of God, and woman the direct representative of man (and only indirectly and through him of God). The spiritual equality of man and wife does not upset this relationship, and therefore an attempt to destroy the outward expression of it is to be condemned, as it would soon lead to an obliteration of the fact itself.

It is to be remembered all through this passage (and it gives a further emphasis to the allusion to Adam and Eve) that St. Paul is only speaking of married women—it is most unlikely that any case had occurred of an unmarried woman attempting such an outrage upon social feeling and national custom. The Greek women when in public (except those of avowedly bad character) either wore a veil or drew the *peplum*, or shawl, over their heads.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head.**—The two clauses which compose this verse are, perhaps, the two most difficult passages in the New Testament, and, accordingly, have given rise to an almost endless variety of interpretation. What is meant, first, by the woman having "power on her head?"

1. There have been many—some of them most fanciful—suggestions

cause ought the woman to ^{1 That is, a covering, in} have power¹ on her head
 sign that she is under the power of her husband.

that the word for power (*exousia*) may have crept in instead of some other word by the mistake of some copyist; or that the word used by St. Paul may have been *exiousa*—"When she goes out in public;" or two words (*ex ousias*)—"in accordance with her nature." All explanations, however, which require an alteration in the Greek text of the passage must be set aside, for (1) there is no MS. evidence whatever to support any other reading than the ordinary one, *exousian*; and (2) any alteration of a difficult or unusual word would have been naturally into a word that would simplify the passage; whereas here, if alteration has taken place, it has been to insert a word which has increased the obscurity of a difficult passage.

2. It has been maintained that the word *exousia* here means the sign of power, *i.e.*, a veil, which is the symbol of the husband's power over the wife. The fatal objection to this view, however, is that *exousia* expresses our own power, and not the power exercised by another over us. It is a word frequently used by St. Paul in this sense. (See chaps. viii. 9; ix. 4, 5, 12, 18.) Whatever interpretation, therefore, we put upon this passage, it must be consistent with this word being interpreted as meaning some "power" which the woman herself has, and not some power exercised over her by her husband.

Most commentators have quoted a passage from Diodorus Sic. i. 47, in which the Greek word "kingdom" (*basileia*) is used to signify "crown," as an illustration of the

use of the word indicating the thing symbolised for the symbol itself. The parallelism between that use of the word kingdom, and the use here of the word "power," has been very positively denied (Stanley and others), on the ground that the "use of the name of the thing signified for the symbol, though natural when the power spoken of belongs to the person, would be unnatural when applied to the power exercised over that person by some one else." But the parallelism will hold good if we can refer the "power" here to some symbol of a power which belongs to the woman herself.

If we bear in mind the Apostle's constant use of words with a double significance, or rather with both an obvious and a subtly implied meaning, and if we also recall the reference made to a woman's abundance of hair in verses 5, 6, and the further reference to a woman's long hair in verses 14, 15, where the hair of the woman, given her by nature, and the wearing of a veil are used as almost identical thoughts, we may, I think, conclude that the "power" here spoken of is that long hair which is called in verse 15 her "glory." It is remarkable that Callistratus twice uses this word *exousia* in connection with hair to express its abundance. To the Jews the recollection of Samson's history would have given the word "power," when applied to hair, a remarkable significance. To thus turn aside abruptly in the middle of a long passage in which woman's subordination is enforced,

and speak suddenly and vividly of her "power" would be eminently Pauline. In the Apostle's writings the thought of inferiority and superiority, of ruler and server, are frequently and almost paradoxically regarded and enforced as identical. To serve because you rule; to be weak because you are in another sense strong, are thoughts strikingly combined again and again in the Epistles of St. Paul. Thus I would imagine him here to suddenly turn aside and say, I have been speaking of your bondage and subordination, you are, because of this, to have a covering (a veil or long hair) on your head as a sign, and yet that very thing which is the symbol of your subjection to man is the sign of your beauty and "power" as a woman.

Because of the angels.—Why should a woman have her head covered (either with her natural veil of hair, or with an artificial veil shrouding her face) because of the angels? The same objections which have been already stated to any alteration of the usual Greek text of the earlier clause of this verse apply equally here. The MS. evidence is unanimous in favour of the word "angels," nor can we accept any of the figurative meanings attached to the word angel as "the president" (see Rev. ii. 1), or "messenger," sent by enemies to see what took place contrary to general custom in those assemblies. We must take the word "angel" in its ordinary and general sense.

That the angels were present in assemblies for worship was an idea prevalent among the Jews (Ps. cxxxviii. 1, in the LXX.), and regarded as they were by the Christian as "ministering spirits" (Heb.

i. 14), no doubt their presence would be realised in the meetings of Christians.

We have already seen that the Apostle in his argument upon the relation of the sexes to each other (verses 7—9), refers to the first three chapters of Genesis as illustrating and enforcing that relationship. What more natural than that his thoughts should have gone on to chap. vi. of the same book, where is the record of the angels (in the LXX. the word translated "sons of God" is "the angels"—*angeloi*) having been enamoured by the beauty of women, and so having fallen from their high estate. This account of "the fall of the angels" is referred to more than once elsewhere in the New Testament (see Jude, verse 6; 2 Pet. ii. 4), and through Rabbinical interpretations would have been familiar to St. Paul's converts. Without at all necessarily expressing his belief in the historic accuracy of this legendary view of the fall of the angels, St. Paul might use it as an argument with those who did believe it (as in the case of the Rock, see chap. x. 4, and Note there). You believe—would be St. Paul's appeal to these women—that once, through seeing the beauty of the daughters of men, the holy angels themselves fell—even that thought ought to make you feel that it is not seemly for you to be without a veil (of which your "power on your head," *i.e.*, your hair, is the type) in those assemblies where the angels are present as God's ministering spirits.

It has been urged (by Meyer and others) that the word "angels," in the New Testament, always signifies *good angels*, and it is in that sense I would regard it

because of the angels.
 (11) Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. (12) For as the woman *is* of the man, even so *is* the man also by the

woman; but all things of God.

(13) Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

(14) Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a

here, for the thought surely is, that they are good angels, and should not, therefore, be tempted. I presume the idea was also that the fallen angels were "good" before their fall.

(11) **Nevertheless . . .**—Here follow words of caution, lest the previous express declaration of the subordination of woman to man might be exaggerated or perverted. This very subordination of one sex to the other implies a mutual connection, and not an isolation of each sex. The woman is not independent of, but dependent on, the man "in the Lord," *i.e.*, in the Christian economy.

(12) **For as the woman is of the man.**—An appeal to the original act of creation proves the truth of the previous statement of the interdependence of the sexes. If already (verse 7) the fact of woman's having been taken out of man was used as an argument to prove her subordination, there is now coupled with that fact of the origin of woman that other fact of the perpetual birth of man from woman to show that there is a mutual relation. The first woman was made out of man; therefore woman is dependent on man. Every man has been born of a woman; therefore man is not independent of woman. In the Greek

the word rendered "of" represents a finite act—the word rendered "by" a continued process.

But all things of God.—Thus, as usual, St. Paul completes the thought by tracing all up to God. The mediate processes of their origin may differ, but the source of their being is common—they, and all beings, and all things, and the sequence of all things, come of God. (See chap. viii. 6; Rom. xi. 36; 2 Cor. v. 18.)

(13) **Judge in yourselves.**—In this and the two following verses the Apostle reasons with them—appeals to their own common sense, and to the indications of Nature, as to the evident truth of what he has taught them on this question. Surely you would not think it seemly for a woman (setting aside the question of men and angels altogether) to speak face to face with God in prayer?

(14) **Nature itself.**—This may mean; either "the native inborn sense of what is seemly" as contrasted with revelation; or it may signify the ordinary and evident arrangement of things in creation. Probably the former is the true meaning of the passage which refers to the fact that the heathen who had no direct revelation did (by regarding long hair as a woman's glory) "by nature" the

shame unto him? ⁽¹⁵⁾ But ^{1 Or, veil} covering.¹ ⁽¹⁶⁾ But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

things contained in the Law (Rom. ii. 14).

⁽¹⁵⁾ **But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her.**—We should follow the suggestions of Nature. If a woman has naturally long hair, which is given to her as a covering for her head, the covering of her head can be no shame to her; therefore let her wear a veil. “The will ought to correspond to Nature.”

⁽¹⁶⁾ **But if any man seem to be contentious.**—The argument, and the appeal to their own good sense, having been completed, the Apostle now adds that if, after all, some one continues to argue the matter captiously, and is not satisfied with the reason given, the answer to such a one must be simply—We, the Apostles and the churches of God, have no such custom as that women should pray and teach with uncovered head. It has been suggested that the word “custom” refers, not to the uncovering the head, but to the “contention” just mentioned. But the former interpretation seems more natural; and the Apostle’s object here is, not so much to merely censure the contentious spirit, as to show how such an objector must be dealt with. It is noticeable that the appeal is made to the practice of the churches (plural), not the Church. Thus it is not the authority of the Church as such that is quoted, but it is the uniformity of practice in the several

Christian churches that is appealed to. The Church in Corinth has no right to become exceptional.

It may be well to make two general remarks on the scope and bearing of this remarkable passage.

1. As St. Paul taught regarding Slavery (chap. vii. 21) that the object of Christianity was not to suddenly efface existing political arrangements, so he teaches here that Christianity did not seek to obliterate these social distinctions which were universally recognised. We know now how mighty an instrument Christ’s Religion has been in elevating the social condition of woman, but this has been accomplished by gradually leavening the world with Christian principle, and not by sudden external revolution. The arguments and illustrations which the Apostle here employs have a more abiding and a wider application than the particular case to which he applied them. They have been written “for our learning” as well as for the instruction of those to whom they were originally addressed. And the lesson which they teach us is, that Christianity did not come to unsex woman, but to raise, dignify, and ennoble her as woman—to abolish for ever her real wrongs, but not to yield to a revolutionary clamour for imaginary rights. Old and New Testament alike emphasise the truth that (as has been quaintly and truly said) “woman was not made from man’s head to be his ruler,

(17) Now in this that I
 Chap. xi. 17—34. declare unto
 Abuses at the you I praise
 Lord's Supper.

you not, that ye come
 together not for the bet-
 ter, but for the worse.

nor from his feet to be his slave, but from his side to be his equal, and from beneath his strong arm to demand his protection."

2. The influence of St. Paul's instruction as to women not uncovering their heads in public worship has lasted long after the necessity for that particular expression of her relationship to man has passed away. While, in succeeding ages, again and again, some have forgotten the principles of the teaching, which are eternal, the particular application of them, which was only temporary, has been continuously and universally observed. Surely this is an illustration and evidence of the Divine Wisdom which withheld the apostolic writers from, as a rule, laying down minute directions for worship, or dogmatic formulas of faith. Men would, in a servile obedience to rules, have soon and completely forgotten the living principles on which they were based. To this day the universal custom in Christian places of worship, of women being covered and men uncovered, and the increasing revolt against the acknowledgment of the subordination of woman to man, of which that practice was originally the avowed symbol, is a striking proof of how the same spirit, which led Jews of old to be scrupulous in their observance of certain external ordinances, while forgetting the weightier matters of which they were to be the outward expression, was not merely a Jewish but a human weakness.

(17) Now in this that I declare unto you . . .—Better, *Now I give you this command, while not praising you that you come together not for the better, but for the worse.* These words lead from the subject which has gone before to another and different abuse of liberty in public assemblies, of which the Apostle is now about to speak. There were evidently three great abuses which had crept into the Church:—1. The discarding by the women of the covering for their heads. This only concerned one sex, and has been treated of in the earlier part of this chapter. The other two affect both sexes. 2. The disorders at the Lord's Supper. 3. The misuse of spiritual gifts. The former of these occupies the remainder of this chapter, while the latter is discussed in chap. xii. 1—30. To render the Greek word "I declare," as in the Authorised version, and so make it refer to what is about to follow, gives a more logical completeness to the passage, but it is scarcely allowable, as the Greek word elsewhere always means a distinct command (chap. vii. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 10, 12, *et al.*). Others have suggested that St. Paul anticipates in thought the practical direction which occurs in verse 34, and alludes to it here in the words, "This I command you." This view is open to the objections (1) that it completely isolates verse 17 from verse 16, while the Greek evidently intimates a connection between them; (2) that it is unnatural to

(18) For first of all, when ye | I hear that there be divi-
 come together in the church, |¹ Or, | sions¹ among you; and I
schisms.

separate the statement so far from the command to which it refers. It is better to regard these words as given above—forming a sort of intellectual isthmus connecting the two wide fields of thought which the earlier and later portions of the chapter embrace.

I praise you not.—This carries the thought back to verse 2, and shows that the commendation expressed there is still the writer's starting-point, or rather the point of departure from which he proceeds to censure.

That ye come together.—Although in the English version the word "you" is inserted ("I praise *you* not"), it does not occur in the Greek. The passage is not, "I do not praise you because, &c.," but, "I do not praise your coming together not for the better, but for the worse." These words introduce the new topic which follows.

(18) **For first of all.**—We in vain look for the "secondly," which, in a perfectly systematic treatise, should follow this "first." Some writers maintain that verses 18 and 19 form the first point, and verses 20 to 34 the second. There is, however, no indication of a new subject being introduced with verse 20, but the repetition of the words "come together" carries the mind back at once to the "come together" in verse 18, and indicates the continuation of the subject there commenced, and from which the Apostle had, at the mention of the word "divisions," for a moment parenthetically digressed.

It is better to consider the "first point" to be the abuse regarding

the Lord's Supper, which is more immediately treated of; and the "second point," the abuse of spiritual gifts, commencing with verse 1 of chap. xii. There are two branches of the one general subject, viz., "Irregularities in religious assemblies," and although the latter is not connected with the former by a definite "secondly," there is a sufficient verbal indication that a second topic is entered upon. It is well to remember in this and similar cases that this is not a treatise, but a letter, and not only a letter, but an answer to a letter, and that if we had a copy of the epistle to which this is a reply, many points of sequence and arrangement, which at present present difficulties, would be as clear to us as they were to those who originally received this Epistle.

When ye come together in the church.—The reference here is not to a locality, but to the character of the assembly, as we should say "in church," or, "in parliament." The spirit of faction, which has already, in the earlier part of this Epistle, been dealt with, as pervading Christian society, had invaded the Christian assemblies.

I partly believe it.—These words are full of the courtesy and charity so characteristic of the Apostle; and they suggest to us all a lesson regarding our belief of evil reports, even when reaching us on "the very best authority." The general practice is to believe a little more than we are told. St. Paul believed a part only of what he was told.

partly believe it. ⁽¹⁹⁾ For there must be also heresies ¹ among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. ⁽²⁰⁾ When ye come together

² Or, ye cannot eat.
¹ Or, sects.

therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat ² the Lord's supper. ⁽²¹⁾ For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry,

⁽¹⁹⁾ **For there must be also heresies.**—Better, *For there must be also sects.* There have been many attempts to explain where lies the difference between the “divisions” of the former verse and the “sects” of this verse. From all that we know of the Apostolic Church it is clear that neither of these words can mean sects separated from the Church, but “parties” in the Church. Christ had foretold (Matt. xviii. 7) that “stumbling-blocks,” or “scandals,” must arise in the Church, and it is possible that our Lord on some occasion spoke of these as “sects” (Justin Martyr attributes the use of this very word to our Lord); and St. Paul, possibly, uses the word here because it was the one traditionally reported as having been used by Christ in some of his unrecorded utterances. Christ has foretold that in the divine economy of permission such divisions will arise. They are allowed because this is a state of continual judgment; and the existence of such “offences” will be God's means of manifesting those who are void of offence, and those who are not.

⁽²⁰⁾ **When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.**—Better, *Therefore, when you assemble in the same place, it is not to eat the supper dedicated to the Lord.* Regarding verse 19 as a parenthesis, the word “therefore”

connects this with verse 18. There being divisions among you, it is not possible for you when you assemble as a Church body (“in the same place” being equivalent to “in church” of verse 18) to partake of that supper which is dedicated to the Lord. The whole meal, or “charity-feast” (Jude, verse 12), was distinguished from other meals by being united with the Lord's Supper. To these charity-feasts the Christians brought contributions of food—the rich of their abundance, the poor whatever they could afford—and the food thus provided was partaken of in common by all. The Greek words in this verse for “Lord's Supper” are more general (*kuriakon deipnon*) than those used in verse 27 and in chap. x. 21 (*kuriou*). The whole meal was dedicated to the Lord by virtue of its union with the sacramental Supper of the Lord.

⁽²¹⁾ **For.**—Here follows a description of the conduct and mode of proceeding at this feast, which renders it impossible, as stated in verse 20, for it to be a Lord's Supper. Every one greedily seizes (takes before distribution is made) what he has brought with him, and appropriates it to his own individual use, instead of making it a contribution to the general and common supply. Every one comes to eat *his own supper*, and not the *Lord's Supper*. And the result is that while some poor man, who has not

and another is drunken.
 (22) What? have ye not
 houses to eat and to drink
 in? or despise ye the church
 of God, and shame them that

¹ Or,
*them
 that are
 poor?*

have not?¹ What shall I
 say to you? shall I praise
 you in this? I praise *you*
 not. (23) For I have re-
 ceived of the Lord that

been able to bring enough for
 himself, remains unfed, some rich
 man, drinking the wine which he
 brought, and which he has not
 shared with others, is drunken.
 (See Note on verse 34.)

(22) **What? have ye not
 houses . . . ?**—Better, *Surely it is
 not that you have no houses to eat
 and drink in?* This cannot be the
 explanation of their conduct, for
 they have houses in which they can
 enjoy their proper meals. Hunger
 and thirst, which can be satisfied
 at home, therefore, cannot be the
 explanation of their conduct at
 the charity-feasts. The only other
 alternative explanation, therefore,
 is that they despise an assembly
 which is the Church of God; and
 they put to shame those poor
 members, who, no doubt, were the
 majority, who have not houses in
 which to eat and drink, and have
 come together in this common as-
 sembly of Christians to share in the
 food which the wealthier members
 ought to contribute.

The shame which a poor man
 will feel when the rich come to
 these feasts bringing supplies for
 their own private use, and not for
 general distribution, will arise both
 from the striking contrast which
 will come out all the more vividly
 from his poverty being brought
 into such direct contact with the
 wealth of the rich, and from the
 evident dislike of the rich to par-
 take of a common meal with the
 poor. Thus, those assemblies will,

through the misconduct of the
 wealthier Christians, have precisely
 the opposite result from that which
 they were intended to accomplish.
 It will be an assembly in one place,
 but not to partake of one supper—
 even that which is dedicated to the
 Lord. The Apostle asks indig-
 nantly whether such conduct can
 be included in the catalogue (see
 verse 17) of those things for which
 he can praise them, and then in the
 following verses shows how such
 conduct cannot be worthy of praise,
 inasmuch as it is entirely at va-
 riance with the solemn and sacred
 circumstances in which the Lord's
 Supper originated.

(23) **For I have received of
 the Lord.**—Better, *For I received
 from the Lord.* Do these words
 imply that St. Paul had a direct
 revelation from Christ of the words
 and facts which he now recalls, or
 merely that he knew from the
 accounts given him by others who
 had been present, what took place
 on that memorable and solemn
 occasion?

The whole structure of the pas-
 sage seems to imply that what
 follows had been received by St.
 Paul directly from Christ, and that
 he is not appealing to a well-known
 tradition, in which case he would
 scarcely have used the singular,
 "I received," nor to something
 which he had learnt from the other
 Apostles, in which case he would
 not have said "I" emphatically
 (the word being emphasised by

which also I delivered
unto you, That the Lord

Jesus the same night in
which he was betrayed

expression in the Greek), nor "from the Lord," for the other Apostles had not received their knowledge of these facts "from the Lord," but from their own observation and hearing. *How* Christ thus communicated these truths to His new Apostle we are not told. The method of communication (whether in a trance, or state of ecstasy, or any other supernatural manner) does not appear to cause either doubt or difficulty to those to whom the Apostle conveyed the information thus miraculously bestowed upon him.

That which also I delivered unto you.—The Apostle was not now for the first time communicating these solemn facts to the Corinthians. He had told them all this before, and therefore they were sinning against knowledge when they degraded a feast which they knew to be so solemn to a purpose so unworthy.

There now follows an account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, which, as compared with the accounts given in the Gospel narratives (see Matt. xxvi. 26—29; Mark xiv. 22—25; Luke xxii. 19, 20), possesses some noteworthy features. The Evangelists (St. Matthew and St. Mark) wrote their accounts many years after the occurrence, and recorded what they remembered to have observed and heard. St. Paul writes here, within a very few years at all events of his having received it, an account of what had been directly communicated by the Lord. This was also most probably the first written record of what occurred on that solemn night.

The fact that St. Luke's narrative agrees most closely with St. Paul's, would imply, not as some rationalising critics insinuate, that St. Paul was indebted to St. Luke; but that St. Luke attached high value to an account which his companion had received directly from the glorified Christ. The only differences of any importance between St. Luke's and St. Paul's narrative are—(1) St. Luke writes "given for you;" St. Paul omits the word "given" (see Note on verse 24). (2) St. Luke omits the words "this do ye as oft as ye drink it," after the giving of the cup; but he implies them by stating that the cup was given "in like manner" to the bread, in connection with which he records these words. The suggestion that St. Luke copied his account of the Last Supper from this Epistle is a mere speculation, and in the highest degree improbable. If that Evangelist had used this Epistle in writing his Gospel, is it likely that he would have been content with giving the somewhat scanty account of our Lord's appearances after His resurrection, when he had at hand the much ampler record of the appearance to the 500 brethren and to James, which this Epistle contains? (chap. xv.)

In all the narratives, however, the outlines of the scene are the same. There can be no mistake as to their all being truthful and (as the minor discrepancies prove) honestly independent records of an actual historical scene. It is worthy of remark that in the heated controversies which have

took bread: ⁽²⁴⁾ and when he had given thanks,^a he brake it, and said, Take,

^a Matt.
26. 26;
Mark
14. 22;
Luke
22. 19.

eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of

raged around the Eucharistic Feast as to its spiritual significance, its evidential value has been frequently lost sight of. If the Betrayal and Crucifixion are not historical facts, how can we account for the existence of the Eucharistic Feast? Here is an Epistle whose authenticity the most searching and ruthless criticism has never disputed. We have evidence of the existence of this feast and its connection with events which occurred only twenty years before. If we bear in mind that the Apostles were Jews, and yet spoke of that wine which they drank as "blood"—that they were lovingly devoted to the person of Christ, and yet spake of that bread which they ate as His "flesh"—can the wildest imagination conceive of that practice having originated with themselves as their most solemn religious rite, and the profoundest expression of their love to their Lord. Could anything but the record given in the Gospel narrative possibly account for such a ceremony holding such a place in a sect composed of Christianised Jews? A dark conspiracy like that of Catiline might have selected the tasting of human blood as the symbol of the conspirators' sanguinary hate of all human order and life; but such a band of men as the early Christians certainly could not of their own thought have made such a choice, and publicly proclaimed it. And if this be true—if Jesus, the night before an ignominious death, instituted this strange and solemn

rite, which has been handed down century after century in unbroken continuity—can that foresight as to the future of His Church be assigned to one who was less than what Christendom claims her Lord to be? When Christ died His Apostles gave up all as lost, and went back sorrowfully to their old work as fishermen; Christendom was not an afterthought of the Apostles, but the forethought of the Lord.

The same night in which he was betrayed.—These words imply that the history of the Betrayal was familiar, and they also solemnly and touchingly remind the Corinthians of the strange contrast between the events of that night and the scenes in which they indulge now on the same night that they partake of that supper.

⁽²⁴⁾ **And when he had given thanks . . .**—Better, *and having given thanks, He brake it, and said, "This is My body which is for you."* The insertion of the words "take, eat," and "broken" is not supported by MS. evidence. The former were probably inserted so as to produce a verbal identity with St. Matthew's account, and the word "broken" possibly as explanatory. At the institution the act of breaking the bread explained sufficiently what was meant. The Master, while in the act of breaking it, said, "This is My body, which is for you."

This do in remembrance of me—i.e., all that was done then. Bless the bread, break it, distribute

me.¹ (25) After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye

¹ Or, for a remembrance.

² Or, shew ye.

drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

(26) For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew² the Lord's death till he come.

it, eat it. When I am no longer with you bodily, these acts will make memory grow into realisation of My presence in your midst. If the soft music of those words could reach us now, disentangled from the theological discords of intervening ages, surely they would come to us with some such significance. To those who first heard them they certainly must have implied not that a physical presence was about to be perpetuated, but rather that there was now something for them which would in after ages console them for a physical absence.

(25) **After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped.**—We have here an intimation not found in St. Matthew or St. Mark's narrative, that the blessing of the cup took place "after supper," which implies that the blessing of the bread took place earlier in the meal.

This cup is the new testament.—Better, *This cup is the new covenant*. The word "new" is peculiar to this and St. Luke's narrative; it does not occur in the best MSS. of St. Matthew and St. Mark. The new covenant of grace between God and Humanity was ratified in the blood of Christ. The cup containing the symbol of that blood is therefore the pledge and witness of that covenant. This was a new covenant in blood (Rom. iii. 25) as contrasted with

the old covenant in blood (Ex. xxiv. 8).

As oft as ye drink.—This can scarcely be taken as a command to make all occasions of bodily refreshment virtually a eucharist, but must be regarded as referring definitely (as in the following verse) to this particular rite.

(26) **For as often as ye . . .**—The previous verse concluded the account of the institution as conveyed by Christ to St. Paul, and the Apostle himself now again speaks. All this being the true account of the origin of this Supper, as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup (as distinct from other bread and wine) you proclaim the Lord's death until He come. The Greek word for "ye show" is that used for making a public oral proclamation. The passage does not imply, as some have suggested, that the Lord's Supper "was a living sermon or an acted discourse," but, as is still the custom, that when the bread and wine were consecrated to this sacred use, there was an oral declaration made (perhaps in the very words the Apostle here used, verses 22—25) of the facts of the original institution. The imperative form given in the margin of the Authorised version is quite inadmissible.

In the pathetic words "until He come" we may find an expression of the belief, perhaps largely due

(27) Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. (28) But let a

man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. (29) For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh dam-

to the hope that the Second Advent was not far distant.

(27) Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord. . . .—Better, *Wherefore, whosoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord.* The entire weight of MS. evidence is in favour of the conjunction “or,” not “and,” which was probably retained in the English version lest the disjunctive “or” might seem to favour the practice of receiving in one kind only. It is, however, clear that if in these early days there was a considerable interval between the receiving the bread and the wine, it would have been quite possible for a partaker to have received one only unworthily, and the Apostle intimates that in either case he is guilty.

Sin was the cause of that body being broken and that blood shed, and therefore the one who unworthily uses the symbols of them becomes a participator in the very guilt of those who crucified that body and shed that blood.

(28—32) There are so many modifications required in these verses of the Greek text from which our translation is taken, so as to bring it into harmony with the best MSS., and so many changes needed in the translation itself, so as to convey more clearly the meaning of the original, that it will be best to give here a consecutive trans-

lation of the whole passage. It should read thus:—*But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup, for he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh a judgment to himself if he does not discern the Body—(for this cause many among you are weak and sick, and some sleep)—but if we would discern ourselves we should not be judged; but being judged we are chastened by the Lord, in order that we may not be finally condemned with the world.* There are several words in this sentence which call for remark.

(28) **So let him eat.**—This implies that a man should partake of this sacred feast only after he has carefully examined himself as to the spirit in which he was approaching such holy bread and wine.

(29) **Unworthily.**—This word is not in the best Greek MSS.

Damnation to himself.—The Greek word here does not imply final condemnation. On the contrary, it only means such temporal judgments as the sickness and weakness subsequently mentioned, and which are to save the man from sharing the final damnation of the heathen.

Not discerning the Lord's body.—The words “the Lord's” are to be omitted, the weight of MS. evidence being altogether against their authenticity. Verse 30 is a parenthesis, and verse 31

nation ¹ to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. ⁽³⁰⁾ (For this cause many

¹ Or, judgment.

are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.) ⁽³¹⁾ For if we would judge

re-opens with this same verb. The force of the passage is, "He who eats and drinks without discerning the Body (*i.e.*, the Church) in that assembly, eats and drinks a judgment to himself; for if we would discern ourselves we should not be judged."

There are some important points to be borne in mind regarding this interpretation of the passage. (1) The Greek word, which we render "discerning," "discern," signifies to arrive at a right estimate of the character or quality of a thing. (2) *The* fault which St. Paul was condemning was the practice which the Corinthians had fallen into of regarding these gatherings as opportunities for individual indulgence, and not as Church assemblies. They did not rightly estimate such gatherings as being corporate meetings; they did not rightly estimate themselves as not now isolated individuals, but members of the common Body. They ought to discern in these meetings of the Church a body; they ought to discern in themselves parts of a body. Not only is this interpretation, I venture to think, the most accurate and literal interpretation of the Greek, but it is the only view which seems to me to make the passage bear intelligibly on the point which St. Paul is considering, and the real evil which he seeks to counteract. (3) To refer these words directly or indirectly to the question of a physical presence in the Lord's Supper, is to divorce them

violently from their surroundings, and to make them allude to some evil for which the explicit and practical remedy commended in verses 33 and 34 would be no remedy at all. Moreover, if the word "body" means the Lord's physical body, surely the word "Lord's" would have been added, and the words, "and the blood," for the non-recognition of the blood would be just as great an offence. (4) St. Paul never uses the word "body" in reference to our Lord's physical body, without some clear indication that such is meant. (See Rom. vii. 4; Phil. iii. 21; Col. i. 22.) On the other hand, the use of the word "Body," or "Body of Christ," meaning the Church, is frequent. We have had it but a few verses before, in reference to this very subject (chap. x. 17). It is also to be found in Rom. xii. 5; Eph. i. 22, 53; v. 23, 30. (In this last passage, "of His flesh and of His bones," are not in the best MSS., and destroy the real force of the "Body," which means "Church.")

⁽³⁰⁾ For this cause—*i.e.*, because you do not regard these feasts, to which the Lord's Supper is joined as gatherings in a common body, but eat and drink to excess, and so gain no spiritual advantage, but actually physical evil, many are weak and sickly.

And many sleep.—Better, and some die. Even death sometimes resulted from their drunken orgies, either naturally, or by God's direct visitation.

⁽³¹⁾ For.—This joins verse 31 to

ourselves, we should not be judged. ⁽³²⁾ But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned

with the world. ⁽³³⁾ Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. ⁽³⁴⁾ And if any man hunger, let him

verse 30, which see. The change to the first person, courteously identifying himself with them, is characteristic of St. Paul.

⁽³²⁾ **But when we are judged.**—This verse explicitly declares that the condemnation following an unworthy partaking was not final condemnation, but temporal suffering to save them from being condemned with the heathen.

^(33, 34) **Wherefore, my brethren.**—To correct the abuses of which he has spoken, and to enable them to escape the judgments which were falling upon them, the Apostle gives them this practical advice. When you come together to this eucharistic feast, do not eagerly eat what you have brought; wait until all have arrived, and then partake in common of this Christian meal. If, however, any man is really hungry, then let him satisfy his hunger at home, and come to this Supper so that he may partake of it not to his judgment.

⁽³⁴⁾ **The rest**—or, literally, *the remaining matters*—doubtless refers to some other details connected with the charity-feasts.

From the foregoing we gather the following outline of the method of celebration of the Lord's Supper in the Apostolic Church.

It was a common practice amongst the Greeks at this time to hold a feast called *eranos*, to which all contributed, and of which all partook. A similar arrangement

soon sprang up in the Christian communities, and were called *agapæ*, or "charity-feasts." At these gatherings was celebrated—probably at first daily, and afterwards weekly—the Lord's Supper. It consisted of two parts—a loaf broken and distributed during the meal, and a cup partaken of by all present after it. This bread and this cup were distinguished from the meal itself by the solemn declaration over them of the fact of the institution (verse 26). The entire feast, however, had a solemnity and sanctity imparted to it by the eucharistic acts which accompanied it; and while this bread and this wine constituted the "Supper of the Lord," the entire "charity-feast" became consecrated by it as a "Lord's Supper" (verse 20), the phrase being similar to "Lord's day" (Rev. i. 10). To it the brethren came, not as individuals, but as members of the body of Christ. This gathering of the Church was His body now on earth; that sacramental bread and wine, the symbols of His body, which had been on earth, and which had been given for them. To the charity-feast the rich brought of their abundance, the poor of their poverty. But once assembled, there everything was common. The party-spirit which raged outside soon invaded these sacred scenes. The rich member ceased to discern in that gathering "the Body," and to discern themselves

eat at home ; that ye come not together unto condemnation.¹ And the rest will I set in order when I come.

A.D. 59.

Or, judgment.

CHAPTER XII.—

⁽¹⁾ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would

Chap. xii. 1—31.
Spiritual gifts.

as “members of that Body.” They regarded themselves as individuals, and the food which they brought as their own. The poor were put to shame ; some of them arriving late would remain hungry, while the rich had eaten and drunk to excess. On those who acted thus there fell naturally God’s judgments of sickness and of death. To correct this terrible evil and grave scandal, St. Paul recalls to them the solemnity of the act of Holy Communion, what it meant, how it was instituted. He reminds them of how the whole feast was consecrated by having that eucharistic bread and wine united with it, and he commands those who wanted merely to satisfy their natural hunger to do so at home before coming to the “Lord’s Supper.” The two thoughts of communion with Christ and communion with one another, and of the bread and wine being the medium of the union with Him, and the source of the Christian unity, intersect and interlace each other, like the fine threads of some tapestry which are so skilfully interwoven that you cannot distinguish *them* while you look on the image or scene which they definitely produce. We may with theological subtlety dis sever them ; but if we do so we shall lose that loving image of the Holy Communion which the Apostle wrought out in his teaching, and on which he and the early Church gazed with tender adoration, and from which

they drew the deepest draughts of spiritual life.

When I come.—There is no definite indication of an approaching visit in these words. They are quite general, “whenever I come.”

XII.

⁽¹⁾ **Now concerning spiritual gifts.**—Again the sequence of the topics treated of is probably decided by the subjects contained in the letter from Corinth (see chaps. vii. 1 and viii. 1), and the Apostle replies to inquiries regarding the comparative value and importance of certain spiritual gifts. In this early age the Church was full of the divine energy of spiritual youth. From the indwelling Spirit of God resulted certain marvellous “gifts,” some of which ceased with the apostolic age—some of which seem to have lingered for centuries, even to our own day—declaring themselves intermittently in times of profound religious awakening. The party spirit with which the Corinthian Church seems to have been saturated naturally led to diverse views as to the relative importance of certain of these gifts—some were unduly exalted, some unduly depreciated. The truth that these gifts are valuable as evidence of the indwelling Spirit, and so far as they could be useful for the Church, was forgotten. The Apostle reserves for consideration in more detail (see chap. xiii.) the special gift of tongues, which was, perhaps, the gift most exag-

not have you ignorant.
 (2) Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. (3) Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speak-

¹ Or, *anathema*.

ing by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: ¹ and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

(4) Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same

generated and most misunderstood at Corinth, and deals in this chapter with the subject of spiritual gifts generally. The subject of the chapter is *The Source, Object, and Value of Spiritual Gifts*, and the chapter may be thus sub-divided:—

Verses 1—3. The confession of Christ as Lord is the true evidence of the Spirit.

Verses 4—11. The gifts of the Spirit are diverse in character, but the origin is the same.

Verses 12—30. The analogy of the human body shows that the spiritual Body (the Church) is not a collection of independent parts, but a living organism, consisting of mutually interdependent members.

I would not have you ignorant.—Better, *I do not wish you to be ignorant.*

(2) **Ye know that ye were Gentiles.**—Better (according to the weight of MSS. evidence), *Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were, &c.* In this and the following verse the Apostle reminds his readers that so far from regarding the marvellous manifestations of the Spirit, such as speaking with tongues and prophesying, as the most wonderful miracles, the greatest miracle of all was their conversion. That blind

followers of dumb idols should be transformed into intelligent believers in the living Word was the most striking work of the Spirit. They were now no longer led hither and thither by diverse teachings and diverse gods; they had an unchanging principle of life, and an unerring guide of conduct. The contrast of the present state of Christians with their former state as heathens is a topic of frequent occurrence in St. Paul's writings (Rom. xi. 30; Col. i. 21; iii. 7, &c.).

(3) **Wherefore I give you to understand.**—Better, *Wherefore I make known unto you.* Because such was your condition, and there still seems to linger in your minds some of the ignorance which belonged to such a state, I make known unto you the one great test of your possession of the Holy Spirit. If any man say "Jesus is anathema," that is a proof that he has not that Spirit. If any man say "Jesus is Lord," that is a proof that he has that Spirit.

(4-6) **Now there are diversities of gifts.**—Although conversion is identical in every case, yet afterwards there are spiritual gifts which vary according to individual capacity and character, but they all come from the one Spirit. There are varieties of ministration in which those spiritual gifts are

Spirit. ⁽⁵⁾ And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁽⁶⁾ And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

⁽⁷⁾ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. ⁽⁸⁾ For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the

employed, *and* (not "but" in the Greek) the same Lord is served by these varied ministries; there are varieties of operations resulting from these gifts and ministrations, but it is the same God who works them all in all cases. We have here a clear indication of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity—the HOLY SPIRIT, the direct source of spiritual gifts; the SON, the one in whose service these gifts are to be used as ministers; the FATHER, the one supreme origin of all powers thus bestowed in diverse manners by the one Spirit, and for diverse purposes in the ministering to the One Son. Thus, underlying this passage is the vivid realisation of the Trinity in unity, and unity in Trinity of the Divine Nature.

⁽⁷⁾ **But the manifestation of the Spirit.**—These gifts which flow from one source are intended to flow towards one object, viz., the benefit of the whole Church. If it were only for a man's own benefit it would cease to be a "manifestation"—it would be sufficient for the person to possess the spirit consciously to himself. But the object of light is to give light to others. The object of the spiritual light is to make manifest to others.

⁽⁸⁾ **For to one is given by the Spirit.**—Verses 8—10 illustrate the former statements as to

varieties of endowments for the object of the manifestation of the Spirit, still, however, emphasising the unity of their origin, viz., the Holy Spirit. The following division (Meyer's) of the gifts which are here mentioned is, perhaps, the best approach to a classification which can be made. In the Greek the genera (so to speak) are divided by the word *hetero*, the species by *allo*, both words being rendered in the English by the one word "another":—

I. Gifts which have reference to intellectual power.

- (1) The word of wisdom.
- (2) The word of knowledge.

II. Gifts which depend upon special energy of faith.

- (1) The faith itself.
- (2) Operating in deeds.
 - (a) Healings.
 - (b) Miracles.

(3) Operating in words, as in prophetic utterances.

(4) Operating in distinguishing true and false spirits.

III. Gifts which relate to tongues.

- (1) Speaking with tongues.
- (2) Interpreting tongues.

The "wisdom" and the "knowledge" differ, in that the former expresses the deep spiritual insight into spiritual truth which some possess, the latter the intellectual

same Spirit ; ⁽⁹⁾ to another faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ; ⁽¹⁰⁾ to another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another *divers* kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues : ⁽¹¹⁾ but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, divid-

¹ Gr. *Greeks.*

ing to every man severally as he will. ⁽¹²⁾ For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body : so also is Christ. ⁽¹³⁾ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, ¹ whether *we be* bond or free ; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

appreciation of Christian doctrine, which is not so profound as the former, and which as the man passes into the spiritual state will vanish away (chap. xiii. 8).

⁽⁹⁾ **Faith.**—This cannot mean the faith which is necessary to salvation, for that belongs to all Christians ; but such faith as is mentioned in Matt. xvii. 20, Luke xvii. 6, the results of such a faith being here enlarged, and not embracing miracles alone, but prophecy and the discerning of spirits. In the Greek “the word of wisdom” is said to be given *by* the Spirit ; “the word of knowledge” *according* to the Spirit ; and “the faith and gift of healing” *in* the Spirit. By the use of this variety of expression the Apostle probably means to indicate the variety of methods of operation of the Spirit, as well as the diversity of the gifts which He lavishes.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **Prophecy.**—Not in its modern and limited sense of foretelling the future, but forthtelling truth generally.

Discerning of spirits—*i.e.*, the power to distinguish between

the workings of the Holy Spirit and of evil and misleading spirits (see 1 Tim. iv. 1 ; 1 John iv. 1). On the gifts of tongues and interpretations of tongues, see chap. xiv.

⁽¹¹⁾ **But all these.**—Again, in striking contrast to the great varieties of gifts, the common source of them all is emphatically repeated. The Corinthians estimated these gifts variously, according to their variety in operation. The Apostle estimates their common value as proceeding from the One Spirit, distributed according to His will. Those who valued men more or less according to the kind of gift they possessed were really, if unconsciously, criticising the giver.

⁽¹²⁾ **For.**—Here follows an illustrative proof of the former statement. The human body is composed of many members, and so also is the spiritual body of Christ, which is His Church.

To drink into one Spirit.—Better (in accordance with the best MSS.), *to drink one Spirit.* The act of baptism was not only a watering of the convert with the

(14) For the body is not one member, but many. (15) If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? (16) And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? (17) If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole

were hearing, where were the smelling? (18) But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. (19) And if they were all one member, where were the body? (20) But now are they many members, yet but one body. (21) And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head

washing of regeneration, but a partaking of one Spirit on his part. It is the same word as is used in chap. iii. 6, Apollos "watered."

(14) For the body is not one member, but many.—Here follows a series of suggestions as to the different parts of the body claiming independence of the body itself, which the nature of the case shows to be absurd.

(15) Is it therefore not of the body?—Better, *It is not on that account not of the body*; and so omit the note of interrogation in the subsequent passages of these verses also. The illustration is almost the same as that contained in Livy, ii. 32, the fable of the revolt of the limbs against the belly. Pope, in his *Essay on Man* (ix.), employs the same idea thus:—

"What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,
Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear declined
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
Just as absurd for any part to claim
To be another in this general frame:
Just as absurd to mourn the fate or pains
The great directing MIND OF ALL ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.'

(17) If the whole body were an eye.—Here is shown how absurd it would be for the body to be merely one member, and in verse 19 is shown the converse absurdity of the members losing their individuality. There is a corporate body composed of divers members. That is the difference between a dead machine and a living organism.

(20) But now are they.—From the *reductio ad absurdum* of the previous verses the Apostle turns to the fact as it is, and proceeds (in verse 21) to state that there is a mutual interdependence in the members of the body. The eye is dependent on the hand, the head upon the feet. Here, no doubt, the illustration is drawn out in this particular direction to rebuke those who being themselves possessed of what were considered important spiritual gifts despised the gifts which the Spirit had bestowed on others.

to the feet, I have no need of you. ⁽²²⁾ Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: ⁽²³⁾ and those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow ¹ more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

⁽²⁴⁾ For our comely *parts* have no need: but God

² Or, *division.*

¹ Or, *put on.*

hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked: ⁽²⁵⁾ that there should be no schism ² in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. ⁽²⁶⁾ And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. ⁽²⁷⁾ Now ye are

⁽²²⁾ Which seem to be more feeble.—The general argument of this and the following verse (without attempting to identify the particular parts of the body referred to) is that the weakest parts of the body are as necessary to the body as the strongest; and those parts which are considered less seemly are more abundantly cared for by being carefully covered with clothes, as distinguished from the face and hands which are uncovered.

⁽²⁴⁾ For our comely parts have no need.—These words (better, *and our comely parts have no need*) conclude the former verse. The words, “But God hath tempered,” commence a new sentence, in which the natural practice of covering parts of the body is stated to be in harmony with God’s evident intention.

⁽²⁵⁾ That there should be no schism.—The existence of differences of gifts in the Church had been used by the Corinthians to cause schisms, exalting some gifts and depreciating others, when this very variety in the Church ought,

as was the intention of variety in the human body, to create a mutual dependence, which would promote unity.

⁽²⁶⁾ And whether one member suffer.—This verse completes the statement of the perfect unity of the members in one body and with one another. They are not only physically joined together, but they are so united as to feel together.

⁽²⁷⁾ Now.—We have here in general terms the application of the foregoing illustration, the detailed application of which follows in verse 28. The Apostles were those selected by our Lord Himself, or afterwards elected by them to join that body. (On prophets and teachers, see verse 10.) The teachers were probably a junior order of instructors. (See Acts xiii. 1; Eph. iv. 11.) The enumeration of the gifts here corresponds with that previously given in verses 9 and 10, with the exception of the mention here of “helps” and “governments,” and the omission of “interpretation of tongues”

the body of Christ, and members in particular.

(28) And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities¹ of tongues.

(29) *Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers*² of mira-

cles? ⁽³⁰⁾ Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? ⁽³¹⁾ But covet earnestly the best gifts.

And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

A.D. 59.

¹ Or, kinds.

² Or, powers.

CHAPTER XIII.—

(1) Though I speak with the tongues of men and

Chap. xiii.
Love.

and "discernment of spirit." Possibly, therefore, the words inserted here are only another designation of the same thing. The "helps" being the aid required for those who heard tongues in order to the understanding them, and the "governments" being the due regulation of the acceptance of certain spiritual powers and rejection of others.

(31) **But covet earnestly.**—Better, *But earnestly seek the better gifts.* All this argument is not meant to check ardour and to damp enthusiasm. The Spirit divideth to every man as He wills, but He wills to give to each the best gift that each desires and is capable of receiving. The receptivity which comes with earnest and practical desire is in the case of each individual the determining cause as to what gift the Spirit will give. The last sentence, "And yet show I unto you a more excellent way," ought to form the opening clause of the next chapter. The "more excellent way" is not some gift to be desired to the exclusion of the other gifts, but a more excellent way of striving for those

gifts. You are not to strive for any one gift because it is more highly esteemed, or because it is more apparently useful, or because it is more easily attained. That which will consecrate every struggle for attainment and every gift when attained is LOVE.

XIII.

(1) **Though I speak . . .**—The more excellent way is "Love." Without it all moral and intellectual gifts are valueless. If there be love—the love of God, and the love of our brethren—in our hearts, all will be well. This hymn of praise in honour of love is remarkable, (1) as coming from St. Paul, and not from St. John, from whose pen we might naturally have looked for it; and (2), occurring here in an atmosphere of controversy, preceded and succeeded as it is by close logical argument.

On the first point we may observe what a striking illustration it is of the completeness of St. Paul's character. The clear, vigorous intellect and the masculine energy of the great Apostle are united to a heart full of tenderness. We

of angels, and have not | |charity, I am become as

car. almost feel its pulsations, we can almost hear its mighty throbbings, in every line of this poem.

That this passage should be found in the middle of a protracted argument suggests the idea that we have here the result of a sudden and direct inspiration. The Apostle had always been conscious of a mighty power working in him, mastering him, bringing him into captivity to Christ. There suddenly flashes upon him the realisation of what that power is, and he cannot but at once give utterance in language of surpassing loftiness and glowing with emotion, to the new and profound conviction which has set his whole soul aflame. This chapter is the Baptismal Service of Love. Here it receives its new Christian name. The word (*agapè*) which is used here for love is peculiar to the New Testament (and a few passages in the LXX.). It is not to be found in any heathen writer. The word "charity," which signifies either tolerance or almsgiving, is an insufficient rendering of the original, and destroys the force of the passage, especially in verse 3, where "almsgiving" without love is pronounced worthless. The Latin *caritas* was used as the rendering of *agapè*, probably because the ordinary Latin word *amor* (love) was considered too significant of a mere earthly or fleshly affection; and hence the word "charity" in the English version. Perhaps it was hoped that the word "charity," when planted in such a soil, and with such surroundings, would have grown to have that larger significance to which the original

gives expression. If so, the experiment has not succeeded, the word has not become acclimatised to this chapter. The word "love" had better be restored here. The rare purity of its surrounding atmosphere will completely deprive it of any earthly or sensual taint.

This chapter, occupied with the one main thought, divides itself into three parts—

Verses 1—3. The greatest gifts are valueless without Love.

Verses 4—7. The pre-eminent characteristics of Love.

Verses 8—13. Gifts are transient; virtues are eternal, and chief of them is Love.

Tongues of men and of angels.—The gift of tongues (see Notes on chap. xiv.) is placed first as that most over-estimated at Corinth. It is useless without love. It would be impossible to define love, as it is impossible to define life; but the best conception of what St. Paul means by love can be found from the description which he subsequently gave of it. Stanley, contrasting the meaning of the word employed by St. Paul with the various words for love in other literature, remarks: "While the 'love' of the New Testament retains all the fervour of the Hebrew 'aspiration' and 'desire,' and of the 'personal affection' of the Greek, it ranges through as wide a sphere as the comprehensive 'benevolence' of Alexandria. Whilst it retains the religious element that raised the affections of the Hebrew Psalmist to the presence of God, it agrees with the classical and Alexandrian feelings in making its chief object the

sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. ⁽²⁾ And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove

mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. ⁽³⁾ And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth

welfare of man. It is not religion evaporated into benevolence, but benevolence taken up into religion. It is the practical exemplification of the two great characteristics of Christianity, the union of God with man, the union of religion with morality; love to man for the sake of love to God, love to God showing itself in love to man."

As sounding brass.—Not a brass trumpet or instrument of any kind, but simply a piece of metal, which when struck will merely produce noise.

A tinkling cymbal.—Better, *a clanging cymbal*. This instrument can produce by itself no intelligible tune. (See Ps. xl. 5.)

⁽²⁾ **Prophecy.**—The Apostle valued the gift of prophecy—*i.e.*, preaching—more highly than the gift of tongues, which stood first in Corinthian estimation. He therefore naturally selects it as coming into the same condemnation if unaccompanied by love. All the secrets of God's providence and complete knowledge (see chap. xii. 8), even such a transcendent faith as Christ had spoken of as capable of moving mountains (Mat. xvii. 20), may belong to a man, and without love he is nothing. We must not take these words as implying that the Apostle possessed this vast knowledge and faith personally. The whole argument is

put hypothetically—it supposes a man possessed of these qualities.

⁽³⁾ **Bestow all my goods.**—The Greek word literally means to feed others by giving them morsels of food, and so we have the thought of a charity extensive in its diffusion, as well as complete in its self-sacrifice. The whole of the bestower's property given in charity, and so divided as to reach the largest number.

I give my body to be burned.—A still greater proof of devotion to some person or cause, is the sacrifice of life; yet even that may be without love. A strange reading has crept into some MSS.—“that I may boast” which would make the passage mean that a man gave his body to some torture from a wrong motive, *viz.*, vain-glory. But this would weaken the force of the passage. What renders the self-sacrifice valueless is not a wrong cause, but the absence of love as the motive power. Although burning was not a form of martyrdom at this time, yet such histories as that of the three children in Dan. iii. 19 would make the expression intelligible and forcible.

These words are historically interesting to the English Church. They formed the text from which Dr. Smith preached at the martyrdom of Latimer and Ridley!

me nothing. ⁽⁴⁾ Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself,¹ is not puffed up, ⁽⁵⁾ doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; ⁽⁶⁾ rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; ⁽⁷⁾ beareth all things, believeth all things,

¹ Or, *is not rash.*

² Or, *with the truth.*

hopeth all things, endureth all things.

⁽⁸⁾ Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. ⁽⁹⁾ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ⁽¹⁰⁾ But when that which is perfect

⁽⁴⁾ **Charity suffereth long.**—Better, *Love is long-suffering.* Here follows a description of love. Descriptions of positive characteristics and negations of evil qualities are now employed by the Apostle in what he would have us believe to be his impossible task of adequately describing true love.

⁽⁵⁾ **Thinketh no evil.**—That is, does not dwell upon the evil done to her.

⁽⁶⁾ **Rejoiceth not in iniquity.**—The attitude of our mind towards sin is a great test of the truth of our religious feeling.

⁽⁷⁾ **Beareth all things.**—The full thought of the original here is that love silently endures whatever it has to suffer.

⁽⁸⁾ **Charity never faileth.**—From the positive and negative qualities of love described and enumerated in the preceding passage, the Apostle now turns to contrast the imperishable character of love and other graces with the ephemeral nature of gifts. The Corinthians held an exaggerated estimate of the value of gifts such as tongues and prophecy, and under-valued the graces of faith and love. Now

the Apostle shows that they were thereby preferring the things which are for a time to the graces which are for ever. One faction, indeed, exalted to the highest place a gift—that of tongues—which was the most ephemeral of all Christian gifts. On the “tongues,” see Note on chap. xiv. 2. “Prophecies,” in the plural, intimates the varied gradations of power possessed by the preachers, in some cases including that deep spiritual insight into the realities of the present which enabled the preacher to foretell distant events.

⁽⁹⁾ **We know in part.**—Knowledge and preaching are incomplete; therefore, when this dispensation ends, and the complete dispensation is brought in, these imperfect gifts shall cease. Gifts are but the implements of the divine husbandry; graces are the seeds themselves. When the great harvest-time comes, the instruments, however useful, will be cast aside altogether; the seeds will, by the very process of death, be transformed into blossoms and fruits, and in that perfected form remain for ever.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **That which is perfect.**—

is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

(11) When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought¹ as a child: but when I became a man, I put away

² Gr. *in a riddle.*

¹ Or, *reasoned.*

childish things. (12) For now we see through a glass, darkly;² but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

(13) And now abideth faith,

This verse shows, by the emphatic "then," that the time when the gifts shall cease is the end of this dispensation. The imperfect shall not cease until the perfect is brought in. (See Eph. iv. 11—13.)

(11) **When I was a child.**—The natural childhood and manhood of this life are analogous to the spiritual childhood of this life and the spiritual manhood of the life to come.

I understood as a child, I thought as a child.—The first word expresses mere simple apprehension, the second word implies active intellectual exertion. It has been suggested that the three words here used refer back respectively to the gifts previously mentioned. "I spoke" corresponds to the "tongues," "I understood" to the "prophecy," and "I reasoned" to the "knowledge." Without intending any such very definite correspondence of these three expressions, the Apostle probably naturally made the points of analogy correspond in number with what they were intended to illustrate.

But when I became a man.—Better, *but now that I have become a man I have given up the ways of a child.* The point brought out is his present state as a man, and not, as the English version might seem to imply, some fixed point of

transition in his past history. The contrast he seeks to make clear is between two states of life.

(12) **For now**—*i.e.*, in this earthly life, the "for" connecting the previous statement with that which it illustrates.

Through a glass, darkly.—Better, *through a mirror in a dark saying.* The illustration here is from a mirror when the image appears far behind the mirror itself. If we remember the imperfect metal surfaces which formed the mirrors of those days, we can imagine how imperfect and enigmatical (the Greek word is "in an *enigma*") would the image appear; so that the Apostle says, "Like that image which you see when you look at an object in a mirror far off, with blurred and undefined outline, such is our knowledge here and now; but *then* (*i.e.*, when this dispensation is at an end) we shall see as you see a man when you stand before him face to face. (See Num. xii. 7, 8 for a similar thought, but a different illustration of it—"mouth to mouth.") The word for "glass" here is the same as in Jas. i. 23, and must mean a mirror, and not, as some commentators suggest, a pane of transparent stone or horn, such as was then used, for which a quite different word would have been employed.

(13) **And now abideth . . .**—

hope, charity, these three ;
but the greatest of these is
charity.

CHAPTER XIV.—

Chap. xiv. 1—⁽¹⁾ Follow after
25. The gift of charity, and
tongues.

A.D. 59.

I Gr.
heareth.

desire spiritual *gifts*, but
rather that ye may pro-
phesy. ⁽²⁾ For he that
speaketh in an *unknown*
tongue speaketh not unto
men, but unto God: for
no man understandeth¹

Better, *Thus there abide . . .* The
“now” is not here temporal, but
logical. It is not “now” (*i.e.*, this
present life) contrasted with the
future, but it is the conclusion of
the whole argument. From all
that has been urged in the previous
verses it follows that these three
graces—faith, hope, love—remain
imperishable and immortal. Gifts
such as the Corinthian Church re-
joiced in shall pass away when the
perfect succeeds the imperfect; the
graces of faith, hope, love shall re-
main in the next life, exalted and
purified. But even in this trinity
of graces there is an order, and love
stands first. The contrast is not
between love which is imperishable
and faith and hope which are pe-
rishable, but between ephemeral
gifts and enduring graces. It is
strange how completely in popular
thinking this has been lost sight of,
and hence we find such words as
these—

“ Faith will vanish into sight ;
Hope be emptied in delight ;
Love in heaven will shine more bright ;
Therefore, give us love ; ”

which express almost the opposite
of what the Apostle really wrote.

There need be no difficulty in
understanding that “faith,” in the
sense of trust in Christ as our
Saviour, may continue in the hea-
venly state; indeed, when we see
Him face to face, and see actually

how great a salvation He hath ob-
tained for us, that faith may be
expected to glow with a new and
increasing fervour. Hope, too,
need never cease if that new life is
to be progressive. If hope lives
by feeding on the present as the
promise of the future, surely it will
have a more abundant sustenance
in that life than in this. Yet love
stands supreme; indeed, both faith
and hope would perish without her.
(See Matt. xxvi. 35; Gal. v. 6.)

XIV.

⁽¹⁾ Follow after charity—
Better, *Follow after love*. The pre-
ceding chapter is parenthetical,
and the Apostle here returns to the
subject with which he had been
immediately occupied before he
branched off into that great Psalm
of Love: He has spoken enthu-
siastically in praise of the superi-
ority of love as the greatest amongst
graces, and of all graces as superior
to all gifts; but still, though we
are to “do this,” we are not to
leave the other undone. Spiritual
gifts are to be “earnestly striven
for.” As there was a priority in
graces, so there is in gifts. To
prophecy is the greatest gift; it is
so, as we see afterwards, because it
makes us useful to our brethren;
therefore it is to be striven for
rather than any other gift.

⁽²⁾ For he that speaketh in

him ; howbeit in the spirit | he speaketh mysteries.

an unknown tongue.—Better, *For he that speaketh in a tongue.* The word “unknown” is not in the original, but it has been inserted in connection with the word “tongue” all through this chapter, so as to make the various passages seem to be consistent with the theory that the gift of tongues was a gift of languages. This is not the place to enter into the question of what particular external manifestation of this gift was evidenced on the Day of Pentecost. (See Acts ii. 1—13.) Still, believing that the gift of tongues here spoken of is identical with the gift of tongues which was first bestowed at Pentecost, I would say that the phenomena described as occurring then must be explained by the fuller and more elaborate account of the nature of the gift which is given to us here. Against the theory that the gift was one of a capacity to speak various languages we have three considerations. (1) the word *dialectos*, which is repeatedly used to express languages (Acts i. 19; ii. 6, 8; xxi. 40; xxii. 2; xxvi. 14), is never used by St. Paul or by the author of the Acts in reference to the utterances of those who possessed the gift of tongues, but the other word, *glossa*, which is, literally, the physical organ of speech—as if the utterances were simply sounds that proceeded from it. (2) There is no trace whatever of this knowledge of languages having been ever used for the purpose of preaching to those who spoke foreign languages. The language of the Lycaonians was evidently not understood by the Apostles when

they were addressed in it (see Acts xiv. 11), and they did not speak in it. That the hearers at Pentecost said they heard those who were filled with the Spirit “speak in our own language” would only imply, either that the outpouring on Pentecost had for the moment a miraculous effect, which immediately ceased, or that “all the various elements of Aramaic and Hellenistic speech, latent in the usual language of the time, were quickened, under the power of this gift, into a new life, sometimes intelligible, sometimes unintelligible to those who heard it, but always expressive of the vitality and energy of the Spirit by which it was animated.” (3) The description of the gift in this chapter is utterly inconsistent with it being a gift of languages. The gift was the result of a quickened spiritual power by the action of the Holy Ghost (see also Acts ii. 4; x. 44—46; xix. 6); it poured itself forth in wild, impassioned utterances, which were sometimes mistaken for delirium (verse 23); and these were the expressions, not of thoughts, but of feelings, unintelligible always, if uninterpreted, to the listener, and sometimes to the utterer himself.

It is to be observed that very notable spiritual phenomena, not unlike what are recorded here, accompanied many periods of great spiritual revival. The histories of the early work of Wesley and Whitfield, and of Irving—to take examples in England alone—afford some very remarkable illustrations. The general subject of the first part of this chapter (verses 1—25)

⁽³⁾ But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. ⁽⁴⁾ He that

speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. ⁽⁵⁾ I

is the Gift of Tongues, and is thus dealt with:—

I. PROPHECY IS SUPERIOR TO THE GIFT OF TONGUES (verses 2—11).

Because (1) Tongues are the means of communion between the individual and God, whereas prophecy is communion with other men (verses 2, 3).

(2) Tongues do yourself good; prophecy does good to others (verses 4—6).

This truth is illustrated (*a*) by the variety of musical instruments (verse 7); (*b*) by the distinction of musical notes (verses 8, 9); (*c*) by the varieties of human language (verses 10, 11)

II. PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE FOREGOING (verses 11—19).

(1) What the aim and object of the Christians should be (verses 12, 13).

(2) His own example (verses 14—19).

III. FURTHER APPEAL TO THEIR INTELLIGENCE AS TO THIS TRUTH (verses 21—25).

(1) The Old Testament teaches the same principle (verses 21, 22).

(2) The gift of prophecy is a means of spreading Christianity, and the gift of tongues is not (verses 23—25).

In the spirit he speaketh mysteries.—The utterances come, not from his mind, but from his spirit, stirred by the Holy Spirit; and he speaks mysteries unintelligible to others.

⁽³⁾ Edification, and exhortation, and comfort.—They communed with God by the speaking with tongues; they communed with the brethren by prophecy—building up, stirring up, cheering up, as each required.

⁽⁴⁾ He that speaketh in an unknown tongue.—Better, *He that speaketh in a tongue.* The introduction of the word “unknown” destroys the whole force of the passage. All tongues—as distinct from languages—were unknown, *i.e.*, unintelligible. The gift of prophecy is superior in usefulness to that of tongues, and therefore to be preferred. The use of the word “edify,” as applied to an individual solely, as distinct from the individual as a part of the whole Church, is unusual with St. Paul (see Note on chap. viii. 1), but is introduced so as to make the antithesis verbally as well as logically more striking.

⁽⁵⁾ I would that ye all spake with tongues.—To avoid danger of misunderstanding or misrepresentation, the Apostle emphatically asserts here that the error which he is combating is the undue exaltation of the gift of tongues to the depreciation of other gifts. The teacher of religious truth to others who thereby builds up the

would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. (6) Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak

¹ Or, tunes.

to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

(7) And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds,¹ how shall it be known what is piped or harped? (8) For if the trumpet give an uncertain

whole edifice of the body of Christ, is a greater one than he who is himself benefited by being possessed of profound but uncommunicable emotion.

Except he interpret.—The gift of interpreting might therefore belong to the same person who had the gift of tongues: and if he had this power of articulating for the benefit of others the emotion which he incoherently expresses in reverie, then the gift of tongues was useful to the Church at large, and so was as valuable as prophecy.

(6) **Now, brethren.**—Transferring these things to himself in an image, the Apostle reinforces the preceding teaching. Now (*i.e.*, seeing that these things are so), what profit would I be to come to you speaking in tongues? I have been telling you that you cannot profit others: I ask you, do you think I speaking in tongues could profit you?

Except I shall speak to you either . . .—Here is an expansion of the “interpretation of tongues” of the previous verse, and which is the condition on

which depends any usefulness of the gift. The “revelation” and the “knowledge” are the internal gifts in the teacher himself which are the sources of his power to communicate “prophecy” (*i.e.*, general exhortation) or “doctrine” (*i.e.*, systematic religious instruction) to his hearers.

(7) **And even things without life.**—The pipe and harp were the best-known instruments, and the principle just laid down of the inutility of sounds unless they be distinctive is illustrated by reference to them. Whether it was a harp or a pipe which was being played you could not know unless each gives a distinct sound of its own. The point here is not, as the English seems to suggest, that there must be a difference in tune, so as to know *what* is being piped or harped—*that* illustration comes in in the next verse—but that each instrument has its own peculiar sound.

(8) **For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound.**—Not only has each instrument its own sound, but in each instrument there is a distinction of notes. If a trumpet

sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

(9) So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy¹ to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. (10) There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices

¹ Gr.
signi-
ficant.

in the world, and none of them is without signification. (11) Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

(12) Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiri-

does not clearly sound the advance when it is intended, or the retreat when it is meant, the trumpet is useless, the soldiers not knowing what to do.

(9) So likewise ye.—This is not the application of the foregoing, but the introduction of a third illustration, viz., the varieties of human language. The “tongue” here is simply the actual organ of speech, distinguished in the Greek, by the insertion of the article, from “tongues” which flow from the spiritual gift. If a human being does not use words that those spoken to understand, it is useless; such words pass as sounds into the air and are useless.

(10) There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world.—There are a great many voices or languages in the world, and none of them but has a right meaning when spoken rightly and to the right person. No word in any language can be meaningless, but must correspond to some thought—for the thought exists first, and the word is invented as the expression of it.

(11) Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice.—Language is useless unless we

know what meaning is attached to each word uttered. The hearer is a foreigner (or barbarian), then, in the estimation of the speaker, and the speaker a foreigner in the estimation of the hearer. Thus the truth that sounds of tongues are useless unless they convey definite ideas to the hearers, is illustrated (1) by different instruments of music, (2) by different sounds of an instrument, (3) by different words and languages of living men—in all of which cases the conveyance of distinct ideas is the sign and test of their utility.

(12) Even so ye.—Here follows the practical application of the previous teaching and illustration. The “ye” of verse 9 was addressed to them as human beings generally; but here the Apostle returns to the immediate subject in hand, viz., the exaltation of particular spiritual gifts in the Corinthian Church. He passes now from the contrast between prophecy and tongues to give practical instruction (verses 12—19) as to how they should seek to use the gift of tongues. The word for “spiritual gifts” is, in the Greek, literally *spirits*, but is evidently meant to imply the gifts, and especially that

tual¹ gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. ⁽¹³⁾ Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret. ⁽¹⁴⁾ For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my under-

¹ Gr. of spirits.

standing is unfruitful. ⁽¹⁵⁾ What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. ⁽¹⁶⁾ (Else when thou shalt bless with

one under consideration—the gift of tongues.

Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.—Better, *seek, then, to the edifying of the Church, that ye may abound.* The point cannot be that they were to seek to excel in spiritual gifts, that so they might edify the Church, for the next verse explains how the gift is to be sought so that it may edify others; but the force of the passage here is as given above—they are to seek this gift for the benefit of others, and so they will themselves, by serving others, abound yet more and more (chap. viii. 7; 1 Thess. iv. 1).

⁽¹³⁾ **In an unknown tongue.**—Better, *in a tongue.* The gift of interpretation would make the gift of tongues useful for the edifying of the Church. This would be an object of unselfish prayer, which God would indeed answer. In the Greek it is suggested that the gift of interpretation is not only to be the object of his prayer, but that it will be the result; and this leads on to the thought in the next verse.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **For if I pray in an unknown tongue.**—Better, *if I pray in a tongue.* Verses 14—19 are expressed in the first person (except verses 16, 17, which are

a parenthesis), as enforcing the Apostle's own example. A man praying in a tongue needed the gift of interpretation. The emotions of his spirit, kindled by the Spirit of God, found utterance in a "tongue," the gift of the Spirit of God; but his intellectual faculty grasped no definite idea, and could not, therefore, formulate it into human language; therefore the prayer which is offered merely in a tongue, from the spirit and not from the understanding, is useless as regards others. The Apostle is here speaking of public worship (see verse 16), and not of private devotion; and the word "fruitless" implies the result, or rather the absence of result, as regards others.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **What is it then?**—The Apostle, in answering this question—viz., What, then, is the practical conclusion of the whole matter?—still speaks in the first person, quoting his own conduct and resolution. He will not let his public ministrations as regards prayer and praise evaporate into mere enthusiasm; nor will he, on the other hand, allow a cold intellectual creed to chill and freeze the warm emotions of the spirit.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit.**—In this and the following verse the Apostle

the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? ⁽¹⁷⁾ For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.) ⁽¹⁸⁾ I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: ⁽¹⁹⁾ yet in the

¹ Gr. *perfect*, or, *of a ripe age.*

church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue.

⁽²⁰⁾ Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.¹

speaks in the second person, for they refer, not to his practice, but to that of some in Corinth. Their conduct and its results are introduced parenthetically here, in contrast with what he is laying down as his own earnest desire and practice.

He that occupieth the room of the unlearned.—Better, *he that is in the position of a private individual*; as we should say; a “layman”—the one who comes as a private person to the assembly, and does not lead the prayer and thanksgiving. How can he say “Amen” when he does not know what is being said? and he cannot know if you speak in a tongue, without interpreting. It would seem from this verse that from the earliest apostolic times the practice has been for the congregation to join in the thanksgiving by uttering “Amen” (the Hebrew “So be it”) at the conclusion.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **For thou verily givest thanks well.**—It is here implied that speaking in a tongue was, as regards an individual, an acceptable mode of worship, and it is the public use of it that all throughout this passage the Apostle is dealing with.

^(18, 19) **I thank my God.**—Here the Apostle resumes in the first person, coming back, after the parenthesis, to the continuation of his own desire and example. He does not undervalue that gift the misuse and exaggeration of which he is censuring; he possesses it himself in a remarkable degree; yet in the Church (*i.e.*, in any assembly of Christians for prayer or instruction) he would prefer to speak five words with his mind rather than ten thousand with a tongue only; for the object of such assemblies is not private prayer or private ecstatic communion with God, but the edification of others. The word used for “teach” in this verse is literally our word *catechise*.

⁽²⁰⁾ **Howbeit in malice be ye children.**—Better, *however in evil be ye infants*. There are three grades spoken of here in the original—infants, children, full-grown men. Their conduct in exalting these “tongues,” against which he has been warning them, is a proof that they are yet children in knowledge. They ought to be full-grown; the only thing in which they ought to be children is evil, and in that they cannot be too

(21) In the law it is written,^a With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. (22) Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but

^a Isa. 28.
11.

to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. (23) If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are*

young, too inexperienced; they should be merely "infants." (A similar thought occurs in chaps. ii. 6; iii. 1; xiii. 10, 11.)

(21, 22) **In the law it is written.**—The preceding teaching is illustrated and enforced by an appeal to Jewish history. The Old Testament as a whole was not infrequently thus designated "the Law." (See John x. 34; xii. 34; xv. 25.) The words are scarcely a quotation, but rather an illustration taken from Isa. xxviii. 9—12. The passage there refers to the refusal of Israel to hearken to Jehovah when He spoke to them with clearness and simplicity, and His judgment on them taking the form of declaring that He would make a foreign people—the Assyrians—be His mouthpiece to them in the future, in a language which they knew not. It is as if the Apostle said: Remember there was a time in Jewish history when an unintelligible language was a sign sent by God, and proved unavailing as regards the conversion of Israel. The gift which you so exalt now is equally useless by itself for that same purpose.

(22) **Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe.**—This is not an interpretation of the prophecy alluded to

in the previous verse, but St. Paul now returns to the gift of "tongues" as existing in the Church, and introduces a thought regarding this gift suggested by the fact mentioned, viz., that in Israel unintelligible tongues, uttered in their hearing, were for a sign to unbelieving Jews. Tongues should not be exalted in estimation above prophecy—inasmuch as the function of the latter is really grander than that of the former. Tongues were useful to arrest the attention of unbelievers, and, if rightly used, to arouse their convictions; but prophecy is in the highest sense useful for believers.

(23) **If therefore.**—Intended, as tongues were, for a "sign," they cease to be thus useful if not properly employed. The report of the strange utterances which take place in the assembled Church may lead some unbeliever to come there; but if there be tongues alone, and they uninterpreted, the stranger will simply think those present are mad. (See Acts ii. 13.) It is not meant here that *all* commence shouting out at the same time, neither is it in the next verse that *all* prophesy simultaneously; but the thought presented is the undue and exclusive cultivation of this gift by all in the Corinthian Church.

unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? ⁽²⁴⁾ But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: ⁽²⁵⁾ and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling

down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

⁽²⁶⁾ How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a

Chap. xiv. 26—40. The order of public worship.

⁽²⁴⁾ **But if all prophesy.**—There is no danger of exaggeration regarding this gift. Each one uttering prophecy, telling forth the gospel truth, and revealing the mind of God, will have a message that will be useful to the unbeliever. As one after another they utter the words of divine truth, they each send something that pierces into his soul. By all of them he is convicted in his own conscience of some sin. He is condemned in his own eyes, a searching light is turned upon his heart. The secrets of his heart are made manifest, and he makes terrible discoveries of his guilt (Heb. iv. 12, 13).

⁽²⁵⁾ **And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest.**—Better, *and the secrets of his heart are made manifest*—such being the reading of the best MSS. It is the third result of the prophetic utterances explained in previous Note. His complete conversion is evidenced by his worshipping God and recognising the presence of God in that assembly of Christians: “He will confess that you are not mad, but that God is truly in you, and that He is the true God who is in you” (Bengel). It is to be noticed that though the Apostle

speaks in this passage of an “unlearned” person (*i.e.*, a private person, one who has no gift of prophecy or tongues), or an “unbeliever,” it is the latter that is most prominently before his mind, and the former only so far as he shared in common with the latter his ignorance and inability to understand.

⁽²⁶⁾ **How is it then, brethren?**—From a discussion as to the relative value of the gift of tongues and that of prophecy, the Apostle now turns to practical instructions as to the method of their employment in public church assemblies. He first gives directions regarding the tongues (verses 27, 28), then regarding prophecy (verses 29—36), and the concluding verses of this chapter contain a summing up and brief repetition of what has been already laid down. In this verse he introduces the practical application of the truths which he has been enforcing, by the question, “How is it, then?”—*i.e.*, what should follow from all these arguments?—and instead of answering the question directly, he first recalls the existing state of confusion in their public assemblies, which had rendered necessary the teaching of the previous verses, and

tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. ⁽²⁷⁾ If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret. ⁽²⁸⁾ But

if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

⁽²⁹⁾ Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. ⁽³⁰⁾ If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the

which is to be remedied by the practical instructions which now follow.

When ye come together, every one of you hath . . .—Better, *when ye are assembling together each one of you hath a psalm, &c.* The uppermost thought in each mind as you are assembling for public worship is the individual gift which he possesses. One had the gift of pouring forth a psalm of praise; another could deliver a doctrinal discourse; another could speak to God in a tongue; another had some deep insight into the spiritual world; another could interpret the tongue. If these varied gifts were employed by each for his own gratification, or even for his own spiritual advancement, they would not be used worthy of the occasion. In public these gifts were to be exercised, not by each one for himself, but for the building up of the whole Church.

⁽²⁷⁾ **If any man speak in an unknown tongue.**—Better, *If any man speak in a tongue.* Here is the practical application of the general rule just laid down to the exercise of the gift of tongues. Those who had that gift were not all to speak together, and so cause confusion; only two, or at the most three, were to speak in each assembly, and each of such group

was to speak in turn, one at a time. There was to be with each group one who had the gift of interpretation, and he was to interpret to the listeners.

⁽²⁸⁾ **But if there be no interpreter.**—But if there be no one with the gift of interpreting, then the speaker with tongues was not to exercise his gift publicly at all; he may only exercise his gift in private with himself and God.

⁽²⁹⁾ **Let the prophets speak.**—Here follows the application, to those who had the gift of prophecy, of the general principle, Let all be done to edification. Only two or three prophets are to speak in each assembly on each occasion; the others (not “other,” as in English version) who had the gift are to sit by silent and judging, *i.e.*, determining whether the utterances were from the Spirit of God. (See chap. xii. 3, and 1 John iv. 1—3.) If, however, while one prophet was standing speaking there came a sudden revelation of truth to some other prophet who was sitting by, the speaker would pause, and the other prophet give utterance to the inspiration which had come to him. The suddenness of the revelation would show that it was a truth needed there and then, and so should find utterance without delay.

first hold his peace. ⁽³¹⁾ For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

⁽³²⁾ And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. ⁽³³⁾ For God is not *the author* of confusion,¹ but of peace.

As in all churches of the saints, ⁽³⁴⁾ let your women keep silence in the churches:

a Gen. 3.
16.

1 Gr. *tumult,*
or, *in-*
quiet-
ness.

for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.^a ⁽³⁵⁾ And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

⁽³⁶⁾ What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

⁽³¹⁾ For ye may all prophesy one by one.—Better, *For it is in your power all to prophesy one by one.* How it is in their power is explained by the following verse. This orderly prophesying will accomplish the instruction and comforting of all; words of instruction will be interspersed with words of comfort, and so the teaching be suited to every condition of mind and soul of those present.

⁽³²⁾ The spirits of the prophets . . .—They might have said it was impossible to carry out St. Paul's instructions; that the rushing Spirit of God overcame them—shook them, so that they could not control themselves. To this St. Paul replies (verse 31; see above) that it is not so; that they can prophesy one by one; that the spirits of the prophets are under the control of the prophets.

⁽³³⁾ For God is not the author of confusion.—Better, *For God is the God, not of confusion, but of peace.* The Church is the Church of God, and should bear on it the moral image of its King: there should be order, therefore, not confusion, in their assemblies.

As in all churches of the saints.—It is best to make these words read as the commencement of the next subject, thus:—*As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches.* At Corinth one evil of neglecting the principles of order just laid down was that women spoke in the public assemblies. This was not the custom in any other churches, therefore the example of other churches was against such a practice.

⁽³⁴⁾ But they are commanded to be under obedience.—Better (as in some of the best MSS.), *but let them be under obedience.* The original precept laid down in Gen. iii. 16 teaches this. "The law" stands for the Old Testament generally.

⁽³⁵⁾ If they will learn any thing.—Better, *if they are desirous to learn anything.* They are not even to ask questions in public assemblies. They are to ask their husbands at home on every point on which they desire special instruction. (See chap. vii.)

⁽³⁶⁾ What?—The Church at Corinth had on some of these

(37) If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

(38) But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

(39) Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. (40) Let all things

points acted at variance with the practice of the other churches, and in a manner which assumed an independence of St. Paul's apostolic authority. He therefore asks them, with something of sarcastic indignation, whether they are the source from whence the word of God has come, or whether they think themselves its sole recipients, that they should set themselves above the other churches, and above him?

(37) **If any man think himself . . .**—The best evidence of the possession of these gifts would be that their conduct was the very opposite of what they seemed to think the possession of these gifts should make it. The Apostle asserts positively that what he is now writing to them are the commandments of the Lord. There could be no clearer or more emphatic statement of St. Paul's claim to inspiration.

(38) **But if any man be ignorant.**—There are here two readings in the Greek, for each of which there is strong evidence. The passage may run, either, as in the English, *if any man does not know this, let him not know it*: then the words would mean that a person who could not recognise such an evident and simple truth must be of a perverse mind—his opposition would give the Apostle no further concern. The other reading is, *if any man knows not*

this, he is himself not known: this would signify that any man who knows not this truth is not known of God (as in chaps. viii. 2, 3; xiii. 12).

(39) **Wherefore, brethren.**—The practical summing up of the whole matter. Seek earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. The phraseology intimates the relative importance of the two gifts in the estimation of the Apostle, which was inverted by those to whom he wrote at Corinth. This ought you to do, but not leave the other undone.

(40) **Let all things be done decently.**—The former verse reiterates in a condensed sentence the principles laid down regarding the gifts in the first part of the chapter (verses 1—25). This verse similarly deals with the general principle laid down in the latter part of the chapter regarding the style and order of public worship. The object of all church assemblies is to be the building up of the Body of Christ, which is His Church; and therefore seemliness and ordered regularity are absolutely necessary to this end. Here again, as in so many other instances in this Epistle, while the particular and unique circumstances which called forth the apostolic instructions have for centuries passed away, the writings of St. Paul are of permanent and abiding application, because of the general and

be done decently and in order.

CHAPTER XV.—

(1) Moreover, brethren, I

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declare unto you the gospel which I ^{Chap. xv. The resurrection.} preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye

eternal principles on which his instructions are based. The strange outbursts of incoherent fanaticism which have occurred from time to time in the after-history of the Church are condemned by the principle with which St. Paul combated the disorder of the gift of tongues in Corinth; and the practice of the Roman Church, in performing her public services in a tongue not "understood of the people," is at variance with the principle which in this chapter he reiterates with varied emphasis—that all public utterance of prayer and praise should be such as those present can join in, not only with emotional heart, but with clear and understanding intellect.

XV.

(1) Moreover, brethren.—

This chapter is throughout occupied with the DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. The occasion which caused the Apostle to dwell at such length and with such emphasis on this subject was the denial of the resurrection by some members of the Corinthian Church. It has been suggested by some writers that what the Apostle had to combat was a false conception of the resurrection—that at Corinth there were probably those who refined away the doctrine of the resurrection into merely a rising from the death of sin into a life of righteousness, something after the manner of Hymenæus and

Philetus (2 Tim. ii. 17, 18), who taught that "the resurrection was past already." It seems clear, however, from the emphatic statement in verse 12, and from the general scope and drift of the entire argument, that what the Apostle is here meeting is not a perversion, but a denial of the doctrine. There were many elements in such a mixed body as the Corinthian Church which would have contributed to the growth of this error. Amongst the Jewish converts would be some traces of the Sadducean (Matt. xxii. 23) denial of the resurrection, and in the Gentile section of the Church there would linger the spirit of the Athenians who "mocked when they heard of the resurrection of the dead" (Acts xvii. 32), and of the Epicurean philosophers who said, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." From these and from other like sources there had crept into the Church itself a denial of the doctrine of the resurrection. In reading this chapter it is well to remember that the Apostle probably intended it, not only as a reply to these corruptors of the faith, but as supplying those who remained faithful with a confirmation of their own faith, and arguments with which they might meet their opponents. It is always difficult to give a clear, exhaustive analysis of an argument of such a writer as St. Paul. The enthusiasm of his nature leads him to

stand ; ⁽²⁾ by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory ¹ what ² I preached unto you, unless ye have	¹ Or, hold fast. ² Gr. by what speech.	believed in vain. ⁽³⁾ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ
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mingle the syllogism of passion with the syllogism of logic ; and, as he was not writing himself, but dictating the composition, a word often leads him off from his argument into some splendid outburst of pathetic exhortation, or of prophetic utterance. Still, including such digressions, the general argument of this chapter may be tabulated thus :—

I.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION (verses 1—34).
Subdivided as follows :

- (1) *The resurrection proved by the historical fact of Christ's resurrection* (verses 1—15).
- (2) *The resurrection proved by an appeal to the moral consequences involved in a denial of it* (verses 16—28).
- (3) *The truth of the resurrection involved in certain existing practices* (verses 29—34).

II.—THE METHOD AND PRINCIPLE OF THE RESURRECTION (verses 35—58).

- (1) *Illustration from analogy* (verses 35—44).
- (2) *Illustration from our dual descent from Adam and from Christ* (verses 44—49).
- (3) *The great change* (verses 50—53).
- (4) *A song of triumph* (verses 54—57).
- (5) *Concluding exhortation* (ver. 58).

I declare unto you.—The Apostle opens his historical argument by reminding the Corinthians that this is no new nor unimportant matter. It is the original gospel which he had preached to them, which they received, and in which they stand, and by which they *are being saved* (not “are saved,” as in the English).

⁽²⁾ If ye keep in memory what I preached unto you.—Better, *if ye hold fast with what word I preached the gospel to you, unless you believed in vain.* The idea here is not, as implied in the English version, that they were converted, and yet that heretofore no results have followed from their belief ; it is the same thought which comes out more fully in verse 17. They are saved by their faith in the gospel as preached by St. Paul, unless (which is impossible) the whole gospel be false, and so their faith in it be vain and useless.

⁽³⁾ For I delivered . . .—Here follows the explanation and illustration of what he meant, in verse 2, by “with what word I preached the gospel.” We see here what the subject of apostolic teaching was—not indeed all the gospel that the Apostle taught, but what he considered of the first importance, and therefore put in the forefront of his teaching—viz., the historical fact of Christ's death for our sins, His burial, His resurrection. This was the first Creed of Christendom.

died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁽⁴⁾ and that he was buried, and

that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: ⁽⁵⁾ and that he was

For our sins.—Not only because of, but in behalf of our sins, in order to take them away (Gal. i. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 24; 1 John iii. 5). The fact of the Atonement was not something evolved by the Apostle's own consciousness, but a fact revealed to him by Christ. (See chap. xi. 23, and Note there.)

⁽⁴⁾ **And that he rose again.**

—Better, and that *He has been raised again.* The burial of our Lord is dwelt upon and emphasised as the proof of the reality of His death. Similarly in the case of Lazarus, his entombment is brought out strongly as showing that it was from no trance, but from death that he arose. (See John xi.)

According to the scriptures.—The reiteration with each statement that it was "according to the scriptures"—*i.e.*, according to the Old Testament scriptures, the Gospel narratives not yet being in existence—shows how strongly the Apostle dwelt on the unity of the facts of Christ's life and the predictive utterances of the prophets. The death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord were all parts of that providential plan which the deep spiritual insight of God's servants of old illumined by the Holy Spirit had enabled them to foresee. The resurrection was no subsequent invention to try and explain away or mitigate the terrible shock which Christ's death had given to His followers. (See Pss. ii. 7; xvi. 10; xxi. 16; Isa. liii. 9, 10; lv. 3; Hos. vi. 2.)

⁽⁵⁾ **That he was seen of**

Cephas.—From the indications of sequence here given we may conclude that the appearances here grouped together are arranged in chronological order. We have these appearances:—(1) To Cephas (see Luke xxiv. 34). (2) To the Twelve—the phrase "the Twelve" being used to indicate, not the number of those present, but the group to which they belonged, as Decemviri might be used, or Hebdomadal Council, not to express the exact number but the corporate body—(see Luke xxiv. 36; John xx. 19). This was probably the appearance to the ten Apostles, and is distinguished from a subsequent appearance to "all the Apostles." (3) To above five hundred brethren at once. This must have been in Galilee, for at a later date (see Acts i. 15) the church at Jerusalem consisted of only one hundred and twenty disciples. (See Matt. xxviii. 16, 17, and Acts i. 15.) (4) To James. This appearance is recorded only here and in the Gospel of the Hebrews, which is quoted by St. Jerome, "But the Lord, when he had given the *sindôn*" (the same word as that for the "linen garment," in Mark xiv. 51) "to the servant of the priest, had a table brought out, and bread on it, which He blessed and gave to James, saying, 'Eat thy bread now, brother, since the Son of Man has risen from the dead;' for James had sworn that he would not eat bread from the hour in which he had drunk the cup of the Lord until he should see Him rising from the dead."

seen of Cephas, then of the twelve : ⁽⁶⁾ after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once ; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. ⁽⁷⁾ After that, he was seen of James ; then of all the apostles. ⁽⁸⁾ And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due

¹ Or, an abortive.

time.¹ ⁽⁹⁾ For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ⁽¹⁰⁾ But by the grace of God I am what I am : and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain ; but I laboured more abundantly than they all : yet not I, but the

(5) To all the Apostles, Thomas being present (John xx. 26). (6) St. Paul himself (Acts ix. 5). To these facts St. Paul appeals. Most of those who saw Him were alive. Their enemies were alive to dispute it if they could. The witnesses had nothing to gain, everything to lose by telling the truth. The evidence was set forth some twenty-five or thirty years after the occurrence of the alleged facts. The Apostle here maintains the truth of an historical fact. He appeals solely to historical proof, and accumulates a mass of historical testimony, such as in any matter of history, if produced so shortly after the occurrence, would be deemed overwhelming.

⁽⁶⁾ *Fallen asleep.*—The same word is used of Stephen's death (see Acts vii. 60), so also in verse 18.

⁽⁸⁾ *Was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*—Better, *Last of all, as to an untimely born one he appeared also to me.* The Apostle here distinctly states that he saw the Lord at the time of his conversion as really as St. Peter and others had seen him,

though with touching pathos and strongly marked emphasis he adds that it was not at the same time as the "firstborn" had seen Him, but only as an "untimely born" one.

⁽⁹⁾ *For I am the least of the apostles.*—*Paulus Minimus.* Here the mention of his conversion—the thought of what he had been before, what he had become since—leads the Apostle into a digression, occupying this and the next two verses. The two thoughts of his own inherent nothingness and of his greatness by the grace of God are here mingled together in expressions of intense personal feeling. While he was a persecutor he had thought that he was acting *for* the Church of God ; he was really persecuting the Church of God. The Christian Church had completely taken the place of the Jewish Church—not merely abolished it, but superseded it.

⁽¹⁰⁾ *But by the grace of God I am what I am.*—This whole verse is full of that maintenance of official dignity as an Apostle and a labourer, and of personal humility, which were characteristic of St. Paul.

grace of God which was with me. ⁽¹¹⁾ Therefore whether *it were* I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. ⁽¹²⁾ Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? ⁽¹³⁾ But if there be no resurrection of the dead,

then is Christ not risen: ⁽¹⁴⁾ and if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain. ⁽¹⁵⁾ Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. ⁽¹⁶⁾ For if

⁽¹¹⁾ **Therefore whether . . .**—Better, *Whether, therefore, it were I or they.* Such (see verses 3, 4) was and is our teaching, such was your belief. It matters not from whom it came, whether from the greatest or least of the Apostles, the gospel was preached, and was accepted by you. These words thus recall the reader from the strong personal feeling shown in the preceding verse to the main argument.

⁽¹²⁾ **If Christ be preached that he rose from the dead.**—Better, *is being preached.* It has been proved as a matter of historical fact that a man has risen from the dead; it is therefore illogical to say that there is no resurrection of the dead.

⁽¹³⁾ **If Christ be not risen.**—Better, *but if Christ be not raised;* and so all through this passage.

Then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.—The Apostles had preached a risen Christ, their converts had believed in a risen Christ, but now the proposition is, There is no resurrection; therefore Christ is not risen; therefore the preaching and the faith which are based on

the delusion that He is risen are both vain and useless. The argument is still purely an appeal to historical evidence supporting an historical fact, and to the consequences involved in denying that fact (see verse 16).

⁽¹⁵⁾ **Yea, and we are found false witnesses.**—Not mistaken witnesses, but witnesses testifying to what they know to be false. This is another result involved in a denial of the doctrine of the resurrection, that the Apostles must be regarded as false witnesses—not deceived, but deceivers. The suppressed part of the argument here is the absurdity of the Apostles being such. There was no motive for them to speak untruth.

If so be that the dead rise not.—Better, *if the dead be not raised.*

⁽¹⁶⁾ **For if the dead rise not.**—Better, *if the dead be not raised.* The Apostle has in the previous verse completed the argument as to the historical fact of Christ's resurrection, which proves that the denial of the doctrine of the resurrection cannot be maintained unless it can be shown that the Apostles are wilfully bearing false testimony,

the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: ⁽¹⁷⁾ and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. ⁽¹⁸⁾ Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. ⁽¹⁹⁾ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

⁽²⁰⁾ But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ⁽²¹⁾ For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. ⁽²²⁾ For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

and that their preaching, and the faith of those who accepted it, is vain. He now turns to a different line of argument—a *reductio ad absurdum*. He maintains the doctrine of the resurrection by showing the incredible absurdities to which a belief in the contrary must lead. If you do not believe in a resurrection, you must believe—(1) That Christ is not raised, and that your faith, therefore, being false, has no result—that you are still slaves of sin. This you know by personal experience to be false. As well might a living man try to believe that he is a corpse. (2) That all who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished; that is, that the noblest and most unselfish perish like brutes. (3) That God gives men a good hope in Christ, and that it, not being fulfilled here, is never to be fulfilled. In other words, if there be no resurrection, the only alternative is atheism, for otherwise you have to believe that, though there is a God who is wise and just, yet that the purest and greatest life ever lived is no better in the end than the life of a dog; that those who have lived the most unselfish lives have perished like beasts; and that God aroused a hunger and thirst of the purest

kind in some souls, only that the hunger should never be satisfied, and the thirst never be quenched.

⁽²⁰⁾ But now . . .—From the hopeless and ghastly conclusion in which the hypothetical propositions of the previous verse would logically land us, the Apostle turns, with the consciousness of truth, to the hopeful faith to which a belief in the resurrection leads. It cannot be so. Now is Christ risen from the dead. And that is no isolated fact. As the firstfruits were typical of the whole harvest (Lev. xxiii. 10, 11), so is Christ. He rose, not to the exclusion but to the inclusion of all Humanity. If St. Paul wrote this Epistle about the time of Passover (see *Introduction*, and chaps. v. 6; xvi. 8), the fact that the Paschal Sabbath was immediately followed by the day of offering of firstfruits may have suggested this thought.

⁽²¹⁾ For since by man . . .—The image of the firstfruits is followed up by an explanation of the unity of Christ and Humanity. The firstfruit must be a sample of the same kind as that which it represents. That condition is fulfilled in the case of the firstfruits of the resurrection.

⁽²²⁾ As in Adam . . .—Better, *as in the Adam all die, so in the Christ*

(23) But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

(24) Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father;

shall all be made alive. The first Adam and the second Adam here stand as the heads of Humanity. All that is fleshly in our nature is inherited from the Adam; in every true son of God it is dying daily, and will ultimately die altogether. All that is spiritual in our nature we inherit from the Christ; it is immortal, is rising daily, will ultimately be raised with a spiritual and immortal body. We must remember that the relationship of Christ to Humanity is not to be dated only from the Incarnation. Christ stood in the same federal relation to all who went before as He does to all who have come since. (See the same thought in chap. x. 4, and in Christ's own words, "Before Abraham was, I am.") The results of Christ's death are co-extensive with the results of Adam's fall—they extend to all men; but the individual responsibility rests with each man as to which he will cherish—that which he derives from Christ or that which he derives from Adam—the "offence" of Adam or the "grace" of Christ. The best comment on this passage is, perhaps, the prayer in the Baptismal Office: "O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in this child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him." There seems to be this moral significance in these words of St. Paul, as well as the obvious argument that, as all men die physically, so all shall be raised from the dead; as we have

the evidence of death in the death of a man and of all men, so we have the evidence (and not the mere theoretical promise) of a resurrection in the resurrection of the Man Christ Jesus.

(25) **But every man in his own order.**—Or, literally, *in his own troop*. There is to be a sequence in the resurrection of the dead, and St. Paul explains this by the three groups:—(1) Christ Himself, the firstfruits; (2) the faithful in Christ at His coming; (3) all the rest of mankind at the end, when the final judgment takes place. The interval between these latter two, as to its duration, or where or how it will be spent, is not spoken of here. The only point the Apostle has to treat of is the order of the resurrection. (See 1 Thess. iv. 13, 17; Rev. xx.)

(24-28) **When he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.**—The Apostle carries on the thought of a triumph which the use of the word "troop" in the previous verse had commenced or suggested. There rises before the prophetic vision of St. Paul the final triumph of Christ over all evil, over all power, and the Son giving up to the Father (not His humanity, which is "for ever and ever"—Luke i. 32, 33) the kingdom of this world, which in His humanity He conquered for the Father as well as for Himself. He will, the moment He becomes conqueror, sit down with the Father on His throne. Christ laying the

when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. ⁽²⁵⁾ For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. ⁽²⁶⁾ (The last enemy *that shall be destroyed is death.*) ⁽²⁷⁾ For he hath

put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under *him, it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. ⁽²⁸⁾ And when all things shall be subdued unto him,

spoils of a conquered world at the foot of the throne of the Father, shows by that supreme act of self-sacrifice, that in His office as Redeemer He came, not to do His own will, but the will of the Father. In this sense the Son Himself, as Redeemer, is "put under Him"—God is all in all. We must clearly remember that the Apostle is here speaking of the Son as Redeemer, and is not penetrating into the deeper mysteries of the relation of the Persons in the Godhead. (See John xvii. 5; Heb. i. 8.)

⁽²⁴⁾ **All rule and all authority and power.**—Not only hostile rule and authority and power, but all intermediate rule of any sort, good and bad. The direct government by God of all creatures is to be at last attained. All the interventions of authority and power which the fall of man rendered necessary will be needless when the complete triumph of Christ comes in. Thus Humanity, having for ages shared the condition of fallen Adam, will be finally restored to the state of unfallen Adam. Man will see God, and be ruled by God face to face.

⁽²⁵⁾ **He must reign.**—It is a moral consequence. God must triumph, and so the Son must reign and conquer till that triumph be

complete. Some suggest that the force of these words is that He must reign, &c., because it has been prophesied (Ps. cx.); but the more obvious truth is that it was prophesied because it is morally necessary.

⁽²⁷⁾ **For he hath put all things under his feet.**—Verse 26 is a parenthesis, and the "for" with which this verse commences goes back to verse 25. The connection is, Christ must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. Christ must triumph, *for* according to the statement in Ps. viii. 6 (see also Ps. cx. 1), God hath put all things under man, and in a higher sense under the Son of Man. (For a similar application of Old Testament statement regarding man to Christ as the Son of Man, see Matt. xxi. 16; Heb. ii. 7.) But when God says that all things are put under Him, He evidently is excepted who did put all things under Him. This leads up logically to the complete triumph of God the Father, expressed in the following verse, which is an expansion of verse 24, on which see Note there.

⁽²⁸⁾ **That God may be all in all.**—In these words are expressed the complete redemption both of the race and of the individual. It is the great and sublime conclusion

then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

(29) Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

to which the moral enthusiasm and the earnest logic of the previous argument has necessarily brought us.

(29) **Else.**—We can well imagine the Apostle pausing, as it were, to take breath after the splendid outburst of mingled rhetoric and logic which we find in verses 23—28; or perhaps even postponing until some other day the further dictation of his Epistle, when he could calmly resume his purely logical argument in favour of the doctrine of the Resurrection. Then there will not appear such a startling or inexplicable abruptness in the words with which this new argument is commenced. “Else”—*i.e.*, if there be no resurrection—*what shall they who are baptized for the dead do? If the dead be not raised at all, why are they then baptized for the dead?* Such is the proper punctuation, and not as in the English version, which joins the clause, “if the dead rise not,” with the preceding instead of with the following portion of the verse. Also the word translated “rise,” is “are raised.” This is an *argumentum ad hominem*. The practice known as baptism for the dead was absurd if there be no resurrection. To practise it and to deny the doctrine of the resurrection was illogical. What shall they do? *i.e.*, What explanation shall they give of their conduct? asks the Apostle. There have been numerous and ingenious conjectures as to the meaning of this

passage. The only tenable interpretation is that there existed amongst some of the Christians at Corinth a practice of baptising a living person in the stead of some convert who had died before that sacrament had been administered to him. Such a practice existed amongst the Marcionites in the second century, and still earlier amongst a sect called the Cerinthians. The idea evidently was that whatever benefit flowed from baptism might be thus vicariously secured for the deceased Christian. St. Chrysostom gives the following description of it:—“After a catechumen (*i.e.*, one prepared for baptism, but not actually baptised) was dead, they hid a living man under the bed of the deceased; then coming to the bed of the dead man they spake to him, and asked whether he would receive baptism, and he making no answer, the other replied in his stead, and so they baptised the ‘living for the dead.’” Does St. Paul then, by what he here says, sanction the superstitious practice? Certainly not. He carefully separates himself and the Corinthians, to whom he immediately addresses himself, from those who adopted this custom. He no longer uses the first or second person; it is “they” throughout this passage. It is no proof to others; it is simply the *argumentum ad hominem*. Those who do that, and disbelieve a resurrection, refute themselves. This

(30) And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? (31) I protest by your¹ rejoicing

¹ Some read, *our*.

which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. (32) If after the manner of

custom possibly sprang up amongst the Jewish converts, who had been accustomed to something similar in their own faith. If a Jew died without having been purified from some ceremonial uncleanness, some living person had the necessary ablution performed on them, and the dead were so accounted clean.

(30) **And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?**—This is the same kind of argument now applied to the Apostles themselves. Their conduct also would be illogical if they did not believe in a resurrection. Notice the strong contrast between “them,” in the previous verse, and “we” in this verse.

(31) **I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus.**—Better, *I protest by your boast which I have in Christ Jesus*. His converts are his boasting (2 Cor. ix. 3), and by the fact that they are his in the Lord, he utters the solemn assertion, “I die daily.” Such a life as St. Paul’s, both as regards the spiritual battles in his own soul and the ceaseless conflict with enemies around him, was indeed a daily dying (2 Cor. xi. 23—28).

(32) **If after the manner of men . . .**—These words imply here, as elsewhere (chap. iii. 3), “merely from a human point of view.” What is the advantage or necessity of my incurring daily risks, if I am merely a human being, with a life limited by what we see, and no immortality and resurrection awaiting me?

I have fought with beasts

at Ephesus.—The question here arises, Are these words to be taken literally or figuratively? Does St. Paul refer to some actual contest in the arena with beasts, or to his conflict with the opponents at Ephesus, whom he thus designates beasts? It is scarcely possible to accept the former interpretation. There is no mention to be found of it in the Acts, and, moreover, his Roman citizenship would have legally protected him against such treatment. We must therefore conclude that the Ephesians themselves are spoken of as “beasts.” Both Hebrew and Greek literature would have made such a form of expression familiar to the Apostle and to his readers. In the Psalms (see Ps. xxii. 12, 13, 20, 21) the opponents of God are similarly spoken of. The Cretans are called “evil beasts” by the poet Epimenides, whom St. Paul quotes in Tit. i. 12. Heraclitus calls the Ephesians “beasts”—the same word as St. Paul uses here; and St. Ignatius (*Epis. ad Rom.*) speaks of “fighting with beasts by land and sea,” and having been bound to “ten leopards,” that is, a band of soldiers.

Although the Greek verb implies that reference is made, not to general or prolonged opposition, but to some one outburst of rage on the part of his opponents, we must not take it as indicating the scene described in Acts xix. 23—34, which had probably not taken place when this was written; but no doubt the “many adversaries” (chap. xvi. 9)

men¹ I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow

¹ Or, to speak after the manner of men.

we die. ⁽³³⁾ Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. ⁽³⁴⁾ Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have

at Ephesus had already availed themselves of some opportunity of venting their rage on the Apostle after the manner of wild beasts. (See *Introduction*.)

What advantageth it me?—This sentence is completed with these words, and should be followed by a note of interrogation, thus—“What advantageth it me?” (See next Note.)

If the dead rise not?—Better, *if the dead be not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*. If the dead be not raised, our conduct is illogical. Consistency then belongs to those who disregard God’s call to repentance, and of whom we read in Isa. xxii. 13, that they say, “Let us eat and drink.” The reference is directly to this passage in the prophet describing the conduct of abandoned Jews during the siege of Jerusalem; but the words indicate with equal accuracy that school of Epicurean philosophy of which, no doubt, there were many representatives at Corinth. Similar expressions are to be found in many classical writers; but the most remarkable instance of the use of these words is where they occur in an inscription on a statue at Anchiale, a town in Cilicia, which was St. Paul’s native province—“Sardanapalus, the son of Anacyndraxes, built Anchiale and Tarsus in one day. Stranger, eat, drink, and play, for all the rest is not worth this.” The figure is represented as making a

contemptuous motion with its fingers. Saul of Tarsus had probably often seen that statue and inscription.

⁽³³⁾ **Be not deceived.**—The previous words are spoken with sarcasm. *That* is what you must come to if this life be all. The solemn thought then occurs to the Apostle that perhaps these words do only too truly describe the actual state of some of the Corinthians. They had become tainted by the bad moral atmosphere in which they lived and which was impregnated with the teaching of that false philosophy, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” “Be not deceived,” he adds, solemnly; it is a fact, “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” This is a proverb, slightly modified in one word from a line in the *Thais* of Menander. It is impossible to say whether the Apostle was acquainted with the original line in the poem, or not; for in any case he would probably have quoted it in the form in which it was current amongst ordinary people. The force of the proverb is, that even evil words are dangerous. The constant repetition of an immoral maxim may lead to immoral life. Words that seem harmless, because they float lightly like thistle-down, may bear in them a seed of evil which may take root and bring forth evil fruit.

⁽³⁴⁾ **Awake to righteousness, and sin not.**—Literally, *Awake*

not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame.

⁽³⁵⁾ But some *man* will say, How are the dead

raised up? and with what body do they come?

⁽³⁶⁾ *Thou* fool, that which thou sowest is not quick-

to soberness in a righteous manner. With this earnest call to arouse from the sleep of indulgence and of death, the Apostle completes this section of the chapter, and the direct proofs of the doctrine of the resurrection. The exhortation is needed, for there are some who call themselves Christians and still have "an ignorance" regarding God. "To their shame" the Apostle speaks this, not only the last words, but the whole preceding argument. It was a shame that to Christians the Apostle should have to vindicate the very fundamental truth of the Faith.

⁽³⁵⁾ But some man will say, How are the dead raised up?—The proof of the truth of the doctrine of the resurrection is concluded in the last verse. The truth of it is, in the early part of this chapter, maintained—(1) by the historical fact of Christ's resurrection; (2) by a *reductio ad absurdum*, showing the consequences logically involved in a denial of it; (3) by an *argumentum ad hominem*. The former two arguments are still those on which we must rest our belief in the doctrine. The latter is, like every argument of that nature, only of force to those to whom it was actually addressed. The Apostle in this verse turns aside to another line of thought. He assumes that his previous arguments are conclusive; there still remain, however, difficulties which will suggest themselves. The difficulty is expressed in two questions,

the second being an enlargement of the first—a more definite indication of where the suggested difficulty lies. "How are the dead raised up?"—that is, not by what power? but in what manner? as is further explained by the next question, "In what body do they come?"

⁽³⁶⁾ *Thou* fool.—Better, *Fool*, or more literally, *Senseless one*. The word in the Greek has not the sense of opprobrium conveyed in the word translated "fool" in Matt. v. 22; xxiii. 17, 19. You who with your own hand sow seed, ask such a question as that! The Apostle now proceeds to show, by the analogies in Nature, how a resurrection of a body is possible, how substantial identity may be preserved under variation of form. The Apostle does not here *prove* anything. Analogy cannot ever be regarded as logically conclusive as an argument. The object of analogy is to show how a difficulty is not insuperable. The doctrine of the resurrection has been logically established. A difficulty is suggested as to how it is possible. Analogy shows that the same difficulty exists in theory in other directions where we actually see it surmounted in fact. It is most important to bear this in mind, as some writers, forgetful of the difference between a logical argument and an illustration from analogy, have regarded some of the Apostle's "arguments" in these verses as inconclusive. The fact of a buried

ened, except it die: ⁽³⁷⁾ and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*: ⁽³⁸⁾ but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to

every seed his own body. ⁽³⁹⁾ All flesh *is* not the same flesh: but *there is* one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, *and* another of birds. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terres-

seed rising into flower does not and cannot prove that man will rise; but it does show that the objection suggested in the question, "How are the dead raised up?" is not a practical difficulty.

We have in these verses three illustrations of the preservation of identity under change of form:—(1) seeds growing into flowers and fruit; (2) flesh in the variety of men, beasts, fishes, and birds; (3) heavenly and earthly bodies in infinite variety of form and of glory.

^(37, 38) **God giveth it a body.**—Here it is implied that, though the seed grows up, as we say, "in the ordinary course of Nature," it is God who not only has originally established but continually sustains that order. Each seed rises with its own "body;" a corn seed grows up into corn, an acorn into an oak. All through this passage the word "body" is used in a general sense for "organism," so as to keep strictly and vividly before the reader the ultimate truth to illustrate which these analogies are introduced. The points of analogy between the sowing and growth of seed and the life and resurrection of man are *not*, as some writers put it—(1) the seed is sown, and man is buried; (2) the seed rots, and man's body decays; (3) the seed

grows up, and man is raised. Such a series of analogies are misleading, for there is no necessity for the body of man to *decay*, but only a necessity for it to die (verses 51, 52). The points of analogy are these:—(1) the seed is sown in the earth, and man is born into the world; (2) the seed dies and decays—man dies; (3) the seed grows through its very decay—man rises through death.

⁽³⁹⁾ **All flesh is not the same flesh.**—Better, *There is no flesh the same flesh.* All organisms have the same basis; there is a "structural unit" in all animal life; but God gives this a vast variety of form in man, in beast, in fish. The same divine prescience which gives to all flesh here the form suited to its condition and surroundings can give hereafter another form to it suitable to the new conditions and surroundings in which it will then be placed. If we had only seen flesh in the form of an animal, and were told that "flesh" could live in the sea, we might have equally argued, "How, with what body?" but seeing as we do that there is a variety of bodies, we feel no such difficulty.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ **There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial.**—It is held by many that this is a distinct illustration from

trial : but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. ⁽⁴¹⁾ *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars : for one star differeth from another star in glory.*

⁽⁴²⁾ So also is the resur-

rection of the dead. It is sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption : ⁽⁴³⁾ it is sown in dishonour ; it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness ; it is raised in power : ⁽⁴⁴⁾ it is sown a natural body ; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body,

that which occurs in the next verse, and that the "celestial bodies" here spoken of are the bodies of angels, whose appearances on earth are accompanied (see Matt. xxviii. 3 ; Acts xii. 7) by a blaze of glory or light. It is better, perhaps, to regard it as a general statement of what is expanded in verse 41. The force of the three analogies introduced in this whole argument is that identity of matter is preserved amid variety of form, and on this point the difference between angelic bodies and human bodies would have no bearing. Between the earthly things and the heavenly things, such as the sun, moon, and stars, there is an identity of substance, but an infinite variety of form and of glory.

⁽⁴¹⁾ **For one star . . .**—Better, *for star differeth from star in glory.* It is not only that the heavenly bodies differ from earthly, but they differ from each other—sun from moon, moon from stars. And there is a further variety still—even amid the stars themselves there is variety. The word "glory" is naturally used as intimating the aspect in which the difference of the heavenly bodies strikes us, looking at them from earth. The God who is thus not limited to a

monotonous form for the substance of which Physical Nature consists, need not be in any difficulty as to some other variety of form for Human Nature beyond that which we see it confined to during its earthly life.

⁽⁴²⁾ **So also is the resurrection of the dead.**—Here follows the application of these analogies to the subject in hand. As there is in the vegetable growth, in the varieties of animal life, and in the diversities of form assumed by inorganic matter, an identity preserved amid ever-varying form or variety of "body," so a change in the form or glory of our organism which we call our "body" is compatible with the preservation of personal identity. The "it," the personality, remains the same—now in corruption, then in incorruption ; now in dishonour, then in glory ; now in weakness, then in power.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ **It is sown a natural body.**—Here is a further and different application of the three analogies. It is not only that there is a variety of body in these illustrations, but there is also an adaptability. The "body" which a plant has when it is in the form of seed is suited to the condition

and there is a spiritual body. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living

soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. ⁽⁴⁶⁾ Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but

in which seed is placed; the "body" which it has when grown into a plant is suited to the changed conditions in which a plant exists; the "flesh" in the "body" form of a bird is suited to its sphere of life; the "flesh" in the "body" form of a fish is suited to its condition; and so on. It is not an accidental but a purposely adapted variety. So it will be in the variety of "bodies" for Humanity. A man's organism is sown (*i.e.*, is born into this world) a natural body; it is raised (through and by death) a spiritual body. The body which we have here on earth is suited with a marvellous detail of adaptability to the life, physical and intellectual, amid which we are placed, and of which we form a part. It is, however, a hindrance to the spiritual man in each of us. (See 2 Cor. v.) There will be a time for each when the body will become as perfectly adapted to the spiritual man in each as the human body here is to the natural man—no longer its hindrance, but its help. The "willing spirit" will then never be hampered and thwarted by a "weak flesh;" the body, having become spiritual itself, will be spiritually strong.

There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.—This emphatic assertion that there are two bodies for man—as really as seed and a blossom are two bodies yet the same plant—is introductory to the further thought introduced in the next verse.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ And so it is written.—Better, *And so it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam became a quickening spirit.* The quotation which follows here is from Gen. ii. 7, and it is the latter part of that verse which is quoted. The Rabbinical explanation of that passage was—that God breathed into man the breath of life originally, but that man became (not "was made") only a living soul, *i.e.*, one in whom the mere human faculties held sway, and not the spirit. He became this lower thing by his own act of disobedience. Here, then, St. Paul contrasts the two Adams—the first man and Christ—from whom we derive our natural and our spiritual natures, and our natural and spiritual bodies. The first Adam became, by his disobedience, a mere living soul, and from him we inherit that nature; the second Adam, by his obedience, became a life-giving spirit, and from Him we inherit the spiritual nature in us. The same verb which is expressed in the first clause must be understood in the second clause. The same thought is expressed in Rom. v. 19.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual.—Here a further thought is introduced. There is not only a variety of bodies—and that variety regulated by adaptability to their state of existence—but there is an ordered sequence in that variety. As the Adam was first from whom we

that which is natural ; and afterward that which is spiritual. ⁽⁴⁷⁾ The first man *is* of the earth, earthy : the second man *is* the Lord from heaven. ⁽⁴⁸⁾ As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy : and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they

also that are heavenly. ⁽⁴⁹⁾ And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth cor-

derive the natural body and soul, and the Adam was last from whom comes our spiritual nature, so there will be the like order in regard to our bodies. The natural body first in this life—the spiritual body afterwards in the next life.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ The second man *is* the Lord from heaven.—Better, *the second man is from heaven.* The words “the Lord,” which occur in the English version, are not in the best Greek MSS. The word which is twice rendered “of” in this verse has the force of “from,” “originating from,” in the Greek. The first representative man was from the earth, the second representative man was from heaven ; and as was the first earthly Adam, so are we in our merely physical condition ; and as is the second heavenly Adam, so shall we be in our heavenly state.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ We shall also bear the image of the heavenly.—Better, *let us bear also the image of the heavenly.* Such is the reading of the best MSS. The words transport the thoughts of the reader to the future glory, and, at the same moment, show a light on present duty. The resurrection life is to be begun in us even now. “If by any means we can attain to the resurrection of the dead” (2 Cor. iii. 18 ; Phil. iii. 21).

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Now this I say.—This is the phrase with which the Apostle is wont to introduce some statement of profound significance. (See chaps. i. 12 ; vii. 29.) The statement so introduced here is that flesh and blood, being corruption, cannot enter into the heavenly state, which is incorruption. This is still part of the answer to the question, “With what bodies do they come ?” but the reply is no longer based upon any analogy. It comes now as a revelation of what he had been taught by the Spirit of God. Flesh and blood are indeed corruption. Blood is everywhere the type of this lower animal life. Blood is the life of the flesh ; and so, though Jews might eat the flesh, they might not eat the blood, which is the life thereof (Gen. ix. 4). All offerings which typified the offering up and sacrifice of “self”—the lower sinful self—were sacrifices by shedding of blood, without which was no remission (Heb. ix. 22). When the supreme Sacrifice was made on Calvary the blood was shed—once for all. So when Christ showed His resurrection body to His disciples He did not say, “A spirit hath not flesh and blood, as ye see Me have ;” but “A spirit hath not ‘flesh and bones,’ as ye see Me have.” The

ruption inherit incorruption. ⁽⁵¹⁾ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁽⁵²⁾ in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the

trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁽⁵³⁾ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

blood of Christ is never spoken of as existing after His crucifixion. That was the supreme sacrifice of Self to God. The blood—the type of the human self—was poured out for ever. It is to be noticed also that the phrase “of His flesh and of His bones” (not His “blood,” which the Eucharistic Feast would have suggested) was evidently in ordinary use, as it was interpolated in Eph. v. 30.

The blood, as the type of our lower nature, is familiar in all popular phraseologies, as when we say, for example, that a “man’s blood is up,” meaning that his physical nature is asserting itself. One characteristic of the resurrection body, therefore, is that it shall be bloodless.

⁽⁵¹⁾ **Behold, I shew you a mystery.**—It is better to take these words as referring to what follows rather than (as some have done) to the preceding statement. A mystery means something which up to this time has been kept concealed, but is now made manifest (Rom. xi. 25; Eph. iii. 3–5).

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.—There are here a considerable variety of readings in the Greek, but the text from which our English version is taken is probably correct. The Apostle believed that the end of the world might come in the

lifetime of some then living. We shall not all, he says, necessarily sleep, but we shall all be changed. The change from the earthly to the spiritual body is absolutely necessary. To some it will come through the ordinary process of death; to those who are alive at Christ’s advent it will come suddenly, and in a moment. The dead shall be raised, but we (the living) shall be changed.

⁽⁵²⁾ **The last trump.**—The trumpet was used to summon an assembly (Ex. xx. 18; Ps. lxxxii. 3; Isa. xviii. 3; xxvii. 13), or to sound a warning. The last trumpet is the one which concludes a series which have already been sounding at intervals in notes of warning to the nations (Ps. xlvi. 5; Isa. xxvii. 13; Jer. li. 27). This verse states with reiterated emphasis that this change shall not be a protracted process, but a sudden and momentary alteration in the condition of our bodies.

⁽⁵³⁾ **For this corruptible must . . .**—Here again is repeated the truth of verse 50, which shows the absolute necessity for a change in the nature of the resurrection body. There is, however, an additional thought introduced here. Not only must the resurrection body be suited to the condition but also to the duration of the new life. As a spiritual body, it will be

(54) So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed

^a Hos. 13.
14.

¹ Or, *hell*.

up in victory. (55) O death,^a where *is* thy sting? O grave,¹ where *is* thy victory? (56) The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. (57) But thanks *be* to God,

adapted to the needs of a spiritual state and as an immortal and incorruptible body, it will be adapted to a life which is everlasting.

(54) **So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption.**—The Apostle now transports himself in thought to the time when there shall be the actual accomplishment of that for which there then is this absolute and moral necessity. These words bring before us with vivid power the intensity of the Apostle's own belief in what he is teaching.

Death is swallowed up in victory.—These words, originally referring to the Jewish people (Isa. xxv. 8), are naturally applied here to the human race, of which they were the chosen type.

(55) **O death, where is thy sting?**—In the prophet Hosea, where these words originally occur, the passage reads thus—"Where is thy victory, O death? Where is thy sting, O hell?"—the word "hell" referring, not to the place of torment, but to the Hades of departed spirits. This difference between St. Paul's words and those of the prophet has given rise to a variety of readings in the Greek text here. The weight of evidence is in favour of the reading, "Where is thy sting, O death? Where is thy victory, O death?" the word "Hades," or "grave," not being

introduced at all. The passage is not a quotation, but the adaptation of the form of a familiar Old Testament phrase.

(56) **The sting of death is sin.**—Death is pictured as a monster, and it is armed with a sting. Its sting is sin. If there were no sin, death would not be capable of inflicting pain, and the strength of sin springs from the fact that it is the violation of God's law. (See this thought fully brought out, Rom. v. 12, and vii. 7.)

(57) **But thanks be to God.**—The future is so certain that the Apostle speaks of it as a subject for present thanksgiving; the victory is one which God gives now through Jesus Christ. His resurrection is the pledge of our resurrection. His death is the power by which we are enabled to conquer that lower self, from whose crucifixion and death we shall rise to the higher incorruptible life of the resurrection day. With this earnest and enthusiastic expression of praise to God the argument concludes. Through arguments historical, moral, philosophical; through explanations from the analogy of Nature, and from the theology of Old and New Testament history, the Apostle has led his readers, vindicating the truth and illustrating the manner of the Resurrection of the Dead. He projects his mind

which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye

know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

A.D. 59.

CHAPTER XVI.—

⁽¹⁾ Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I

Chap. xvi. Conclusion.

into the future, and, standing in thought with ransomed and raised Humanity after death has been vanquished and the grave been spoiled, he joins in the shout of triumphant praise which shall then ascend to Christ and God.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ **Therefore.**—Because all this is so—because there is a life hereafter—let this life here be worthy of it. You might grow weak and faint-hearted if you could think that all your work for God and truth here might be wasted; but it is not so. It cannot be “in vain” if it be “in the Lord.” It is very striking and very expressive of the real spirit of the gospel that a chapter which leads us step by step through the calm process of logic, and through glowing passages of resistless eloquence to the sublimest thoughts of immortality, should at last thus close with words of plain and practical duty. Christianity never separates, in precept or in promise, “the life that now is” and “that which is to come.”

XVI.

⁽¹⁾ **Now concerning the collection for the saints.**—This chapter deals briefly with the following subjects:—

Verses 1—4. The collection for the poor at Jerusalem.

Verses 5—9. The Apostle’s prospective arrangement, as to his journey.

Verses 10—18. Commendation of various individuals.

Verses 19, 20. The salutation of the Church.

Verses 21—24. The salutation of Paul himself.

From the fact of a necessity existing for a collection for the poor Christians at Jerusalem, it is clear that the community of goods (see Acts ii. 44) which had at the beginning been established in that Church had not proved successful. Christianity was largely recruited from the lower classes, especially in Jerusalem (Jas. ii. 5), and a common fund would not long have flourished with so few contributors and such a multitude of sharers. Moreover, the many who were shut up in prison had perhaps by this time been released in abject poverty, and would naturally be the subject of anxious solicitation to one who was identical with “persecuting Saul,” who “had given his voice against them,” and against others now dead. (See Acts xxvi. 10.) It is to be noticed that the Apostle does not speak of them as “the poor,” but as “saints.” That was the true ground of their claim upon their brethren.

As I have given order to

have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

(2) Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him,

1 Gr. *ofst.*

that there be no gatherings when I come. (3) And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality¹ unto Jerusalem. (4) And if it

the churches of Galatia.—Better, *As I gave order to the churches of Galatia.* The order was definitely given by the Apostle in person when visiting these churches (Acts xviii. 23). It does not occur in his Epistle to that Church. On this passage Bengel's Note is worth quoting—"He proposes the Galatians as an example to the Corinthians, the Corinthians to the Macedonians, and the Corinthians and Macedonians to the Romans (2 Cor. ix. 2; Rom. xv. 26). Great is the power of examples."

(2) Upon the first day of the week.—The Greek phrase (as given in the best MSS.) is literally, *on one of the Sabbaths*—that being, after a Hebrew idiom, equivalent to "the day next after the Sabbath." Already the day of the week on which Christ had risen had become noted as a suitable day for distinctively Christian work and Christian worship. It does not yet seem to have been designated by the phrase by which it became subsequently universally known in Christendom—"the Lord's Day;" that name occurs first in Rev. i. 10. This would be a convenient as well as a suitable day for each one to set aside, as he had proposed, something, storing it up until the Apostle's arrival; for this was already the usual day for Christians assembling themselves to-

gether (Acts xx. 7). I cannot think with Stanley and others that the Apostle means that each was to lay by "in his own house," and not in some general treasury. The object of this direction is expressly stated to be that the money should all be ready in bulk-sum when the Apostle came, so that his time and that of the Christian community during his visit might not be occupied with this, but with more profitable matters, which result would not have been accomplished if the offering had then to be gathered from each Christian home.

As God hath prospered him.—Better, *whatsoever he may be prospered in.* These words do not imply that only in cases of exceptional prosperity was a man to contribute, but every man was to give out of whatever fruits he had from his labour.

(3) Whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters.—Better, *whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send by letters to bring your gifts to Jerusalem.* The Apostle had not made up his mind finally whether he would take the gift himself or send it by messengers, whom he would accredit with letters, to the Church at Jerusalem. He would probably be influenced by the amount collected, and by the urgency, or otherwise, of the

be meet that I go also, they shall go with me. ⁽⁵⁾ Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia : for I do pass through Macedonia. ⁽⁶⁾ And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye

may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. ⁽⁷⁾ For I will not see you now by the way ; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. ⁽⁸⁾ But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. ⁽⁹⁾ For a great door and

needs of those at Jerusalem at the time. The Apostle was, in one sense, the humblest of men ; but he valued highly the dignity of his apostolic office, and if but a very small sum were ready for the Church at Jerusalem, he would have felt it to be beneath the dignity of his office, though not of himself, to be the bearer of such an offering. The course finally adopted was that the Apostle went himself, and the selected brethren with him (Acts xxi. 15).

⁽⁵⁾ For I do pass through Macedonia. — A misrepresentation of these words gives rise to the incorrect statement that this Epistle was written at Philippi, which is to be found in the subscription at the end of this chapter in our English Bible. The Apostle does not here refer to where he is at the moment of writing, but to his intention regarding his journey. He had intended to go first to Corinth (see 2 Cor. i. 15, 16), but he has altered that plan, and says that his intention now is to pass through Macedonia first, and then visit Corinth. Then he says, "For I do pass through Macedonia." To this intention the Apostle adheres. (See *Introduction*.)

⁽⁶⁾ And it may be that I will abide . . . — His former plan

had involved but a brief visit to the Church at Corinth, but the arrangement which he now contemplated would permit of a longer stay, and so he adds, with affectionate emphasis, "that *you* may send me on my journey." Whither he would go from Corinth he had not yet determined ; and, indeed, it was subsequently determined for him by a conspiracy against him, which was fortunately discovered in time (Acts xx. 3). He remained three months at Corinth, during winter, and, as that brought him to a time of year when a voyage would be safe, he resolved to sail into Syria. The conspiracy of the Jews caused this plan to be abandoned, and a different course, through Troas, &c., adopted. (See Acts xx. 6, 13, 17.) The phrase "that ye may send me on" implies not merely that Corinth should be the starting-point of his journey to Jerusalem, but that he should set out on that journey with the good wishes and blessing of his Corinthian friends (as in Acts xx. 38 ; xxi. 5).

⁽⁷⁾ For I will not see you now by the way. — Here again is a reference to his changed intention. (See verse 5.)

⁽⁸⁾ But I will tarry at Ephesus. — In this and the following verse the Apostle returns to his

effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of

the Lord, as I also *do*.
⁽¹¹⁾ Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

immediate plans at Ephesus. It was probably now about Easter-time (see verse 7), and the hostility of enemies increases. (See Acts xix. 9—23.) That must be subdued. A door has been opened wide for the effectual spread of the gospel (Acts xix. 20). Of that the Apostle must avail himself. Therefore he will remain where he is until Pentecost. Duty to be done, and danger to be faced in the doing of it, were to such a man as St. Paul sufficient indications as to where he ought to be found.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **Now if Timotheus come** . . .—Timothy and Erastus had been sent (see chap. iv. 17) by St. Paul to remind the Corinthians of his former teaching, and to rebuke and check those evils of which rumours had reached the ears of the Apostle. As, however, they would travel through Macedonia, delaying *en route* at the various churches to prepare them for the visit which St. Paul, according to his then intention, purposed paying them after he had been to Corinth, they possibly might not reach Corinth until after this Epistle, which would be carried thither by a more direct route. The Apostle was evidently anxious to know how Timothy would be received by the Corinthians. He was young in years. He was young also in the faith. He had probably a

constitutionally weak and timid nature (see 1 Tim. iv. 15, v. 23; 2 Tim. i. 4), and he was of course officially very subordinate to St. Paul. In a Church, therefore, some of whose members had gone so far as to question, if not actually to repudiate the authority even of the Apostle himself, and to depreciate him as compared with the elder Apostles, there was considerable danger for one like Timothy. By reminding the Corinthians of the work in which Timothy is engaged, and of its identity with his own work, the Apostle anticipates and protests against any insult being offered to Timothy, because of what a great English statesman once called in reference to himself, "the atrocious crime of being a young man."

⁽¹¹⁾ **For I look for him with the brethren.**—Timothy and Erastus (Acts xix. 22) had been sent through Macedonia to Corinth some time before this Epistle was written, but when they had been despatched the full knowledge of the state of affairs at Corinth had not reached St. Paul. Now that he knows how very bad is the condition of the Corinthian Church, and what need it has of vigorous treatment, he sends not only his Epistle, but with it Titus and two other brethren. (See 2 Cor. viii. 18, 22, 23.) In energy and firmness of

(12) As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren : but his will was not at all

to come at this time ; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

(13) Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like

character Titus was a striking contrast to Timothy, while he equally shared the spirit and confidence of St. Paul. (See *Introduction*, and 2 Cor. vii. and viii.) He therefore was not only a bearer of this Epistle, but one fully competent and willing to deal energetically with the recalcitrant spirit of some sections of the Corinthian Church. The Apostle here expresses the hope that Timothy may join Titus and his party when they take their departure from Corinth.

(12) **As touching our brother Apollos.**—St. Paul, free from the smallest spark of personal jealousy, had wished that Apollos, whose named had been used as the designation of a faction in opposition to the Apostle himself, should go with this letter to Corinth. St. Paul had planted, Apollos had watered that Church, and in the absence of the planter, Apollos would have been the most likely and proper person to exercise authority there. The unselfish consideration of St. Paul is equalled by the thoughtful reluctance of Apollos, who fears that his presence might encourage the one faction, and perhaps embitter the other, and he declines, not considering it a “convenient” time to do so. In the thought of these teachers “convenient” meant the good of Christ’s Church, and not the ease or comfort of any individual man.

(13, 14) **Watch ye, stand fast.**—These words of stirring exhortation

come in here somewhat abruptly. It is possible that they conclude the Epistle so far—the Apostle intending to add, immediately before sending it, the verses which follow, and which contain messages from, or commendations of their friends who were with him. Living in a profound consciousness of the uncertainty of life, St. Paul might wish not to have such references to friends with him added until the last moment along with his own autograph (see verse 21). The Apostle’s mind is full of the hope of beneficial results following from this letter and from the exertions of Titus ; yet, after all, everything depends upon the Corinthians themselves. Chrysostom’s Note on these words brings out their meaning well. “Now in saying these things, he seems indeed to advise ; but he is reprimanding them as indolent. Wherefore he saith, *Watch*, as though they slept ; *stand*, as though they were rocking to and fro ; *quit you like men*, as though they were playing the coward ; *let all your things be done with charity*, as though they were in dissensions. And the first caution refers to the deceivers, viz, *Watch, stand* ; the next to those who plot against us, *quit you like men* ; the third to those who make parties and endeavour to distract, *let all your things be done with charity*, which thing is the bond of perfection, and the root and the fountain of all blessings.”

men, be strong. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Let all your things be done with charity.

⁽¹⁵⁾ I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) ⁽¹⁶⁾ that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth. ⁽¹⁷⁾ I am glad

of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. ⁽¹⁸⁾ For they have refreshed my spirit and your's: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

⁽¹⁹⁾ The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their

⁽¹⁵⁾ **The house of Stephanas.**—The Apostle here reminds the Corinthians that the devotion of teachers, and all who serve in the gospel ministry, ought to be rewarded with a return of sympathy and devotion on the part of those whom they serve. There is in the original a characteristic play upon words here which can scarcely be rendered adequately in the English: "Ye know the house of Stephanas, that they have *ordercd themselves* to the ministry of the saints, now I exhort you, *order yourselves* to be subject to them." Stephanas (chap. i. 16), Fortunatus, and Achaicus had come from Corinth to Ephesus, probably with the letter from the Corinthians (chap. vii. 1), and their presence had cheered the Apostle. They, "faithful amid the faithless," had made up for the want of zeal and love on the part of so many of the Corinthians. The Corinthians might think that these men had told St. Paul much of the evil state of Corinth, and he, therefore, carefully commends them to their consider-

ation as having refreshed, not only his spirit, but "theirs also." They had come on behalf of the whole Church there, not enemies to bear tales, but well-wishing friends to obtain apostolic help and counsel for all. The Apostle did not send his reply back by the same messengers, but by Titus instead, as probably their return to Corinth would have stirred up a good deal of controversy and ill feeling as to what account they had given him verbally of the various parties and their conduct in Corinth.

⁽¹⁹⁾ **The churches of Asia salute you.**—This and the following verse are occupied with the salutations from the churches throughout Asia; from the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla; and finally, from "all the brethren." Aquila and Priscilla had been the Apostle's friends at Corinth (Acts xviii. 1—3), and he now was with them at Ephesus. (See Rom. xvi. 3—5; 2 Tim. iv. 19.) Probably by "the church in their house" is meant a group

house. ⁽²⁰⁾ All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.

⁽²¹⁾ The salutation of *me* Paul with mine own hand.

⁽²²⁾ If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha.

⁽²³⁾ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

⁽²⁴⁾ My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

The first *epistle* to the Corinthians was written from Philippi by Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and Timotheus.

of foreigners then resident in Ephesus, and accustomed to meet there for worship, as distinct from those who had been converted in Ephesus.

⁽²⁰⁾ **An holy kiss.**—The kiss was the ordinary form of affectionate greeting in the East. The Church adopted it; and when thus interchanged between those whose bond of friendship was not earthly, but spiritual, it was designated “the holy kiss.” (See Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Thess. v. 26.) The practice was given up in the Latin Church in the thirteenth century, but is still used in the Greek Church on certain great occasions, such as Easter Day.

⁽²¹⁾ **The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.**—It was the Apostle’s habit to dictate his Epistles, but to add a few words at the end in his own handwriting. (See 2 Thess. iii. 17.) The concluding verses here are accordingly St. Paul’s autograph. The earlier portions had been written by Sosthenes. (See chap. i. 1.)

⁽²²⁾ **If any man love not the Lord Jesus.**—From all the argument and controversy which form the main portion of the Epistle, the Apostle with his own hand brings back the thoughts of the Corinthians to the true test of their Christianity.

Do they love the Lord Jesus? The word here used for love signifies not merely affectionate regard, but personal devotion.

Let him be Anathema Maran-atha.—Better, *Let him be Anathema. Maranatha.* There is no connection between these two words. *Anathema* signifies “accursed.” The absence of love to Christ is condemnation. The word *Maranatha* is a Syriac expression—the “Lord is at hand,” or “the Lord is come;” probably the former. The uncertainty of the moment when the Lord may come is the most solemn thought with which to remind them of the importance of being one with Christ. Stanley gives the following interesting Note:—“The name Maronite is sometimes explained by a tradition that the Jews in their expectation of the Messiah were constantly saying, *Maran* (Lord). To which the Christians answered, *Maranatha* (The Lord is come, why do you expect Him? Hence the name ‘Maronite’ is applied to the Jews, especially Spanish Jews and Moors who confessed *Maran*, but not *Maranatha*.”

⁽²⁴⁾ **My love be with you all.**—Like a river which, after rushing, foaming over many a rock and through many a gorge, at last

I. CORINTHIANS, XVI.

emerges into a broad calm amid sunlit meadows, so this Epistle, after chapters of trenchant logic and fervid rebuke, closes in peaceful words of tenderness and love

[In reference to the erroneous subscription which follows this Epistle in our English version, see Notes on verses 5, 8, and 10.

For the date of this Epistle, see *Introduction.*]

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THE

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY.

THE
SECOND EPISTLE TO THE
Corinthians.

WITH COMMENTARY BY

E. H. PLUMPTRE, D.D.,
Dean of Wells.

EDITED BY CHARLES JOHN ELLICOTT, D.D.,
Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.



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INTRODUCTION

TO

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

It is not without some reluctance that I have undertaken to treat of an Epistle which stands in such close connection with that which precedes it that it can scarcely be dealt with by a different hand without some risk of want of unity of treatment.

I have, however, kept on the same main lines of thought and method of interpretation which have been followed in the Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and have been glad to find myself on all important points of one mind with the commentator.

Of the genuineness of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians there has never been a moment's doubt, even among critics who allow themselves the widest range in their attacks on the canon of New Testament writings. External evidence is in itself adequate. The Epistle is quoted by Irenæus (*Hær.* iii. 7, § 1), by Athenagoras (*De resurr. mort.*), by Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* iii. 94, iv. 101), and by Tertullian (*De Pudicitia*, c. 13). Testimony of this kind is, however, hardly needed. The Epistle speaks for itself. In its intense personality, its peculiarities of style, its manifold coinci-

dences with the Acts and with other Epistles (especially with 1 Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians), its vehement emotions, it may fairly be said to present phenomena beyond the attainment of any later writer wishing to claim for what he wrote the authority of a great name. Pseudonymous authorship is, in this case, simply out of the question.

In order to understand the Epistle we must throw ourselves, as by a mental effort, into the mind and heart of the writer at the moment when he wrote or, more probably, dictated it. Much that is necessary for that purpose has been already said in the Notes to the First Epistle, and it is not necessary to repeat it. Of the sins and disorders of the Corinthians as reported to him by successive informants—the household of Chloe (1 Cor. i. 11), and by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Cor. xvi. 17); of his treatment of the topics then brought before him; of the probable effect of what he wrote upon the several parties in the Corinthian Church, we need not now speak. It will be sufficient to note that he had sent Timotheus before he wrote the First Epistle; that he had then sent the

II. CORINTHIANS.

First Epistle by Stephanas, his companion; that when they were gone (or possibly with them*) he despatched Titus to complete the work, perhaps as trusting more to his energy than that of the other messengers. Timotheus had returned to him. It is not certain that he reached Corinth. If he did, he came and left before the Epistle had arrived, and was unable to report what had been its result. His timid and shrinking character probably unfitted him for coping with the many difficulties which presented themselves. (See Note on 1 Cor. iv. 17.) His coming, therefore, however welcome it might be, brought no relief to the Apostle's anxiety. He started from Ephesus, whether before or after the arrival of Timotheus we do not know, and, in pursuance of his plan, went to Troas. But there, too, great as the opportunities for mission-work were (chap. ii. 12), he had no strength or heart to use them. A restless, feverish anxiety devoured him night and day, and he sailed for Macedonia, probably for Philippi. And there, at last, after a time of expectation and anxiety, Titus came to him (chap. vii. 6). His report was evidently more full and satisfactory than that which had been brought by Timotheus. He was able to report, what the latter had not reported—the effect of the First Epistle; and this was, in part, at least, full of comfort. The majority at a meeting of the Church had acted as he had told them to act, in the punishment of the incestuous offender (chap. ii. 6), they had shown generally a desire to clear themselves from the reproach of

sensual impurity (chap. vii. 11), and had manifested warm feelings of attachment to the Apostle personally (chap. vii. 7). They had obeyed Titus as the Apostle's delegate, and had made the work which he had undertaken in much anxiety, a labour of love and joy (chap. vii. 13—16). They had taken up the collection for the saints with an eager interest, and had not only accepted the idea, but had begun to act on the suggestion of 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, as to the weekly payments, and to the alms-box of the house (chap. ix. 13). So far all was well, and had this been all, the Second Epistle to the Corinthians would probably have been as full of thankfulness, and joy, and comfort, as that to the Philippians. But it was not all. Wisely or unwisely, Titus thought it right to tell him of the words and acts of the two parties in the Church of Corinth, who, at opposite extremes, were agreed in resisting his authority. There were some, the party of license, who needed sharp words of censure, and had given no proof of repentance for the foul evils of their former life (chap. xii. 21). There was the Judaising party, claiming to belong to Christ in a sense in which St. Paul did not belong to Him, boasting of their Hebrew descent (chaps. x. 7; xi. 4, 22), arrogating to themselves a special apostolic authority (chap. xi. 5), insolently lording it over their abject followers (chap. xi. 20). And from one or other of these rival parties, probably in some cases from both, there had come—so Titus reported—taunts, sneers, and insinuations against the Apostle's character. He had shown feebleness in his change of plan (chap. i. 17); his personal appear-

* See *Introduction to the First Epistle to the Corinthians*.

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ance, feeble and infirm, did not match the authoritative tone of his letters; his speech had nothing in it to command admiration (chap. x. 10); he threatened supernatural punishments, but he did not dare to put his threats to the proof (chap. xiii. 3). What right had he to claim the authority of an Apostle, when he had never seen the Christ in the flesh? Was it certain that he was a Hebrew, a Jew of the pure blood of Palestine, or even that he was of the seed of Abraham? (chap. vi. 22). They turned into a reproach the fact that he had worked for his maintenance at Corinth, and yet had received gifts from the Macedonian churches, as though he had been too proud to put himself under obligations to any but his favourites (chap. xi. 2—10). They insinuated that what he would not do directly he meant to do indirectly, through the collection for the poor of Jerusalem (chap. xii. 16). How could they tell that the fund so secured would find its way to those who were ostensibly its objects? Who was this Paul who came without credentials (chap. iii. 1), and expected to be received on the strength of his everlasting self-assertions? (chaps. iii. 1; v. 12; x. 8, 12; xii. 11). Was there not a touch of madness in his visions and revelations? Could he claim more than the tolerance which men were ready to extend to the insane? (chaps. v. 13; xi. 16—19.)

Conceive all these barbed arrows of sarcasm falling on the ears, and through them piercing the very soul, of a man of singularly sensitive nature, passionately craving for affection, and proportionately feeling the bitterness of loving with no adequate return (chap. xii. 15), and we may form some estimate of

the whirl and storm of emotion in which St. Paul began to dictate the Epistle on which we are about to enter. Joy, affection, tenderness, fiery indignation, self-vindication, profound thoughts as to the mysteries of the kingdom of God which flashed upon his soul as he spoke—all these elements were there, craving to find expression. They hindered any formal plan and method in the structure of the Epistle. They led to episodes, and side-glances, and allusive references without number.

It follows from this that an analysis of such an Epistle is not a very easy matter, and that which follows must be received only as an approximately complete one, helping the student to follow the manifold oscillations of thought and feeling.

- 1.—St. Paul wishes the Corinthians to know his troubles and sufferings before the return of Titus (chap. i. 1—14).
- 2.—He tells them of his first plan of coming to them, and defends himself against the charge of fickleness in changing it (chaps. i. 15—ii. 1).
- 3.—He is glad that he did change his plans, for thus there was time for the repentance on the part of the incestuous offender of 1 Cor. v. 1. Such a one now needed sympathy and pardon (chap. ii. 2—11).
- 4.—He is about to tell them of his meeting with Titus, but the remembrance of the triumphant joy of that moment overpowers him, and fills him with a profound sense of the issues of life and death which hang upon his words (chap. ii. 12—17).

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- 5.—Will this be called the self-assertion of one who has no credentials? His thoughts pass rapidly to the true credentials of effective preaching, and so to the new covenant of which he is the preacher, and so to the contrast between that covenant and the old (chap. iii. 1—18).
6. The sense of the tremendous responsibility of the work thus committed to him, leads him to dwell on his own fitness and unfitness for it. On the one side there is nothing but infirmity and disease, on the other there is the life of Jesus working in his life (chap. iv. 1—18), and the hope of a life after death, in which all that is spiritual in us now shall find itself emancipated from the flesh and clothed with a new spiritual organism (chap. v. 1—9).
- 7.—That hope does not, however, exclude the fear of the judgment through which all must pass. At the risk of seeming mad he must dwell on that fear. Only so can he lead men to estimate rightly the preciousness of the message of reconciliation (chap. v. 10—21).
- 8.—Will those to whom he writes receive that message in vain? He pleads with them by all he has done and suffered for them to give him a place in their affections, above all to give Christ the supreme place in them. Only so can they be indeed God's children (chap. vi. 1—18). They cannot serve him and the lust demon, Belial.
- 9.—His thoughts turn from the party of license, whom he had in view in the previous section, to those who had shown themselves zealous against impurity. Now he can tell these, and such as these, why meeting Titus had given him matter for such warm rejoicing; why he feels that he can trust them (chap. vii. 1—16).
- 10.—A new topic begins, apparently after a pause. He is about to show that he trusts them, by asking them to let their performance in the matter of the collection for the saints be equal to their readiness of will. He tells them of the arrangements he has made for it, and stirs them up by example of the Macedonians, by appeals to their own self; by the hope of God's favour (chaps. viii. 1—ix. 15).
- 11.—As if by the association of contrast, he turns from what he viewed with satisfaction and hope to the sarcasm and insinuations which had caused such acute pain (chap. x. 1—18). He charges his opponents, the Judaising teachers, with intruding into his province, defends himself against some of their special accusations, and challenges them to a comparison of their labours and sufferings with his own (chap. xi. 1—29). Even the infirmities with which they taunted him are, for those who understand them rightly, a ground of confidence and strength (chaps. xi. 30—xii. 18).
- 12.—Having thus defended himself, his thoughts travel on to

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the time of his projected visit. He looks forward, not without anxiety, to the possibility of having to exercise his apostolic authority in punishing the offenders both of the party of license and that of the Judaisers. But he hopes that that necessity will not arise. His wish and prayer is that they may be restored to completeness without it. The agitation of his own spirit is calmed, and he ends with words of peace and blessing for them (chaps. xii. 19—xiii. 14).

Of the immediate results of the Epistle, and of the after-history of the Church of Corinth, we know but little. Within a few months he paid his promised visit, and was received with hospitality by one of the chief members of the Church (Rom. xvi. 23). Titus and the unnamed brethren of chap. viii. 18, 22, probably Luke and Tychicus, had done their work effectually, and he could tell the Romans to whom he wrote of the collection for the saints which had been made in Achaia as well as in Macedonia (Rom. xv. 26). They apparently had so far gained the confidence of the Corinthians that they did not think it necessary to choose any delegates of their own to watch over the appropriation of the funds collected (Acts xx. 4). The malignant enmity of the Jews, however, had not abated. His life was endangered by a plot to attack him as he was embarking at Cenchreæ, and he had to change his plans and return through Macedonia (Acts xx. 3). After this we lose sight of the Corinthian Church altogether, and the one glimpse which we get, accepting the Pas-

toral Epistles as genuine, and as coming after St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, is that on his return to his former labours, Erastus, who seems to have travelled with him, stopped at the city in which he held a municipal position of authority (Rom. xvi. 23; 2 Tim. iv. 20). The Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, written, probably, about A.D. 95—some thirty-five years, therefore, after the date of this Epistle—shows, however, that the character of the Church has not altered, and that the old evils had re-appeared. A few rash and self-confident persons, putting themselves at the head of a factious party, had brought discredit on the Church's name. It was necessary to exhort them once more to submit to their rulers and to follow after peace (Clem. Rom. i. 1), to remind them of the self-denying labours of the two Apostles, Peter and Paul, whose names they professed to honour (i. 2), of the examples of faith and humility presented by Christ Himself and by the saints of the Old Testament (i. 16—18). The old doubts as to the resurrection (1 Cor. xv.) had re-appeared, and Clement, over and above the teaching of Scripture and of the Apostles on this subject, presses on them the analogy of the stories then current as to the death and revival of the Phoenix* (i. 24,

* The elaborate note in Dr. Lightfoot's edition of St. Clement shows that a fresh prominence had recently been given to the phoenix-legend, which may account for the stress thus laid on it. It was said to have re-appeared in Egypt in the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 34—36) (Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 28). In A.D. 47 a live phoenix was actually exhibited in the *comitium* of Rome (Plin. *Nat. Hist.* x. 2). Historians and savans, though they might think the particular instance an imposture, accepted the tradition with hardly a question.

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25). The authority of the legitimate pastors of the Church (he names bishops or deacons only, as St. Paul had done in Phil. i. 1) was disputed, and he urges submission, and quotes the Epistle—the first of the two which St. Paul had addressed to them (i. 47)—paraphrasing the section in which he had set forth the excellence of charity (i. 49). The letter was sent by messengers, among whom we find one, Fortunatus, who may have been among the survivors who knew the Apostle's work, and had been the bearer of the Epistle of which Clement has just reminded them. The name, however, like its synonyms, Felix, Eutyclus, and the like, was not an uncommon one, and the identification cannot, therefore, be regarded as more than probable.

Somewhat later on, about A.D. 135, the Church of Corinth was visited by Hegesippus, the historian of the Jewish Church, to whom we owe the narrative of the death of James, the Bishop of Jerusalem. He touched at that city on his voyage to Rome, and remained there for several days. He found the

Church faithful to the truth under its bishop Primus (Euseb. *Hist.* iv. 22). Dionysius, who succeeded Primus in his episcopate, brought out all that was good in the Church over which he ruled, and extended his activity to the Macedonians, the Athenians, the people of Nicomedia, of Crete, and of the coast of Pontus. He bears his testimony to the liberality of the Church of Corinth in relieving the poverty of other churches, to the traditional liberality which it had, in its turn, experienced at the hand of the Roman churches. The teaching of 2 Cor. viii., ix., had, it would seem, done its work effectually. He records the fact that the Epistle of Clement was read, from time to time, on the Lord's Day. A female disciple, named Chrysophora, apparently of the some type of character as Dorcas and Priscilla, was conspicuous both for her good works and her spiritual discernment (Euseb. *Hist.* iv. 23). With this glimpse into the latest traceable influence of St. Paul's teaching, our survey of the history of the Church of Corinth may well close.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTER I. — A.D. 60.

Chap. i. 1—7.
Thanksgiving to
God, as the Giver
of all comfort.

(1) Paul, an
apostle of
Jesus Christ
by the will of
God, and Timothy
our
brother, unto the church

of God which is at Corinth,
with all the saints which
are in all Achaia : (2) grace
be to you and peace from
God our Father, and *from*
the Lord Jesus Christ.
(3) Blessed *be* God, even the

I.

(1) **Timothy our brother.**—Literally, *Timothy, the brother.* The word is used obviously in its wider sense as meaning a fellow-Christian. The opening words of the Epistle are nearly identical with those of 1 Cor. i. 1. Timothy, however, takes the place of Sosthenes, having apparently left Corinth before the arrival of the First Epistle, or, possibly, not having reached it. (See *Introduction.*) It is natural to think of him as acting in this instance, as in others where the Apostle joins his name with his own (Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1), as St. Paul's amanuensis.

With all the saints.—On the term "saints," see Note on Acts ix. 13. The term Achaia, which does not occur in the opening of 1 Cor., includes the whole of the Roman province, and was probably used to take in the disciples of Cenchreæ (Rom. xvi. 1) as well as those of Corinth, and possibly also those of Athens.

(2) **Grace be to you.**—See Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 3.

(3) **Blessed be God . . . the Father of mercies.**—The opening words are spoken out of the fullness of the Apostle's heart. He has had a comfort which he recognises as having come from God. The nature of that comfort, as of the previous sorrow, is hardly stated definitely till we come to chaps. ii. 13; vii. 6, 7. At present the memory of it leads him to something like a doxology, as being the utterance of a more exulting joy than a simple thanksgiving, such as we find in 1 Cor. i. 4; Phil. i. 3; Col. i. 3. The same formula meets us in Eph. i. 3, where also it expresses a jubilant adoration. Two special names of God are added under the influence of the same feeling. He is "the Father of mercies," the genitive being possibly a Hebraism, used in place of the cognate adjective; in which case it is identical with "God, the merciful Father," in Jewish prayers, or with the ever-recurring formula of the Koran, "Allah, the

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; ⁽⁴⁾ who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in

any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. ⁽⁵⁾ For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

compassionate, the merciful." It seems better, however, to take the words more literally, as stating that God is the *originator* of all mercies, the source from which they flow. So we have the "Father of lights" in Jas. i. 17. The precise phrase does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament; but we have the same noun in "the mercies of God" in Rom. xii. 1.

The God of all comfort.—The latter word, of which, taking the books of the New Testament in their chronological order, this is the earliest occurrence, includes the idea of counsel as well as consolation. (See Note on Acts iv. 36.) It is used only by St. Paul, St. Luke, and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and is pre-eminently characteristic of this Epistle, in which it occurs twelve, or, with the cognate verb, twenty-eight times.

In the balanced structure of the sentence—the order of "God" and "Father" in the first clause being inverted in the second—we may trace something like an unconscious adoption of the familiar parallelism of Hebrew poetry.

⁽⁴⁾ **Who comforteth us.**—For the writer, the name "God of all comfort" was the outcome of a living personal experience. He had felt that ever-continuing comfort flowing into his soul, and he knew that it had not been given to him

for his own profit only, but that it might flow forth to others. Heathen poets had asserted one side of the truth. Sophocles had said—

"They comfort others who themselves have mourned; —*Fragm.*

and Virgil—

"Not ignorant of ill, I, too, have learnt
To succour those that suffer."
—*Æn.* i. 630.

There was a yet deeper truth in the thought that the power to comfort varies with the measure in which we have been comforted ourselves. Sorrow alone may lead to sympathy, but it falls short of that power to speak a word in season to them that are weary (Isa. l. 4), which is of the very essence of the work of comforting. The words imply that he had passed through a time of tribulation himself. They imply also that he knew of their troubles. (Comp. chap. vii. 7—11.)

⁽⁵⁾ **Abound in us.**—Better, *overflow to us*. The sufferings of Christ, as in 1 Pet. iv. 13; v. 1 (the Greek in 1 Pet. i. 11 expresses a different thought), are those which he endured on earth: those which, in His mysterious union with His Church, are thought as passing from Him to every member of his body, that they too may drink of the cup that He drank of. For the thought that in our sufferings, of whatever nature, we

(6) And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual¹ in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be

¹ Or, *is wrought.*

comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.

(7) And our hope of you *is* stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so *shall ye be* also of the consolation.

share Christ's sufferings, comp. chap. iv. 10; Phil. iii. 10; Col. i. 24; 1 Pet. iv. 13. The use of the plural "*our tribulations*," "*overflow to us*," is dependent partly on the fact that St. Paul has joined Timotheus with himself in his salutation, and partly on the fact that it is his usual way of speaking of himself unless he has distinctly to assert his own individuality.

So our consolation also aboundeth.—Better, as before, *overflows*. The consolation which has come to him through Christ, as the channel through whom it flows down from the father, has, like the suffering, an expansive power, and pours itself out on others.

(6) **And whether we be afflicted . . .**—The better MSS. present some variations in the order of the clauses, some of them giving the words "and our hope of you is stedfast" after "which we also suffer" in this verse. The variation hardly affects the sense in any appreciable degree. That sense is that each stage of the Apostle's experience, that of affliction no less than that of consolation, tended to make others sharers in the latter and not in the former.

For your consolation and salvation.—The latter word is added as presenting, in modern phrase, the objective side of the result of which St. Paul speaks,

while the former gives prominence to the subjective. There was not only the sense of being comforted: there was also the actual deliverance from all real evil, expressed by the word "salvation." But this deliverance is seen, not in a mere escape from, or avoidance of, sufferings, but in a patient steadfast endurance of them.

Which is effectual.—Better, *which worketh*. The word is the same as in "faith working by love" in Gal. v. 6.

Which we also suffer.—What these are has not yet been specifically stated. It is assumed that the sufferings of all Christians have much in common. All have to suffer persecution from without (Acts xiv. 22). All have anxieties, sorrows, disappointments, which bring a keener pain than the ills that threaten the spoiling of goods or even life itself.

(7) **And our hope of you is stedfast.**—Better, *our hope on behalf of you*. The sentence is brought in as a kind of parenthesis connected with the word "enduring." He had not used that word lightly, still less as a tacit reproach, as though they were wanting in endurance. His hope for them, for their salvation in the fullest sense of the word, had never been stronger than it was at that moment.

(8) For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure,

Chap. i. 8—14.
The nature of the
Apostle's trouble,
and his deliver-
ance.

ren, have you
ignorant of
our trouble
which came

¹ Or,
answer.

above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: (9) but we had the sentence¹ of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the

So shall ye be also of the consolation.—Better, *so are ye also*. The verb is not expressed in the Greek, but it is more natural to supply it in the tense which had been used before. The English version practically dilutes the hope by throwing it into a future, which may be near or distant, instead of connecting it with the actual present. The Apostle could not doubt for a moment that they were at that very time sharers in the comfort as well as in the sufferings.

(8) **We would not, brethren, have you ignorant.**—From the generalised language of the previous verses he passes to something more specific. The phrase by which he calls attention to the importance of what he is about to write is characteristic of the Epistles of this period (Rom. i. 13; 1 Cor. x. 1; xii. 1; 1 Thess. iv. 13).

Our trouble which came to us in Asia.—The allusion may possibly be to the Demetrius tumult of Acts xix. 24—41, or to some like time of danger, such as that referred to in 1 Cor. xv. 32. On the other hand, however, he would probably, in that case, have spoken of a definitely localised danger, as he does in the last reference as being “in Ephesus.” The words “in Asia” suggest a wider range of suffering, such as we find referred to in the speech to

the elders at Miletus (Acts xx. 19), and the context leads us to think of bodily illness as well as of perils and anxieties.

We were pressed out of measure.—The adverbial phrase is specially characteristic of the Epistles of this period. We find it in the “exceedingly sinful” of Rom. vii. 13; the “more excellent (or, *transcending*) way” of 1 Cor. xii. 31; and again in 2 Cor. iv. 17; Gal. i. 13.

Insomuch that we despaired even of life.—The language is obviously more vividly descriptive of the collapse of illness than of any peril such as those referred to in the previous Note. St. Paul could hardly have despaired of life during the tumult of Acts xix.

(9) **We had the sentence of death in ourselves.**—The word translated “sentence” (*apokrima*) does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, nor indeed in the LXX. Literally it means *answer*, and was probably a half-technical term, used in medical practice, which St. Paul may have adopted from St. Luke, expressing the “opinion” which a physician formed on his diagnosis of a case submitted to him. The Apostle had found himself in a state in which, so far as he could judge for himself, that opinion would have been against the prospect of re-

dead : ⁽¹⁰⁾ who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver : in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us ; ⁽¹¹⁾ ye also help-

ing together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our

covery. He ceased to trust in himself, *i.e.*, in any remedial measures that he could take for himself. He could only fold his hands and trust in God. Recovery in such a case was a veritable resurrection. It may be noted, however, that a cognate word (*apokrisis*) is frequently used by Hippocrates in the sense of a morbid or virulent secretion, and possibly the word here used may also have had that meaning. In this case, what he says would be equivalent to "We had the symptoms of a fatal disease in us."

⁽¹⁰⁾ Who delivered us from so great a death.—Death in itself seems hardly to admit of such a qualifying adjective, but the words appear to have been used to represent the incidents of the death which seemed so near, the bodily anguish, the sense of prostration, almost, one might venture to say, the very presence of the king of terrors. As the word translated "so great" is, strictly speaking, used of quality rather than quantity, we might almost translate it, *so terrible a death*.

And doth deliver. — The words are wanting in some of the better MSS., and others give them in the future. They may possibly have been inserted to carry the thought of the deliverance into the present as well as through the past and the future.

In whom we trust.—Better, *in whom we have hoped*. The verb

is not the same as the "trust" of the preceding verse. The words imply that he was not yet altogether free, as man would judge, from the danger of a relapse. Life was for him, in relation both to bodily infirmities and perils of other kinds, a perpetual series of deliverances.

⁽¹¹⁾ Ye also helping together by prayer . . .—They, too, to whom he writes can help him as he helps them. Indirectly he asks their prayers for him, but he does so with a refined delicacy of feeling by assuming that they are already praying, and that their prayers are helpful.

That for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons.—The Greek word for "person" (*prosôpon*) is elsewhere throughout the New Testament translated "face" or "countenance," or "person" in the sense of "outward appearance." It has been suggested that that may be its meaning even here : *that thanksgiving may be offered from many upturned faces*. The use of the word *prosopopœia*, however, for "personifying," and of *prosôpon* for the characters in a drama, indicates that the noun was beginning to be used in a different sense, and this must clearly have been well established when it came to be used in theological language for the three "persons" of the Godhead. It is interesting to note, however, as a fact in the history of language, that, if this be its meaning here, it

behalf. ⁽¹²⁾ For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sin-

cerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world,

is probably one of the earliest extant instances of its being so used.

The "gift," in this instance, is the deliverance from danger and suffering spoken of in the previous verse. Safety and health deserved the name not less truly than prophecy and the gift of tongues. He assumes, with the same subtle refinement as before, that they will be as ready to give thanks for his recovery or deliverance as they were to pray for it.

⁽¹²⁾ For our rejoicing is this . . . —Better, *our boast*, as in Rom. iii. 17; xv. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 31. With the feeling of jubilant thankfulness which has hitherto characterised his language there mingles another of a different character. It had, perhaps, been in the background of his thoughts all along. He had seemed, in 1 Cor. iv. 21, to imply that he was coming to take strong measures against evil-doers ("Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love?"). In 1 Cor. xvi. 2—8 he had spoken yet more definitely, "I will come unto you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia." And yet he had not come. Titus would seem to have told him what was said of this: "He was fickle, and changeable; said 'Yes' one day, and 'No' another. Perhaps he was afraid to come." He is eager to refute the charge without a formal pleading as in answer to it, and seems to cast about for an opening. He finds it in the words which he had just dictated. He has a right to assume that the Corinth-

ians will pray and give thanks for him, for he can boast that he has never failed, conscience bearing him witness, in transparent sincerity to them.

The testimony of our conscience.—The words present an obviously undesigned coincidence with St. Paul's language in Acts xxiii. 1; xxiv. 16, and again with that of Rom. ix. 1. To have nothing on his conscience, to "know nothing by (*i.e.*, *against*) himself" (1 Cor. iv. 4), was the great law of his life. And this was true, as of his whole life in relation to the Corinthians, so especially of the supposed change of purpose with which he had been taunted.

In simplicity.—The better MSS. give "holiness" instead of "simplicity." The Greek word for the latter is very characteristic of this Epistle (chap. viii. 2; ix. 11, 13; xi. 3), but then it is used in these passages in quite another sense, as of a single-minded generosity. The word for "holiness" is not a common one, but it appears in Heb. xii. 10. It was, however, the natural correlative of the term "saints" applied to all believers. St. Paul's conscience told him that he had not been false to the *consecrated* character which that term involved.

Godly sincerity.—Better, *sincerity which is of God*. It is seldom satisfactory to tone down the bold vigour of the Greek, or perhaps Hebrew, idiom into the tameness of an English adjective. The sincerity

and more abundantly to you-ward. ⁽¹³⁾ For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or

acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; ⁽¹⁴⁾ as also ye have acknowledged us in

which St. Paul claims had come to him as God's gift: he could submit it to God's judgment. The word for "sincerity" (literally, *transparency of character*, or, perhaps, that which bore the test of the strongest light) had been used in 1 Cor. v. 8.

Not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God.—Better, *in* or *with* in both clauses. The words indicate the same line of thought as those of 1 Cor. ii. 1—6. Men made invidious comparisons between his plainness of speech and the eloquent wisdom of some other teachers. That kind of "fleshly," *i.e.*, *worldly*, wisdom he disclaims. It was not that, but the favour or the "grace" of God which was the motive-force of his action, the sphere in which he lived and moved.

We have had our conversation.—Better, *we conducted ourselves*. The tense of the Greek verb implies a special reference in thought to the time when he had been at Corinth. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to note that "conversation" means "conduct," but as the first occurrence of the word in the New Testament, it may be well to trace the several stages through which it has passed. On its appearance in English, as in Chaucer, it has its full etymological force as indicating, as it does here, habitual conduct. "Enquire of his conversation and of his life before" (*Tale of Melibæus*). So in Wiclif's version of the Bible it is used, as in that of 1611, in Gal. i. 13. In

somewhat later writers, *e.g.*, in Sidney and Strype, the sense becomes that of "conduct *with* others," "converse, intercourse," a sense still prominent in the familiar legal term for adultery. In Swift and Cowper it has come to be all but absolutely identified with the intercourse which is carried on by talking. In its fullest sense, the Apostle can say that he had striven to *live* everywhere so as to avoid giving grounds for suspicion. Nowhere had he been more careful so to live than at Corinth, where men were suspicious in proportion to their own viciousness. (Comp. Notes on chap. vii. 1, 2.)

⁽¹³⁾ **For we write none other things . . .**—The Greek presents a play on the two words "read" (*anaginoskein*) and "acknowledge," or "know fully" (*epiginoskein*), which it is impossible to reproduce in English. It is as though he said: "I have no hidden meaning in what I write and you read:—What you read you read aright in its plain and simple sense. I hope" (the very hope implies that it had been otherwise) "that the more you know me the more will you so read me and judge me even to the end, the great day when the Lord shall come and all things shall be made plain." (Comp. 1 Cor. iv. 3—5.) Possibly, however, the words "even to the end" may be merely equivalent to "completely." (See Note on John xiii. 1.)

⁽¹⁴⁾ **As also ye have acknowledged.**—The parenthetical clause

part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus. ⁽¹⁵⁾ And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before,

Chap. i. 15-24.
The reasons of the Apostle's change of plan.

¹ Or. grace.

that ye might have a second benefit;¹ ⁽¹⁶⁾ and to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judæa. ⁽¹⁷⁾ When I there-

(better, *ye did acknowledge*) comes in to qualify the fear which had been partly veiled by the hope. They had done him some, though not adequate, justice. The phrase "in part" may be noted as specially characteristic of the Epistles of this period (Rom. xi. 25; xv. 15, 24; 1 Cor. xi. 18; xii. 27; xiii. 9).

That we are your rejoicing . . .—Better, *a ground of exaltation to you, as you are to us*. The words must be connected with the future rather than the past. "I trust that you will one day recognise that you have as much reason to be proud of me as I have to be proud of you." The word for "rejoicing," "boasting," "glorying," &c., is specially characteristic of this period of St. Paul's life, occurring forty-six times in 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, and only six times in his other Epistles. The "day of the Lord Jesus," of His great advent to judge the world (comp. Rom. ii. 16), defines the "end" to which the previous verse had pointed.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **And in this confidence.**—What has been said hitherto paves the way for the explanation of his apparent change of purpose which he is anxious to give, though he will not formally plead at the bar of the tribunal of those who accused or suspected him. It was

because he trusted that they would judge him rightly that he had done that which had led some to judge him wrongly. His plan had been at first to go straight by sea from Ephesus to Corinth, then to pass on to Macedonia, thence to return to Corinth, and thence set sail for Jerusalem. When he wrote 1 Cor. xvi. 5, 6, he had already modified his plan by deciding to go to Macedonia first. His original scheme had shown his wish to see as much of the Corinthians as possible. They were to have two visits ("a second favour"), and not one only. Had he shown less regard, he asks, in the change with which he had been taunted?

⁽¹⁶⁾ **To be brought on my way.**—The change of word is significant. He did not intend merely to go from Corinth to Judæa. He expected the Corinthians to further his intentions, to help him on, to escort him solemnly to the ship in which he was to sail, perhaps to accompany him to Asia. (Comp. the use of the word in Acts xv. 3; xx. 38, "accompanied"; xxi. 5; Rom. xv. 24; 1 Cor. xvi. 6-11.) The wish had been stated in 1 Cor. xvi. 6, but without more than a hint (1 Cor. xvi. 4), that his destination might be Jerusalem.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **Did I use lightness?**—This, then, was the charge which

fore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay? ⁽¹⁸⁾ But *as God is*

¹ Or, *preaching.*

true, our word¹ toward you was not yea and nay. ⁽¹⁹⁾ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not

he is anxious to refute. The question meets us, however, When had the Corinthians heard of the plan thus detailed? It had been already abandoned, as we have seen, before the first Epistle was despatched. Had it been communicated in a lost letter (see Note on 1 Cor. v. 9)? or was this what Timotheus, who started before the first letter was written (1 Cor. iv. 17), had been authorised to announce? Either alternative is possible, and there is no evidence to enable us to decide which is most probable.

Do I purpose according to the flesh . . . ?—The construction is somewhat involved. He may mean: (1) “Do I form my purposes after the flesh” (*i.e.*, from worldly motives), “so as to catch the praise of consistency from those who harp on the rule that ‘Yes should be yes, and No, no?’” or (2) “Am I weak and worldly in my purpose, changing my plans, and saying ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ in almost the same breath?” On the whole, (2) seems to give the better sense. It is obvious that the words on which he dwells had been used of him by others. Some teacher of the party of the circumcision had, apparently, quoted the rule of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 37) and of St. James (Jas. v. 12), and had asked, with a sneer, when the First Epistle came and showed

that the original plan had been abandoned, whether this was the way in which St. Paul acted on it? The passage has accordingly the interest of being indirectly a reference to our Lord’s teaching, showing, like Acts xx. 35, that “the words of the Lord Jesus” were habitually cited as rules of life.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **As God is true.**—Literally, *as God is faithful.* The words were one of St. Paul’s usual formulæ of assertion (Comp. 1 Cor. i. 9; x. 13; 2 Thess. iii. 3). In other instances it is followed commonly by a statement as to some act or attribute of God. Here it is more of the nature of an oath: “As God is faithful in all His words, so my speech” (the vague term is used to include preaching, writing, personal intercourse) “is true and faithful also.” There had been no “Yes” and “No” in the same breath; no saying one thing when he meant another.

⁽¹⁹⁾ **By me and Silvanus and Timotheus.**—We note an undesigned coincidence with Acts xviii. 5, where Silas (whose identity with Silvanus is thus proved) is related to have come with Timotheus to join St. Paul at Corinth. The three names are joined together in the same order in 1 Thess. i. 1, and 2 Thess. i. 1.

Was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.—From the

yea and nay, but in him was yea. ⁽²⁰⁾ For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by

us. ⁽²¹⁾ Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; ⁽²²⁾ who hath also sealed us, and given

forensic point of view, this was, of course, hardly an adequate defence against the charge of inconsistency. The argument was, so to speak, one of ethical congruity. It was infinitely unlikely that one who preached Christ, the absolutely True Christ, who enforced every precept with the emphatic "Amen, Amen" (the word occurs thirty-one times in St. Matthew, fourteen times in St. Mark, seven times in St. Luke, and in its reduplicated form twenty-five times in St. John), "Verily, verily," should afterwards be shamelessly untruthful, and use words that paltered with a double sense.

But in him was yea.—Better, *but in Him Yea has been and still is so*, as His great characterising word.

⁽²⁰⁾ **All the promises of God.** .—Literally, *as many as are the promises of God*. Many of the better MSS. give a different reading: "In him is the Yea, wherefore also by him is the Amen to God for glory by our means." The thought in either case is the same. The promises of God have been fulfilled and ratified in Christ. He was, as it were, a living incarnate "Amen" to those promises. Comp. St. John's use of the word Amen as a name of Christ, the "faithful and true witness" (Rev. iii. 14). The words "by us" are determined by the context as referring to the preacher rather than to the hearers of the Word.

⁽²¹⁾ **He which stablisheth us with you . . .**—For a moment the thought of an *apology* for his own conduct is merged in the higher thought of the greatness of his mission. The word "stablisheth," or "confirmeth," as in 1 Cor. i. 8, is connected with the previous "Amen" as the emphatic formula of ratification. In the insertion of "with you" we note St. Paul's characteristic anxiety to avoid the appearance of claiming for himself what others might not claim with equal right. He repeats the confident hope which he had expressed in 1 Cor. i. 8.

In Christ.—Literally, *into Christ*, as though the result of the "establishing" was an actual incorporation with Him. This seems a truer interpretation than that which paraphrases, "confirms us in believing on Christ."

And hath anointed us.—Literally, *and anointed*, as referring to a definite moment in the life of the disciples. The verb follows naturally on the mention of Christ the Anointed One. The time referred to is that when, on baptism or the laying on of hands (Acts viii. 17), they had received the first-fruits of the gift of the Spirit, as in Acts ii. 38; viii. 17; x. 44; xix. 6; the "unction from the Holy One" (1 John ii. 20, 27).

⁽²²⁾ **Who hath also sealed us.**—Better, *who also sealed us*. The thought thus expressed is that the gift of the Spirit, following on

the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. ⁽²³⁾ Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto

Corinth. ⁽²⁴⁾ Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

baptism or the laying on of hands, is as the seal of the covenant which God makes with His people, attesting its validity. (Comp. Eph. i. 13; iv. 30; and, for the Jewish use of seals, Jer. xxxii. 10.)

And given the earnest of the Spirit.—Better, for the same reason as before, *gave*. The Greek word for “earnest” (*arrhabón*), which occurs here for the first time, and is used only by St. Paul in the New Testament (chap. v. 5; Eph. i. 14), has a somewhat interesting history. Originally a Hebrew word, from a verb meaning “to mix,” “to change,” “to pledge,” and so used, as a cognate noun, with the last of the three senses, it appears simply transliterated in the LXX. of Gen. xxxviii. 17, 18. It would seem to have been in common use among the Canaanite or Phœnician traders, and was carried by them to Greece, to Carthage, to Alexandria, and to Rome. It was used by the Greek orator Isæus, and by Plautus and Terence among the earlier Latin writers. The full form came to be considered somehow as pedantic or vulgar, and was superseded in Roman law by the shortened “*arrha*,” the payment of a small sum given on the completion of a bargain as a pledge that the payer would fulfil the contract: and it has passed into Italian as “*arra* ;” into modern French, as “*les arrhes* ;” into popular Scotch even, as “*arles*.” As applied by St. Paul, it had the force

of a condensed parable, such as the people of commercial cities like Corinth and Ephesus would readily understand. They were not to think that their past spiritual experience had any character of finality. It was rather but the pledge of yet greater gifts to come: even of that knowledge of God which is eternal life (John xvii. 3). The same thought is expressed, under a more Hebrew image, in the “*firstfruits* of the Spirit” in Rom. viii. 23. Grammatically, the “earnest of the Spirit” may be taken as an example of the genitive of apposition, “the earnest which is the Spirit.”

⁽²³⁾ I call God for a record.—Better, *I call upon God as a witness against my soul*. The thought seems to come across St. Paul’s mind that the Corinthians will require a more specific explanation of his change of plan, and he finds this in what had been in part suggested in 1 Cor. iv. 21. Had he carried out his first purpose, he would have come to punish or chastise. He had been, on this account, reluctant to come. His not coming was an act of leniency.

I came not as yet.—Better, *I came no more—i.e.*, not a second time after his first visit. The Greek adverb cannot possibly mean “not yet.”

⁽²⁴⁾ Not for that we have dominion over your faith.—Better, *are lording it over*. He has scarcely written, or uttered, the

CHAPTER II.—⁽¹⁾ But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. ⁽²⁾ For if I make you sorry, who is he then that

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maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? ⁽³⁾ And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you

words which imply authority, when the thought comes to him that he may seem to claim too much. He shrinks from "lording it over God's heritage" (1 Pet. v. 3), and half apologises for so strong a word as "sparing." He puts forward, therefore, the other side of his work. He was really seeking, not to domineer, or cause pain, but to be a fellow-worker with their "joy and peace in believing" (Rom. xv. 13). He knows that they have a standing-ground, independently of him, in their faith in Christ, and he seeks to confirm that faith.

II.

⁽¹⁾ But I determined this with myself.—Better, *I determined for myself*. The chapter division is here obviously wrong, and interrupts the sequence of thought. St. Paul continues his explanation. He did not wish to come again, *i.e.*, to make his second visit to Corinth, in grief, and if he had carried out his first plan, that would have been the almost inevitable result. He consulted his own feelings ("for myself") as well as theirs.

⁽²⁾ Who is he then that maketh me glad?—The force of the "for," with which the verse opens, lies below the surface. He had wished to avoid a visit that

would cause sorrow to himself and others, and events had shown that he was right. But it might be said, perhaps had been said, that he didn't seem to care about giving pain when he wrote, as, *e.g.*, in 1 Cor. iv. 18; v. 2—7; vi. 5—8. "Yes," is his answer; "but then the pain which I inflict" (the pronoun is emphatic) "gives to him who suffers it the power of giving me joy, and so works out an ample compensation;" a thought to which he returns in chap. vii. 8. The abruptness of the question and the use of the singular number shows that he has the one great offender, the incestuous adulterer of 1 Cor. v. 1, before his mind's eye. He sees him, as it were, and can point to him as showing how well the course he had taken had answered.

⁽³⁾ And I wrote this same unto you.—Here, again, we have to read between the lines. The pronoun, which does not refer to anything that has been actually said, shows with what definiteness certain passages in his first letter were stamped upon his memory. The question might be asked, "Why had he written so sharply?" And he makes answer to himself that the result had been what he had intended: that his motive in so writing as to give pain had been to avoid giving and receiving pain

all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all. ⁽⁴⁾ For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but

that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. ⁽⁵⁾ But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I

when he came in person. He wanted his visit to be one of unmixed joy for himself, and if so, it could not fail, looking to their mutual sympathy, to give his disciples joy also.

⁽⁴⁾ **Out of much affliction and anguish.**—Men might think that it had cost him little to write sharp words like those which he has in his mind. He remembers well what he felt as he dictated them—the intensity of his feelings, pain that such words should be needed, anxiety as to their issue, the very tears which then, as at other times (Acts xx. 19, 31; 2 Tim. i. 4), were the outflow of strong emotion. Those who were indignant at his stern words should remember, or at least learn to believe this, and so to see in them the strongest proof of his abounding love for them. The heart of St. Paul was in this matter as the heart of Him who said, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten” (Rev. iii. 19). The motive in such a case is not to give pain, but to lead those whom we reprove to feel how much we love them. The same word for “anguish” appears in Luke xxi. 25. Looking to the fact that it is used only by St. Luke and St. Paul in the New Testament, we may, perhaps, see in it another example of medical terminology. The anguish was like that of a tight pressure or constriction of the heart.

⁽⁵⁾ **But if any have caused grief.**—The man who had been the chief cause of his sorrow is now prominent in his thoughts. He will not name him. He is, as in 1 Cor. v. 1—5, and here in verse 7, “a man,” “such a one.” The abrupt introduction of the qualifying clause, “but in part,” and the absence of any authoritative punctuation, makes the construction ambiguous. It admits of three possible explanations: (1) “If any have caused grief, it is not *I* alone whom he hath grieved, but in part, to some extent—not to press the charge against *him* too heavily—all of *you*.” They, the members of the Corinthian Church, were really the greatest sufferers from the scandal which brought shame upon it. (2) “If any have caused grief, *he* hath not grieved me, save in part” (*i.e.*, he is not the only offender), “that I may not press the charge against *all of you*—so that I may not treat you as if you were all open to the same condemnation, or had all caused the same sorrow.” (3) Combining parts of (1) and (2): “It is not *I* whom he hath grieved, save in part, that I may not lay the blame on all of *you*.” Of these (1) seems the simplest and most natural. In any case, it is important to remember that the position of the pronoun in the Greek, “*me* he hath grieved,” makes it specially emphatic.

may not overcharge you all. ⁽⁶⁾ Sufficient to such

Chap. ii. 6-11.
Directions for
the absolution of
the offender.

a man is this
punishment,¹
which was
inflicted of

¹ Or.
censure.

many. ⁽⁷⁾ So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort

him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

⁽⁸⁾ Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. ⁽⁹⁾ For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether

⁽⁶⁾ Sufficient to such a man is this punishment.—Better, perhaps, *this censure*, or *rebuke*: the Greek word *epitimia* being different from those in Matt. xxv. 46, and in Heb. x. 29. It is natural to infer that this was somewhat after the pattern of the course marked out in 1 Cor. v. 3-5. A meeting of the Church had been held, and the man delivered to Satan. Possibly this was followed by some suffering of body, supernaturally inflicted, or coming as the natural consequence (not less divine because natural) of remorse and shame. It was almost certainly followed by excommunication and exclusion from religious and social fellowship. St. Paul had clearly heard what it had been, and thought that it had been enough.

Which was inflicted of many.—Actually, *by the majority*. The decision, then, had been not unanimous. The minority may have been either members of the Judaising "Cephas" party, resenting what they would look upon as St. Paul's dictation, and perhaps falling back on the Jewish casuistry, which taught that all the natural relationships of a proselyte were cancelled by his conversion; or the party of license, against whom the Apostle reasons in 1 Cor. vi.—viii.,

and who boasted of their freedom. The Passover argument and the form of the sentence in 1 Cor. v. alike suggest the idea that the offender and those who defended him were Jews. On the other hand, see Note on chap. vii. 12.

⁽⁷⁾ Ye ought rather to forgive.—The indignation which St. Paul had felt has passed, on his hearing of the offender's state, into pity and anxiety. The time had come for words of pardon and comfort and counsel. What if he should be "swallowed up," and sink as in the great deep of sorrow? Suicide, madness, apostasy, seem to float before his mind as but too possible results.

⁽⁸⁾ That ye would confirm your love.—The word for "confirm" (better, perhaps, *ratify*—comp. Gal. iii. 15) suggests the thought of an act as formal and public as the rebuke had been. The excommunicated man was to be readmitted to fellowship by a collective act of the Church.

⁽⁹⁾ For to this end also did I write . . .—The tense of the Greek verb, which may be what is known as the Epistolary aorist, used by the writer of the time at which he writes would not be decisive as to what is referred to, and the words may mean: "I write to

ye be obedient in all things.
 (10) To whom ye forgive any
 thing, I *forgive* also: for
 if I forgave anything, to

¹ Or, *in
the
sight.*

whom I forgave *it*, for
 your sakes *forgave I it* in
 the person¹ of Christ;
 (11) lest Satan should get an

you thus to see whether you are as obedient now as you were before—in one line of action as in the other.” If he refers to the First Epistle, it is to intimate that he gave the directions in 1 Cor. v. 3—7, not only for the removal of a scandal and the reformation of the offender who had caused it, but as a test of their obedience. On the whole, the former interpretation seems preferable. It scarcely seems like St. Paul to make the punishment a trial of obedience. There is a characteristic subtle delicacy of thought in his suggesting that, having shown obedience in punishing they should show it also in forgiving.

(10) **To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also.**—The procedure of 1 Cor. v. 3—7 is again, obviously, in his mind. Though absent in body he had made himself a sharer spiritually in that censure. He now, anticipating their compliance with his request, makes himself a sharer in the sentence of absolution.

For if I forgave anything.—Better, *if I have forgiven*; and so in the following clauses. The case is put hypothetically, though he has an actual offender in his thoughts, because he had, in verse 5, all but disclaimed the character of being an aggrieved person. He confines himself, therefore, to saying: “So far as I was aggrieved, I have forgiven; so far as I have forgiven, it is for your sake as a body, not merely for my own and that of the offender.”

In the person of Christ.—Literally, *in the face of Christ*. (See Note on chap. i. 11.) *In the presence of Christ* is, therefore, a possible rendering. The English version is probably correct, the phrase conveying the same sense as “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” in 1 Cor. v. 4, but in a somewhat stronger form. He had forgiven, as though Christ was acting in or by him. The forgiveness would be as authoritative as the censure. It will be noted that he claims in its fulness the authority given to the Apostles of Christ in John xx. 23.

(11) **Lest Satan should get an advantage of us.**—Literally, *lest we should be cheated (or out-manœuvred) by Satan*. The phraseology is that of one who is as it were playing a game against the Tempter, in which the souls of men are at once the counters and the stake. The Apostle’s last move in that game had been to “give the sinner over to Satan” with a view to his ultimate deliverance. But what if Satan should outwit him by tempting the sinner to despair or recklessness? To guard against that danger required, as it were, another move. Stratagem must be met by strategy. The man must be absolved that he may be able to resist the Tempter.

We are not ignorant of his devices.—The language comes from a wide and varied experience. St. Paul had been buffeted by a messenger of Satan

advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. ⁽¹²⁾ Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened

Chap. ii. 12, 13. St. Paul's journey from Troas to Macedonia.

unto me of the Lord, ⁽¹³⁾ I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Now thanks be unto God, which always

(chap. xii. 7); had once and again been hindered by him in his work (1 Thess. ii. 18); was ever wrestling, not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers (Eph. vi. 12); and so he knew how the Tempter could turn even the rules of an ascetic rigour, or the remorse of a sin-burdened conscience, into an occasion of yet further and more irremediable sin.

⁽¹²⁾ Furthermore, when I came to Troas. — The article, perhaps, indicates the Troad as a district, rather than the city, just as it does in the case of Saron. (See Acts ix. 35.) The case of the offender had come in as a parenthesis in verses 5—8. He returns to the train of thought which it had interrupted, and continues his narrative of what had passed after he had written the First Epistle. A Church had probably been founded in the city of Troas by St. Luke, but St. Paul's first visit to it had been limited to a few days, and there are no traces of his preaching there. Now he comes "for the gospel's sake." That there was a flourishing Christian community some months later we find by referring to Acts xx. 6.

A door was opened unto me. — Opportunities for mission-work, as we should call them, are thus described in 1 Cor. xvi. 9.

There is something of the nature of a coincidence in his using it of two different churches, Ephesus and Troas, within a comparatively short interval.

⁽¹³⁾ I had no rest in my spirit. — Instead of coming himself straight from Ephesus, as he had at first intended, and had intimated probably in the lost letter of 1 Cor. v. 9, or by Timotheus (1 Cor. iv. 17), or pressing on through Macedonia, as he purposed when he wrote the First Epistle (1 Cor. xvi. 5), he had sent on Titus (himself possibly connected with Corinth) to ascertain what had been the effects of that Epistle on the Corinthian Church. Titus was to return to him at Troas. Not meeting him there, St. Paul, in his eager anxiety to hear something more than Timotheus had been able to tell him, left Troas, in spite of the opening which it presented for his work as a preacher of the gospel, and hastened on into Macedonia. Taking the route that he had taken before, he would probably go to Philippi, where he would find St. Luke; and we may conjecture, without much risk of error, that it was there that he and Titus met.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Now thanks be unto God. — The apparent abruptness of this burst of thanksgiving is at first somewhat startling. We have to

find its source, not in what the Apostle had written or spoken, but in what was passing through his memory. He had met Titus, and that disciple had been as a courier bringing tidings of a victory. The love of God had won yet another triumph.

Causeth us to triumph.—

Better, *who always leads us in His triumph.* There is absolutely no authority for the factitive meaning given to the verb in the English version. In Col. ii. 15 it is translated rightly, "triumphing over them in it." It is obvious, too, that the true rendering gives a much more characteristic thought. It would be unlike St. Paul to speak of himself as the triumphant commander of God's great army. It is altogether like him that he should give God the glory, and own that He, as manifested in Christ, had triumphed, and that Apostle and penitent, the faithful and the rebellious, alike took their place in the procession of that triumph.

The imagery that follows is clearly that of the solemn triumphal procession of a Roman emperor or general. St. Paul, who had not as yet been at Rome, where only such triumphs were celebrated, had, therefore, never seen them, and was writing accordingly from what he had heard from others. Either from the Roman Jews whom he had met at Corinth, many of them slaves or freed-men in the imperial household, or the Roman soldiers and others with whom he came in contact at Philippi, possibly from St. Luke or Clement, he had heard how the conqueror rode along the Via Sacra in his chariot, followed by his troops and prisoners, captive kings and princes, and trophies of victory; how fragrant clouds of

incense accompanied his march, rising from fixed altars or wafted from censers; how, at the foot of the Capitoline hill, some of the prisoners, condemned as treacherous or rebellious, were led off to execution, or thrown into the dungeons of the Mamertine prison, while others were pardoned and set free. It is not without interest to remember that when St. Paul wrote, the latest triumph at Rome had been that solemnised at Rome by Claudius in honour of the victory of Ostorius over the Britons in A.D. 51, and commemorated by a triumphal arch, the inscription on which is now to be seen in the court-yard of the Barberini Palace at Rome; that in that triumph Caractacus had figured as a prisoner; and that he and his children, spared by the mercy of the emperor, had passed from the ranks of the "lost" to those of the "saved" (*Tacit. Ann. xiii. 36*). According to a view taken by some writers, Claudia and Linus (2 Tim. iv. 21) were among those children.

The savour of his knowledge.—There is obviously a reference to the incense which, as in the above description, was an essential part of the triumph of a Roman general. It is there that St. Paul finds an analogue of his own work. He claims to be, as it were, a *thurifer*, an incense-bearer in the procession of the conqueror. Words, whether of prayer or praise, thanksgiving or preaching, what were they but as incense-clouds bearing to all around, as they were wafted in the air, the tidings that the Conqueror had come? The "savour of his knowledge" is probably "the knowledge of *Him*:" that which rests in Him as its object.

causeth us to triumph in
 Chap. ii. 14—17. Christ, and
 The Apostle as an incense-bearer
 in the triumph of Christ. maketh mani-
 fest the sa-
 vour of his
 knowledge by us in every
 place. ⁽¹⁵⁾ For we are unto
 God a sweet savour of
 Christ, in them that are

¹ Or, deal
 deceit-
 fully
 with.

saved, and in them that
 perish: ⁽¹⁶⁾ to the one *we*
are the savour of death
 unto death; and to the
 other the savour of life
 unto life. And who *is*
 sufficient for these things?
⁽¹⁷⁾ For we are not as many,
 which corrupt¹ the word

⁽¹⁵⁾ We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ.—If we believe this Epistle to have been written from Philippi, it is interesting to note the recurrence of the same imagery of a “sweet savour” in the Epistle to that Church (Phil. iv. 18). Here the mind of the writer turns to the sterner, sadder side of the Roman triumph. Some who appeared in that triumph were *on their way to deliverance*, some *on their way to perish* (this is the exact rendering of the words translated *saved* and *lost*), and this also has its analogue in the triumph of Christ. He does not shrink from that thought. In his belief in the righteousness and mercy of Christ, he is content to leave the souls of all men to His judgment. He will not the less do his work as incense-bearer, and let the “sweet savour” of the knowledge of God be wafted through the words which it has been given him to utter. All things are for His glory, for His righteousness will be seen to have been working through all.

⁽¹⁶⁾ To the one we are the savour of death unto death.—As with other instances of St. Paul’s figurative language, we note the workings of a deeply, though unconsciously, poetic imagination. Keeping the image of the triumph

in his mind, he thinks of the widely different impression and effect which the odour of the incense would work in the two classes of the prisoners. To some it would seem to be as a breath from Paradise, giving life and health; to others its sweetness would seem sickly and pestilential, coming as from a charnel house, having in it the “savour of death,” and leading to death as its issue.

And who is sufficient for these things?—The question forced itself on St. Paul’s mind as it forces itself on the mind of every true teacher: Who can feel qualified for a work which involves such tremendous issues? If we ask how it was that he did not draw back from it altogether, the answer is found in other words of his: “God has made us able (*sufficient*) ministers of the New Testament” (chap. iii. 6); “our sufficiency is of God” (chap. iii. 5). It is obvious that even here he assumes his sufficiency, and gives in the next verse the ground of the assumption.

⁽¹⁷⁾ For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God.—More accurately, *We are not as most, as the greater number*. There is a ring of sadness in the words. Even then the ways of error were manifold, and the way

of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

CHAPTER III.—⁽¹⁾ Do

A.D. 60

we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to

Chap. iii. 1—3.
The true letters of commendation.

of truth was one. Among Judaizers, and the seekers after Greek wisdom, asserters of license for liberty, questioners of the resurrection: how few were those who preached the true word of God in its purity! The word for “corrupt,” formed from a word which signifies “huckster” or “tavern-keeper,” implies an adulteration like that which such people commonly practised. We, says St. Paul, play no such tricks of trade with what we preach; we do not meet the tastes of our hearers by prophesying deceits. The very fact that we know the tremendous issues of our work would hinder that. Comp. St. Peter’s use of the same figure in “the sincere (the *unadulterated*) milk of the *reason*” (1 Pet. ii. 2). It is doubtful whether the imagery of the triumph is still present to his thoughts. If it were, we may think of the word “corrupt” as connected with the thought of the sweet savour: “Our incense, at any rate, is pure. If it brings death it is through no fault of ours. It is not a poisoned perfume.”

As of sincerity, but as of God.—The two clauses are half connected, half contrasted. To have said “of sincerity” alone would have been giving too much prominence to what was purely subjective. He could not feel sure that he was sincere unless he knew that his sincerity was given to him by God. (For the word

“sincerity,” see Note on chap. i. 12.)

III.

⁽¹⁾ **Do we begin again to commend ourselves?**—The MSS. present various readings: “Do we begin again to commend ourselves [Nay, not so], unless we desire [which we do not] letters of commendation;” but the Received text is sufficiently supported, and gives a clearer and simpler meaning. Here, again, we have to read between the lines. Titus has told St. Paul what has been said of him at Corinth. Referring, probably, to what he had said in his First Epistle as to the “wisdom” which he preached (1 Cor. ii. 6), his having “laid the foundation” (1 Cor. iii. 10), his dwelling on his sufferings (1 Cor. iv. 11), his preaching without payment (1 Cor. ix. 15) as a thing he gloried in, they had sneered at him as always “commending himself.” They had added that it was no wonder that he did so when he had no authoritative letters of commendation from other churches, such as were brought by other teachers. As soon as the words, “We are not as the many,” had passed his lips, the thought occurs that the same will be said again. He *hears* it said, as it were, and makes his answer.

Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you?—We are left to conjecture

you, or *letters of commendation* from you? ⁽²⁾ Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: ⁽³⁾ *forasmuch as 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 fleshy tables

who are thus referred to. Possibly some of the Apollos party had contrasted the letters which he had brought from Ephesus (Acts xviii. 27) with St. Paul's want of them. Possibly the Judaizing teachers who meet us in chap. xi. 13 had come with credentials of this nature from the Church of Jerusalem. The indignant tone in which St. Paul speaks indicates the latter view as the more probable. The "letters of commendation" deserve notice as an important element in the organisation of the early Church. A Christian travelling with such a letter from any Church was certain to find a welcome in any other. They guaranteed at once his soundness in the faith and his personal character, and served to give a reality to the belief in the "communion" of saints, as the necessary sequel to the recognition of a Catholic or universal Church. It is significant of the part they had played in the social victory of the Christian Church that Julian tried to introduce them into the decaying system which he sought to galvanise into an imitative life (Sozomen. *Hist.* v. 16).

⁽²⁾ **Ye are our epistle written in our hearts.**—This is an answer. They, the Corinthian converts, are written on his heart. In his thoughts and prayers for them he finds his true commendatory letter, and this a letter which is patent to the eyes of all men. In "known and read"

we find the familiar play on the two words, *epiginoskein* and *anaginoskein*. (See Note on chap. i. 13.) All who knew St. Paul could read what was there written.

⁽³⁾ **Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared.**—The metaphor appears to shift its ground from the subjective to the objective. It is not only as written in his heart, but as seen and known by others, that they (the Corinthians) are as a letter of commendation. They are as a letter which Christ had written as with the finger of God. That letter, he adds, was "ministered by us." He had been, that is, as the *amanuensis* of that letter, but Christ was the real writer.

Written not with ink.—Letters were usually written on papyrus, with a reed pen and with a black pigment (*atramentum*) used as ink. (Comp. 2 John, verse 12.) In contrast with this process, he speaks of the Epistle of Christ as written with the "Spirit of the living God." It is noteworthy that the Spirit takes here the place of the older "finger of God" in the history of the two tables of stone in Ex. xxxi. 18. So a like substitution is found in comparing "If I with the finger of God cast out devils," in Luke xi. 20, with "If I by the Spirit of God," in Matt. xii. 28. Traces of the same thought are found in the hymn in the Ordination service, in which

of the heart. ⁽⁴⁾ And such trust have we through Christ to Godward : ⁽⁵⁾ not that we are sufficient of ourselves to

Chap. iii. 4-12.
Contrast between the ministry of the letter and that of the spirit.

think any thing as of ourselves ; but our sufficiency is of God ; ⁽⁶⁾ who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament ; not of the letter, but of the spirit : for the letter killeth, but

the Holy Spirit is addressed as "the finger of God's hand."

Not in tables of stone.—The thought of a letter written in the heart by the Spirit of God brings three memorable passages to St. Paul's memory :—(1) the "heart of flesh" of Ezek. xi. 19 ; xxxvi. 26, 27 ; (2) the promise that the law should be written in the heart, which was to be the special characteristic of the new covenant (Jer. xxxi. 31—33) ; and (3) the whole history of the circumstances of the first, or older, covenant ; and, from this verse to the end of the chapter, thought follows rapidly on thought in manifold application of the images thus suggested.

But in fleshy tables of the heart.—The better MSS. give *in tables* (or, *tablets*), *which are hearts of flesh*, reproducing the words of Ezek. xi. 19. The thought of the letter begins to disappear, and that of a law written on tablets takes its place, as one picture succeeds another in a dissolving view.

⁽⁴⁾ **Such trust have we.**—The words carry us back to the expressions of verses 2 and 3, perhaps, also, to the assertion of his own sincerity and sufficiency implied in chap. ii. 16, 17. He has this confidence, but it is through Christ, who strengthens him (Col. i. 11).

⁽⁵⁾ **Not that we are sufficient . . .**—He had not used the

word "sufficient" of himself, but it was clearly the implied answer to the question, "Who is sufficient for these things?" In the Greek there are two different prepositions for the one "of" in English. "Not as though we are sufficient of ourselves to form any estimate as originating with ourselves," would be a fair paraphrase. The habit of mind which led St. Paul to emphasise the shades of meaning in Greek prepositions to an extent hardly to be expressed in English, and not commonly recognised, it may be, in colloquial Greek, is seen again in Rom. xi. 36.

Is of God.—The preposition is the same as in the second of the two previous clauses. The sufficiency flows from God as its source : originates with Him.

⁽⁶⁾ **Able ministers of the new testament.**—Better, perhaps, as keeping up the stress on the word that had been used in chap. ii. 16, in the English as in the Greek, *sufficient ministers*. The noun is used as carrying out the thought implied in the "ministered by us" in verse 3. In the "new covenant"—new, as implying *freshness* of life and energy—we have a direct reference, both to our Lord's words, as cited in 1 Cor. xi. 25, and given in the Gospel narrative of the Last Supper (see Matt. xxvi. 28), and to Jer. xxxi. 31. The

the spirit giveth life.¹ <sup>Or, quick-
eneth.</sup>
(⁷) But if the ministration
of death, written *and* en-

graven in stones, was
glorious, so that the chil-
dren of Israel could not

Greek omits the article before all three words, "of a new covenant, one not of a written letter, but of spirit." The idea of "spirit" comes from Ezek. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26, 27.

For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.—The word "letter" (*gramma*) stands, not for what we call the literal meaning of Scripture, as contrasted with one which is allegorical or spiritual, but for the whole written code or law of Judaism. St. Paul does not contrast the literal meaning of that code with the so-called mystical exposition of it (a view which has often led to wild and fantastic interpretations), but speaks of the written code as such. So the plural "the writings, the Scriptures" (*grammata*), are used of the sacred Books of Israel (John v. 47; 2 Tim. iii. 15), and the scribes (*grammateis*) were those who interpreted the writings. The contrast between the "letter" in this sense and the "spirit" is a familiar thought with St. Paul (Rom. ii. 27—29; vii. 6). Of this written code St. Paul says that it "killeth." The statement seems startlingly bold, and he does not here stop to explain its meaning. What he means is, however, stated with sufficient fulness in the three Epistles written about this time (1 Cor. xv. 56; Gal. iii. 10, 21; Rom. vii. 9—11; viii. 2, 3, the references being given in the chronological order of the Epistles). The work of the Law, from St. Paul's view, is to make men conscious of sin. No

outward command, even though it come from God, and is "holy, and just, and good" (Rom. vii. 12), can, as such, do more than that. What was wanting was the life-giving power of the Spirit. The word here (as in Rom. ii. 27; vii. 6) appears to hover between the sense of "spirit" as representing any manifestation of the Divine Life that gives life—in which sense the words of Christ are "spirit and life" (John vi. 63), and Christ Himself is a "quickening spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45, and verse 17 of this chapter)—and the more distinctly personal sense in which St. Paul speaks of "the Spirit," the Holy Spirit, and to which we commonly limit our use of the name of "the Holy Ghost" in His relation to the Father and Son. Of that Spirit St. Paul says that "it quickens:" it can rouse into life not only the slumbering conscience, as the Law had done, but the higher spiritual element in man—can give it strength to will, the healthy energy of new affections, new prayers, new impulses. If we cannot suppose St. Paul to have been acquainted with our Lord's teaching, as recorded in John vi. 63, the coincidence of thought is, at any rate, singularly striking.

(⁷) But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious.—More accurately, *engraved in a writing* (i.e., in a written formula) upon stones. The word for "writing" is the same as the "letter" of the preceding verse,

stedfastly behold the face
of Moses for the glory of

his countenance; which
glory was to be done away:

and the whole might, perhaps, be best translated *if the ministration of death in the letter, engraved upon stones, was glorious*. The English version, by using the two participles, creates a false antithesis between "written" and "engraved," and misses the sequence of thought indicated by the continued use of the word for "letter" or "writing." For "was glorious," more accurately, *came into being with glory*. The thoughts of the Apostle have travelled to the record of the circumstances connected with the giving of the Law as the foundation of the first covenant, and of them he proceeds to speak fully. We can almost picture him to ourselves as taking up his LXX. version of the Law and reproducing its very words and thoughts.

So that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold . . .—The narrative in Ex. xxxiv. 29—35 records that when Moses came down from the mount with the second tables of stone, "the skin of his face shone," and the "people were afraid to draw nigh unto him." The English version—that "*till* Moses had done speaking with them he put a veil on his face," and that "when he went in before the Lord he took it off until he came out"—suggests the thought that he appeared to the people, after the first manifestation of the unconscious glory, as a veiled prophet. It is doubtful, however, whether this is the natural meaning of the Hebrew, and Ex. xxxiv. 35 repeats the statement that the Israelites saw the glory. The LXX., Vulgate, and most modern versions

give, "When he ceased speaking he put a veil on his face." They saw the brightness, they shrank from it in awe, they were not allowed to watch it to the end and gaze on its disappearance. This was the sequence of facts that St. Paul had in his thoughts, and which he certainly found in the LXX.; and it is of this, accordingly, that he speaks. The children of Israel could not bear to look on the glory, even though it was perishing and evanescent. The English rendering, "which glory was to be done away," reads into the participle a gerundial force that does not properly belong to it; and it may be noted that it is the first of the great English versions that does so, the others giving, "which is made void," or "which is done away." It would be better expressed, perhaps, by, *which was in the act of passing away*. The Greek word is the same as that on which our translators have rung so many changes in 1 Cor. xiii. 8—11. It was a favourite word with St. Paul at this period of his life, occurring twenty-two times in 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, and three times only in his other Epistles.

It may be noted that the Vulgate rendering of Ex. xxxiv. 29, "*ignorabat quod cornuta esset facies ejus*" ("he knew not that his face was horned"), has given rise to the representations of Moses with horns, or rays of light taking the place of horns, as in Michael Angelo's statue in the church of San Pietro in Vincoli at Rome, and pictorial representations generally.

(8) how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? (9) For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness

exceed in glory. (10) For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. (11) For if that which is done away was glorious,

(8) How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?—Better, *be more in glory*. The ministration of the spirit—that which has spirit for its characteristic attribute, and proceeds from the Spirit, and imparts it to others—is that which St. Paul claims as his ministry. The glory of the new covenant must be as much above the glory of the old, as the living, life-giving Spirit is above the dead and death-bringing code which he speaks of as the “letter.”

(9) If the ministration of condemnation be glory . . .—Many of the better MSS. give the reading, *if there be glory to the ministry of condemnation*. The latter phrase takes the place here of “the ministry of death” in verse 7. The “letter,” the “written law,” as such, works death, because it brings with it the condemnation which awaits transgressors. It holds out to them the pattern of a righteousness which they have never had, and cannot of themselves attain unto, and passes its sentence on them as transgressors. Contrasted with it is the ministration which has “righteousness” as its object and result, and therefore as its characteristic attribute—the “law of the Spirit of life”—a law written in the heart, working not condemnation, but righteousness and peace and joy (Rom. viii. 1—4).

(10) For even that which was made glorious had no glory.—More accurately, St. Paul, reproducing the very tense which he found in the LXX. of Ex. xxxiv. 35, *that which had been glorified has not been glorified—i.e.*, has lost its glory.

In this respect . . .—The phrase is the same as in chap. ix. 3; 1 Pet. iv. 16. The English expresses it very fairly. “In this point,” as compared with the gospel, the Law has lost its glory; it is thrown into the shade by “the glory that excelleth.” The imagery seems to bring before us the symbolic meaning of the Transfiguration. Moses and Elijah appear in glory, but the glory of the Son of Man surpasses that of either. The word for “excelleth” may be noted as peculiar to St. Paul among the writers of the New Testament.

(11) For if that which is done away . . .—The Greek participle is in the present tense, “being done away,” or “failing,” expressing the same thought as the “decaying and waxing old” of Heb. viii. 13. The contrast between the transient and the permanent is expressed by the same Greek words as in 1 Cor. xiii. 8—11.

Glorious.—Literally, *through glory*, seen, as it were, through a medium of glory which surrounded it. The second “in glory” is meant,

much more that which remaineth *is* glorious. ⁽¹²⁾ Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness¹ of speech: ⁽¹³⁾ and not as Moses, *which*

¹Or, boldness.

put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that

Chap. iii, 13—18. The veil, once on the face of Moses, now on the heart of Israel, shall one day be withdrawn.

probably, to express a state of greater permanence.

⁽¹²⁾ **Seeing then that we have such hope.**—The “hope” is in substance the same as the “confidence” of verse 4; but the intervening thoughts have carried his mind on to the future as well as the present. He has a hope for them and for himself, which is more than a trust in his own sufficiency.

We use great plainness of speech.—The word so rendered expresses strictly the openness which says all, in which there is no reticence or reserve. It stands in contrast with the “corrupting the word” of chap. ii. 17, and answers to the Apostle’s claim to have “kept back nothing that was profitable” in Acts xx. 20. We, he practically says, need no veil.

⁽¹³⁾ **And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face.**—The Apostle, it must be remembered, has in his thoughts either the LXX. version of Ex. xxxiv. 33, or an interpretation of the Hebrew answering to that version. (See Note on verse 7.) What was the object of this putting on of the veil? The English version of that text suggests that it was to hide the brightness from which they shrank. But the interpretation which St. Paul follows presents a very different view. Moses put the veil over his face that *they might not see the end, the fading away* of that transitory glory. For them it was as though

it were permanent and unfading. They did not see—this is St. Paul’s way of allegorising the fact stated—that the whole system of the Law, as symbolised by that brightness, had but a fugitive and temporary being.

Could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.—Better, *look on the end of that which was perishing.* Literally, the words state the fact, they could not see how the perishing glory ended. In the interpretation of the parable St. Paul seems to say that what was true of those older Israelites was true also of their descendants. They could not see the true end of the perishing system of the Law, its aim, purport, consummation. There is, perhaps, though most recent commentators have refused to recognise it, a half-allusive reference to the thought expressed in Rom. x. 4, that “Christ is the *end* of the law for righteousness;” or, in 1 Tim. i. 5, that “the *end* of the commandment is love out of a pure heart.” Had their eyes been open, they would have seen in the fading away of the old glory of the decaying “letter” the dawn of a glory that excelled it. And in the thought that this was the true “end” of the Law we find the ground for the Apostle’s assertion that he used great plainness of speech. He had no need to veil his face or his meaning, for he had no fear lest the glory of the gospel

which is abolished : ⁽¹⁴⁾ but their minds were blinded : for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the

old testament ; which *veil* is done away in Christ. ⁽¹⁵⁾ But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

of which he was a minister should fade away.

⁽¹⁴⁾ But their minds were blinded.—The Greek verb expresses strictly the callousness of a nerve that has become insensible, as in Mark vi. 52 ; viii. 17 ; Rom. xi. 7. Here, as applied to the faculties of perception, “blinded” is, perhaps, a legitimate rendering.

Remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament . . .—The words are better translated: *the same veil remaineth in the reading of the old covenant ; the fact not being revealed (i.e., by the removal of the veil) that it (the old covenant) is being done away in Christ.* The figure is passing through a kind of dissolving change. There is still a veil between the hearers of the Law and its true meaning ; but the veil is no longer on the face of the law-giver, but on their hearts ; and the reason of this is, that, the veil not being withdrawn, they do not see that the glory of the older covenant is done away by the brightness of the new. It is doing violence to the context to refer to the veil the words “is done away,” which through the whole passage is applied to the Law itself ; and in verse 16 a new and appropriate word is used for the withdrawal of the veil. It is, the Apostle says, because the veil of prejudice and tradition hinders them from seeing the truth that the Jews of his own time still think of the Law as per-

manent, instead of looking on it as passing through a process of extinction. The “Old Testament” is clearly used, not, as in the modern sense, for the whole volume of the Law—Prophets and Psalms—but specially for the law which was the basis of the covenant. The other, but less adequate, rendering would be, *the veil remaineth . . . unwith-drawn, for it (the veil) is abolished in Christ.* If there was any authority for giving an active force to the middle form of the verb, we might translate with a perfectly satisfactory meaning, *the same veil remaineth . . . not revealing the fact that it is being done away in Christ ;* but unfortunately there is no such authority. The English, “which veil is done away,” fails to give, in any case, the true force of the Greek.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Even unto this day, when Moses is read . . .—The mention of Moses is decisive as to the meaning of the “Old Testament,” or *covenant*, in the previous verse. When he, as being read, speaks to the people now, St. Paul reasons, there is still a veil between him and them ; but it is, to use modern phrase, subjective and not objective—on their heart, and not over his face. It has been suggested that there may be a reference to the *Tallith*, or four-cornered veil, which was worn by the Jews in their synagogues when they prayed or listened to the Law, as a symbol of reverence, like that of the

⁽¹⁶⁾ Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there

seraphim in Isa. vi. 2, who covered their faces with their wings. It is, however, doubtful whether the use of the *Tallith* goes back so far; and even if its antiquity were proved, it has to be remembered that though it covered the head and ears—the symbol, perhaps, of seclusion—it did not cover the face.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord.—Better, *But when it shall turn*. The allegorising process is still carried on. Moses removed the veil when he went into the tabernacle to commune with the Lord (Ex. xxxiv. 35); so, in the interpretation of the parable, the veil shall be taken away when the heart of Israel shall turn, in the might of a real conversion, to the Lord of Israel. The very word for “turn” is taken from the same context: “Moses called them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation turned to him” (Ex. xxxiv. 31).

⁽¹⁷⁾ Now the Lord is that Spirit.—Better, *the Lord is the Spirit*. The words seem at first inconsistent with the formulated precision of the Church’s creeds, distinguishing the persons of the Godhead from each other. We apply the term “Lord,” it is true, as a predicate of the Holy Spirit when we speak, as in the Nicene Creed, of the Holy Ghost as “the Lord, and Giver of life,” or say, as in the pseudo-Athanasian, that “the Holy Ghost is Lord;” but using the term “the Lord” as the subject of a sentence, those who have been trained in the theology

of those creeds would hardly say, “The Lord” (the term commonly applied to the Father in the Old Testament, and to the Son in the New) “is the Spirit.” We have, accordingly, to remember that St. Paul did not contemplate the precise language of these later formularies. He had spoken, in verse 16, of Israel’s “turning to the Lord:” he had spoken also of his own work as “the ministration of the Spirit” (verse 8). To turn to the Lord—*i.e.*, the Lord Jesus—was to turn to Him whose essential being, as one with the Father, was Spirit (John iv. 24), who was in one sense *the Spirit*, the life-giving energy, as contrasted with the letter that killeth. So we may note that the attribute of “quickenings,” which is here specially connected with the name of the Spirit (verse 6), is in John v. 21 connected also with the names of the Father and the Son. The thoughts of the Apostle move in a region in which the Lord Jesus, not less than the Holy Ghost, is contemplated as Spirit. This gives, it is believed, the true sequence of St. Paul’s thoughts. The whole verse may be considered as parenthetical, explaining that the “turning to the Lord” coincides with the “ministration of the Spirit.” Another interpretation, inverting the terms, and taking the sentence as “the Spirit is the Lord,” is tenable grammatically, and was probably adopted by the framers of the expanded form of the Nicene Creed at the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 380). It is obvious,

is liberty. ⁽¹⁸⁾ But we all, | as in a glass the glory of
with open face beholding | the Lord, are changed

however, that the difficulty of tracing the sequence of thought becomes much greater on this method of interpretation.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.—The Apostle returns to the more familiar language. To turn to the Lord, who is Spirit, is to turn to *the* Spirit which is His, which dwelt in Him, and which He gives. And he assumes, almost as an axiom of the spiritual life, that the presence of that Spirit gives freedom, as contrasted with the bondage of the letter—freedom from slavish fear, freedom from the guilt and burden of sin, freedom from the tyranny of the Law. Compare the aspect of the same thought in the two Epistles nearly contemporary with this:—the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, those children being partakers of a glorious liberty (Rom. viii. 16—21); the connection between walking in the Spirit, and being called to liberty (Gal. v. 13—16). The underlying sequence of thought would seem to be something like this: “Israel, after all, with all its seeming greatness and high prerogatives, was in bondage, because it had the letter, not the Spirit; we who have the Spirit can claim our citizenship in the Jerusalem which is above, and which is free” (Gal. iv. 24—31).

⁽¹⁸⁾ **But we all, with open face.**—Better, *And we all, with unveiled face.*—The relation of this sentence to the foregoing is one of sequence and not of contrast, and it is obviously important to maintain in the English, as in the Greek, the

continuity of allusive thought involved in the use of the same words as in verse 14. “We,” says the Apostle, after the parenthesis of verse 17, “are free, and therefore we have no need to cover our faces, as slaves do before the presence of a great king. There is no veil over our hearts, and therefore none over the eyes with which we exercise our faculty of spiritual vision. We are as Moses was when he stood before the Lord with the veil withdrawn.” If the *Tallith* were in use at this time in the synagogues of the Jews, there might also be a reference to the contrast between that ceremonial usage and the practice of Christian assemblies. (Comp. 1 Cor. xi. 7; but see Note on verse 15.)

Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord.—The Greek participle which answers to the first five words belongs to a verb derived from the Greek for “mirror” (identical in meaning, though not in form, with that of 1 Cor. xiii. 12). The word is not a common word, and St. Paul obviously had some special reason for choosing it, instead of the more familiar words, “seeing,” “beholding,” “gazing stedfastly;” and it is accordingly important to ascertain its meaning. There is no doubt that the active voice signifies to “make a reflection in a mirror.” There is as little doubt that the middle voice signifies to look at one’s self in a mirror. Thus Socrates advised drunkards and the young to “look at themselves in a mirror,” that they might learn the disturbing effects of passion (*Diog.*

into the same image from ^{1 Or. of} the Lord | by the Spirit of the
glory to glory, even as ^{the} Spirit. | Lord.¹

Laert. ii. 33 ; iii. 39). This meaning, however, is inapplicable here; and the writings of Philo, who in one passage (*de Migr. Abrah.* p. 403) uses it in this sense of the priests who saw their faces in the polished brass of the lavers of purification, supply an instance of its use with a more appropriate meaning. Paraphrasing the prayer of Moses in *Exod.* xxxiii. 18, he makes him say: "Let me not *behold* thy form (*idea*) mirrored (using the very word which we find here) in any created thing, but in Thee, the very God" (2 *Allegor.* p. 79). And this is obviously the force of the word here. The sequence of thought is, it is believed, this:—St. Paul was about to contrast the veiled vision of Israel with the unveiled gaze of the disciples of Christ; but he remembers what he had said in 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12 as to the limitation of our present knowledge, and therefore, instead of using the more common word, which would convey the thought of a fuller knowledge, falls back upon the unusual word, which exactly expresses the same thought as that passage had expressed. "We behold the glory of the Lord, of the Jehovah of the Old Testament, but it is not, as yet, face to face, but as mirrored in the person of Christ." The following words, however, show that the word suggested yet another thought to him. When we see the sun as reflected in a polished mirror of brass or silver, the light illumines us: we are, as it were, transfigured by it and reflect its brightness. That this meaning lies in the word itself cannot, it is true, be proved,

and it is, perhaps, hardly compatible with the other meaning which we have assigned to it; but it is perfectly conceivable that the word should suggest the fact, and the fact be looked on as a parable.

Are changed into the same image.—Literally, *are being transfigured into the same image*. The verb is the same (*metemorphôthê*) as that used in the account of our Lord's transfiguration in *Matt.* xvii. 2, *Mark* ix. 2; and it may be noted that it is used of the transformation (a *metamorphosis* more wondrous than any poet had dreamt of) of the Christian into the likeness of Christ in the nearly contemporary passage (*Rom.* xii. 2). The thought is identical with that of *Rom.* viii. 29: "Conformed to the likeness" (or *image*) "of His Son." We see God mirrored in Christ, who is "the image of the invisible God" (*Col.* i. 15), and as we gaze, with our face unveiled, on that mirror, a change comes over us. The image of the old evil Adam-nature (*1 Cor.* xv. 49) becomes less distinct, and the image of the new man, after the likeness of Christ, takes its place. We "faintly give back what we adore," and man, in his measure and degree, becomes, as he was meant to be at his creation, like Christ, "the image of the invisible God." Human thought has, we may well believe, never pictured what in simple phrase we describe as growth in grace, the stages of progressive sanctification, in the language of a nobler poetry.

From glory to glory.—This mode of expressing completeness is

CHAPTER IV.—

(1) Therefore seeing we have
 this ministry,
 as we have re-
 ceived mercy,
 we faint not ;
 (2) but have re-

Chap. iv. 1—6.
 The gospel is
 hidden from
 those whose
 minds are
 blinded.

A.D. 60.

1 Gr.
shame.

nounced the hidden things
 of dishonesty,¹ not walking
 in craftiness, nor handling
 the word of God deceit-
 fully ; but by manifestation
 of the truth commending
 ourselves to every man's

characteristic of St. Paul, as in Rom. i. 17, "from faith to faith"; 2 Cor. ii. 16, "of death to death." The thought conveyed is less that of passing from one stage of glory to another than the idea that this transfiguring process, which begins with glory, will find its consummation also in glory. The glory hereafter will be the crown of the glory here. The beatific vision will be possible only for those who have been thus transfigured. "We know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2).

Even as by the Spirit of the Lord.—The Greek presents the words in a form which admits of three possible renderings. (1) That of the English version ; (2) that in the margin, "as of the Lord the Spirit;" (3) as of the Lord of the Spirit. The exceptional order in which the two words stand, which must be thought as adopted with a purpose, is in favour of (2) and (3) rather than of (1), and the fact that the writer had just dictated the words "the Lord is the Spirit" in favour of (2) rather than (3). The form of speech is encompassed with the same difficulties as before, but the leading thought is clear: "The process of transformation originates with the Lord (*i.e.*, with Christ), but it is with Him, not 'after the flesh' as a mere teacher and prophet

(chap. v. 16), not as the mere giver of another code of ethics, another 'letter' or writing, but as a spiritual power and presence, working upon our spirits. In the more technical language of developed theology, it is through the Holy Spirit that the Lord, the Christ, makes His presence manifest to our human spirit."

IV.

(1) Therefore seeing we have this ministry.—The ministry referred to is that of which such great things have just been said: the ministry of the new covenant, of the Spirit, of righteousness, of glory (chap. iii. 6, 8, 9). Two thoughts rise up in the Apostle's mind in immediate association with this: (1) His own utter unworthiness of it, which finds expression in "as we have received mercy" (comp. 1 Tim. i. 12); and (2) the manifold trials and difficulties in the midst of which it had to be accomplished. The very fact that he has been called to such a work is, however, a source of strength. He cannot faint or show cowardice in discharging it.

(2) But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty.—Better, *the hidden things of shame*. We fail at first to see the connection of the self-vindication which follows with what has gone before,

conscience in the sight of God. ⁽³⁾ But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: ⁽⁴⁾ in whom

the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel

and have once more to go below the surface. He has defended himself against the charge of "fickleness" (chap. i. 17), but another charge, more disturbing still, had also been brought against him. Men had talked, so he had been told, of his "craftiness" (comp. chap. xii. 16), and to that imputation, perhaps also to another covered by the same general term (see Eph. v. 12, and Notes on chap. vii. 1, 2), he now addresses himself. The English word "dishonesty" is used in its older and wider sense. So in Wiclif we have "honest" members of the body in 1 Cor. xii. 23, and in Shakespeare and old English writers generally, and in popular usage even now, "honesty" in a woman is equivalent to chastity. The context shows, however, that St. Paul speaks chiefly not of sensual vices, nor yet of dishonesty in the modern sense of the word, but of subtlety, underhand practices, and the like. Men seem to have tried to fasten his reputation on the two horns of a dilemma. Either his change of plan indicated a discreditable fickleness, or if not that, something more discreditable still.

Nor handling the word of God deceitfully.—The word is nearly equivalent to the "corrupting" or "adulterating" of chap. ii. 17. In "commending ourselves" we trace a return to the topic of chap. iii. 1. Yes, he acknowledged that he did "commend himself," but it was by the manifestation of

truth as the only means that he adopted; and he appealed not to men's tastes, or prejudices, or humours, but to that in them which was highest—their conscience, their sense of right and wrong; and in doing this he felt that he was speaking and acting in the presence of the great Judge, who is also the searcher of hearts.

⁽³⁾ **But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.**—Better, in both cases, as keeping the sequence of thought, *has been veiled*, instead of "is hid," and *among them that are perishing*. (See Note on chap. ii. 15.) He cannot close his eyes to the fact that the glorious words of chap. iii. 18 are only partially realised. There are some to whom even the gospel of Christ appears as shrouded by a veil. And these are not, as some have thought, Judaising teachers only or chiefly, but the whole class of those who are at present *on the way to perish*, not knowing God, counting themselves unworthy of eternal life. The force of the present participle, as not excluding the thought of future change, is again to be carefully noted.

⁽⁴⁾ **In whom the god of this world . . .**—The word sounds somewhat startling as a description of the devil, but it has parallels in "the prince of this world" (John xiv. 30), "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2). The world which "lieth in wickedness," perhaps *in the evil one* (1 John v.

of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. ⁽⁵⁾ For we preach not ourselves, but Christ

Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁽⁶⁾ For God, who commanded the light

19), worships the spirit of hate and falsehood and selfishness, and in so doing it practically deifies the devil. And the work of that god of this world is directly in antagonism to that of God. He seeks to lead men back from light to darkness. "*He blinded*" (the Greek tense indicates an act in past time without necessarily including the idea of its continuance in the present) "the minds of the *unbelievers*." The noun is probably used, as in 1 Cor. vi. 6; vii. 12—15; x. 27; xiv. 22—24, with a special reference to the outside heathen world. Their spiritual state was, St. Paul seems to say, lower than that of Israel. The veil was over the heart of the one; the very organs of spiritual perception were blinded in the other.

Lest the light of the glorious gospel.—Better, *to the end that the radiance* (or, *light-giving power*) *of the gospel of the glory of God* . . . The words describe not merely a purpose, but a result. The word for "light" here, and in verse 6, is not the simple noun commonly used, but a secondary form, derived from the verb "to give light" or "illumine." The English version "glorious," though a partial equivalent for the Greek idiom of the genitive of a characteristic attribute, lacks the vigour and emphasis of the original, which expresses the thought that the gospel is not only glorious itself, but shares in the glory of Christ, and has that for its theme and object. But even that gospel may

fail of its purpose. The blind cannot see even the brightness of the noon-day sun. The eye of the soul has to receive sight first. So, in the mission to the Gentiles given to the Apostle on his conversion, his first work was "to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light" (Acts xxvi. 18).

Christ, who is the image of God.—The Greek word is used in the LXX. of Gen. i. 26 for the image of God, after which man was created. So in 1 Cor. xi. 7 man is spoken of as "the image and glory of God." (Comp. Col. i. 15; iii. 10.) In Heb. x. 1 it stands as intermediate between the object and the shadow, far plainer than the latter, yet not identical with the former, however adequately representing it.

Should shine unto them.—Literally, *should irradiate, or cast its beams upon them*.

⁽⁵⁾ **For we preach not ourselves.**—The words, like those about "commending ourselves," imply a reference to something that had been said. He was charged with being egotistic in his preaching, perhaps with special reference to passages like 1 Cor. ii. 1—4; iii. 1—10; iv. 11—13. He indignantly repudiates that charge. "Christ Jesus" had been all along the subject of his preaching. (Comp. 1 Cor. ii. 2.) So far as he had spoken of himself at all, it had been as a minister and servant for their sake (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23; ix. 19).

⁽⁶⁾ **For God, who commanded**

to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. ⁽⁷⁾ But we have

this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not

Chap. iv. 7—11. Contrast between the greatness of the treasure and the frailty of the earthen vessel.

the light to shine out of darkness.—Better, *For it is God who commanded . . . that hath shined.* The whole verse is in manifest antithesis to verse 4. The god of this world did his work of blinding; the true God called light out of darkness. Here there is obviously a reference to the history of the creation in Gen. i. 3.

Hath shined.—The English tense is allowable, but the Greek is literally *shone*, as referring to a definite fact in the past life of the Apostle and other Christians at the very time of their conversion.

In the face of Jesus Christ.—Some MSS. give “Christ Jesus,” others “Christ.” The clause is added as emphasising the fact that the glory of God is for us manifested only in the face (or, possibly, in the *person*, with a somewhat wider sense; see Note on chap. i. 11) of Christ, as it was seen by the Israelites in the face of Moses. The word for “give light” is the same as that rendered “radiance” in verse 4.

⁽⁷⁾ **But we have this treasure in earthen vessels.**—The imagery here begins to change. The treasure is “the knowledge of the glory of God” as possessed by the Apostle. It was the practice of Eastern kings, who stored up their treasures of gold and silver, to fill jars of earthenware with coin or bullion (Herod. iii. 103. Comp. also Jer. xxxii. 14). “So,” St. Paul

says, in a tone of profound humility, “it is with us. In these frail bodies of ours—‘earthen vessels’—we have that priceless treasure.” The passage is instructive, as showing that the “vessels of wood and of earth” in 2 Tim. ii. 20 are not necessarily identical with those made for dishonour. The words have probably a side glance at the taunts that had been thrown out as to his bodily infirmities. “Be it so,” he says; “we admit all that can be said on that score, and it is that men may see that the excellence of the power which we exercise comes from God, and not from ourselves.” The words that follow, contrasting sufferings and infirmities in their manifold variety with the way in which they were borne through God’s strengthening grace, show this to be the true underlying sequence of thought.

⁽⁸⁾ **We are troubled on every side.**—The Greek presents all the clauses in a participial form, in apposition with the “we” with which verse 7 opens. The careful antithesis in each case requires some modification of the English version in order to be at all adequately expressed. *Hemmed-in in everything, yet not straitened for room; perplexed, yet not baffled;* or, as it has been rendered, less literally, but with great vividness, *bewildered, but not benighted.* The imagery in both clauses belongs to the life of the soldier on active service.

of us. ⁽⁸⁾ *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair;¹ ⁽⁹⁾ persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; ⁽¹⁰⁾ always

¹ Or, not altogether without help, or, means.

bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. ⁽¹¹⁾ For we which live are always delivered unto death for

⁽⁹⁾ **Persecuted, but not forsaken.**—Better, perhaps, as expressing in both terms of the clause the condition of a soldier on a field of battle, *pursued, yet not abandoned*. The next clause is again distinctly military, or, perhaps, agonistic; *stricken down* (as the soldier by some dart or javelin), *yet not perishing*. In the "faint, yet pursuing," of Judges viii. 4, we have an antithesis of the same kind in a narrative of actual warfare.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.**—The word for "dying" (again, probably, a distinctly medical term) is literally "*deadness*," "*the state of a corpse*." Comp. Rom. iv. 19 for the word itself, and Rom. iv. 19, Col. iii. 5 ("mortify"), Heb. xi. 12 ("as good as dead") for the cognate verb. The word describes, as by a bold hyperbole, the condition of one whose life was one long conflict with disease: "dying daily" (1 Cor. xv. 31); having in himself "the sentence," or, possibly, *the very symptoms*, "of death" (2 Cor. i. 8, 9). He was, as it were, dragging about with him what it was scarcely an exaggeration to call a "living corpse;" and this he describes as "the dying" (or *death-state*) "of the Lord Jesus." The thought implied in these words is not formally defined. What seems implied is that it brought him nearer to the like-

ness of the Crucified; he was thus made a sharer in the sufferings of Christ, filling up what was lacking in the measure of those sufferings (Col. i. 24), dying as He died, crucified with Him (Gal. ii. 20). It may be noted that Philo (2 *Alleg.* p. 73) uses almost the same word to express the natural frailty and weakness of man's body—"What, then, is our life but the daily carrying about of a corpse?"

That the life also of Jesus . . .—The life of Jesus is the life of the new man, "created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 24). It is not that the Apostle is merely looking forward to the resurrection life, when we shall bear the image of the heavenly; he feels that the purpose of his sufferings now is that the higher life may, even in this present state, be manifested in and through them; and accordingly, as if to guard against the possibility of any other interpretation, he changes the phrase in the next verse, and for "our body" substitutes "our mortal flesh."

⁽¹¹⁾ **We which live are always delivered unto death.**—Better, *are always being delivered*. The opening clause emphasises the paradox of the statement: "We live, and yet our life is a series of continual deaths. We are delivered as to a daily execution." The words are often interpreted—but, it is

Jesus' sake, that the life
also of Jesus might be made
manifest in
our mortal
flesh. ⁽¹²⁾ So
then death
worketh in us,
but life in you.

Chap. iv. 12—17.
Sufferings and
death work out
life for the
hearers and eter-
nal glory for the
preacher.

^a Ps. 116.
10.

⁽¹³⁾ We having the same
spirit of faith, according as
it is written, I believed,^a
and therefore have I
spoken; ^a we also believe,
and therefore speak;
⁽¹⁴⁾ knowing that he which
raised up the Lord Jesus

believed, wrongly—of the dangers and sufferings caused by persecution. The whole tenor of the Epistle suggests rather (see Note on preceding verse) the thought of the daily struggle with the pain and weakness of disease. It has been urged that the words “for Jesus' sake” determine the sense of the context as referring to the trials of persecution. The position is, however, scarcely tenable. The words, of course, as such, include the idea of such trials; but a man who laboured ceaselessly, as St. Paul laboured, as in a daily struggle with death, and yet went on working for the gospel of Christ, might well describe himself as bearing what he bore “for Jesus' sake.”

In our mortal flesh.—The reason for the change in the last two words has been given in the Note on the preceding verse. The very “flesh” which, left to itself, is the source of corruption, moral and physical, is by the “excellence of the power of God” made the vehicle of manifesting the divine life. As has been well said: “God exhibits DEATH in the *living* that He may also exhibit LIFE in the *dying*” (Alford).

⁽¹²⁾ **So then death worketh in us, but life in you.**—“Life” is here clearly used in its higher spiritual sense, as in the preceding verse. We trace in the words

something of the same pathos as in 1 Cor. iv. 8—13, without the irony which is there perceptible. “You,” he seems to say, “reap the fruit of my sufferings. The ‘dying’ is all my own; you know nothing of that conflict with pain and weakness; but the ‘life’ which is the result of that experience works in you as well as in me, and finds in you the chief sphere of its operation.”

⁽¹³⁾ **We having the same spirit of faith . . .**—The “spirit of faith” is not definitely the Holy Spirit, but the human spirit in fellowship with the Divine, and therefore characterised by faith. And then, as if pleading that this faith must find utterance, he falls back on the words that are in his mind, almost as an axiom, from Ps. cxvi. 10: “I believed, and therefore I spoke.” It will be noted that the context of the words quoted is eminently in harmony with the feelings to which the Apostle has just given expression: “The sorrows of death compassed me; the pains of hell gat hold of me. I found trouble and heaviness . . . I was brought low . . . Thou hast delivered my soul from death” (Ps. cxvi. 3—8). It is as though that Psalm had been his stay and comfort in the midst of his daily conflict with disease.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **Knowing that he which**

shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you. ⁽¹⁵⁾ For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving

of many redound to the glory of God. ⁽¹⁶⁾ For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.

raised up the Lord Jesus . . . —From his present experience of the triumph of life over death he passes to the future victory of which that triumph was the earnest. It is clear that he speaks here not of any deliverance from danger or disease, but of the resurrection of which he had spoken so fully in 1 Cor. xv. The better MSS. give *with Jesus*, the Received text having apparently originated in a desire to adapt the words to the fact that Christ had already risen. St. Paul's thoughts, however, dwell so continually on his fellowship with Christ that he thinks of the future resurrection of the body, no less than of the spiritual resurrection which he has already experienced (Eph. ii. 6), as not only wrought *by* Him but associated *with* Him; and in this hope of his he includes the Corinthians to whom he writes. It will then be seen, he trusts, that "life" has indeed been "working" in them. The verb "present," as describing the work of Christ, and, we may add, his own work as a minister of Christ, under this aspect, is a favourite one with St. Paul (chap. xi. 2; Eph. v. 27; Col. i. 22).

⁽¹⁵⁾ For all things are for your sakes.—We can scarcely doubt that he thinks in his own mind, and intends to remind them, of the glorious words of 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

That the abundant grace might through the thanks-

giving of many . . .—More accurately, *that grace, having abounded by means of the greater part of you, may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.* The passage is nearly parallel to chap. i. 11. He takes for granted that the grace which he has received has been given in answer to the prayers, if not of all the Corinthians, yet at least of the majority (comp. the same distinction drawn in chap. ii. 6), and he is sure that it will, in its turn, cause their thanksgiving to be as copious as their prayers. The passage is, however, obscure in its construction, and two other renderings of the Greek are grammatically possible, which is more than can be said of the English version: (1) "that grace having abounded, may, for the sake of the thanksgiving of the greater part of you, redound . . ."; and (2) "that grace having abounded, may, by means of the greater part of you, cause thanksgiving to redound . . ." What has been given above is, it is believed, the closest to St. Paul's meaning.

⁽¹⁶⁾ For which cause we faint not.—He returns, after a long digression, to the assertion with which chap. iv. had opened, but in repeating the words he enters once again on the same line of thought, but under a different succession of imagery. The "outward man," the material framework of the body, is undergoing a gradual process of

(17) For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; (18) while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen :

A.D. 60.

for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

CHAPTER V.—⁽¹⁾ For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle

decay, but the "inward man," the higher spiritual life, is "day by day" passing through successive stages of renewal, gaining fresh energies. This verb also, and its derivative "renewal," are specially characteristic of St. Paul. (Comp. Rom. xii. 2; Col. iii. 10; Tit. iii. 5.) The verb in Eph. iv. 23, though not the same, is equivalent in meaning.

(17) For our light affliction . . .—More accurately, *the present lightness of our affliction*. This is at once more literally in accord with the Greek, and better sustains the balanced antithesis of the clauses.

A far more exceeding . . .—The Greek phrase is adverbial rather than adjectival: *worketh for us exceedingly, exceedingly*. After the Hebrew idiom of expressing intensity by the repetition of the same word (used of this very word "exceedingly" in Gen. vii. 19; xvii. 2), he seeks to accumulate one phrase upon another (literally, *according to excess unto excess*) to express his sense of the immeasurable glory which he has in view.

(18) While we look not at the things which are seen.—The "while we look" is, according to the Greek idiom, the condition of what had been stated in the preceding verse. The "look" is that of one who contemplates this or

that as the end or goal for which he strives. The "things that are seen" are, of course, all the incidents and circumstances of the present life; the "things that are not seen" (the very phrase of Heb. xi. 1) are the objects of faith, immortality, eternal life, the crown of righteousness, the beatific vision. These things are subject to no time-limits, and endure through all the ages of God's purposes. The others are but for a brief season, and then are as though they had not been. Striking as the words are, they find an echo in the words of a contemporary seeker after wisdom: "These things (the things which most men seek after)," says Seneca (*Ep.* 59), "are but objects of the imagination, and present a show of being but for a time . . . Let us give our minds to the things which are eternal."

V.

(1) For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved.—Better, *be broken up*, as more in harmony with the image of the tent. The words that follow give the secret of his calmness and courage in the midst of sufferings. He looks beyond them. A new train of imagery begins to rise in his mind; linked, perhaps, to that of the preceding

were dissolved, we have
 a building of
 God, an house
 not made
 with hands,

Chapter v. 1—8.
 The desire of the
 Apostle to be
 clothed with the
 spiritual.

eternal in the heavens.
 (2) For in this we groan,
 earnestly desiring to be
 clothed upon with our
 house which is from heaven:

chapter by the idea of the tabernacle; in part, perhaps, suggested by his own occupation as a tent-maker. His daily work was to him as a parable, and as his hands were making the temporary shelter for those who were travellers on earth, he thought of the house "not made with hands," eternal in the heavens. The comparison of the body to the house or dwelling-place of the spirit was, of course, natural, and common enough, and, it may be noted, was common among the Greek medical writers (as, *e.g.*, in Hippocrates, with whom St. Luke must have been familiar). The modification introduced by the idea of the "tent" emphasises the transitory character of the habitation. "What if the tent be broken up?" He, the true inward man, who dwells in the *tent*, will find a more permanent, an eternal, home in heaven: a *house* which comes from God. What follows shows that he is thinking of that spiritual body of which he had said such glorious things in 1 Cor. xv. 42—49.

(2) For in this we groan.—The "groaning" here, and in verse 4, may, of course, be a strong way of expressing the burden and the weariness of life, but taken in connection with what we have already seen in the Epistle, as pointing to the pressure of disease, we can scarcely fail to find in it the utterance of a personal or special suffering. (See Notes on chap. i. 8, 9.)

Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon.—The words have suggested the question whether St. Paul spoke of the "spiritual body" to be received at the resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 42—49), or of some intermediate stage of being, like that represented in the visions which poets have imagined and schoolmen theorised about, in the visions of the world of the dead in the *Odyssey* (book xi.), in the *Æneid* (book vi.), in Dante's *Divina Commedia* throughout. The answer to that question is found in the manifest fact that the intermediate state occupied but a subordinate position in St. Paul's thoughts. He would not speak over-confidently as to times and seasons, but his practical belief was that he, and most of those who were then living, would survive till the coming of the Lord (1 Cor. xv. 52; 1 Thess. iv. 15). He did not speculate accordingly about that state, but was content to rest in the belief that when absent from the body he would, in some more immediate sense, be present with the Lord. But the longing of his soul was, like that of St. John (Rev. xxii. 20), that the Lord might come quickly—that he might put on the new and glorious body without the pain and struggle of the "dissolution" of the old. In the words "be clothed upon" (literally, the verb being in the middle voice, *to clothe ourselves, to put on*) we have a slight change of imagery. The transition from the thought of a

(³) if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

(⁴) For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but

clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. (⁵) Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest

dwelling to that of a garment is, however, as in Ps. civ. 1—3, sufficiently natural. Each shelters the man. Each is separable from the man himself. Each answers in these respects to the body which invests the spirit.

(³) **If so be that being clothed . . .**—The Greek particles express rather more than the English phrase does, the truth of what follows. “If, as I believe, . . .” though not a translation, would be a fair paraphrase. The confident expectation thus expressed is that in the resurrection state the spirit will not be “naked,” will have, *i.e.*, its approximate garment, a body—clothing it with the attributes of distinct individuality. To the Greek, Hades was a world of shadows. Of Hades, as an intermediate state, St. Paul does not here speak, but he is sure that, in the state of glory which seemed to him so near, there will be nothing shadowy and unreal. The conviction is identical with that expressed in 1 Cor. xv. 35—49, against those who, admitting the immortality of the spirit, denied the resurrection of the body.

(⁴) **Being burdened.**—The whole passage is strikingly parallel to Wisd. ix. 15. “The corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.” *The Wisdom of Solomon*, which no writer quotes before

Clement of Rome, had probably been but recently written (possibly, as I believe, by Apollos), but St. Paul may well have become acquainted with it.

Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon.

—Better, *seeing that we do not seek to put off, but to put on a garment.* The thought is that of one who thinks that the Coming of the Lord is near. He wishes, as he expects, to remain till that Coming (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 15), to let the incorruptible body supervene on the corruptible, to be changed instead of dying. In this way, that which is mortal, subject to death, would be swallowed up of life, as death itself is swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. xv. 54).

(⁵) **He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing.**—Better, *he that wrought us for this very thing.* The “very thing” is the consummation, by whatever stages it may be reached, in which mortality is swallowed up of life. The whole work of God in the past—redemption, the new birth, the gifts and graces of the Spirit—was looking to this as its result. He had given the “earnest of the Spirit” (see Note on chap. i. 22) as a pledge of the future victory of the higher life over the lower. Every gift of spiritual energy not dependent upon the material organism was an assurance that that organism was an impediment to the free

of the Spirit. ⁽⁶⁾ Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the

Lord: ⁽⁷⁾ (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) ⁽⁸⁾ we are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be

action of the Spirit, which would one day be overcome. Our eyes, to take a striking instance, are limits, as well as instruments, to the spirits' power of perception.

⁽⁶⁾ **Therefore we are always confident.**—The Greek construction is participial: *being therefore always confident*; the sentence not being completed, but begun again with the same verb in verse 8. The two verbs for being "at home" and "absent" are not found elsewhere in the New Testament. The latter conveys the special idea of being absent from a man's home or country. The knowledge of the fact that follows is given as the ground of the Apostle's confidence. It makes him long for the change; not wishing for death, but content to accept it, as it will bring him nearer to his Lord.

⁽⁷⁾ **For we walk by faith, not by sight.**—Better, *and not by what we see* (or, *by appearance*). It seems almost sad to alter the wording of a familiar and favourite text, but it must be admitted that the word translated "sight" never means the faculty of seeing, but always the form and fashion of the thing seen. (Comp. Luke iii. 22; ix. 29; John v. 37.) The fact is taken for granted; and it comes as the proof that as we are, we are absent from the Lord. Now we believe in Him without seeing Him; hereafter we shall see Him face to face. Our life and conduct and our

"walk" in this world rest on our belief in the Unseen.

⁽⁸⁾ **We are confident, I say.**—The sentence begun in verse 6 and half broken off is resumed. The apparent sense is that he prefers death to life, because it brings him to the presence of his Lord. At first, this seems at variance with what he had said in verse 4, as to his not wishing to put off the garment of the present body. Here, however, the expression is not so strong. "We are *content*," he says, "if death comes before the Coming of the Lord, to accept death; for even though it does not bring with it the glory of the resurrection body, it does make us at home with Christ among the souls who wait for the resurrection." If there still seems to us some shadow of inconsistency, we may look upon it as the all but inevitable outcome of the state which he describes in Phil. i. 21—25, as "in a strait between two," and of the form of life in which he now finds himself. The whole passage presents a striking parallelism, and should be compared with this. This is, it is believed, an adequate explanation. Another may, however, be suggested. We find the Apostle speaking of certain "visions and revelations of the Lord," of which he says he knows not whether they are "in the body or out of the body" (chap. xii. 1). May we not think of him as referring here also to a like experience. "We take pleasure," he says, if we adopt this

present with the Lord.

Chap. 5. 9—11. (9) Wherefore we labour,¹ that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted

¹ Or, endeavour.

of him. (10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in his body, according to that he hath

interpretation, wholly or in part, "even here, in that state which takes us, as it were, out of the body, or seems to do so, because it is in that state that our eyes are open to gaze more clearly on the unseen glories of the eternal world." The fact that both verbs are in the tense which indicates a single act, and not a continuous state, is, as far as it goes, in favour of this explanation.

(9) **Wherefore we labour.**—Better, *we strive earnestly after*. The English "labour" is quite inadequate, the Greek expressing the thought of striving, as after some honour or prize. *Our ambition is that . . . we may be accepted* would be, perhaps, the best equivalent. For "accepted of him" read *acceptable*, or better, *well-pleasing to him*: the Greek word implying the quality on which acceptance depends, rather than the act itself.

(10) **For we must all appear.**—Better, *must all be made manifest*. The word is the same as that in 1 Cor. iv. 5 ("shall *make manifest* the counsels of the heart"), and is obviously used with reference to it. It may be noted that it is specially characteristic of this Epistle, in which it occurs nine times. The English version, which can only be ascribed to the unintelligent desire of the translators to vary for the sake of variation, besides being weak in itself, hinders the reader from seeing the reference to 1 Cor. iv. 5, or even the connection with

the "made manifest" in the next verse.

Before the judgment seat of Christ.—The Greek word shows the influence of Roman associations. In the Gospels the imagery of the last judgment is that of a king sitting on his *throne* (Matt. xxv. 31), and the word is the ever-recurring note of the Apocalypse, in which it occurs forty-nine times. Here the judgment-seat, or *bona*, is the tribunal of the Roman magistrate, raised high above the level of the *basilica*, or hall, at the end of which it stood. (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 19; Acts xii. 21; xviii. 12.) The word was transferred, when basilicas were turned into churches, to the throne of the bishop, and in classical Greek had been used, not for the judge's seat, but for the orator's pulpit.

That every one may receive the things done in his body.—It would have seemed almost impossible, but for the perverse ingenuity of the system-builders of theology, to evade the force of this unqualified assertion of the working of the universal law of retribution. No formula of justification by faith, or imputed righteousness, or pardon sealed in the blood of Christ, or priestly absolution, is permitted by St. Paul to mingle with his expectations of that great day, as revealing the secrets of men's hearts, awarding to each man according to his works. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"

done, whether *it be* good or bad. ⁽¹¹⁾ Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we

persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made

(Gal. vi. 7) was to him an eternal, unchanging law. The revelation of all that had been secret, for good or evil; the perfectly equitable measurement of each element of good or evil; the apportionment to each of that which, according to this measurement, each one deserves for the good and evil which he has done: that is the sum and substance of St. Paul's eschatology here and in 1 Cor. iv. 5. At times his language seems to point to a yet fuller manifestation of the divine mercy as following on that of the divine righteousness, as in Rom. v. 17, 18; xi. 32. At times, again, he speaks as if sins were washed away by baptism (1 Cor. vi. 11), or forgiven freely through faith in the atoning blood (Rom. iii. 25; Eph. ii. 13); as though the judgment of the great day was anticipated for all who are in Christ by the absence of an accuser able to sustain his charge (Rom. viii. 3), by the certainty of a sentence of acquittal (Rom. viii. 1). If we ask how we can reconcile these seeming inconsistencies, the answer is, that we are not wise in attempting to reconcile them by any logical formula or ingenious system. Here, as in other truths of the spiritual life—God's foreknowledge and man's free-will, God's election and man's power to frustrate it, God's absolute goodness and the permission of pain and evil—the highest truth is presented to us in phases that seem to issue in contradictory conclusions, and we must be content to accept that result as following

from the necessary limitations of human knowledge.

⁽¹¹⁾ **Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord.**—Better, *the fear of the Lord*. The English word "terror" is unduly strong, and hinders the reader from seeing that what St. Paul speaks of is identical with "the fear of the Lord"—the temper not of slavish dread, but reverential awe, which had been described in the Old Testament as "the beginning of wisdom" (Job xxviii. 28; Ps. cxi. 10). Tyndale's and Cranmer's versions give, "how the Lord is to be feared;" the Rhemish, "fear." "Terror," characteristically enough, makes its first appearance in the Geneva version.

We persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God.—The antithesis is singularly indicative of the rapid turn of thought in the Apostle's mind. "*We go on our way of winning men to Christ.*" (Comp. the use of the same Greek word in Acts xii. 20, "having made Blastus . . . their friend.") It is singular to note that, in an Epistle probably nearly contemporary with this, St. Paul uses the phrase almost in a bad sense: "Do we now persuade men, or God?" *i.e.*, "Are we seeking to please our friends or God?" (Gal. i. 10). And here, apparently, the imperfection of the phrase and its liability to misconstruction occurs to him, and he therefore immediately adds, "Yes, we do our work of persuading men" (the case of Felix, in Acts xxiv. 25, may be noted as showing

manifest in your consciences. ⁽¹²⁾ For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give

Chap. v. 12—15. St. Paul's defence against the reproach of commending himself and being insane.

¹ Gr. *in the face.*

you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance,¹ and not in heart. ⁽¹³⁾ For whether we be

the prominence of "the judgment to come" in St. Paul's method), "but it is all along with the thought that our own lives also have been laid open in their inmost recesses to the sight of God." The word "made manifest" is clearly used in reference to the same word (in the Greek) as is translated "appear" in verse 10.

And I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.—The words are an echo of what had already been said in chap. iv. 2. He trusts that in their inmost consciences, in the effect of his preaching there, in the new standard of right and wrong which they now acknowledge—perhaps, also, in the estimate which their illumined judgment passes on his own conduct—he has been made manifest as indeed he is, as he is sure that he will be before the judgment-seat of Christ.

⁽¹²⁾ For we commend not ourselves again unto you.—The better MSS. omit "For," which may have been inserted for the sake of an apparent sequence of thought. In reality, however, what follows is more intelligible without it. He has scarcely uttered the words that precede this sentence when the poison of the barbed arrow of the sneer to which he had referred in chap. iii. 1 again stings him. He hears his enemies saying, "So he is commending himself again;" and these words are the answer to

that taunt. "No," he says, "it is not so, but in appealing to the witness of the work done in your consciences we give you an 'occasion' (or *starting-point*) of a boast which we take for granted that you, the great body of the Church of Corinth, will be ready to make for us."

That ye may have somewhat to answer.—The opponents, of whom we are to hear more hereafter (see Notes on chaps. x. 7—18; xi. 12—33), rise up once more in his thoughts. "That such as these should be boasting of *their* work and *their* success!" What did they glory in? *In appearance.* The words may apply to anything external—claims of authority, training, knowledge, and the like. The use of the word, however, in chap. x. 1 seems to imply a more definite meaning. Men contrasted what we should call the dignified "presence" of his rivals with his personal defects, the weakness of his body, the lowness of his stature. "Take your stand," he seems to say, "against that boast, on the work done by us in your consciences."

⁽¹³⁾ For whether we be beside ourselves.—The recollection of one sneer leads on to another. This also had been said of him, and the intense sensitiveness of his nature made him wince under it. Some there were at Corinth who spoke of his visions and revelations, his speaking with

beside ourselves, *it is* to |
 God: or whether we be |

| sober, *it is* for your cause
 |⁽¹⁴⁾ For the love of Christ

tongues as in ecstasy, his prophecies of future judgment, as so many signs of madness. "He was beside himself." (Comp. Agrippa's words in Acts xxvi. 24, and Note there.) Others, or, perhaps, the same persons, pointed to his tact, in becoming all things to all men, perhaps even insinuated that he was making money by his work (chap. ix. 12; xii. 10): "he was shrewd enough when it served his turn." He answers accordingly both the taunts. What people called his "madness"—the ecstasy of adoration, the speaking with tongues (1 Cor. xiv. 18—23)—that lay between himself and God, and a stranger might not intermeddle with it. What people called "his sober-mindedness"—his shrewd common sense, his sagacity—that he practised not for himself but for his disciples, to win them to Christ, remove difficulties, strengthen them in the faith.

⁽¹⁴⁾ For the love of Christ constraineth us.—The Greek, like the English, admits of two interpretations—Christ's love for us, or our love for Christ. St. Paul's uniform use of this and like phrases, however, elsewhere (Rom. v. 5; viii. 35; 1 Cor. xvi. 24; 2 Cor. xiii. 14), is decisive in favour of the former. It was the Apostle's sense of the love that Christ had shown to him and to all men that was acting as a constraining power, directing every act of every spiritual state to the good of others, restraining him from every self-seeking purpose.

Because we thus judge, that if one died for all.—Better, as expressing the force of the

Greek tense, *because we formed this judgment.* The form of expression implies that the conviction dated from a given time, *i.e.*, probably from the hour when, in the new birth of his conversion, he first learnt to know the universality of the love of Christ manifested in His death. Many MSS. omit the "if," but without any real change of meaning. It is obvious that St. Paul assumes the fact, even if it be stated hypothetically. The thought is the same as in the nearly contemporary passage of Rom. v. 15—19, and takes its place among St. Paul's most unqualified assertions of the universality of the atonement effected by Christ's death. The Greek preposition does not in itself imply more than the fact that the death was *on behalf of all*; but this runs up—as we see by comparing Matt. xx. 28, Mark x. 45, with Mark xiv. 24, John xv. 13—into the thought that the death was, in some very real sense, vicarious: *in the place of* the death of all men. The sequence of thought involves that meaning here.

Then were all dead.—These strange, mysterious words have received very different interpretations. They cannot be rightly understood without bearing in view what we may call the *mystic* aspect of one phase of St. Paul's teaching. We may, perhaps, clear the way by setting aside untenable expositions. (1) They cannot mean, however true the fact may be in itself, that the death of Christ for all showed that all were previously under a sentence of condemnation and of death, for the verb is in the

constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: ⁽¹⁵⁾ and *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him

which died for them, and rose again. Chap. v. 16—21.
⁽¹⁶⁾ Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known

tense which indicates the momentary act of dying, not the state of death. (2) They cannot mean, for the same reason, that all were, before that sacrifice, "*dead in trespasses and sins.*" (3) They can hardly mean that all men, in and through that death, paid vicariously the penalty of death for their past sins, for the context implies that stress is laid not on the satisfaction of the claims of justice, but on personal union with Christ. The real solution of the problem is found in the line of thought of Rom. v. 17—19, 1 Cor. xi. 3, xv. 22, as to the relation of Christ to every member of the human family, in the teaching of Rom. vi. 10, as to the meaning of His death—"He died unto sin once". "Christ died for all"—this is the Apostle's thought—"as the head and representative of the race." But if so, the race, in its collective unity, died, as He died, to sin, and should live, as He lives, to God. Each member of the race is then only in a true and normal state when he ceases to live for himself and actually lives for Christ. That is the mystic ideal which St. Paul placed before himself and others, and every advance in holiness is, in its measure, an approximation to it.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Should not henceforth live unto themselves.—St. Paul

was not writing a theological treatise, and the statement was accordingly not meant to be an exhaustive presentment of all the purposes of God in the death of Christ. It was sufficient to give prominence to the thought that one purpose was that men should share at once His death and His life; should live not in selfishness but in love; not to themselves, but to Him, as He lived to God. (Comp. Rom. vi. 9—11; Eph. ii. 5—7.) Now we see the full force of "the love of Christ constraineth us," and "we love Him because He first loved us." If He died for us, can we, without shame, frustrate the purpose of His death by not living to Him?

⁽¹⁶⁾ Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh.—The logical dependence of this sentence on the foregoing lies in the suppressed premiss, that in living not to ourselves, but to Christ, we gain new standards of judgment, new ways of looking at things. To know a man "after the flesh" is to know him by the outward accidents and circumstances of his life: his wealth, rank, culture, knowledge. St. Paul had ceased to judge of men by those standards. With him the one question was whether the man was, by his own act and choice, claiming the place which the death of Christ

Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. ⁽¹⁷⁾ There-¹ Or, let him be. ^a Isa. 43. 19; Rev. 21. 5. fore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is*¹ a new creature: old things are passed away;^a

had secured for him, and living in Him as a new creature. That is the point of view from which he now "knows," or looks on, every man.

Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh.—What, we ask, gave occasion to this strange parenthesis? What did it mean? To what stage of the Apostle's life does it refer? (1) The answer to the first question is probably to be found in once more reading between the lines. There was, we know, a party at Corinth claiming a special relation to Christ (1 Cor. i. 12). They probably did so as having been personal disciples. If they were like those who elsewhere claimed to speak in the name of James (Acts xv. 24; Gal. ii. 12), they were likely to urge his claims as the brother of the Lord. To St. Paul such a way of judging would be to know Christ after the flesh—to judge of Him, as of others, by the lower standard of the world. (2) The next question is more difficult. The hypothetical form of the proposition practically implies an admission of its truth. It is hardly conceivable that he refers to the time before his conversion, and means that he too had once seen and known Jesus of Nazareth, judging of Him "after the flesh," by an earthly standard, and therefore had thought that he ought to do many things against Him; or that, after the revelation of Christ in him, at the time of his conversion, he had, for a time, known Him after a manner which he now

saw to be at least imperfect. The true solution of the problem is probably to be found in the fact that he had once thought, even before he appeared as the persecutor of the Church, of the Christ that was to come as others thought, that his Messianic expectations had been those of an earthly kingdom restored to Israel. Jesus of Nazareth did not fulfil those expectations, and therefore he had opposed His claim to be the Messiah. Now, he says, he had come to take a different view of the work and office of the Christ. (3) It follows, if this interpretation is correct, that he speaks of the period that preceded his conversion, not of an imperfect state of knowledge after it, out of which he had risen by progressive stages of illumination and clearer vision of the truth. Now, and from henceforth, he seems to say, we think of Christ, not as the King of Israel, but as the Saviour of mankind.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **Therefore if any man be in Christ.**—To be in Christ, in St. Paul's language, is for a man to be united with Him by faith and by baptism (Rom. vi. 3, 4), to claim personally what had been secured to him as a member of the race for whom Christ died. In such a case the man is born again (Tit. iii. 5)—there is a new creation; the man, as the result of that work, is a new creature. The old things of his life, Jewish expectations of a Jewish kingdom, chiliastic dreams, heathen philosophies, lower aims, earthly standards—these things, in idea at

behold, all things are become new. ⁽¹⁸⁾ And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the minis-

¹ Gr. put in us.

try of reconciliation; ⁽¹⁹⁾ to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us ¹

least, passed away from him at the time when he was united with Christ. We may trace an echo of words of Isaiah's that may have floated in the Apostle's memory: "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider *the things of old*. Behold I make *new things*" (Isa. xliii. 18, 19). The words in italics are in the LXX. the same as those which St. Paul uses here.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **And all things are of God.**—The presence of the article in the Greek indicates that he is speaking, not of the universe at large, but of the new things belonging to the new creation of which he had spoken in the previous verse. The line of thought on which he has now entered raises him for the time above all that is personal and temporary, and leads him to one of his fullest and noblest utterances as to God's redeeming work.

Who hath reconciled us to himself . . . and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.—It is worthy of note that this is the first occurrence, in order of time, in St. Paul's Epistles, of this word "reconcile" as describing God's work in Christ, and that so applied it occurs only in this Epistle and in Rom. v. 10, written shortly afterwards. The idea involved is that man had been at enmity and was now atoned (*at-oned*) and brought into concord with God. It will be noted that the work is described as originating

with the Father and accomplished by the mediation of the Son. It is obvious that the personal pronoun is used with a different extent in the two clauses: the first embracing, as the context shows, the whole race of mankind; the last limited to those who, like the Apostles, were preachers of the Word. More accurately, the verbs should run: *who reconciled . . . and gave*. The word translated "reconciliation" is, it should be noted, the same as that rendered "atonement" in Rom. v. 11.

⁽¹⁹⁾ **To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world.**—Better, perhaps, *How that it was God who was reconciling in Christ a world unto Himself*. Both "God" and "world" are, in the Greek, without the article. The English rendering is tenable grammatically, but the position of the words in the original suggests the construction given above. He seems to emphasise the greatness of the redeeming work by pointing at once to its author and its extent. The structure is the same as the "was preaching" of Luke iv. 44. All the English versions, however, from Wiclif downwards, adopt the same construction. Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Geneva version translate *making agreement between the world and Himself*, instead of "reconciling to Himself." The "world" is, of course, the world of men, the "all" of verse 15.

the word of reconciliation.

⁽²⁰⁾Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though

God did beseech *you* by us :
we pray *you* in Christ's
stead, be ye reconciled to

Not imputing their trespasses unto them . . . — The two participial clauses that follow describe the result of the reconciling work. The first is that God no longer charges their transgressions against men: the pronouns being used in the third person plural, as being more individualising than the "world" and more appropriate than would have been the first person, which he had used in verse 18, and which he wanted, in its narrower extension, for the clause which was to follow. The word for "imputing," or *reckoning*, is specially prominent in the Epistles of this period, occurring, though in very varied shades of meaning, eight times in this Epistle and nineteen times in that of Romans. The difficulty of maintaining a logical coherence of this truth with that of a judgment according to works does not present itself to the Apostle's mind, and need not trouble us. (See Note on verse 10.)

And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.—Literally, to maintain the participial construction, *placing with* (or *in*) *us the word of reconciliation*. Tyndale gives "atonement" here as in Rom. v. 11.

⁽²⁰⁾ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ.—The preposition "for" implies the same representative character as in verses 14, 15. The preachers of the Word were acting *on behalf* of Christ; they were acting also *in His stead*. The thought or word meets us again in Eph. vi. 20: "I am an ambassador

in bonds." The earlier versions (Tyndale, Geneva, Cranmer) give "messengers," the Rhemish "legates." "Ambassadors," which may be noted as singularly felicitous, first appears in the version of 1611. The word, derived from mediæval Latin *ambasciator*, and first becoming popular in the Romance languages, is found in Shakespeare, and appears to have come into prominence through the intercourse with France and Spain in the reign of Elizabeth.

We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.—It will be seen in this conclusion of the language of St. Paul as to the atonement, how entirely, on the one hand, he recognises the representative and vicarious character of the redeeming work of Christ; how entirely, on the other, he stands aloof from the speculative theories on that work which have sometimes been built upon his teaching. He does not present, as the system-builders of theology have too often done, the picture of the wrath of the Father averted by the compassion of the Son, or satisfied by the infliction upon Him of a penalty which is a quantitative equivalent for that due to the sins of mankind. The whole work, from his point of view, originates in the love of the Father, sending His Son to manifest that love in its highest and noblest form. He does not need to be reconciled to man. He sends His Son, and His Son sends His ministers to entreat them to be reconciled to Him, to accept the

God. ⁽²¹⁾ For he hath
made him *to be* sin for
us, who knew no sin;

that we might be made
the righteousness of God
in him.

pardon which is freely offered. In the background there lies the thought that the death of Christ was in some way, as the highest act of Divine love, connected with the work of reconciliation; but the mode in which it was effective, is, as Butler says (*Analogy*, ii. 5), "mysterious, and left, in part at least, unrevealed," and it is not wise to "endeavour to explain the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us beyond what the Scripture has authorised."

⁽²¹⁾ For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.—The "for" is omitted in many of the best MSS., but there is clearly a sequence of thought such as it expresses. The Greek order of the words is more emphatic: *Him that knew no sin He made sin for us*. The words are, in the first instance, an assertion of the absolute sinlessness of Christ. All other men had an experience of its power, gained by yielding to it. He alone gained this experience by resisting it, and yet suffering its effects. None could "convict Him of sin" (John viii. 46). The "Prince of this world had nothing in Him" (John xiv. 30). (Comp. Heb. vii. 26; 1 Pet. ii. 22.) And then there comes what we may call the paradox of redemption. He, God, made the sinless One to be "sin." The word cannot mean, as has been said sometimes, a "sin-offering." That meaning is foreign to the New Testament, and it is questionable whether it is found in the Old,

Lev. v. 9 being the nearest approach to it. The train of thought is that God dealt with Christ, not as though He were a sinner, like other men, but as though He were sin itself, absolutely identified with it. So, in Gal. iii. 13, he speaks of Christ as made "a curse for us," and in Rom. viii. 3 as "being made in the likeness of sinful flesh." We have here, it is obvious, the germ of a mysterious thought, out of which forensic theories of the atonement, of various types, might be and have been developed. It is characteristic of St. Paul that he does not so develop it. Christ identified with man's sin: mankind identified with Christ's righteousness—that is the truth, simple and yet unfathomable, in which he is content to rest.

That we might be made the righteousness of God in him.—Better, *that we might become*. The "righteousness of God," as in Rom. iii. 21, 22, expresses not simply the righteousness which He gives, nor that which He requires, though neither of these meanings is excluded, but rather that which belongs to Him as His essential attribute. The thought of St. Paul is, that by our identification with Christ—first ideally and objectively, as far as God's action is concerned, and then actually and subjectively, by that act of will which he calls faith—we are made sharers in the divine righteousness. So, under like conditions, St. Peter speaks of believers as "made partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet

CHAPTER VI.—⁽¹⁾We

Chap. vi. 1, 2.
The prayer of the
Apostle that men
would use the
accepted time.

receive not

then, as work-
ers together
with him, be-
seech you
also that ye
the grace of

A. D. 60.

a Isa. 49.

God in vain. ⁽²⁾ (For he
saith, I have heard thee in
a time accepted, and in the
day of salvation have I
succoured thee: behold,
now is the accepted time;
behold, now is the day of sal-

i. 4). In actual experience, of course, this participation is manifested in infinitely varying degrees. St. Paul contemplates it as a single objective fact. The importance of the passage lies in its presenting the truth that the purpose of God in the death of Christ was not only or chiefly that men might escape punishment, but that they might become righteous.

VI.

⁽¹⁾ We then, as workers together with him, beseech you . . .—The thought of the marvel of the atoning love fills the heart of St. Paul with an almost passionate desire to see its purpose realised in those whom he has taught; and so, “as a fellow-worker with Him”—the pronoun may be referred grammatically either to God or Christ, but the general tone of the context, and St. Paul’s language elsewhere (1 Cor. xii. 6; Eph. i. 11, 20; Phil. ii. 13), are decisive in favour of the former—he renews his entreaty. The language in which he does so is every way significant. Those to whom he wrote had believed and been baptised, and so they had “received the grace;” but the freedom of the will to choose good or evil remained, and if they chose evil they would frustrate the end

which the grace was intended to work out. (Comp. the language of 1 Cor. ix. 27; xv. 10.)

⁽²⁾ I have heard thee in a time accepted . . .—Better, perhaps, *acceptable*. The meaning of the pronoun “He,” as referring to God, is determined by the preceding verse. The tense of the Greek is better expressed by, *I heard thee . . . I succoured thee*. As with other citations, it is a natural inference that St. Paul had the context, as well as the words actually cited, in his mind, and it is interesting, accordingly, to remember that context. The words (Isa. xlix. 8) are among those addressed at first to the servant of Jehovah, as “the light of the Gentiles;” then, apparently, in His name, as the Holy One, and in that of Jehovah, to Israel as a nation. In God’s dealings with His people through Christ the Apostle saw the true fulfilment of Isaiah’s words. Never, in spite of all outward calamities, had there been a time so acceptable, a day so full of deliverance.

Behold, now is the accepted time . . .—The word for “accepted” is much stronger than in the previous clause. *Entirely acceptable* is, perhaps, its best equivalent. The solemnity of the words was, it may be, intensified in St. Paul’s thoughts by what seemed to him the nearness of the impending

vation.) ⁽³⁾ Giving no offence
in any thing,
that the min-
istry be not
blamed: ⁽⁴⁾ but
in all *things*

Chap. vi. 3—10.
The contrasts in
the life of the
minister of
Christ.

¹ Gr. *com-
mend-
ing.*

² Or, *in
tossings
to and
fro.*

approving¹ ourselves as the
ministers of God, in much
patience, in afflictions, in
necessities, in distresses,
⁽⁵⁾ in stripes, in imprison-
ments, in tumults,² in

judgment. Opportunities, as we should say, were offered which might never again recur. But the prolonged experience of the long-suffering of God has given to the words a yet more profound significance. There is, so to speak, a "now" running through the ages. For each church and nation, for each individual soul, there is a golden present which may never again recur, and in which lie boundless possibilities for the future. The words of the Apostle are, as it were, the transfigured expression of the generalisation of a wide experience which tells us that—

"There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to
fortune:
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."
—Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, iv. 3.

⁽³⁾ Giving no offence . . .
—The participial construction is resumed from verse 1, verse 2 being treated as parenthetical. A subtle distinction in the two forms of the Greek negatives suggests the thought that he is here giving, as it were, his own estimate of his aim and endeavour in his work. He avoids all occasion of offence, not because he fears censure for himself, but that "the ministry be not blamed."

⁽⁴⁾ But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God.—Better, as keeping up the connection with chaps. iii. 1, and v. 12, as *ministers of God com-*

mending ourselves. He harps, as it were, upon that phrase. Yes, he does commend himself; but how? He looks back on his life of labour and sufferings and challenges comparison. Can others, with their letters of commendation, point to anything like this? The word "ministers" in the Greek is in the nominative case, while the English at least suggests that it is in the objective after the verb. What he means is that he, as the minister of God should do, commends himself by acts and not by words. It is obvious that what follows was likely to expose him to a repetition of the cynical sneer, but of this his generous indignation makes him nobly regardless.

In much patience . . .—Better, as elsewhere, *endurance*. The word has a much stronger meaning than our English "patience." (See Notes on Luke viii. 15; xxi. 19.) The general term is naturally followed by a specification of details. It is not, perhaps, easy to specify what he refers to under each head. Possibly he used such words, as we habitually use them, without a formal classification. The root-idea of the first word of the triad is that of being pressed upon: of the second, that of a constraint that leaves no choice of action; of the third, that of being so hemmed in that there is no room left to move.

⁽⁵⁾ In stripes . . .—The list becomes more specific. "Stripes"

labours, in watchings, in fastings; ⁽⁶⁾ by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the

Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, ⁽⁷⁾ by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteous-

we have seen at Philippi (Acts xvi. 23), and chap. xi. 23, 24 show that there were other instances. Of "imprisonments," that at Philippi is, so far, the only recorded instance (Acts xvi. 24); but there may well have been others, as in chap. xi. 23. "Tumults" (the same word as in Luke xxi. 9) at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii. 50), Lystra (Acts xiv. 5—19), Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 5), Corinth itself (Acts xviii. 12), and Ephesus (Acts xix. 23—41). "Labours" describe the usual tenor of his life, the daily work of his calling as a tent-maker, as well as that connected with his ministry. "Watchings" and "fastings" are, probably, both of them (comp. chap. xi. 27) to be referred to voluntary acts—nights of vigil and self-imposed abstinence—rather than to privations incidental to his work.

(6) **By pureness . . .**—The word may possibly mean "purity of motive" in its widest sense, but the use of the corresponding adjective in 2 Cor. xi. 2; 1 Tim. v. 22; Titus ii. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 2, and, indeed, its general sense elsewhere, is decisive in favour of "purity from sensual sin"—personal chastity. In the general state of morals throughout the empire, and especially in writing to such a city as Corinth, it was natural to dwell on this aspect of the Christian character. (Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 7.) The "knowledge" is obviously not that of earthly things, but of the mysteries of God (Eph. iii. 4). In "kindness" we trace the conscios-

ness of an effort to reproduce the graciousness which he looked on as a characteristic attribute of God and Christ (Eph. ii. 7; Tit. iii. 4). In the "Holy Ghost" we may see a reference both to spiritual gifts, such as those of tongues and prophecy (1 Cor. xiv. 18, 19), and to the impulses and promptings in which he traced the general guidance of the Spirit (Acts xvi. 6, 7). "Love unfeigned" (*i.e.*, without hypocrisy) presents the same combination as in Rom. xii. 9 ("without dissimulation" in the English version).

(7) **By the word of truth.**—Both words are, in the Greek, without the article, and this throws a slight shade of doubt upon their meaning. With the article, the same combination occurs in Eph. i. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 15; and there can be no doubt that there the sense is objective—"the word which conveys the truth of God to men." Here a subjective meaning, "a word of truthfulness," or "truthful word," as distinct from insincerity of speech, is grammatically possible; but in Jas. i. 18, where precisely the same combination occurs, we have ample warrant for retaining the objective meaning even here.

By the power of God.—Here, again, the words hover between a general and specific sense. As distinguished from the "Holy Ghost" in verse 6, and looking to the general use of the Greek word for "power," it seems natural to refer the word here chiefly, though,

ness on the right hand and on the left, ⁽⁸⁾ by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as de-

ceivers, and *yet* true; ⁽⁹⁾ as unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened,

perhaps, not exclusively, to the supernatural power given by God for working miracles. (Comp. especially chap. xii. 12; 1 Cor. ii. 5; xii. 10, 28, 29.)

By the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.—The thought is found in a more expanded form in Eph. vi. 11—17; 1 Thess. v. 8. Its recurrence in chap. x. 4 shows how familiar it was to St. Paul's mind. Here it is presented in a more condensed form, but its meaning is sufficiently obvious. The weapon of the right hand is "the sword of the Spirit," aggressive in the conflict with evil (Eph. vi. 17). The armour for the left hand is defensive, the "shield of faith," which is our defence against the fiery darts of the wicked (Eph. vi. 16). This gives, it is believed, a better meaning than the interpretation which translates the Greek word by "instruments," as in Rom. vi. 13, and taking these as meaning opportunities for action, sees in the two adjectives the meaning which sometimes attaches to them in Greek authors, and was derived from the usages of Greek divination, as "favourable" and "unfavourable." It has been urged that the absence of the Greek article before "weapons on the left" is against the distinction which has been drawn above, and therefore that the words refer to the breast-plate which encompasses both sides of the body; but this, though a tenable view grammatically, is somewhat over-subtle. A man dictating

a letter under the influence of strong emotion is not always mindful of minute grammatical distinctions, such as that on which this last interpretation rests.

⁽⁸⁾ **By honour and dishonour.**—The enumeration of the elements in and by which his ministry is carried on begins to take a more personal character. We trace once more in the words that follow the sensitiveness of a recent experience. He has to do his work, at one time, as through a *glory* which he has not sought; at another time under an ignominy which he has not deserved. Men at one time speak well of him, and at another he falls upon evil and bitter tongues. The word "deceiver," most galling of all words to one who is conscious of his truthfulness, is recklessly flung at him. Through all these he goes on his work, believing that in them also he may find a way of commending himself as a minister of God.

⁽⁹⁾ **As unknown, and yet well known.**—In the absence of fuller information as to what disparaging language had been used in reference to St. Paul, it is not easy to appreciate the precise force of the words thus used. Possibly, he had been spoken of as a man of "unknown" or obscure antecedents, and his answer to that taunt is, as in chap. i. 13, 14, that where he was known at all he was *recognised* as being what indeed he was. He could show even to them, to some of them at least, whether it

and not killed; ⁽¹⁰⁾ as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;

as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing,

were not so. In "dying, and, behold, we live," we may trace a reference partly to the "sentence of death" which had, as it were, been passed upon him (chap. i. 9), partly to the malignant exultation with which that fact had been received, or was likely, he thought, to be received, by those who hated him. We can picture them as saying, "His course will soon be over, he will not trouble us long;" and his answer to that imagined sneer is that he is still in full energy. What has befallen him has been a chastening and a discipline, but he is not yet, as they fondly thought, "killed" and delivered over unto death.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.**—Are we still in the region of the taunts and sneers of which we have found such distinct traces in the previous verses? Did men say of him, as others had said of the saints of God before him, that he was "smitten of God, and afflicted"? Was it with him, as with David, that when he wept, that "was turned to his reproof"? that when he "made sackcloth his garment" he "became a proverb unto them"? (Ps. lxxix. 10, 11.) This seems, on the whole, the most probable explanation of the words. His Jewish rivals, or the jesters of Corinth, taunted him with his want of cheerfulness, "he was always in trouble." This, at least, enables us to understand the bitterness of spirit in which St. Paul spoke, and to enter into the full force of his answer: "Yea, but with our sorrow there is also the ever-flowing well-spring of joy, a joy

not of the world, but of the Holy Ghost."

As poor, yet making many rich.—Better, *as a beggar*. It is not hard to imagine that the outward circumstances of St. Paul's life, his daily toil as a tent-maker, his accepting gifts from the Church of Philippi (chap. xi. 8, 9; Phil. iv. 15), would furnish occasion for some taunting jest. We seem to hear men speaking of him as a "beggar," a "mendicant." "Yes," he answers, "but I am able to make many rich." It is a possible, though perhaps not altogether an adequate, explanation of the words to see in them a reference to the fact that out of his "poverty" he was able to supply the necessities of others (Acts xx. 35). We must, at all events, think of his words as including something more than this, and reminding the Corinthians that he had made many rich with the unsearchable riches of Christ.

As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.—The series of paradoxes culminates in this. In language which has found echoes in the thoughts of sages, saints, mystics, he utters the truth that in the absolute surrender of the thought of calling anything its own the soul becomes the heir of the universe. All things are his, as with the certainty of an assured inheritance. The beatitude of the meek, of those who claim nothing, is that they "shall inherit the earth," and so all things are theirs—the forces of nature, and the changes and chances of life—for all are working together for their good. (See Note on Matt. v. 5.)

and yet possessing all things. (11) O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. (12) Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. (13) Now

for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged. (14) Be ye not unequally yoked together with

Chap. vi. 13—17.
Warning against
intimacy with
idolaters.

(11) O ye Corinthians.—There was manifestly a pause here as the letter was dictated. The rush of thoughts had reached its highest point. He rests, and feels almost as if some apology were needed for so vehement an outpouring of emotion. And now he writes as if personally pleading with them. Nowhere else in the whole range of his Epistles do we find any parallel to this form of speech—this “O ye Corinthians.” He has to tell them that he speaks out of the fulness of his heart, that if his mouth has been opened with an unusual freedom it is because his heart has felt a more than common expansion.

(12) Ye are not straitened in us.—The word presents a natural contrast to the expansion, the dilatation, of heart of the previous verse. There was no narrowness in him. In that large heart of his there was room for them and for a thousand others. It had, as it were, an infinite elasticity in its sympathies. The narrowness was found in their own “bowels”—i.e., in their own affections. They would not make room for him in those hearts that were so straitened by passions, and prejudices, and antipathies.

(13) Now for a recompence in the same.—Better, perhaps, as a return, as expressing the idea of reciprocity. Children should re-

quite the care and love of parents. (Comp. chap. xii. 14.) They, the Corinthians, are his spiritual children. (Comp. 1 Cor. iv. 15.) What does he demand of them, but that they should love him in return for his love? What they needed in their spiritual life was breadth and expansiveness of affection.

(14) Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.—We seem at first to enter by an abrupt transition upon a new line of exhortation. The undercurrent of thought is, however, not difficult to trace. There was a false latitude as well as a true. The baser party at Corinth might think it a matter of indifference whether they married a heathen or a Christian, whether they chose their intimate friends among the worshippers of Aphrodite or of Christ. Against that “enlargement” the Apostle feels bound to protest. The Greek word for “unequally yoked together” is not found elsewhere, and was probably coined by St. Paul to give expression to his thoughts. Its meaning is, however, determined by the use of the cognate noun in Lev. xix. 19) “Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind”). Cattle were unequally yoked together when ox and ass were drawing the same plough (Deut. xxii. 10). Men and women are so when they have no

unbelievers : for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ? ⁽¹⁵⁾ And what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what part

^a Lev. 26.
12.

hath he that believeth with an infidel ? ⁽¹⁶⁾ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ? for ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them,^a and

common bond of faith in God. Another explanation refers the image to the yoke of a balance, or pair of scales, and so sees in the precept a warning against partiality in judgment ; but this rests on very slender ground, or rather, no ground at all.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **What concord hath Christ with Belial ?**—The passage is remarkable as being the only occurrence of the name in the New Testament, all the more so because it does not appear in the Greek version of the Old. The Hebrew word signifies “vileness, worthlessness ;” and the “sons of Belial” (as in Deut. xiii. 13 ; 1 Sam. ii. 12, xxv. 17) were therefore the worthless and the vile. The English version, following the Vulgate, translates the phrase as though Belial were a proper name, and this has led to the current belief, as shown in Milton’s poems, that it was the name of a demon or fallen angel, the representative of impurity—

“Belial came last, than whom a spirit
more lewd,
Fell not from heaven, or more gross to
love
Vice for itself.”

Paradise Lost, i. 490.

“Belial, the dissolutes spirit that fell,
The sensualest, and, after Asmodai,
The fleshliest incubus.”

Paradise Regained, ii. 204.

St. Paul’s use of the word would

seem to imply that some such belief was floating among the Jews in his time. A strange legend, which possibly had a Jewish origin (it is referred to certain *necromantici*), is found in an obscure and forgotten book (Wierus: *Pseudo-Monarchia Dæmonum*), to the effect that Solomon was led by a certain woman to bow before the image of Belial, who is represented as worshipped by the Babylonians. Of that worship there is no trace in history ; and Milton seems to have recognised this—

“To him no temple stood
Nor altar smoked.”

But if the name had gathered these associations round it, we can understand St. Paul’s using it as representing, or, as it were, personifying the whole system of impure *cultus* that prevailed in the worship of Aphrodite at Corinth.

With an infidel.—So many later associations have gathered round the word, that it may be well to remind the reader that it does not mean, as commonly with us, one who has rejected the faith, but simply one who has not as yet received it.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ?**—Here we see clearly the drift of the Apostle’s thoughts. His mind travels back to the con-

walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ⁽¹⁷⁾Wherefore come out from among them,^a and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch

^b Jer. 31.
I.

^a Isa. 52.
II.

not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, ⁽¹⁸⁾and will be a Father unto you,^b and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

troversy about things sacrificed to idols. Was there not a risk that what he had said about "width" and "expansion" of feeling would be perverted by those who claimed the right to sit at an idol's feast even in the precincts of the idol's temple (1 Cor. viii. 10)? Against that perversion he thinks it necessary to enter his protest. And the ground of that protest is that they, collectively and individually (1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19), are the temples of God, and that there can be no "agreement" between that temple and one dedicated to an idol. The word translated "agreement" expresses, like the English, a compact or treaty of alliance. In modern phrase a *concordat* between the two antagonistic systems was an impossibility.

I will dwell in them, and walk in them.—The citation which follows is, like many others in St. Paul's writings, a composite one: Lev. xxvi. 12 giving, "I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people;" and Ex. xxix. 45, "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God." The implied premiss is that wherever God dwells there is His temple. The word indicates the "sanctuary," or holiest part of the temple. (See Note on John ii. 19.)

⁽¹⁷⁾ **Wherefore come out from among them.**—Another composite quotation follows, begin-

ning with Isa. lii. 11. In their primary historical sense, the words were addressed as to the priests and Levites who were to return from Babylon. They were not to bring back with them any symbol of that "unclean" ritual which they had witnessed there. The local and historical meaning has for the Apostle passed away, and the "unclean thing" is identified with the whole system of heathenism. The close connection of this verse with the great prophecy of the atoning work makes it probable that in writing of that work St. Paul had remembered or, perhaps, actually turned to Isa. liii., as it stood in the LXX. version, and so was led on to the verse which almost immediately preceded it. "I will receive you" comes in lieu of the ending of Isaiah from the Greek of Ezek. xi. 17; Jer. xxiv. 5.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **And will be a Father unto you . . .**—Again we have, as it were, a mosaic of citations: "I will be a Father . . ." from 2 Sam. vii. 14; "Sons and daughters" from Isa. xliii. 6; "Saith the Lord Almighty" from the Greek of 2 Sam. vii. 8. It may be noted as not without interest that the Greek word rendered "Almighty" here, and "Omnipotent" in Rev. xix. 6, is commonly used in the LXX. as an equivalent for the Hebrew "Lord of Hosts" or "Lord of Sabaoth."

CHAPTER VII.—

A. D. 60.

⁽¹⁾ Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the

flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. ⁽²⁾ Receive us; we

Chap. vii. 1—4. The Apostle's strivings after purity of act and motive.

VII.

⁽¹⁾ Having therefore these promises . . . let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness.—The thought is identical with that of 1 John iii. 3. In each there is the contrast between the high ideal to which the believer in Christ is called and the infinite debasement into which he may possibly sink. St. John characteristically presents the law of the spiritual life as a generalised fact of experience: "Every man who has the hope actually does purify himself." The word for "filthiness" does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. In 2 Macc. i. 27, it is used of the "pollution" of idolatry; in the LXX. of Jer. xxiii. 14 (where the English version gives "a horrible thing," and the margin "filthiness") of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. The cognate verb is used of sexual impurity in Rev. xiv. 4, and probably with the same sense in Rev. iii. 4, and this is manifestly what St. Paul has in his thoughts here. The two thoughts—idolatry and impurity—were inextricably blended in his mind. He had been warning men against the feasts that were held in the idol's temple. He cannot close his eyes to the "hidden things of shame" that were their constant and inevitable accompaniments. But that contagion of impurity might spread to the inward parts. Mind and conscience might

be defiled (Tit. i. 15). The literature of the Empire, as seen in Catullus and Martial and Juvenal, shows only too terribly what St. Paul meant by "filthiness of the spirit." The very element in man by which he is raised above the brute creatures that lead a simply animal or natural life—his imagination, fancy, discernment of analogies—sinks him to an infinite depth below them.

Perfecting holiness in the fear of God.—The word for "holiness" involves the idea of consecration, and grows out of the thought that the "saints" of God make up collectively, as in chap. vi. 16, the Temple in which He dwells. As the former clause of the verse presents the negative aspect of purity, abstinence from all that desecrates, this presents the positive, the perfect consecration, and this is wrought out in its completeness, in "the fear of God"—the reverential awe before the thought of God's presence. The word is the same as that mis-translated "terror" in chap. v. 11.

⁽²⁾ **Receive us; we have wronged no man.**—Better, *Make room for us; we wronged no man*: with the same change of tense in the verbs that follow. There is an almost infinite pathos in that entreaty, uttered, we may well believe, as from the very depths of the soul—"Make room for us." The undercurrent of thought flows on. He had com-

have wronged no man, we |

| have corrupted no man, we

plained of their being straitened in their affections, had entreated that they would enlarge their hearts towards him, as his heart was enlarged towards them. He has travelled on—his thoughts turning now to the party of license, with whom he had pleaded so earnestly in 1 Cor. viii.—x.—to the terribly unutterable expiations to which they were exposing themselves by their companionship with idolaters. He now, almost, as it were, with sobs, entreats once more: “You can find a place for such as these in your heart. Have you no place for me?” In the words “we wronged no man” we find reference to charges of greed of gain and self-interested motives that had been whispered against him, and to which he refers again in chaps. viii. 20; xii. 18. Perhaps, also, he contrasts himself with others, who “did wrong and defrauded” (1 Cor. vi. 8).

We have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.—The word for “corrupt” is the same as that translated “defile” in 1 Cor. iii. 17, and is used with manifest reference to sensual impurity in 2 Pet. ii. 12; Jude, verse 10; Rev. xix. 2. The word for “defrauded” is not the same as that in 1 Cor. vi. 8, and though meaning literally “to make a gain,” or “seek a gain,” had, with its cognate nouns, acquired a darker shade of meaning. The verb is used in obvious connection with impurity in 1 Thess. iv. 3—6, where see Note. The nouns often appear in closest companionship with those which indicate that form of evil (1 Cor. v. 10, 11; Eph. v. 5; 2 Pet.

ii. 14; Rom. i. 29; Col. iii. 5). Mere greed of gain is commonly described by another word, which we translate “the love of money” (Luke xvi. 14; 1 Tim. vi. 10; 2 Tim. iii. 2). There seems, then, sufficient reason for connecting this verb also with the same class of sins. It would seem as if the word had colloquially acquired a secondary meaning, and was used of those who sought gain by ministering to the vice of others—who became, as it were, purveyors of impurity. The words, so understood, give us a momentary glimpse into a depth of evil from which we would willingly turn our eyes. But they leave no room for doubt that, in the infinite pruriency of such a city as Corinth, even such things as these had been said of the Apostle in the cynical jests of the paganising party of license. They tolerated such things themselves. They welcomed those who practised them to their friendship (1 Cor. v. 11). They whispered, we may well believe, of private interviews in lonely lodgings, of public gatherings at night of men and women, and of the kiss of peace. They insinuated that, after all, he was even such a one as themselves. So, in like manner, was the fair fame of a disciple of St. Paul’s attacked by Martial, not apparently with malignity, but only in the wantonness of jest. (See *Excursus on the Later Years of St. Paul’s Life*, at the end of the Acts of the Apostles.) So like charges were levelled at the reputation of Athanasius (Sozomen. *Hist.* ii. 25), and of Hooker (*Walton’s Life*). So, generally, it was the ever-recurring

have defrauded no man.
 (3) I speak not *this* to condemn *you*: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with *you*. (4) Great *is* my bold-

ness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.
 (5) For, when we were come

calumny of the heathen against the Christians that their *Agapæ*, or Feasts of Love, were scenes of foulest license. It is obvious that there is much in the popular outcry against confession that partakes more or less of the same character. Against charges of this nature St. Paul utters his indignant denial: "No," he virtually says; "you find a place in your affections for those who do such things: can you not find a place also for us who are free from them?" The sense which some have given to the word "corrupt," as referring only to doctrinal corruptions, is manifestly out of the question.

(3) **I speak not this to condemn you.**—Better, *I do not speak as condemning*. There is no "you" in the Greek, and the form of expression seems intentionally vague, as leaving it an open question whether his words might refer to his readers or to others. We trace here a sudden revulsion of feeling. What he had just said seemed to imply that he condemned them for even listening to the calumnies which had been circulated against him, for joining in any measure even of outward friendship with men of evil lives; and then there rushes on his memory the recollection of all the good news which Titus had brought. Indignation and jealous sensitiveness are swallowed up in the overflowing thankfulness to which those tidings

had given birth at the time, and which were now renewed.

I have said before . . .—He had not used the form of expression before, as far as this letter is concerned, but the fact was implied in what he had said in chap. vi. 11: "Our heart is enlarged." The words that follow are partly an almost proverbial expression for strong attachment, as in Horace (*Odes*, iii. 9): "*Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens*"—

"With thee I fain would live,
 With thee I fain would die;"

partly with a profounder meaning, that, whether in death or life (the order of the words throws us back on "dying, and, behold, we live," in chap. vi. 9), his heart and prayers would be with them and for them.

(4) **Great is my boldness of speech.**—The context shows that he is not apologising for bold and plain speaking, but uses the word as implying confidence (1 Tim. iii. 13; Philem. verse 8.) He can speak without reticence now, because he is going to express his comfort and joy at what had been reported to him.

I am exceeding joyful.—Literally, *I exceedingly abound* (or, *overflow*) *in joy*. The verb is the same as in Rom. v. 20, and answers to the "pressed above measure" which he has used in chap. i. 8, in speaking of his troubles.

(5) **For, when we were come into Macedonia . . .**—His

into Macedonia, our flesh | had no rest,
 Chap. vii. 5-7. | but we were
 His joy at the | troubled on
 news brought by | every side ;
 Titus. | without *were* fightings,
 within *were* fears. ⁽⁶⁾ Never-
 theless God, that comfort-
 eth those that are cast
 down, comforted us by the
 coming of Titus ; ⁽⁷⁾ and

not by his coming only,
 but by the consolation
 wherewith he was com-
 forted in you, when he told
 us your earnest desire,
 your mourning, your
 fervent mind toward me ;
 so that I rejoiced the more.
⁽⁸⁾ For though I made you
 sorry with a letter, I do
 not repent, though I did

feeling has led him back to the narrative from which he had digressed in chap. ii. 13. He had come from Troas full of anxiety and agitation. He arrived in Macedonia. Much remained the same. His body was still suffering from want of rest, even though his spirit had found relief in the thought that the coming of Titus could not now be far off. (Comp. "our *flesh*" here, with "I had no rest for my *spirit*" in chap. ii. 13.)

Without were fightings, within were fears.—We have no knowledge to what the first clause refers. It is natural to think either of dangers and persecutions from the heathen, or, probably, of conflicts with the party of the circumcision, or, as he calls them in Phil. iii., of the "conscion," at Philippi. The "fears" manifestly refer to his alarm and anxiety about the effect produced by his first Epistle.

⁽⁶⁾ **God, that comforteth those that are cast down.**—The fact of his own experience seems almost to present itself to his thoughts as constituting an attribute of the divine character. In the word for "cast down" (*lowly*) we may, perhaps, trace an allusion to

the same word used of him by others as a disparaging epithet. (See Note on chap. x. 1.)

⁽⁷⁾ **And not by his coming only.**—There was joy, doubtless, in seeing his true son in the faith (Tit. i. 1) once again, but the great comfort was found in the news which he brought with him. On the part of the majority, at least, of those who had been present when the Epistle was read, there had been all the feelings which he most desired to rouse—longing to see him as he longed to see them (see Rom. i. 11; Phil. i. 8; 1 Thess. iii. 6; 2 Tim i. 4, for the meaning of the word), their "mourning" (*uttered lamentation*) for having grieved him; their *zeal* (not "towards" him, but) *on his behalf and for him*, as against those who slandered him. All these were elements of comfort, and his sorrow was turned into a yet greater joy than had been caused by the mere arrival of Titus.

⁽⁸⁾ **For though I made you sorry with a letter.**—Better, *For even if*, and, as the Greek has the article, *with my letter*. This Titus had told him; and commonly to have caused pain to others would have been a source of grief to him,

repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season. ⁽⁹⁾ Now

Chap. vii. 9—12. The forms in which the Corinthians had manifested their sorrow and repentance.

I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance:

for ye were made sorry after a godly manner,¹ that

¹ Or, according to God.

ye might receive damage by us in nothing. ⁽¹⁰⁾ For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. ⁽¹¹⁾ For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of your-

but he cannot bring himself now to say, *I regret*. (This is, perhaps, better than *repent*. On the words see Notes on Matt. xxi. 29; xxvii. 3.) He owns, however, that there had been a moment, either on first hearing of their grief or in his previous anxiety, when he had half regretted that he had written so strongly. Now he sees that that grief was but transient, and he trusts that the good wrought by it will be abiding.

⁽⁹⁾ **That ye sorrowed to repentance.**—Here the true word for “repentance” is used in all the fulness of its meaning. (See Notes on Matt. iii. 2, 8.) There is nothing in the Greek corresponding to the variation, “ye sorrowed” and “were made sorry,” the same word being used in both clauses.

After a godly manner.—The English is but a feeble equivalent for the Greek. Literally, *according to God*—(i.e., as may be seen by comparing the sense of the same or like phrases in Rom. viii. 27; Eph. iv. 24; Col. ii. 8), after His will and purpose. “God allowed you,” he tells them, “to be grieved in order that you might sustain no

loss, as you might have done had we held our peace.”

⁽¹⁰⁾ **For godly sorrow.**—Again we note the needless variation which is the easily besetting sin of the English Version. Better, as before, *the sorrow which is after the will of God*.

Repentance to salvation not to be repented of.—Here the English effaces a distinction in the original. (See Note on Matt. xxvii. 3.) Better, *repentance unto salvation, giving no matter for regret*. The adjective, or adjectival phrase, may qualify either “repentance” or “salvation.” The latter seems preferable.

But the sorrow of the world worketh death.—As contrasted with “salvation,” death must be taken in its widest sense. The mere sorrow of the world leads only to remorse and despair, to the death of a broken heart, possibly to suicide, in any case, to the loss of the true eternal life.

⁽¹¹⁾ **That ye sorrowed after a godly sort.**—Better, as before, *that ye sorrowed after the will of God*. The series of emotional words that follow represent the Apostle’s

selves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

⁽¹²⁾ Wherefore, 'though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God

estimate of what he had heard from Titus. There was (1) *earnestness* where there had been indifference to evil, or even approval of it (1 Cor. v. 2); and this was shown (2) in the *vindication* of their conduct which they had sent through Titus, and (3) in their stern "indignation" against the offender; (4) in their "fear," partly of the supernatural chastisement which St. Paul had threatened, partly of the judgment of God, which was against such things; (5) in the *longing* to have him once more among them which mingled with their fear; (6) in their new "zeal" for the law of purity; (7) in their actual *vengeance*, *i.e.*, their sentence of condemnation passed upon the offender.

To be clear in this matter.

—Literally, *in the matter*, possibly with exclusive reference to the sin condemned in 1 Cor. v. 1—5, but possibly, also, as in 1 Thess. iv. 6, as an euphemistic expression for the sin of impurity generally.

⁽¹²⁾ Wherefore, though I wrote unto you.—The reference to the man that had suffered wrong implies that the offender in 1 Cor. v. 1 had married his step-mother during his father's life. All other interpretations—such as those which make St. Paul or the community the injured party—are fantastic. But in what sense was the father

injured? The union was a marriage, not a mere concubinage or adultery (see Note on 1 Cor. v. 1), and it could not have been so unless the first marriage had been dissolved by a divorce. But if the husband had divorced the wife, then, though the son's marriage may have shocked men as immoral, the father could hardly be said to have suffered a wrong to which he had exposed himself by his own act. The probable explanation is found in supposing that the wife, seduced by her step-son or seducing him, had divorced herself. Wives had this power under Roman law; and it was used with such license under the Empire, that Juvenal speaks of one woman of rank who had—

"Eight husbands in five autumns. Do you laugh?"

The thing reads well upon an epitaph."—*Sat.* vi. 230.

On this assumption the father had, of course, sustained a very grievous wrong. There is an obvious tone of impatience, almost of annoyance, in the way in which St. Paul speaks of the whole business. It was one of those scandals in which, though it had been necessary to assert the law of purity and enforce the discipline of the Church, he could not bring himself at the time to feel any special interest in either of the parties. Afterwards, when the

might appear unto you.

(13) Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy

Chap. vii. 13—16. The affection which Titus felt for the Corinthians.

of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

(14) For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our

sinner was repentant, there came, it is true, a new feeling of pity for him, as in chap. ii. 6—8. But when he wrote, it was with a larger aim, to show them how much he cared for his disciples at Corinth, how jealous he was to clear away any stains that affected their reputation as a Church. It is noticeable that no mention is made of the woman's repentance, nor, indeed, of her coming, in any way, under the discipline of the Church. The facts of the case suggest the conclusion that both husband and wife were heathens, and that the son was the only convert of the family. In this case we may fairly assume that she had played the part of temptress, and that his conscience, though weak, had been the more sensitive of the two. On this view the exhortations against being "unequally yoked together" with unbelievers gains a fresh significance. Possibly some idolatrous festival had furnished the first opportunity of sin, and so the fact gave special protest against any attempt to combine the worship of Christ with that of Belial.

(13) **Therefore we were comforted.**—The tense of the Greek verb implies a different structure of the sentence: *Therefore we have been comforted: and upon (i.e., over and above) our comfort we rejoiced more exceedingly at the joy of Titus.*

That was to St. Paul a new source of happiness. The intense sympathy of his nature would have made him share the disappointment of his delegate, and in like manner he now shares his joy. The messenger had shown himself to be his true son in the faith (Tit. i. 1).

His spirit was refreshed.—Better, as expressing the permanence of the effect, *has been refreshed*. The term was a favourite one with the writer. Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus had "refreshed" his spirit (1 Cor. xvi. 18. Comp. also Philem. verses 7 and 20). The primary idea of the word is, however, rather that of "giving rest" to the weary, as in Matt. xi. 28; xxvi. 45.

(14) **For if I have boasted any thing to him of you.**—It is obviously implied that he had boasted. He had encouraged Titus, when he sent him, with the assurance that he would find many elements of good mingled with the evil which he was sent to correct. And now St. Paul can add: "*I was not ashamed*" (the tense requires this rendering) "when he came back with his report."

Even so our boasting, which I made before Titus.—The words "I made" are, as the italics show, not in the Greek. Some of the better MSS. give, indeed, "*your boasting,*" and with

boasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth. (15) And his inward affection¹ is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. (16) I rejoice there-

¹ Gr. *bowels.*
A.D. 60.

fore that I have confidence in you in all *things*.

CHAPTER VIII.—

(1) Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God

Chap. viii. 1—6. The action of the Macedonian churches in regard to the collection for the saints.

this reading the sense would be: "As what I said of you to Titus turned out to be true, so I recognise that what you said to him of yourselves, of your zeal and longing (as in verse 11), was spoken truly." The Received reading rests, however, on very good authority, and certainly gives a better sense: "We spoke truly to you of your faults; we spoke truly to Titus of your good qualities."

(15) **His inward affection.**—The margin gives the literal meaning of the Greek, which is used here with the same meaning as in chap. vi. 12. Perhaps "heart," or "feelings," would be the best English equivalent. The recollection of what had passed at Corinth had bound him by ties of closest sympathy with the disciples there.

With fear and trembling.—The combination is a favourite one with St. Paul. (Comp. 1 Cor. ii. 3; Eph. vi. 5; Phil. ii. 12.) What it means is that Titus had been received, not, as he feared, with petulant resistance, but with respectful reverence, not without an element of fear.

(16) **I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.**—Most of the better MSS. omit "therefore," which may have been inserted for the sake of

connecting the verse. "I have confidence in you," though, in one sense, a literal translation of the Greek, fails to give its exact meaning. He does not mean, "I trust you," but "*I am of good cheer*, I take courage in you, being what you are." With this expression of thankfulness he leaves the painful subject of which he had been compelled to speak, and passes, probably after a pause of greater or less length, to another.

VIII.

(1) **Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit . . .**—Better, *we declare, or make known to you*. There is no adequate reason for retaining a phrase which is now obsolete. The topic on which the Epistle now touches, and which is carried on through this and the following chapter, was one very dear to the Apostle's heart. (See Note on 1 Cor. xvi. 1.) When he wrote before he had simply given directions as to what the Corinthians were to do. Now he has something to tell them. The churches of Macedonia—Philippi, we must believe, prominent among them—had been true to their old generosity (chap. xi. 8, 9; Phil. iv. 15), and were now showing it, not, as

bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; ⁽²⁾ how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. ⁽³⁾ For to *their* power, I

bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they* were willing of themselves; ⁽⁴⁾ praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the

before, in personal kindness to their teacher, but in the truer way of acting as he wished them to act; and he sees in this a means of stirring up his friends at Corinth to an honourable emulation. There is something intensely characteristic in the way in which he opens his statement. He traces the generosity of the Macedonians to its true source. He is going to tell the Corinthians of the "grace of God" that has enabled them to do so much.

⁽²⁾ **In a great trial of affliction.**—We do not know what is specially referred to, but a community of Christians in a heathen city was always exposed to trials of this kind, and the temper shown before by the rulers at Philippi and the Jews of Thessalonica (Acts. xvi. 19, 20; xvii. 5, 6; 1 Thess. ii. 14) makes it almost certain that they would carry on at least a petty persecution with more or less persistency. The "poverty" at Philippi may possibly be connected with the preponderance of women in the Church there, as indicated in Acts xvi. 13. In the absence of the bread-winners of a household, Christian women in a Græco-Roman city would find but scanty means of subsistence. In part, however, the churches were but sharers in a widely-spread distress. Macedonia

and Achaia never recovered from the three wars between Caesar and Pompeius, between the Triumvirs and Brutus and Cassius, and between Augustus and Antonius. Under Tiberius, they petitioned for a diminution of their burdens, and were accordingly transferred for a time from the jurisdiction of the senate to that of the emperor, as involving a less heavy taxation.

Unto the riches of their liberality.—The primary meaning of the word, as in chap. i. 12 (where see Note), is simplicity, or singleness of purpose. That singleness, when shown in gifts, leads to "liberality," and so the word had acquired the secondary sense in which it seems here to be used. Tyndale, and Cranmer, however, give "singleness," and the Rhemish version "simplicity." "Liberality" first appears in that of Geneva.

⁽³⁾ **They were willing of themselves.**—Literally, *spontaneously*. This was the point of excellence which he wished to indicate as an example to the Corinthians. Those of Macedonia needed no appeal or counsel such as he had given to the Corinthians and to others.

⁽⁴⁾ **Praying us with much intreaty . . .**—The words "that we would receive" are not in

saints. ⁽⁵⁾ And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. ⁽⁶⁾ In-
 somuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. ⁽⁷⁾ Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing*,

in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. ⁽⁸⁾ I speak not by com-
 mandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of

Chap. viii. 8-15.
 Appeal to the good-will and self-respect of the Corinthians.

the Greek, which literally runs: *asking of us the grace (or favour) and fellowship in the ministry of the saints, i.e., asking to be allowed to share in it.*

⁽⁵⁾ **Not as we hoped . . .**—This means, of course, that they had done what was far beyond his hopes; and here the point lies in the fact that they gave, not their money only, but themselves, their time, thought, energy, primarily to Christ as their Lord, and then to the Apostle as His minister. And this they had done because they had allowed the will of God to work upon their will.

⁽⁶⁾ **Insomuch that we desired Titus . . .**—The sequence of events seems to have been this: When Titus came to Corinth, he, among other things, after seeing the satisfactory results of the First Epistle in other respects, had begun to take measures for this collection for the poor of Jerusalem. He had been, to a certain extent, successful. Encouraged by the report of that success, St. Paul had now entreated Titus to return to Corinth, and to bring the good work to its completion. "This grace *also*" practically means—this

work of liberality, as well as that of repentance and loyal obedience already spoken of in chap. vii.

⁽⁷⁾ **Therefore, as ye abound in every thing.**—Literally, *But, as ye abound*, marking the transition from narrative to exhortation. He opens, as was his manner, with words of praise, and dexterously combines the gifts of "utterance and knowledge," which he had acknowledged before (1 Cor. i. 5), with the "earnestness and love" of which he had spoken in this very Epistle (chap. vii. 12).

And in your love to us.—Some MSS. give the reading "our love for you," but that in the text has abundant authority, and gives a far better meaning. The English expresses the general meaning, but there is a subtle delicacy in the Greek: "the love which, flowing from you, rests in us as its object." The other reading would convey the sense of "the love which, flowing from us—*i.e.*, from our teaching and influence—now dwells in you, and shows itself in act." In any case, he is praising them for a quality which is actually theirs.

⁽⁸⁾ **I speak not by commandment.**—The English, and,

your love. ⁽⁹⁾ For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty

¹ Gr. *willing.*

might be rich. ⁽¹⁰⁾ And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward¹ a

indeed, the Greek also, is to some extent ambiguous, and leaves us uncertain whether he disclaims merely the tone of command or the sanction of a divine authority. The former seems the preferable meaning, but ultimately the one runs into the other. He gives no commands in this matter to others because he has received no commandment from the Lord Himself. (Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 6, 12, 25.)

⁽⁹⁾ **Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.**—The meaning of the word "grace" appears slightly modified by the context. The theological sense of the word, so to speak, falls into the background, and that of an act of liberality becomes prominent.

That, though he was rich, . . . he became poor.—Better, *that, being rich . . .* The thought is the same as that expressed in Phil. ii. 6, 7, especially in the words which ought to be translated *He emptied Himself*. He was rich in the ineffable glory of the divine attributes, and these He renounced for a time in the mystery of the Incarnation, and took our nature in all its poverty. This is doubtless the chief thought expressed, but we can scarcely doubt that the words refer also to the outward aspect of our Lord's life. He chose the lot of the poor, almost of the beggar (the Greek word "poor" is so translated, and rightly, in Luke xvi. 20-22), as Francis of Assisi

and others have done in seeking to follow in His steps. And this He did that men might by that spectacle of a life of self-surrender be sharers with Him in the eternal wealth of the Spirit, and find their treasure not in earth but heaven. As regards the outward mendicant aspect of our Lord's life, and that of His disciples, see Notes on Matt. x. 10; Luke viii. 1-3; John xii. 6.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **And herein I give my advice.**—We note the same careful distinction between command and counsel which we have seen in 1 Cor. vii. 25.

Who have begun before . . .—Better, *who got the start last year, not only as to the doing, but also as to the willing*. At first, the words seem like an anti-climax, but what is meant is that the Corinthians had been before the Macedonian churches in both those stages. They had formed the purpose of giving, they had begun to lay by and to collect, before their rivals had started. They had, as it were, scored those two points in that game of honourable competition. It was "profitable for them" that he, as a by-stander watching the game, should give them a hint, so that they might not at last be ignominiously defeated. It is not easy to fix the exact limits of time indicated in the "year ago." The First Epistle was written about Easter. Then, after remaining at Ephesus for a while, there came

year ago. ⁽¹¹⁾ Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have. ⁽¹²⁾ For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted

according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not. ⁽¹³⁾ For *I mean* not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: ⁽¹⁴⁾ but by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be* a supply

the journey to Troas: then that to Macedonia; then the coming of Titus, bringing word that the Corinthians had acted on the command of 1 Cor. xvi. 1. This would bring us to the autumn months; and St. Paul, reckoning, as a Jew would, the year as beginning with Tisri (September or October), might speak of what had taken place in April or May as done "last year," though there had not been an interval of twelve months.

⁽¹¹⁾ **Now therefore perform the doing.**—Better, *complete the doing*: to "perform the doing" being open, in the modern use of the word, to the charge of tautology. All the English versions, however, have "perform." The three stages are distinctly marked out in St. Paul's mind:—(1) Willing the purpose to give; in this they had shown readiness. (2) Setting about the work of giving; this Titus had reported. (3) Completing the work; this he now urged upon them, so that it might answer to the beginning.

⁽¹²⁾ **For if there be first a willing mind.**—This grows "out of that which ye have" in the previous verse. He is expecting a sum large relatively, and not absolutely. The history of the widow's mite, found in the Gospel of his friend St. Luke (Luke xxi. 1—4), was probably not unknown to him as

belonging to "the words of the Lord Jesus" which he freely cites (Acts xx. 35). He has, at all events, imbibed the spirit of its teaching from other like words.

⁽¹³⁾ **For I mean not that other men be eased.**—The disclaimer is obviously an answer to something that had been said. The "charity begins at home" argument, with which the workers in the cause of missions and other distant works of charity are but too familiar, would seem not to have been unknown in the Church of Corinth.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **But by an equality.**—The meaning of the word is obvious. The Church of Jerusalem was at this time suffering from poverty, and, therefore, St. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to come to its assistance. A time might come in which their relative position would be inverted, and then he would plead not less earnestly that Jerusalem should assist Corinth. It is reading too much between the lines to see in the words the thought which the Apostle expresses elsewhere (Rom. xv. 27), that the equality of which he speaks consisted in the Corinthians giving money and receiving spiritual privileges. But for the fact that controversial ingenuity is "capable of anything," it might have been thought impossible to see in them

for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: ⁽¹⁵⁾ as it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over;^a and he that had gathered little had no lack. ⁽¹⁶⁾ But thanks be to God, which put the same

^a Ex. 16.
18.

earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. ⁽¹⁷⁾ For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. ⁽¹⁸⁾ And we have sent with

Chap. viii. 16—
24. St. Paul's arrangements for the transmission of the sum collected for the churches of Judæa.

the doctrine that men are to give to the poor in order that, in their time of need, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, they might receive from them a transfer of their superfluous merits. And yet this has actually been done by Roman Catholic commentators—even by such as Estius.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **He that had gathered much.**—The quotation is from one of the readings of the LXX. version of Ex. xvi. 18. The work of love was, in the Apostle's thoughts, like the manna in the wilderness. In the long-run all would be filled, each according to his several necessities.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **Thanks be to God, which put . . .**—Better, *which putteth*, the verb being in the present tense, and referring to what was then passing after Titus's return from Corinth.

The same earnest care.—There is no direct comparison, but what he means is the same care as his own. Titus had shown himself a true son of his spiritual father (Tit. i. 1).

⁽¹⁷⁾ **For indeed he accepted the exhortation . . .**—The words have a two-fold purpose:—(1) To show that Titus was authorised by the Apostle, and acting at his

request; (2) that he was so eager to go that he did not even need to be requested. The tense, "he went," is what is known as the epistolary aorist. Titus was to start, probably, as the bearer of this letter.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **The brother, whose praise is in the gospel.**—We cannot get beyond probable conjecture in determining who this was. The general current of patristic interpretation (represented, we may add, in the Collect for St. Luke's Day in the Prayer Book of the Church of England, though not in that of the Breviary of the Church of Rome) ran in favour of St. Luke; but this rested on the assumption, for which there is no evidence, and against which there is a strong balance of probabilities, that he was already well known as the writer of a Gospel. (See *Introduction to St. Luke*.) Apart from this, however, it may be urged that there is more evidence in favour of this hypothesis than of any other. If the words be interpreted, as they must, as pointing to a preacher of the Gospel, we have indications of St. Luke having done this at Antioch, at Troas, and at Philippi. None of the other companions of St. Paul who have been suggested, such as Tychicus or

him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches; ⁽¹⁹⁾ and not *that* only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this

¹ Or, *gift*. | grace,¹ which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration of your ready mind*: ⁽²⁰⁾ avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which

Trophimus, was likely to have so wide-spread a reputation. None was so likely to be with him at the time at Philippi. And it may be noted further—and this, so far as I know, is a point which has not hitherto been dwelt on—that there was no man so fitted to stir up the Corinthians, by his personal character, to a worthy completion of the good work they had begun. We have seen that in his Gospel he dwells emphatically on all parts of our Lord's teaching that point out the danger of riches and the blessedness of a generous almsgiving (see *Introduction to St. Luke*); how at Philippi his influence was traceable in the liberal supplies sent to St. Paul at Thessalonica (see Note on Acts xvi. 40, and Phil. iv. 15) and at Corinth (see Note on chap. xi. 9). Was not such a man, we may ask, eminently adapted for the mission on which the "brother, whose praise is in the gospel," was now sent? and was not the Apostle likely to choose him above all others for it? For Mark and Gaius, who have also been suggested, there is not a shadow of evidence; and as the latter was of Corinth (Rom. xvi. 23), he was not likely to have been sent thither from Philippi. The tense, "we have sent," is, as before, the epistolary aorist, used of the time at which the letter was being written.

⁽¹⁹⁾ **Who was also chosen of the churches.**—The word, as in Acts xiv. 23, implies a definite appointment, in this case, obviously, by popular election—on the part of the Macedonian churches. This falls in, it need hardly be said, with the facts of the case as indicated by the use of the first person plural in Acts xx. 5, and through the rest of the book.

With this grace.—The word is used, as in verses 4, 6, 7, as we familiarly use the word "charity," for the liberality which was the result of the grace.

To the glory of the same Lord.—Better, if we keep the Received text, *of the Lord Himself*; but the better MSS. give, *of the Lord*, only. There is no need of inserting the word "declaration of"; *in relation to the glory of the Lord and to your readiness* gives a perfectly intelligible sense.

⁽²⁰⁾ **Avoiding this, that no man should blame us.**—He gives this as the reason why he wished men thus appointed to travel with him. He desired to guard against the suspicion of those who were too ready to suspect. His companions were to bear witness that the sums which he took up with him from the several churches were what had actually been collected. They were to be, practically, auditors of his accounts.

is administered by us :
 (21) providing for honest
 things, not only in the
 sight of the Lord, but also
 in the sight of men. (22) And

we have sent with them
 our brother, whom we have
 oftentimes proved diligent
 in many things, but now
 much more diligent, upon

(See Note on Acts xx. 4.) He dwells again, later on in the Epistle (chap. xii. 18, 19), on the same measure of precaution.

This abundance.—The word, which primarily signifies “succulence,” or juiciness, as used of plants and fruits, does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It has rather the look of belonging to St. Luke’s medical vocabulary, and is, indeed, used by Hippocrates (*De Gen.* p. 28) of the full habit of body of a youth attaining puberty.

(21) **Providing for honest things** . . .—Many of the best MSS. give: “For we provide for honest things,” as though he gave the general principle on which he was now acting in this particular instance. The rule of life is repeated, a few months afterwards, in Rom. xii. 17. The English reader does not recognise the fact, which the Greek reader would see at once, that the words are a quotation from Prov. iii. 4, where the Greek version has: “Write them upon the table of thine heart, and thou shalt find favour.” *Provide things honest in the sight of God and man.* The citation is interesting, as showing that even one who was taught by the Spirit, as St. Paul was, could yet find guidance for his daily conduct in a book which seems to many almost to be below the level of the spiritual life. In this case, had the Apostle had only the judgment of God to consider, he could with a pure conscience have taken

up the money to Jerusalem by himself. But he had to consider that men were judging him, and might suspect him, and therefore he insisted, as has been said above, on having his accounts audited.

(22) **And we have sent with them our brother.**—Who this second unnamed brother was is again simply matter of conjecture. Of the names connected with St. Paul at this period, that of Tychicus seems to have the greatest balance of probabilities in its favour. He went up with St. Paul to Jerusalem on this very business (Acts xx. 4), and the tone in which the Apostle speaks of him in Eph. vi. 21, Col. iv. 7, exactly agrees with his language here. In 2 Tim. iv. 12, Tit. iii. 12, we have further evidence of his being one of the most trusted of the couriers, or “messengers,” of the Apostolic Church. The name of Clement has, however, I think, some claim to consideration. St. Paul refers to him as an active fellow-worker (Phil. iv. 3). He was connected with the Philippians. Assuming his identity with Clement of Rome, this gives him a point of contact with the Church of Corinth, to which Clement addressed his Epistle. On the other hand, the distinction drawn in chap. ix. 4 between these brethren and the Macedonians may seem to exclude Clement, as it has been thought to exclude Aristarchus and Sopater and Secundus. The word translated

the great confidence which *I have*¹ in you. ⁽²³⁾ Whether *any do enquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren *be enquired of*, *they are* the messengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Christ. ⁽²⁴⁾ Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the

¹ Or, he hath.

A.D. 60.

churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

CHAPTER IX.—

⁽¹⁾ For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me

Chap. ix. 1—4. Appeal to the Corinthians to let their conduct answer to the account of them which he had given to the Macedonians.

“diligent” (“earnest” in verse 16) is used by St. Paul only in this passage. It implies what we might almost call the “business-like” side of the Christian type of character, and is therefore employed with special fitness here.

⁽²³⁾ **Whether any do enquire of Titus.**—There is no verb in the Greek, and its insertion is not required for the English. Our common phrase, *As to Titus . . . as to our brethren*, exactly expresses St. Paul’s meaning. In the “messengers” of the churches we find in the Greek the word “Apostles” used, as in Phil. ii. 25, and possibly Rom. xvi. 7, in a lower sense (the Greek has no article), for “delegates of the churches,” as the Twelve and Paul and Barnabas were delegates of Christ. The other epithet—“the glory of Christ”—is an unusual one. To say that they were working only to that glory, though true, seems hardly adequate, and we gain a deeper thought by connecting it with the language of chap. iii. 18. “These messengers,” he says, “are like Christ in character: they reflect His glory. You may see that glory in them.”

⁽²⁴⁾ **Wherefore shew ye to**

them.—In adding “before the churches” (literally, *in the face of the churches*), St. Paul appeals, as he has done throughout the chapter, to that natural love of praise which takes its place as a legitimate, though it may be, and ought to be, a subordinate motive, for the activity of Christian benevolence. They were not to consider only what he and Titus and the two brethren would think of them. The eyes of the churches were upon them. Probably Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea are referred to.

The proof of your love, and of our boasting.—The “love” to which he appeals is probably their personal regard for him. What the “boast” was he states more fully in chap. ix. 2. With a subtle knowledge of human nature, he attacks them, as it were, on every side. They have to compete with Macedonia; they have to show their love for their teacher; they have to sustain their own reputation.

IX.

⁽¹⁾ **For as touching . . .**—The division of chapters in the English version, unfortunately,

to write to you: ⁽²⁾ for I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. ⁽³⁾ Yet have I sent the brethren,

lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: ⁽⁴⁾ lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident

gives the impression of the introduction of a new subject. In reality there is no new topic, and all flows on with unbroken continuity. This is part of the appeal to their self-respect begun in chap. viii. 23, 24. "You will pardon," he practically says, "my words of counsel as to the necessity of prompt action; as to the general duty of that ministrations to the saints you have shown that you need no instruction."

⁽²⁾ **For I know the forwardness of your mind.**—This was the boast to which he had referred in chap. viii. 24. Achaia (*i.e.*, Corinth, and perhaps Cenchreæ also) had been ready *last year*. The urgency of his present appeal indicates a latent misgiving whether he had not unconsciously overstated the fact, and had mistaken the "will" that had shown itself for an actual readiness to send off the money whenever it was called for. (See Note on verse 3.) The word for "provoke," used here in a good sense, is found in Col. iii. 21, in a bad sense, as "irritating." This was another reason for prompt and generous action. It would be a permanent disgrace to them if, after having been held up as a pattern to others, they afterwards fell short of their excellence.

Very many.—Literally, *the greater number*.

⁽³⁾ **Yet have I sent the brethren . . .**—This, then, was his purpose in the new mission. He wanted the performance not to fall short of the promise. They must be found ready, their money collected. (Comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 2.)

In this behalf.—Perhaps, *in this particular*, or, *in this respect*, would be more in harmony with modern English phraseology.

⁽⁴⁾ **Lest haply if they of Macedonia . . .**—The Greek for "Macedonians" has no article, and the word is meant to stir up something like an *esprit de corps*. "Surely you Achaians won't allow Macedonians to come and see that you fall short of what I told them about?" It is a probable, but not, as some have thought, a necessary inference, that neither of the two unnamed brethren of chap. viii. 18, 22, were of that province. What he now indicates is, that it is, at all events, probable that when he comes to pay his deferred visit he will be accompanied by Macedonians. If, then, they were still not ready, there would be shame for him; how much more for them!

In this same confident boasting.—Literally, *in this confidence of boasting*; but the better

boasting. (5) Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before

Chap. ix. 5-9.
Exhortation to the spirit of true liberality.

1 Gr. *blessing.*
2 Or, *which hath been so much spoken of before.*

unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty,¹ whereof ye had notice before,² that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of

MSS. give "in this confidence" only. The word so translated (*hypostasis*), literally, "that which stands under, the base or ground of anything," has the interest of a long subsequent history in metaphysical and theological controversies, of which we find, perhaps, the first trace in Heb. i. 3, where it appears as "person," and Heb. xi. 1, where it is rendered "substance." (See Notes on those passages.) In Heb. iii. 14, it has the same meaning as in this passage.

(5) Therefore I thought it necessary . . .—The brethren were to go before St. Paul, so as to get all things ready for his arrival. There were to be no hurried and unsatisfactory collections then.

Your bounty, whereof ye had notice before.—Better, *your bounty, announced before*. He is not referring to any notice that he had given, whether in 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, or elsewhere, but to the announcement that he himself had made to the churches of Macedonia. The word for "bounty" (*eulogia*) has, like that for "confidence" in the preceding verse, the interest of an ecclesiastical history attaching to it. Literally, it means a "blessing;" then, as in the LXX. of Gen. xxiii. 11, Judg. i. 15, it was used for the "gift," which is the outward token or accompaniment of a blessing. In liturgical language, as connected with the "cup of blessing," it was applied—(1) to

the consecrated bread and wine of the Lord's Supper generally; (2) specially to those portions which were reserved to be sent to the sick and other absentees; (3) when that practice fell into disuse, to the unconsecrated remains; and (4) to gifts of bread or cake to friends or the poor, as a residuum of the old distributions at the Agapæ, or Feasts of Charity.

As a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.—The bearing of the last word is not quite obvious. Probably what is meant is this:—"Let your gift be worthy of what you call it, a 'blessing' expressed in act, not the grudging gift of one who, as he gives, is intent on gaining some advantage through his seeming generosity." So understood, it expresses the same thought as Shakespeare's well-known lines:—

"The quality of mercy is not strained,

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

It is possible, however, that the word "covetousness" had been applied tauntingly to St. Paul himself, as always "asking for more," always "having his hand" (as it is sometimes said of active organising secretaries in our own time) "in people's pockets," and that this is his answer to that taunt. The use of the corresponding verb in chaps. vii. 2; xii. 17, 18, is strongly in favour of this view.

covetousness. ⁽⁶⁾ But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which

soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. ⁽⁷⁾ Every man according as he purposeth in his heart,

“Don’t look on this business,” he seems to say, “as a self-interested work of mine. Think of it as, in every sense of the word, a blessing both to givers and receivers.”

⁽⁶⁾ **He which soweth sparingly . . .**—It is interesting to note the occurrence of this thought in another Epistle of this period (Gal. vi. 7, 8).

He which soweth bountifully . . .—Literally, repeating the word before used, *he which soweth in blessings*. The obvious meaning of the passage is that a man “reaps,” *i.e.*, gains, the reward of God’s favour and inward satisfaction, not according to the quantitative value of the thing given, except so far as that is an indication of character, but according to the spirit and temper in which he has given it.

⁽⁷⁾ **Every man according as he purposeth.**—The verb, which does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, is used in its full ethical significance as indicating, not a passing impulse nor a vague wish, but a deliberate resolve, deciding both on the end and on the means for its attainment (Aristotle, *Eth. Nicom.* iii., c. 2). Such, St. Paul teaches, should be the purpose of the giver—not the outcome of a spent emotion, or a promise half-regretted, but formed with a clear, well-defined perception of all attendant circumstances, and therefore neither “grudgingly,” as regards amount, nor with reluctance, as giving under pressure.

God loveth a cheertul giver.—As in chap. viii. 21, so here, we have a distinct echo from the Book of Proverbs (xxii. 8) as it stands in the Greek version. In that version we find the following: “He that soweth wicked things shall reap evils, and shall complete the penalty of his deed. God blesseth a cheerful man and a giver, and shall complete” (in a good sense) “the incompleteness of his works.” It is obvious that this differs much from the Hebrew, which is represented in the English version, and it is interesting as showing that St. Paul used the LXX., and habitually quoted from it, and not from the Hebrew. As coming so soon after the quotation from Prov. iii. 4 in chap. viii. 21, it seems to suggest that the Apostle had recently been studying that book, and that his mind was full of its teaching. As a law of action, it may be noted that the principle has a far wider range of application than that of simple alms-giving. Cheerfulness in visits of sympathy, in the daily offices of kindness, in the life of home, in giving instruction or advice—all come under the head of that which God approves and loves. So the greatest of Greek ethical teachers had refused the title of “liberal” to the man who gave without pleasure in the act of giving. The pain he feels proves that if he could he would rather have the money than do the noble action (Aristotle, *Eth. Nicom.* iv., c. 1).

so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

(8) And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (9) (as it is written, He hath dis-

^b Ps. 112.
9.

^a Prov. 11. 25;
Rom. 12. 8;
Eccles. 35. 9.

^c Isa. 55.
10.

persed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. (10) Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both prayers and hopes as to the collection for the saints. minister bread for your food, and multiply

(8) God is able to make all grace abound toward you.—The word “grace” must be taken with somewhat of the same latitude as in chap. viii. 6, 7, 19, including every form of bounty, as well as “grace,” in its restricted theological sense: the means of giving, as well as cheerfulness in the act. He will bless the increase of those who give cheerfully, that they may have, not indeed the superfluity which ministers to selfish luxury, but the sufficiency with which all true disciples ought to be content. In the word “sufficiency,” which occurs only here and in 1 Tim. vi. 6 (“godliness with contentment”), we have another instance of St. Paul’s accurate use of the terminology of Greek ethical writers. To be independent, *self-sufficing*, was with them the crown of the perfect life; and Aristotle vindicates that quality for happiness as he defines it, as consisting in the activity of the intellect, and thus distinguished from wealth and pleasure, and the other accidents of life which men constantly mistook for it (*Eth. Nicom.* x., c. 7). At the time when St. Paul wrote it was constantly on the lips of Stoics. (Comp. the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, iii. c. 11.)

(9) As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad.—The words are quoted from the LXX. version of Ps. cxii. 9. At first it might almost seem as if they were quoted in a different sense from the original, and applied, not to the giver of alms, but to God as the giver of all good, dispersing His bounty and showing His righteousness. There are, however, sufficient grounds for taking them in their true meaning here also. “The good man gives to the poor,” the Psalmist had said; “but he is not impoverished by his gifts. His righteousness” (the word is used as it perhaps is in the better text in Matt. vi. 1—but see Note there—in the sense of alms-giving) “continues still and for ever.” He can, *i.e.*, go on giving from a constantly replenished store. That this is the meaning is shown by verse 3 of the Psalm: “Wealth and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness endureth for ever:” the latter clause corresponding to the former, according to the laws of parallelism in Hebrew poetry.

(10) Now he that ministereth seed to the sower.—Better, *he that giveth bounteously*. The Greek verb (*epichorêgein*) has a somewhat interesting history.

your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) ⁽¹¹⁾ being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanks-

giving to God. ⁽¹²⁾ For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

Originally it expressed the act of one who undertook to defray the expenses of the chorus of a Greek theatre. As this was an act of somewhat stately generosity, the verb got a wider range, and was applied to any such act, and was so transferred in like manner by the Apostle, probably, as far as we can trace, for the first time, to the divine bounty. It may be noted that it was not so used by the LXX. translators. The word indeed occurs but once in that version, in Ecclus. xxv. 22 ("if a woman *maintain* her husband"). In its higher sense it becomes a somewhat favourite word with St. Paul (Gal. iii. 5; Col. ii. 19), and is used by St. Peter (2 Pet. i. 5, 11) after he had become acquainted with St. Paul's Epistles, and possibly enriched his vocabulary through them.

The phrase "seed to the sower" occurs, with a different verb, in Isa. lv. 10. In the words that follow, "the fruits of righteousness," there is an obvious reminiscence of Hos. x. 12, and Amos vi. 12. The phrase occurs again in Phil. i. 11. The construction, according to the better MSS., varies somewhat from that of the Authorised version. *He that bounteously giveth seed to the sower and bread for food* (the beneficence of God thought of, as shown both in seed-time and harvest) *shall give bounteously, and multiply your seed, and increase*

the produce of your righteousness. "Righteousness" is taken, as before, as specially presented under the aspect of alms-giving.

⁽¹¹⁾ **Being enriched in every thing.**—The context points primarily to temporal abundance, but we can scarcely think that the other thought of the spiritual riches that are found in Christ (chap. viii. 9) was absent from the Apostle's mind. On the word for "bountifulness" see Note on chap. viii. 2. The participles are not grammatically connected with the preceding sentence, but the meaning is sufficiently obvious.

Which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.—His thoughts are obviously travelling on to the time of his arrival at Jerusalem, to the announcement of the collected gifts of the Gentile churches at a solemn gathering of the Church there, to the thanksgiving which would then be offered.

⁽¹²⁾ **For the administration of this service.**—The latter word (*leitourgia*) has, like that for "ministering" in verse 10, an interesting history. In classical Greek it stands for any public service rendered to the State. In the LXX. version it, and its cognate verb and adjective, are used almost exclusively of the ritual and sacrificial services of the Tabernacle and the Temple, as, e.g., in Num. iv. 25; 1 Chron.

⁽¹³⁾ whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and

for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; ⁽¹⁴⁾ and by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding

xi. 13; xxvi. 30; and in this sense it appears in Luke i. 23; Heb. viii. 6: ix. 21; and with the same shade of meaning used figuratively, in Phil. ii. 17. That meaning survives in the ecclesiastical term "liturgy," applied, as it was at first, exclusively to the service of the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Here, probably, the thought is implied that a large and liberal gift to Christ's poor, and for His sake, is the most acceptable of all forms of "service" in the liturgical sense of that word. So understood it implies the same truth as that stated in Jas. i. 27.

Not only supplieth the want of the saints.—Literally, *fills up the things that were lacking*. The wants of the "saints," i.e., the disciples of Jerusalem, were, we must remember, very urgent. They had never quite recovered from the pressure of the famine foretold by Agabus (Acts xi. 28), and the lavish generosity of the first days of the Church (Acts ii. 44, 45; iv. 32) had naturally exhausted its resources.

But is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God.—More accurately, *overflows, by means of many thanksgivings, to God*; the latter noun standing in a closer connection with the verb than the English version suggests. Some of the better MSS. give, *to Christ*.

⁽¹³⁾ Whiles by the experi-

ment of this ministration they glorify God.—The construction of the Greek sentence is again that of a participle which has no direct grammatical connection with what precedes, but the English version sufficiently expresses the meaning. *Test* would, perhaps, be a better word than "experiment." The word is the same as that rendered, with a needless variation, "experience" in Rom. v. 4, "trial" in 2 Cor. viii. 2, "proof" in 2 Cor. xiii. 3.

Your professed subjection.—The English version makes the not unfrequent mistake of merging the genitive in a somewhat weak adjective. Literally, *in your obedience to the confession of faith*. The latter noun is used in this sense in 1 Tim. vi. 12, 13; Heb. iii. 1; iv. 14. The word seems to have acquired a half-technical significance, like that which attaches to "faith" and "religion" used objectively.

For your liberal distribution.—The construction is the same as in the previous clause: *for the liberality of your contribution*.

⁽¹⁴⁾ And by their prayer for you, which long after you.—The structure of the Greek is again ungrammatical, but the following gives a somewhat more accurate representation: *And while they long after you, in supplication for you, on account of the exceeding grace of God that rests on you. He*

grace of God in you.
 (15) Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

CHAPTER X.—(1) Now I Paul myself beseech you

¹ Or, *in outward appearance.*
 A.D. 60.

by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence¹ *am* base among you, but being absent *am*

Chap. x. 1—6. The boldness of the Apostle as warring with no carnal weapons.

seems half lost in his anticipations of what will follow when he hands over the contributions of the Gentiles to the "saints" at Jerusalem. Their utterance of praise and thanksgiving will, he is sure, be followed by a yearning prayer of intercession for their benefactors.

(15) **Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.**—So the section on the collection for the saints comes to its close. We are left to conjecture to what gift the Apostle refers: whether to the love of God as manifested in Christ, or to the spirit of love poured into men's hearts. The use of the word in the Acts (ii. 38; viii. 20; x. 45; xi. 17) is in favour of referring it to the gift of the Holy Ghost; that of Rom. v. 15, 17, to the gift of pardon or righteousness. Probably it did not enter into his thoughts to subject the jubilant utterance of praise to a minute analysis.

At this stage there was manifestly another pause of greater or less length, in the act of dictating. Fresh thoughts of a different kind are working in his mind, and rousing feelings of a very different kind from those which had been just expressed. At last he again breaks silence and begins anew.

X.

(1) **Now I Paul myself beseech you.**—His thoughts, as

has been said, have travelled back to Corinth. The stinging words which Titus had reported to him (see Note on verse 10) vex his soul. He speaks in the tone of the suppressed indignation which shows itself in a keen incisive irony. The opening formula is one which he reserves as emphasising an exceptionally strong emotion (Gal. v. 2; Eph. iii. 1; Philem. verse 19).

By the meekness and gentleness of Christ.—On the precise ethical significance of the former word see Note on Matt. v. 5; on that of the second on Acts xxiv. 4. The temper described by the latter is that of one who does not press his rights, but acts in the spirit of equitable concession. The use of the formula of adjuration implies (1) that he felt how the opponents of whom he is about to speak were lacking in those two excellencies; (2) that he could appeal to what they knew of the personal character of Jesus as possessing them. This knowledge, it is obvious, must have rested on a general acquaintance with the facts of the Gospel history, like that implied in his treatment of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor. xi. 23—25; and of the Resurrection in 1 Cor. xv. 1—7; and in his reference to our Lord's teaching in Acts xx. 35.

Who in presence *am* base among you.—Literally, *in person*—i.e., in personal appearance. Possibly, however, the translators may

bold toward you : ⁽²⁾ but I beseech *you*, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think¹ of us as if we walked

¹ Or, reckon.
² Or, to God.

according to the flesh. ⁽³⁾ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh : ⁽⁴⁾ (for the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God² to the pulling down

have used the word "presence" in this sense. So Bacon speaks of "dignity of presence." The fact that "outward appearance" is given in the margin as an alternative reading, suggests, however, that though they changed the word, they meant what Cranmer and the Geneva version had expressed by "when I am present with you." For "base," read *downcast*, or *of low estate*. We have already seen, in chap. vii. 6 a reference to the offensive word.

But being absent am bold toward you.—This also was one of the taunts. "It was easy to be bold at a distance; but would he have the courage to face them? Was not his delay in coming a proof that he was shirking that encounter?"

⁽²⁾ But I beseech you . . . —There is, of course, an implied warning, almost a menace, in the entreaty. He would fain be spared the necessity for boldness when he and those of whom he speaks meet face to face; but if the necessity comes it will be the worse for them. They "reckon" him as walking "after the flesh," with low and selfish aims and tortuous arts. (Comp. chap. i. 17; Rom. viii. 12, 13; 1 Cor. i. 26.) He "reckons" that he has daring enough to confront those who take that estimate of him.

⁽³⁾ For though we walk in the flesh.—The phrase is generally used by St. Paul for the simple fact of bodily existence, with all its incidental infirmities and trials, but, commonly, without implying sin, as "after the flesh" does (Gal. ii. 20; Phil. i. 22—24; 1 Tim. iii. 16). The thought of participating in the sin of which the body is the occasion is, however, very close to that of sharing its weakness; and the phrase appears with this sense in Rom. viii. 8, 9.

We do not war after the flesh.—Strictly, *we are not carrying on our campaign*. See Note on Luke iii. 14, where the same word is used. As so often in St. Paul's style, the word — especially any word like this, connected with the soldier's life—becomes the germ of an elaborate figurative imagery, almost of a parable.

⁽⁴⁾ For the weapons of our warfare . . . —We learn from the earlier words of 1 Thess. v. 8, yet more from the later ones of Eph. vi. 11—16, what these were—the energies of spiritual powers given by the Eternal Spirit.

To the pulling down of strong holds.—The phrase is essentially military, used in the LXX. for the capture and destruction of fortresses (Lam. ii. 2; Prov. xxi. 22); "casting down the strength" (1 Macc. v. 65); "pulled down the

of strong holds;) ⁽⁵⁾ casting down imaginations, ¹ and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and	¹ Or, reasonings.	bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; ⁽⁶⁾ and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience,
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fortress" (viii. 10). He speaks as if leading an attack on the strong defences of the powers of evil, possibly thinking of the great system of idolatry and impurity enthroned at Corinth and throughout the Empire, possibly of those of pride and obstinate rebellion in the hearts of his individual opponents. The context favours the latter interpretation. It has been suggested (Stanley, *in loc.*) that the Apostle's language may have been coloured by national memories of the wars against the Cilicians, carried on by Pompeius, which ended in the reduction of one hundred and twenty fortresses and the capture of more than 10,000 prisoners.

⁽⁵⁾ **Casting down imaginations.**—The participle is in agreement with the "we war not" of verse 3. In the Greek word rendered "imaginations," we have the noun derived from the verb rendered "think," or *reckon*, in verse 2. It would be better, perhaps, to carry on the continuity by rendering it *thoughts* or even *reckonings*.

Every high thing that exalteth itself.—The noun probably belongs, like "strong hold," to the language of military writers, and indicates one of the rock fortresses, the

"Tot congesta manu præruptis oppida saxis,"
 ["Towns piled high on rocks precipitous,"]

—Virgil, *Georg.* i. 156.

which were so conspicuous in all ancient systems of defence.

Against the knowledge of God.—The parable and the interpretation are here obviously blended. The thoughts of men resist the knowledge of God as the stronghold of rebels resists the armies of the rightful king.

Bringing into captivity every thought.—The verb is used by St. Paul again in Rom. vii. 23; 2 Tim. iii. 6. There can be no doubt that "the obedience of Christ" means "obedience to Christ," and it had better, therefore, be so translated.

⁽⁶⁾ **And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience.**—The idiom, *having in a readiness*, is perhaps somewhat too archaic, and it might be better to render *being ready*, or *holding ourselves ready*. The words that follow imply the thought that those with which the verse opens were somewhat too unqualified. When he spoke of "avenging all disobedience," he was not thinking of those to whom he writes, and whose repentance and obedience had filled him with so much joy (chap. vii. 6—13), but only of the rebellious remnant. He would wait till all had obeyed who were willing to obey. He does not indicate what form of vengeance he thought of taking, but we may think of some such severe discipline as that indicated by "delivering to Satan," in 1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. v.

when your obedience is fulfilled. ⁽⁷⁾ Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this

Chap. x. 7-10.
The Apostle's protest against being judged by appearances.

20, with a view, if it were possible, to their ultimate restoration. (Comp. chap. xiii. 3-10.)

⁽⁷⁾ Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?—The Greek sentence may be taken either as interrogative, imperative, or indicative. The latter "ye look on things . . ." gives the most satisfactory meaning, as pressing home the charge on which he proceeds to dwell. He has, of course, the party of resistance in his thoughts, but he writes to the whole community, as influenced—some more and some less—by the tendency to attach undue weight to the outward accidents of those who claimed their allegiance rather than to that which was of the essence of all true Apostolic ministry.

If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's . . . —There cannot be the shadow of a doubt that the words refer to those whose watchword was "I am of Christ" (see Note on 1 Cor. i. 12), who laid claim to some special connection with Him, either as having been His personal disciples, or, at least, as having seen and known Him. In answer to that claim, with a half-ironical emphasis on "let him think," or "let him reckon" (comp. verses 2 and 5), he

again, that, as he *is* Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's. ⁽⁸⁾ For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: ⁽⁹⁾ that I

asserts that he is as truly His—*i.e.*, connected with Him, chosen by Him—as they were.

For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority.—Literally, *somewhat too much*—perhaps as quoting a word that had been used of him. In referring to his "authority," it scarcely admits of question that he claims—as in 1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. v. 20, and by implication in verse 6—the power to enforce that authority by a supernatural chastisement, as, *e.g.*, in the case of Elymas. He is anxious, however, having used the word "pulling down" or "destruction," to qualify his threat by the assertion that the power had been given him with a view, not "for destruction," but "for edification," or, to express the force of the antithesis more adequately, *for building up*. (Comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 12-26; Eph. iv. 12-16; and Notes on chap. xiii. 10.)

I should not be ashamed.—Better, *I shall not be ashamed*. He was quite sure, without any shadow of misgiving, that if he proceeded to the extreme step of delivering his opponents to Satan, the result which he contemplates will follow.

⁽⁹⁾ That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.—The logical sequence of

may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

⁽¹⁰⁾ For *his* letters, say they,

are weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence is weak, and *his* speech

thought is: "I say this" (*i.e.*, that my sentence of delivery to Satan will not be a hollow form) "in order that I may not seem to frighten you as with a bug-bear." This, it is clear from what follows, had been said. (Comp. the sneer in the next verse.) The use of the plural in this verse and that which follows is in favour of the hypothesis of a lost letter being referred to in 1 Cor. v. 9, but does not absolutely prove it.

⁽¹⁰⁾ For *his* letters, say they, are weighty and powerful.—Allusive references to what had been said of him at Corinth have already appeared frequently. Here, for the first time, we have the very words quoted. The scorn conveyed in them had wounded the Apostle's sensitive nature like a poisoned arrow; and we have here the nearest approach which the New Testament presents to the passionate complaints poured forth by some of the psalmists of the Old (Pss. lxi., cix.). We note the common element of a burning indignation under the sense of wrong. We note also the absence from the Apostle's feelings of the maledictory element which is so prominent in theirs. The "meekness and gentleness of Christ" had not been without their effect in tempering even the most vehement emotions.

The great majority of MSS. give the verb in the singular: "For his letters, saith he . . ." This may be taken, like the French *on dit*, as used impersonally, and possibly this is the meaning which the English

version was intended to convey. The context, however, the definite "such a man as that" of the next verse, is obviously decisive. St. Paul has in his thoughts here, and through the rest of the chapter, one conspicuous antagonist,—the head of a clique and cabal of opponents.

His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.—As with other antithetical epigrams, the sting was found in the tail. It would seem all but incredible that any doubt could ever have been expressed as to the fact that the words point to physical infirmities. They can, indeed, refer to nothing else. For the tradition as to the Apostle's personal appearance, see *Excursus* at the end of the Acts of the Apostles. The "contemptible speech" (literally, *speech of no value; counted as nought*) may refer either to a weak or unmusical voice, or to the absence of the rhetorical artifices, the exordium, divisions, perorations, in which Greek audiences delighted. It may be noted that these words give a fresh significance to a remarkable passage in an Epistle written, in the judgment of many critics, within a few weeks of this. "You," he says to the Galatians (Gal. iv. 13, 14), "though I came to you with that infirmity of the flesh which others sneer at, the chronic trial of my life, you did not contemn" (the self-same verb as that used here) "nor loathe me." There is manifestly a contrast present to his thoughts between

contemptible. ⁽¹¹⁾ Let such
 an one think
 this, that,
 such as we
 are in word
 by letters
 when we are
 absent, such
 will we be also in deed

Chap. x. 11—
 18. Contrast be-
 tween the boast
 of the Apostle
 and that of the
 rivals who have
 intruded into his
 sphere of labour.

when we are present.
⁽¹²⁾ For we dare not make
 ourselves of the number,
 or compare ourselves with
 some that commend them-
 selves: but they measuring
 themselves by themselves,
 and comparing themselves
 among themselves, are not

the mean insults of his rivals at
 Corinth and the affection which the
 Galatians had once manifested,
 and which made their subsequent
 alienation all the more painful to
 him.

⁽¹¹⁾ **Such will we be also.**—
 As a verb of some kind must be
 supplied, it would be better to give
 the present: *Such are we*. It is not
 so much a threat of what will hap-
 pen in a particular instance as a
 statement of the general consistent
 character of his life.

⁽¹²⁾ **We dare not make our-
 selves of the number.**—The
 last five words give the meaning of
 one Greek verb (*enkrinai* = to in-
 sert), the sound of which seems
 immediately to suggest the cognate
 verb (*synkrinai* = to compare). It
 is, of course, hard to convey the
 half-playful assonance in English.
 In "some that commend them-
 selves" we note a reference to the
 charge of self-commending, which
 he has already noticed four times
 (chaps. iii. 1; iv. 2; v. 12; vii. 11).
 Before he had defended himself
 against the charge; now he retorts
 it on his opponents. In "we dare"
 we trace a reference to the charge
 of cowardice, as in verse 2.

**Measuring themselves by
 themselves.**—The Greek MSS.
 present many various readings,

some of the best MSS. omitting
 "are not wise, but," and some
 giving "not boasting" for "we
 will not boast;" and the Greek text,
 on any reading, presents a gram-
 matical difficulty, arising from the
 fact that the last word may be
 either the third person plural of a
 verb in the indicative present, or a
 participle in the dative case, agree-
 ing with "themselves." It is
 hardly necessary to discuss here the
 various possible constructions rising
 out of the combination of these
 phenomena. The English version
 gives, it is believed, substantially
 the meaning of the original. In the
 very act of saying, with a touch of
 irony, that he will not compare
 himself with the rival teachers, the
 Apostle virtually does compare
 himself. And the point he makes
 is that they instituted no such
 comparison. They were their own
 standards of excellence. Each was
 "*amator sui sine rivali*." Collective-
 ly, they formed what has been de-
 scribed in the language of modern
 literary history as a "Mutual Ad-
 miration Society." Of all such self-
 admiration—one might almost say,
 of all such *autolatry*—St. Paul de-
 clares, what the experience of all
 ages attests, that they who practise
 it "are not wise." They lose,
 as the Greek verb more definitely

wise.¹ ⁽¹³⁾ But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule² which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. ⁽¹⁴⁾ For we

¹ Or, *understand it not.*

² Or, *line.*

stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you : for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ : ⁽¹⁵⁾ not boasting of

expresses it, all power of discernment.

⁽¹³⁾ **But we will not boast of things without our measure.**—The words imply, of course, that his opponents were doing this. He refers in it to the *concordat* established between himself and Barnabas, on the one hand, and Peter, James, and John, on the other, to which he refers in Gal. ii. 9. He had not transgressed the terms of that *concordat* by thrusting himself upon a Church which had been founded by one of the Apostles of the circumcision. He had gone, step by step, seeking “fresh fields and pastures new,” till he had reached Corinth as, at present, the farthest limit of his work. In that apportionment of work, though it was a compact with human teachers, he saw the guidance of God; his opponents, on the other hand, had systematically violated it. They had come to the Church of Antioch, which had been founded by Paul and Barnabas (Acts xv. 1); they had followed in his footsteps in Galatia (see *Introduction to Epistle to the Galatians*); they were now stirring up strife and disloyalty at Corinth. We note as an undesigned coincidence that a few weeks or months later, as in Rom. xv. 19, he had preached the gospel as far as Illyricum, but this was during the time

immediately following on the despatch of this Epistle, during which, on his way to Corinth, whence he wrote to Rome, he had “gone over those parts, and given them much exhortation” (Acts xx. 2).

⁽¹⁴⁾ **For we stretch not ourselves . . . as though we reached not unto you.**—Some of the better MSS. omit the negative, and then the sentence must be taken as a question: “Are we over-reaching” (*i.e.*, transgressing boundaries) “as though you were not within the limit assigned to us?”

For we are come as far as to you also.—The word for “come” (not the usual verb) is one which almost always in the New Testament, as in classical Greek, carries with it the sense of anticipation, “getting before others.” (See Note on Matt. xii. 28.) And this is obviously St. Paul’s meaning. “We were the first to come,” he says, “as working within our limits; the very fact that we did so come being a proof of it.” They (his rivals) came afterwards, and were intruders. On Corinth, as the then limit of his work, see Note on the preceding verse.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **Not boasting of things without our measure . . .**—The words are not merely defensive. He presses home the charge of intrusion. They, not he, were

things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is in-

¹ Or, magnified in you.

creased, that we shall be enlarged¹ by you according to our rule abundantly, ⁽¹⁶⁾ to preach the gospel in

finding ground for their boasts in other men's labours. The context leads, however, to the conclusion that it was a charge that had been brought against him. They had spoken of him as pushing on from point to point, as with a measureless ambition. Perhaps the fact that he had worked at Antioch, where the gospel had been preached by men of Cyprus and Cyrene (Acts xi. 20), at Troas, where it had been preached by St. Luke (see Notes on chap. ii. 12; Acts xvi. 8), to the Romans whom he found at Corinth, and who, like Aquila and Priscilla, had been already converted (see Notes on Acts xviii. 2), were thought to give a colour to the charge that he was boasting in other men's labours.

Having hope, when your faith is increased.—The verb is in the present tense, and should be translated, *as your faith grows*. The words are spoken in the spirit of one—

'Nil actum reputans si quid superesset agendum'

["Who thinks nought done while aught remains to do"]—

who seeks for fresh provinces to annex to the territory of his king. The growth of their faith will give him fresh courage, perhaps also fresh resources. But what does he mean by his "hope that we shall be enlarged according to" (or, perhaps, *in relation to*) "our rule"? The words seem to imply something more than a mere extension of labours, and suggest the prob-

ability that in his journey to Jerusalem, with the large and liberal gifts of the Gentile churches, he had an intention, here half-avowed, to endeavour to modify the terms of the *concordat* referred to in Gal. ii. 9, and to get the sanction of the Church of Jerusalem for his mission work at Rome: though there the gospel had been preached by others, and it was, primarily, at least, one of the Churches of the Circumcision. It will be seen that this supposition explains better than any other the apologetic tone of Rom. xv. 20—29. It was his reluctance even to appear to build on another man's foundation that had hitherto kept him from them. He does not intend to appear, when he comes, in the character of the founder of this Church, or even as building the superstructure, but only as a friend, seeking mutual help and counsel. Spain is his goal. He takes Rome as a parenthesis. But he is going to Jerusalem, and he hopes that the difficulty which has hitherto hindered him will be removed.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you.**—It is clear, from Rom. xv. 19—24, that he is thinking (1) of Western Greece, (2) of Rome, (3, and chiefly) of Spain. There, apparently, he could hope to preach the gospel without even the risk of its being said that he was building on another man's foundation.

And not to boast in another man's line . . .—The

the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line¹ of things made ready to our hand. (17) But he that glorieth,^a let him glory in the Lord. (18) For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but

¹ Or, rule.
A.D. 60.
^a Jer. 9.
24; 1
Cor. 1.
31.

whom the Lord commendeth.

CHAPTER XI.—

(1) Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my
Chap. xi. 1-6.
The anxious jealousy of St. Paul lest his disciples should be perverted.

words, like those of verse 15, are at once an answer to a charge and a *tu quoque* retort. "Spain! Illyricum!" he seems to say within himself. "Will you say that I am transgressing boundaries and working on another man's lines there? Can you say that you are free from that charge in your work at Corinth?"

(17) He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.—Better, *He that boasteth*, the English translators having again yielded to their besetting weakness for variation. On the general meaning of the phrase, which has been used before, see Note on 1 Cor. i. 31. Here it has a more special force. "To boast in the Lord" was to boast as in the sight of Christ of that of which the boaster thought as done, not by himself, but by Christ as dwelling in him.

(18) For not he that commendeth himself is approved.—Again, as in verse 12, and five earlier passages (see reference there), we trace the impression which the stinging taunt had left on St. Paul's mind. In the word "approved" there is possibly a reference to what had been said in 1 Cor. xi. 19. He had meant something more by it than meeting with men's approval.

XI.

(1) Would to God.—As the words "to God" are not in the Greek, it would be better to treat them as the general expression of a wish: *Would that ye could bear.*

Ye could bear with me a little in my folly.—There are two catch-words, as it were, which characterise the section of the Epistle on which we are now entering: one is of "bearing with," or "tolerating," which occurs five times (verses 1, 4, 19, 20), and "folly," which, with its kindred "fool," is repeated not less than eight times (verses 1, 16, 17, 19, 21; chap. xii. 6, 11). It is impossible to resist the inference that here also we have the echo of something which Titus had reported to him as said by his opponents at Corinth. Their words, we must believe, had taken some such form as this: "We really can bear with him no longer; his folly is becoming altogether intolerable."

And indeed bear with me.—The words, as the marginal reading indicates, admit of being taken either as imperative or indicative. Either gives an adequate meaning, but the latter, it is believed, is preferable. It is one of the many passages in which we

folly: and indeed bear¹ with me. ⁽²⁾ For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present

¹ Or, you do bear with me.

you as a chaste virgin to Christ. ⁽³⁾ But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from

trace the working of conflicting feelings. Indignation prompts him to the wish, "Would that ye could bear." Then he thinks of the loyalty and kindness which he had experienced at their hands, and he adds a qualifying clause to soften the seeming harshness of the words that had just passed from his lips: "And yet (why should I say this? for) ye do indeed habitually bear with me."

⁽²⁾ **For I am jealous over you . . .**—The word is used with the same sense as in the nearly contemporary passage of Gal. iv. 17, and the whole passage may be paraphrased thus: "I court your favour with a jealous care, which is not a mere human affection, but after the pattern of that of God." There is probably an implied contrast between the true jealousy which thus worked in his soul and the false jealousy of which he speaks in the passage just referred to.

For I have espoused you . . .—The word is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. It appears in this sense in the LXX. version of Prov. xix. 14: "A man's wife is espoused to him from the Lord." Strictly speaking, it is used of the act of the father who gives his daughter in marriage; and this, rather than the claim to act as "the friend of the bridegroom" (see Note on John iii. 29), is probably the idea here. He

claims the office as the "father" of the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. iv. 15). The underlying idea of the comparison is that the Church at large, and every separate portion of it, is as the bride of Christ. On the earlier appearances of this thought, see Notes on Matt. xxii. 2; xxv. 1; John iii. 29; and, for its more elaborated forms, on Eph. v. 25—32; Rev. xix. 7—9; xxi. 2, 9. What the Apostle now urges is, that it is as natural for him to be jealous for the purity of the Church which owes its birth to him, as it is for a father to be jealous over the chastity of the daughter whom he has betrothed as to a kingly bridegroom.

⁽³⁾ **But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent . . .**—An allusive reference to the history of Gen. iii., which meets us again in 1 Tim. iii. 13—15. St. Paul either takes for granted that the disciples at Corinth will recognise the "serpent" as the symbol of the great tempter, as in Rev. xii. 9; or, without laying stress on that identification, simply compares the work of the rival teachers to that of the serpent. The word for "subtilty" is not that used in the LXX. of Gen. iii. 1. Literally, it expresses the mischievous activity of a man who is *capable de tout*—ready, as we say, for anything.

Corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.—The Greek for "corrupt" has the same

the simplicity that is in Christ. ⁽⁴⁾ For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive

another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*. ⁽⁵⁾ For

special sense as in chap. vii. 2, as implying something that is incompatible with the idea of purity. The Apostle seeks, as it were, for a chastity of mind as well as of body. Many of the better MSS. give, *from the simplicity* (*i.e.*, singleness of affection) *and chastity*; and some, *chastity and simplicity*.

⁽⁴⁾ For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus.—The singular points, like the “any man,” “such an one,” of chap. x. 7, 11, to an individual teacher who had made himself conspicuously prominent. The words throw light on Gal. i. 7, 8. The false teachers in Galatia and those at Corinth were doing the same thing. In the absence of fuller knowledge of what they taught, it is difficult to define accurately what precise form of error is alluded to. One thing, at least, is clear—that their Jesus was not his Jesus—not the Friend and Brother of mankind who had died for all men, that He might reconcile them to God. Reasoning from probabilities, we may, perhaps, infer that they spoke of Him as the head of a Jewish kingdom, requiring circumcision and all the ordinances of the Law as a condition of admission to it.

If ye receive another spirit.—Better, *a different spirit*, as showing that the word is not the same as in the previous clause. The words point, it is clear, to a counterfeit inspiration, perhaps like that of those who had interrupted the

praises of the Church with the startling cry, “Anathema to Jesus!” (See Note on 1 Cor. xii. 3.) Such as these were the “false prophets” of 2 Pet. ii. 1; 1 John iv. 3, simulating the phenomena of inspiration, perhaps thought of by the Apostles as really acting under the inspiration of an evil spirit.

Which ye have not received.—Better, *did not receive*, as referring definitely to the time of their conversion.

Another gospel, which ye have not accepted.—Better, as before, *a different gospel, which ye did not accept*—*i.e.*, different from that which you did accept from me. His gospel, he seems to say, was one of pardon through faith working by love: theirs was based on the old Pharisaic lines of works, ritual, ceremonial, and moral precepts, standing in their teaching on the same footing.

Ye might well bear with him.—Better, the adverb being emphatic, and intensely ironical, *nobly would ye bear with him*. He means, of course, that they have done much more than tolerate the preachers of the false gospel, and have paid them an extravagant deference. On a like use of irony in our Lord’s teaching, see Note on Mark vii. 9.

⁽⁵⁾ For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.—The verb with which the sentence opens is the same as the “I think,” “I

I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. ⁽⁶⁾ But though I

be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made

reckon," which characterises these chapters, and which, being characteristic, ought to be retained. *I reckon I have not fallen short of those apostles-extraordinary.* The whole tone of the passage ought to have made it impossible for any commentator to imagine that the words referred to Peter and James and John as the pillars of the Church of Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 9). Of them he speaks, even in his boldest moments, with respect, even where respect is mingled with reproof. He is glad to remember how they gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. He presents himself at Jerusalem a few months after writing these words, and almost submissively follows the counsel which James gives him (Acts xxi. 26). It is, accordingly, simply the insanity of controversy to imagine that these words have any bearing on the question of the primacy of St. Peter. Those whom he holds up to scorn with an almost withering irony, as "apostles-extraordinary" (he coins a word which literally means "these *extra-special* or *over-extra* apostles"), are the false teachers, claiming to stand in a special relation to Christ, to be His Apostles—perhaps, also, to have a double title to the name, as delegates of the Church of Jerusalem. Of these he speaks more fully in verse 13.

⁽⁶⁾ But though I be rude in speech.—The word for "rude" is the same as that translated as "unlearned" in 1 Cor. xiv. 23, 24. This, then, had also been said of

him by some at Corinth. It might seem at first as if the contemptuous criticism was likely to have come from the Hellenic or paganising party of culture, who despised the Apostle because he was without the polish and eloquence of the rhetoric in which they delighted. The context, however, makes it clear that the opponents now under the lash are the Judaising teachers, the "apostles-extraordinary." They apparently affected to despise him because he had abandoned, or had never mastered, the subtleties of Rabbinic casuistry, the wild allegories of Rabbinic interpretation. "He talks," we hear them saying, "of others as 'laymen,' or 'unlearned.' What right has he so to speak who is practically but a 'layman' himself? How can a man who is cutting and stitching all day be a 'doctor of the law'? *Nē sutor ultra crepidam.*" Side by side with the recognition of the dignity of labour in some Jewish proverbs (such, *e.g.*, as that the father who did not teach his son to work taught him to be a thief), there was among the later Rabbis something like the feeling of an aristocracy of scholarship. Even the Son of Sirach, after describing the work of the ploughman and the carpenter and the potter, excludes them from the higher life of wisdom. "They shall not be sought for in public counsel . . . they cannot declare justice and judgment; and they shall not be found where parables are spoken" (Ecclus. xxxviii. 33). The word for "rude" was probably used as

manifest among you in all things. ⁽⁷⁾ Have I com-

Chap. xi. 7—15.
St. Paul's defence against the charge of slighting the Corinthians by not receiving their gifts.

mitted an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I

have preached to you the gospel of God freely? ⁽⁸⁾ I robbed other churches, taking wages of *them*, to do you service. ⁽⁹⁾ And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that

the equivalent for the Hebrew term by which the Pharisees held up the working classes to contempt as "the people of the earth."

But we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.—The readings vary, some of the better MSS. giving the active form of the verb, *having made (it) manifest in everything among all men*. The apparent awkwardness of having a transitive verb without an object probably led to the substitution of the passive participle.

⁽⁷⁾ Have I committed an offence (literally, *a sin*) in abasing myself . . . ?—The rival teachers apparently boasted of their disinterestedness. "They didn't come for what they could get." St. Paul, we know, more than most men, had acted on the law of which they boasted as their special distinction, and in 1 Cor. ix. 1—18, in the discussion on the question of eating things sacrificed to idols, had dwelt with a pardonable fulness on his own conduct in this matter, as an example of foregoing an abstract right for the sake of a greater good. His enemies were compelled to admit this as far as his life at Corinth was concerned; but they had detected what they looked on as a grave inconsistency. He had accepted help from the churches of

Macedonia (verse 9), and in this they found ground for a two-fold charge: "He wasn't above taking money from other churches—he was only too proud to take it from that of Corinth;" and this was made matter of personal offence. To take money at all was mean; not to take it from them was contemptuous.

He does not deny the facts. He repeats the irritating epithet, "abasing myself"; he adds the familiar antithesis (Matt. xxiii. 12; Luke i. 52; xiv. 11; xviii. 11), "Yes, but I did it that you might be exalted," perhaps with reference to elevation in spiritual knowledge, perhaps, because the fact that he laboured for them without payment was the greatest proof of disinterested love for them which could be given.

⁽⁸⁾ I robbed other churches, taking wages of them.—The word for wages—strictly *rations*, or wages in kind rather than in money—is found in Luke iii. 14; Rom. vi. 23; 1 Cor. ix. 7. Its use in the last-named passage had, perhaps, given occasion for a sneer. "He too can take wages when it suits his purpose." From St. Paul's point of view, if what he had received had been wages at all, he had been guilty of an act of spoliation. He had received wages from one employer while he was acting in the service of another.

⁽⁹⁾ I was chargeable to no

which was lacking to me |
the brethren which came |
from Macedonia supplied :

and in all *things* I have |
kept myself from being |
burdensome unto you,

man.—There is no doubt that this gives substantially the meaning of the Greek word, but the word is a very peculiar one, and has a history which, as throwing light on the sources of St. Paul's phraseology, and his character as shown in his use of it, is not without interest. The verb (*katanarkaô*) is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, nor in the LXX. versions of the Old, nor, indeed, in any known Greek author except Hippocrates. Jerome describes it as belonging to the *patois* of Cilicia, which, if true, would be interesting; but he gives no proof of it (*Ep. ad Aglaia*), and the statement must be treated as unproven. The history which we are about to trace, tends, however, to confirm it as a probable conjecture. The root of the verb is found in the noun *narkê*, which is used (1) for "numbness," or "torpor" (a sense found in our "narcotic"), and (2) as the name of a fish of the torpedo genus, causing numbness by its contact with the human body (Aristotle, *Anim. Hist.* vi. 10). The verb derived from the noun is accordingly used by Hippocrates and Galen in the sense of "being benumbed," or causing numbness. (See Foesius, *Lexic. Hippocrat.* s.v. *ναρκη*.) As used here, it takes its place as a bold figurative expression. To benumb any one, was to exhaust him, to drain him of his vitality by pressing on him, and, as it were, living upon him, St. Paul accordingly means, in using the word, to say, "I didn't drain you of your resources—did

not live upon you." An analogous similitude is found in Shakespeare's lines:—

"That now he was
The ivy which had hid my princely trunk,
And suck'd my verdure out on't."
Tempest, i. 2.

Our modern phrase which speaks of one man as "sponging" on another implies a like metaphor. In the word "parasitic" as applied to plants and animals, we have an inverted transfer of the same idea from the incidents of man's social life to that of lower organisms. As a word belonging, through Hippocrates, to the recognised terminology of physicians, it takes its place in the vocabulary which St. Paul may be supposed to have derived from St. Luke (see *Introduction to St. Luke's Gospel*), and which the fame of Tarsus as a medical school may also have made more or less familiar, as Jerome states, in the conversational idioms of Cilicia.

The brethren which came from Macedonia supplied.—Not "which came," but *when they came*. The Acts of the Apostles present no record of any such supply, but Phil. iv. 15 presents an interesting and confirmatory coincidence. The Philippians had sent supplies to him twice at Thessalonica, and it was a natural sequel to this that they should send to him also at Corinth. The Apostle may well have accepted what they thus sent, and yet have thought his acceptance perfectly compatible with his boast that he was not preaching at Corinth for the sake of gain

and so will I keep myself. ⁽¹⁰⁾ As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting¹ in the regions of Achaia. ⁽¹¹⁾ Wherefore? because I love you not?

¹ Gr. *this boasting shall not be stopped in me.*

God knoweth. ⁽¹²⁾ But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

(1 Cor. ix. 16—18). He was not to be robbed of whatever credit attached to his working for his own livelihood at Corinth and elsewhere, by any sneers which had that acceptance for their starting-point.

And so will I keep myself.—It adds to the interest of this declaration to remember that St. Paul had acted on this principle both at Ephesus, which he had just left (Acts xx. 34), and in the Macedonian churches which he was now visiting (2 Thess. iii. 8). The future tense obviously points to his resolution to continue to act on the same lines during his promised visit to Corinth.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **As the truth of Christ is in me . . .**—The formula is almost, though not quite, of the nature of an oath. He speaks here, as in Rom. ix. 1, in the consciousness that the truth of Christ (the objective sense of the truth revealed in Christ seems almost merged in the subjective sense of the truthfulness that was of the essence of His nature) dwells in him, and that therefore he cannot but speak "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

No man shall stop me of this boasting.—Literally, *This boast shall not be stopped for me.* The verb for "stop" means primarily to "hedge round" or "fence." In

the New Testament, as in Rom. iii. 19, it is always used of "stopping the mouth." Here, with something like a personification, he says that his boast shall not have its mouth thus sealed.

In the regions of Achaia.—The word (*klima*) is peculiar to St. Paul among the writers of the New Testament (Rom. xv. 23; Gal. i. 21). Like our word "climate," which is derived from it, it was originally a term of science, and had passed gradually into colloquial usage. He names the province and not the city—probably to include Cenchree. There is no evidence of his having preached in any other locality south of the Isthmus of Corinth.

⁽¹¹⁾ **Because I love you not . . . ?**—This then had been said. Some of the Corinthians were jealous, or affected to be jealous, of the preference shown to the Macedonians in receiving gifts from them. With an emphatic appeal to Him who reads the secrets of men's hearts, he disclaims that imputation.

⁽¹²⁾ **That I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion.**—It lies on the surface that the "occasion," or *opening for attack*, which his opponents had thus desired, was one against which he guarded himself by not taking money. They

⁽¹³⁾ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves

into the apostles of Christ.
⁽¹⁴⁾ And no marvel; for Satan himself is trans-

boasted of their own disinterestedness. They taunted him with his meanness in taking money from the Macedonian churches. The Apostle wishes, therefore, by persisting in his line of conduct, in spite of the appeals of a real or affected jealousy, to place himself on the same level with them, them on the same level with himself. The comparison between them must rest, he says, on other grounds. This seems the only tenable and coherent interpretation; nor is there any force in the objection which has been urged against it, that there is no evidence that the rival teachers did teach gratuitously. If this is a natural inference from St. Paul's language, and there is no evidence to the contrary, that is surely evidence enough. It may be added, however, that there is at least in favour of the interpretation here given, the evidence of antecedent probability. It was likely that those who claimed to be in some special sense followers of Christ, would at least affect to act on the words of Christ, "Freely ye have received, freely give." (See Note on Matt. x. 8.) It was likely that those who, from another point of view, were representatives of the scribes of Judaism, should at least affect to act as the noblest of those scribes had acted, and to teach, not for payment, but for the love of teaching. That it was an affectation, and not a reality, we shall hereafter see reason to believe.

⁽¹³⁾ For such are false

apostles . . .—St. Paul's estimate of the character of his rivals is now given in unsparing language as the reason why he desires to deprive them of any claim which may give them an adventitious superiority to him. In the term "false apostles" we have the explanation of the "apostles-extraordinary" of verse 5. These "crafty workers" were carrying on a system of imposture, trying to assume the character of being, in a higher sense than he was, "Apostles of Christ." This again throws light both on the words "if any man trusts that he is Christ's" of chap. x. 7, and on the "I am of Christ" of 1 Cor. i. 12.

⁽¹⁴⁾ For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.—The present tense of the original excludes the thought that reference is made to any special incident (such as the appearance of Satan among "the sons of God," of Job i. 6) recorded in the Old Testament, or in tradition. The thought is rather that Satan is ever so transforming himself. If we are to look for any special allusion, we may find a possible explanation in the words "though we, or an angel from heaven," in Gal. i. 8. They suggest the thought, as at least a probable inference, that the Judaising teachers had claimed the authority of an angelic message for the gospel which they preached, and set this against the authority of the angelic visions which St. Luke had recorded in the case of Cornelius (Acts x. 2). It is probable, we

formed into an angel of light. ⁽¹⁵⁾ Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as

the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. ⁽¹⁶⁾ I say again, Let no man

may add, that the Christ-party at Corinth, as distinct from that of Cephas, had affinities with the Jewish sect of the Essenes, and they, we know, were addicted to the worship of angels (*Jos. Wars*, ii. 8, § 6), and made much of revelations conveyed through their ministry. On this supposition St. Paul may, in his allusive way, mean to imply that they were mistaking a satanic for an angelic apparition. Something of the kind is obviously implied in the stress which St. Paul lays on his own visions and revelations in chap. xii. 1.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **If his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.**—The words seem to point to one of the special characteristics of the Apostle's rivals. They represented themselves as the preachers of a righteousness which was, they asserted, neglected in St. Paul's teaching. They claimed the authority of one who was known as James the Just, or Righteous, and who had insisted emphatically on the necessity of a righteousness showing itself in act. They presented themselves as a kind of revival of the Chasidim, or righteous ones. (See Note on Acts ix. 13.) It may be noted that the latter developments of the same school, as seen in the Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, present, in the midst of much that is both false and malignant, an almost ostentatiously high standard of morality.

Whose end shall be according to their works.—What the works were is stated, or implied, in verse 20. Here he is content to rest on the eternal law of God's government, that what a man sows that shall he also reap. The abruptness with which the next verse opens indicates that here again there was a pause in the dictation of the letter. After an interval—during which, led by the last words he had spoken, his thoughts had travelled to the contrast between their works, of which they boasted so loudly, and his own—he begins again, half-indignant at the necessity for self-assertion which they have forced upon him, aware that all that had been said of his "insane" habit of "commending himself" was likely to be said again, and yet feeling that he must once for all remind the Corinthians of what he had done and suffered, and then leave them to judge between the rival claims.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **I say again, Let no man think me a fool . . .**—The stinging word is repeated from verse 1. He protests against the justice of the taunt. He pleads that, even if they think him "insane" (this, rather than mere foolishness, is probably the meaning of the word), they will give him the attention which, even in that case, most men would give—which they, at least, were giving to men to whom that term might far more justly be applied.

think me a fool ; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive¹ me, that I may boast myself a little.

(17) That which I speak, I

Chap. xi. 16—21. Ironic defence against the charge of insanity.

¹ Or, suffer.

speaking *it* not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

(18) Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. (19) For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye *yourselves*

(17) I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly. —Better, *in foolishness*; as keeping up the emphatic repetition of the same word in the English as in the Greek. From one point of view the distinction drawn is the same as that which we find in 1 Cor. vii. 6, 10, 12. There is, however, a marked difference in the subject-matter of the two cases. There he distinguishes a private opinion from a principle or rule which he feels to be divine. Here he draws the line of demarcation between human feelings and a divine inspiration. It is, of course, easy to raise questions which would be hard, if they were not also frivolous and foolish. Are we to class what he places on the lower side of the boundary-line as inspired or uninspired teaching? If the former, are we not contradicting what he writes as inspired? If the latter, are we not depriving what follows of the authority of an inspired writing? Are we not, in so doing, admitting the principle of recognising a human element mingling with the divine in other parts of Scripture as well as this? The answer to these questions, so far as they need an answer, is best found in taking St. Paul's words in their plain and natural sense, believing that his words have just the authority

which he claims for them, and no more. Speaking apart from these questions, there is something almost pathetic in the consciousness which he feels that self-vindication can never, as such, come from the Spirit of God, and that it is, at the best, a pardonable human weakness. It is not wrong, or else his conscience would have forbidden it. It is not the note of the highest or noblest temper, or else he would have felt the Spirit's guidance in it.

(18) Seeing that many glory after the flesh.—To glory, or *boast*, after the flesh, as interpreted by chap. v. 16 (where see Note), is to lay stress on things which are the accidents of the spiritual life, not of its true essence—on descent, prerogatives, rank, reputation, and the like. There is a touch half of irony, half of impatience, in the way in which the Apostle says that he too will for once descend to their level and do as they do.

(19) Ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.—He falls back into the strain of irony of 1 Cor. iv. 8—10, to which, indeed, the whole passage presents a striking parallelism. He assumes that in their serene, self-complacent wisdom they will be willing to tolerate even those whom they look upon as half-insane. He drives the sarcasm

are wise. ⁽²⁰⁾ For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you,

if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. ⁽²¹⁾ I speak as concerning reproach, as though we

home by urging that they tolerate those who are morally in a far worse condition.

⁽²⁰⁾ For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage.—Every word in the sentence clearly points to something that Titus had told him of the action of these rival teachers. They reproduced, in their worst form, the vices of the Pharisaism of Palestine (Matt. xxiii. 4, 14, 25). They enslaved the consciences of men (the same word is used of the same class of men in Gal. ii. 4) by pressing on them an iron code of rules which left no room for the free play of conscience and of reason in those over whom they claimed to act as directors.

If a man devour you.—The word again reminds us of our Lord's denunciation of the teachers who "devoured widows' houses" (Matt. xxiii. 14).

If a man take of you . . .—The words in italics are wrongly supplied, and turn this clause into a feeble repetition of the preceding. Better, *if a man takes you in*. In chap. xii. 16, we have the same construction ("I caught you with guile") obviously with this sense.

If a man smite you on the face.—This last form of outrage was, as St. Paul was soon to experience (Acts xxiii. 2), not unfamiliar to Jewish priests and scribes, as the most effective way of silencing an opponent. We have an earlier instance of its application in the action of Zedekiah, the son of

Chenaanah (1 Kings xxii. 24). That it had found its way into the Christian Church in the apostolic time is seen in St. Paul's rule that a bishop should be no "striker" (1 Tim. iii. 3; Tit. i. 7). It is obvious that he had heard of an instance in which this had actually been done at Corinth, and he taunts them with the tameness of their submission. Did he forget, or had he not as yet heard the law of Matt. v. 39; or was he, knowing it, for a time unmindful of it, in this rush of emotion which he himself feels to be simply human, and therefore not inspired?

⁽²¹⁾ I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak.—Better, *I speak it as a matter of reproach to myself, as though we were weak*. The irony becomes more intense than ever. He has named these acts of outrage, he says, as though by way of self-disparagement. "*We*" (the pronoun is strongly emphasised) "were too infirm to venture on such things." The taunt flung at his bodily infirmities is still present to his thoughts, and he assumes, in the bitterness of his irony, that it was through them he had been kept from like acts of self-asserting authority. Then he resumes his contrast, still dwelling on the offensive words, "folly" or "insanity," which had been used of him: "Yes, but on every ground of daring—I know you will see my insanity again in this—I have as much right to dare as they."

had been weak. Howbeit whereinherit soever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. ⁽²²⁾ Are they Hebrews? so *am* I. Are they

Chap. xi. 21-30.
Contrast between his labours and sufferings and those of his rivals.

Israelites? so *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I. ⁽²³⁾ Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more

⁽²²⁾ Are they Hebrews?—This then was one of their boasts. They were Jews of Palestine, speaking Aramaic, reading the Law and Prophets in the original. He, they asserted, or implied, was a Hellenistic Jew (his birth at Tarsus naturally suggesting that thought), content to use the Greek version of the LXX., over which many of the more exclusive Hebrews mourned on an annual fast-day as a national degradation. St. Paul's answer is, that he too was a Hebrew; or, as he puts it in Phil. iii. 5, "a Hebrew born of Hebrews." What he means is obviously that his parents were Jews of Palestine, and that the accident of his birth in Tarsus had not annulled his claim to that nationality. As a matter of fact it made him able to unite things that were commonly looked on as incompatible, and to be both a Hebrew and a Hellenist.

Are they Israelites? . . .—The words imply another insinuation. They whispered doubts whether he had any right to call himself an Israelite at all. Had he a drop of Abraham's blood flowing in his veins? Might he not, after all, be but the grandson of a proselyte, upon whom there rested the stigma which, according to a Jewish proverb, was not effaced till the twenty-fourth generation?

Did not this account for his heathen sympathies? Strange as the thought may seem to us, the calumny survived, and the later Ebionites asserted (Epiphanius, *Hær.* xxx. 16) that he was a Gentile by birth, who had only accepted circumcision that he might marry the high priest's daughter. The kind of climax which the verse presents points not only to three claims to honour on their part, for in that case the first would include both the second and the third, and the climax would have little meaning, but to successive denials that he possessed any of the three. Jerome, strangely enough (*Cat. Vir. Illust.* c. 5), asserts that St. Paul was a Galilean, born at Gischala; but this, though it may possibly point to a tradition as to the home of his parents, can hardly be allowed to outweigh his own positive statement (Acts xxii. 3).

⁽²³⁾ Are they ministers of Christ?—It is obvious that this title was claimed by the rival teachers in some special sense. They were "ministers of Christ" in a nearer and higher sense than others. This again falls in with all that has been said as to the nature and pretensions of those who said, "I am of Christ." (See Notes on chap. x. 7; 1 Cor. i. 12.)

beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; ⁽²⁶⁾ *in* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters,

in perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the

of unrecorded sufferings, which we must refer either to the period of his life between his departure from Jerusalem (Acts ix. 30) and his arrival at Antioch (Acts xi. 26), or to voyages among the islands of the Ægean Sea during his stay at Corinth or at Ephesus, or to that from Ephesus to Cæsarea in Acts xviii. 22.

A night and a day I have been in the deep.—Taken in their natural sense the words probably point to one of the shipwrecks just mentioned, in which, either swimming or with the help of a plank (as in Acts xxvii. 44), he had kept himself floating for nearly a whole day, beginning with the night. They have, however, been referred by some writers to a dungeon-pit, like that into which Jeremiah was cast (Jer. xxxviii. 6), in which the Apostle was either thrown or hid himself after the stoning at Lystra. Bede (*Quest.* iii. 8) relates on the authority of Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury—whose evidence, as a native of Tarsus, has here a special interest—that there was such a dungeon known by the name of *Bythos* (the word used here for “deep”) in his time at Cyzicus, and, if so, it is probable enough that the same use of the word may have prevailed in other cities. So at Athens there was a dungeon known as the *barathron*—a word used also for a “gulf.” On the whole, however, though the conjecture is interesting

enough to deserve mention, there seems no adequate reason for adopting it.

⁽²⁶⁾ **In journeyings often.**—Again we enter on a list of activities and sufferings of which this is the only, or nearly the only, record. Some of them may be referred to journeys (as above) before his arrival at Antioch; some, probably, to that from Antioch to Ephesus through the interior of Asia Minor (Acts xviii. 23; xix. 1); some to excursions from Ephesus. The “perils of waters” (better, *rivers*) point to the swollen torrents that rush down in spring from the mountain heights of the Taurus and other ranges, and render the streams unfordable. “Robbers” infested then, as now, well-nigh every high-road in Syria and Asia Minor, as in the parable of the Good Samaritan (see Note on Luke x. 30), and the story of St. John and the young robber, as reported from Clement of Alexandria by Eusebius (*Hist.* iii. 23). Of the “perils from his own countrymen” we have instances enough up to this time at Damascus (Acts ix. 23), at Jerusalem (Acts ix. 29), at Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, and Lystra (Acts xiii. 50; xiv. 5—19), at Thessalonica, and at Corinth (Acts xvii. 5—13; xviii. 12). Of “perils from the heathen” we find examples at Philippi (Acts xvi. 20) and Ephesus (Acts xix. 23). City and wilderness (possibly the Arabian desert of Gal.

sea, in perils among false brethren; ⁽²⁷⁾ in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and

thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. ⁽²⁸⁾ Beside those things that are without, that which cometh

i. 17; possibly the high table-lands of Armenia and Asia Minor) and sea were alike fruitful in dangers. As if with something like a climax he reserves the word "false brethren," such as those of Gal. ii. 4, as the last and worst of his trials.

⁽²⁷⁾ **In weariness and painfulness . . .**—The same combination meets us in 2 Thess. iii. 8, where the English version has "labour and travail," as Tyndale and Cranmer have in this passage. "Weariness and painfulness" appear first in the Geneva version; *toil and trouble* is, perhaps, the best English equivalent. From the use of the phrase in 2 Thess. iii. 8, it probably refers chiefly to St. Paul's daily labour as a tent-maker. The "watchings" indicate the sleepless nights spent in anxiety, or pain, or prayer. "Hunger and thirst" are named as privations incident to his journeys or his labours. "Fastings," as distinguished from these, can hardly mean anything but times of self-chosen abstinence, of which we have at least two instances in Acts xiii. 2, 3, and which would be natural in St. Paul both as a Pharisee (see Notes on Matt. vi. 16, and Luke xviii. 12) and as a disciple of Christ (see Note on Matt. ix. 15). "Cold and nakedness" seem to speak not only of lonely journeys, thinly clad and thinly shod, on the high passes from Syria into Asia Minor, but also of lodgings without fire, and of thread-bare garments. The whole passage

reminds us of the narrative given by an old chronicler of the first appearance of the disciples of Francis of Assisi in England, walking with naked and bleeding feet through ice and snow, clothed only with one friar's cloak, shivering and frost-bitten (*Eccleston, De Adventu Minorum*). He obviously contrasts this picture of his sufferings with what the Corinthians knew of the life of his rivals, who, if they were like their brethren of Judæa, walked in long robes, and loved the uppermost places at feasts (Matt. xxiii. 6). It had become a Jewish proverb that "the disciples of the wise had a right to a goodly house, a fair wife, and a soft couch" (Ursini, *Antiqq. Hebr.* c. 5, in Ugolini's *Thesaurus*, vol. xxi.).

⁽²⁸⁾ **That which cometh upon me daily . . .**—The word so translated primarily signifies a "rush" or "tumult," and is so used in Acts xxiv. 12. Here that meaning is excluded by the fact that perils of that nature had been already specified, and that he now manifestly speaks of something differing in kind as well as in degree. But there is, as our modern phraseology shows, such a thing as a "rush" of business almost as trying as the "ugly rush" of a crowd, and that is manifestly what he means here. The daily visits of inquirers, the confessions of sin-burdened souls, the craving of perplexed consciences for guidance, the reference of quarrels of the household or the church to his

upon me daily, the care of all the churches. ⁽²⁹⁾ Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? ⁽³⁰⁾ If I

must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. ⁽³¹⁾ The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

arbitration as umpire, the arrival of messengers from distant churches, each with their tidings of good or evil—this is what we have to think of as present to St. Paul's thoughts as the daily routine of his life; and the absence of any conjunction between the two clauses clearly points to the fact that, in his mind, "the care (or *anxiety*) of all the churches" was all but identical with the "rush" of which he had just spoken.

⁽²⁹⁾ **Who is weak, and I am not weak . . . ?**—The words obviously spring from a recollection of all that was involved in that "rush" of which he had just spoken. Did any come to him with his tale of body-sickness or soul-sickness, he, in his infinite sympathy, felt as if he shared in it. He claimed no exemption from their infirmities, was reminded by every such tale of his own liability to them. The words that follow have a still stronger significance. The word "offended" (better, *made to stumble—i.e.*, led to fall by a temptation which the man has not resisted) suggests the thought of some grievous sin, as distinct from weakness: and the dominant sense of the word, as in Matt. v. 29, 30; xviii. 8, 9; Mark ix. 42, 43, 45, 47; 1 Cor. viii. 13, is that of the sins to which men are led by the temptations of the senses. The other word—to "burn"—is even more startling in its suggestiveness. It had been used in 1 Cor. vii. 9 of the

"burning" of sensual passion, and it is scarcely open to a doubt that the associations thus connected with it mingle with its meaning here. Men came to the Apostle with their tales of shame, and told how they had been tempted and had fallen; and here, too, he, in that illimitable sympathy of his, seemed to have travelled with them on the downward road. He felt himself suffused, as it were, with the burning glow of their shame. He blushed with them and for them, as though the sin had been his own. Simply as a word, it should be added, it is equally applicable to any emotion of intense pain or fiery indignation, and it has been so taken by many interpreters. The view which has been given above seems, however, most in harmony with the Apostle's character.

⁽³⁰⁾ **If I must needs glory . . .**—The words form a transition to the narratives that follow. The question, "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" has suggested the thought of the weakness and infirmity of various kinds with which his enemies reproached him. He will glory—here also with a touch of grave irony—in these, and will leave his rivals to find what ground for boasting they can in what they call their strength. He is confident that his weak points are stronger than their strong ones.

⁽³¹⁾ **The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**—The solemn attestation was, we may

which is blessed for ever-
more, know-
eth that I lie
not. ⁽³²⁾ In

Chap. xi. 31—33.
His escape from
Damascus.

Damascus the governor
under Aretas the king
kept the city of the Da-
mascenes with a garrison,

believe, a natural introduction to what was possibly intended, as the words passed from his lips, to be the beginning of a much fuller narrative than that which was its actual outcome.

Which is blessed for evermore.—The Greek has no conjunction, but its force is best given either by *which is, and is blessed for evermore*, or, by an emphasis of punctuation and the insertion of a verb, *which is: blessed is He for evermore*. The Greek participle is not a single predicate of blessedness, such as the English expresses, but is that constantly used in the LXX. version as the equivalent of the Hebrew name for Jehovah: "He that is," the "I AM" of Ex. iii. 13, 14; Jer. xiv. 13; and in a later and probably contemporary work, not translated from the Hebrew, in Wisd. xiii. 1 ("they could not . . . know Him that is"). So Philo, in like manner, speaks of "He that is" as a received name of God. (See also Notes on John viii. 58, 59; Rom. ix. 5.)

⁽³²⁾ **In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king . . .**—The question meets us at the outset whether the fact that follows is brought in as being the first instance of suffering endured for the sake of Christ, and therefore the natural opening to what was intended to have been a long connected narrative of all such sufferings, or as being connected in some special manner with his "infirmities." On the whole, the

evidence—especially the context of verse 30—seems in favour of the latter view, as far, at least, as the selection of the incident is concerned. There was, we can well imagine, an element of the ludicrous—something that gave occasion to jests and sneers—in the way in which the Apostle's escape had been effected. There was, so to speak, something undignified in it. Those who mocked at the stunted growth and weakness of his bodily presence would find good matter for their mirth in this.

On the historical facts connected with this incident, see Notes on Acts ix. 24, 25. The additional details which we learn from St. Paul are—(1) that Damascus was under the immediate control, not of the Governor of Syria, but of a governor or an *ethnarch*; (2) that the ethnarch was appointed, not by the Roman emperor, but by Aretas (the name was hereditary, and was the Greek form of the Arabic *Haret*), the king of the Nabathæan Arabs, who had his capital at Petra, who was the father of the first wife of Herod Antipas (see Note on Matt. xiv. 1); (3) that the ethnarch lent himself to the enmity of the Jews, and stationed troops at each gate of the city to prevent St. Paul's escape. "Ethnarch," it may be noted, was about this time the common title of a subordinate provincial governor. It had been borne by Judas Maccabæus (1 Macc. xiv. 47; xv. 1, 2) and by Archelaus (Jos. Wars, ii. 6, § 3).

desirous to apprehend me :
 (33) and through a window
 in a basket was I let down
 by the wall, and escaped
 his hands.

A.D. 60.

CHAPTER XII.—⁽¹⁾ It
 is not expedient for me
 doubtless to glory. I will

Chap. xii. 1—6.
 St. Paul's visions
 and revelations
 of the Lord.

(33) Through a window in a basket . . .—On the mode of escape, see Notes on Acts ix. 24, 25. So the spies escaped from the house of Rahab (Josh. ii. 15), and David from the pursuit of Saul (1 Sam. xix. 12). The word which St. Paul uses for "basket" (*sarganè*) implies, perhaps, a more vivid personal recollection, as meaning specifically a rope-work hamper. St. Luke employs the more general term, *spuris*. (See Note on Matt. xv. 32.)

XII.

⁽¹⁾ It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come . . .—The English "doubtless" corresponds to a Greek illative particle. *To boast, then, is not expedient for me.* The MSS., however, present a considerable variety of readings. The best-authenticated text is probably that which would be represented in English by, *I must needs glory. It is not, indeed, expedient, but I will come . . .* The sequence of thought would seem to be that the Apostle felt constrained by the taunts of his opponents to indulge in what looked like self-assertion in vindication of his own character; that he was conscious, as he did so, that it was not, in the highest sense of the word, expedient for him; and that, under the influence of these mingled feelings, he passed over other topics on which he might have dwelt, and came at once to

that which had been made matter of reproach against him.

Visions and revelations of the Lord.—It need scarcely be said that the history of the Acts is full of such visions (Acts ix. 4—6; xvi. 9; xviii. 9; xxii. 18; xxiii. 11; xxvii. 23). One other instance is referred to in Gal. ii. 2. There is scarcely any room for doubt that this also had been made matter of reproach against him, and perhaps urged as a proof of the charge of madness. In the Clementine *Homilies*—a kind of controversial romance representing the later views of the Ebionite or Judaizing party, in which most recent critics have recognised a thinly-veiled attempt to present the characteristic features of St. Paul under the pretence of an attack on Simon Magus, just as the writer of a political novel in modern times might draw the portraits of his rivals under fictitious names—we find stress laid on the alleged claims of Simon to have had communications from the Lord through visions and dreams and outward revelations; and this claim is contrasted with that of Peter, who had personally followed Christ during his ministry on earth (*Hom.* xvii. 14—20). What was said then, in the form of this elaborate attack, may well have been said before by the more malignant advocates of the same party. The charge of insanity was one easy to make, and of all charges, perhaps,

come to visions and revelations of the Lord. ⁽²⁾ I knew a man in Christ

above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether

the most difficult to refute by one who gloried in the facts which were alleged as its foundation—who did see visions, and did “speak with tongues” in the ecstasy of adoring rapture (1 Cor. xiv. 18). It may be noted as an instance of St. Luke’s fairness that he, ignorant of, or ignoring, the charge of madness that had been brought against St. Paul, does not grudge the Apostle of the Circumcision whatever glory might accrue from a true revelation thus made through the medium of a vision (Acts x. 10, 11).

⁽²⁾ I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago.—Better, *I know a man*. The Greek verb, though a perfect tense in form, is invariably used with the force of a present. It is all but impossible to connect the facts that follow with any definite point of time in the Apostle’s life as recorded in the Acts. The date of the Epistle may be fixed, without much risk of error, in A.D. 57. Reckoning fourteen years back, we come to A.D. 43, which coincides with the period of unrecorded activity between St. Paul’s departure from Jerusalem (Acts ix. 30) and his arrival at Antioch (Acts xi. 26). It would be giving, perhaps, too wide a margin to the words “more than fourteen years ago” to refer the visions and revelations of which he here speaks to those given him at the time of his conversion, in A.D. 37. The trance in the Temple (Acts xxii. 17) on his first visit to Jerusalem may, perhaps, be identified with them; but it seems best,

on the whole, to refer them to the commencement of his work at Antioch, when they would have been unspeakably precious, as an encouragement in his arduous work. It may be noted that Gal. ii. 2 specifically refers to one revelation at Antioch, and it may well have been preceded by others. The term “a man in Christ,” as a way of speaking of himself, is probably connected with the thought that “if any man be in Christ he is a new creature” (chap. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15). As one who lived and moved and had his being in Christ, he was raised to a higher region of experience than that in which he had lived before. It was in moments such as he describes that he became conscious of that “new creation” with a new and hitherto unknown experience.

Whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell.—No words can describe more accurately the phenomena of consciousness in the state of trance or ecstasy. It is dead to the outer world. The body remains, sometimes standing, sometimes recumbent, but, in either case, motionless. The man may well doubt, on his return to the normal condition of his life, whether his spirit has actually passed into unknown regions in a separate and disembodied condition, or whether the body itself has been also a sharer in its experiences of the unseen. We, with our wider knowledge, have no hesitation in accepting the former

out of the body, I cannot tell : God knoweth ;) such an one caught up to the

third heaven. ⁽³⁾ And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the

alternative, or, perhaps, in reducing the whole revelation to an impression on the brain and the phenomena known as cataleptic. St. Paul, however, would naturally turn to such records as those of Ezekiel's journey, in the visions of God, from the banks of Chebar to Jerusalem (Ezek. viii. 3 ; xi. 1), and find in them the analogue, though, as he admits, not the solution, of his own experience. The lives of many of the great movers in the history of religious thought present, it may be noted, analogous phenomena. Of Epimenides, and Pythagoras, and Socrates, of Mahomet, of Francis of Assisi, and Thomas Aquinas, and Johannes Scotus, of George Fox, and Savonarola, and Swedenborg, it was alike true that to pass from time to time into the abnormal state of ecstasy was with them almost the normal order of their lives. (See article "Trance" in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, by the present writer.)

Such an one caught up to the third heaven.—Rabbinic speculations on the subject of Heaven present two forms: one which, starting probably from the dual form of the Hebrew word, recognises but two heavens, both visible—the lower region of the clouds and the upper firmament; and a later, which, under the influence of ideas from the further East, spoke of seven. A remarkable legend in the Talmud (*Beres-hith Rabba*, 19, fol. 19, col. 3) relates how the Shechinah, or glory-cloud of the Divine Presence, retired step by step from

earth, where it had dwelt before the sin of Adam, at every fresh development of evil; into the first heaven at the fall, into the second at the murder of Abel, and so on, till it reached the seventh heaven on Abraham's going down to Egypt, and descended again by successive steps from the birth of Isaac to the time of the Exodus, when it came once more to earth and dwelt in the Tabernacle with Moses. If we assume St. Paul to have accepted any such division, the third heaven would indicate little more than the region of the clouds and sky. It is more probable, however, from the tone in which he speaks, as clearly dwelling on the surpassing excellency of his visions, that he adopts the simpler classification, and thinks of himself as passing beyond the lower sky, beyond the firmament of heaven, into the third or yet higher heaven, where the presence of God was manifested. The seven heavens re-appear naturally in the legends of the Koran (*Sura lxvii.*) and in the speculations of mediæval theology as represented by Dante. We probably hear a far-off echo of the derision with which the announcement was received by the jesting Greeks of Corinth and by St. Paul's personal rivals, in the dialogue ascribed to Lucian, and known as the *Philopatris*, in which St. Paul is represented as "the Galilean, bald, with eagle nose, walking through the air to the third heaven."

⁽³⁾ **And I knew such a man.**—Better as before, *I know.*

body, I cannot tell : God knoweth ;) ⁽⁴⁾ how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeak-

¹ Or, possible.

able words, which it is not lawful ¹ for a man to utter. ⁽⁵⁾ Of such an one will I glory : yet of myself I will

(4) That he was caught up into paradise.—The stress laid on this second vision hinders us from thinking of it as identical with the former, either in time or in object-matter. Paradise (see Note on Luke xxiii. 43) was emphatically the dwelling-place of the souls of the righteous, the reproduction in the unseen world of the lost beauty of the Garden of Eden—the “paradise of joy,” as the LXX. in Gen. ii. 15 translates the name. There, flowing about the throne of God, was the fountain of the water of life, and the tree of life growing on its banks (Rev. ii. 7 ; xxii. 1, 2). Speculations on the question whether St. Paul thought of it as nearer or farther from earth than the third heaven are obviously idle and profitless. The nearest approach which we can make to an adequate distinction between the two visions is that the first revealed to his gaze the glory of the Throne of God, with angels and archangels round it, and seraphim and cherubim—a vision like that of Moses (Ex. xxiv. 10), and Isaiah (Isa. vi. 1—3), and Ezekiel (Ezek. i. 4—28), and St. John (Rev. iv. 2—11)—thoughts like those of Hooker’s death-bed (Walton’s *Life*)—while the latter brought before his spirit the peace and rest ineffable, even in their intermediate and therefore imperfect state, of the souls who had fallen asleep in Christ and were waiting for their resurrection.

Unspeakable words, which

it is not lawful for a man to utter.—The first two words present the tone of a paradox—*speech unspeakable*, or *utterances unutterable*. The verb in the second clause hovers between the text, “it is not lawful” and “it is not possible.” The hymns which St. John records in Rev. iv. 8, 9, v. 12—14, vii. 12, and xv. 3, may give us some faint approach to what dwelt in St. Paul’s memory and yet could not be reproduced. Sounds of ineffable sweetness, bursts of praise and adoration, hallelujahs like the sound of many waters, voices low and sweet as those of children, whispers which were scarcely distinguishable from silence and yet thrilled the soul with a rapturous joy—this we may, perhaps, think of as underlying St. Paul’s language. In the mystic ecstatic utterances of the Tongues—themselves needing an interpreter, and helping little to build up those who heard them, though they raised the life of those who spoke with them to a higher level—we may, perhaps, trace some earthly echoes of that heavenly music. (See Notes on Acts ii. 4 ; 1 Cor. xiv. 2.)

(5) Of such an one will I glory.—There is, if we rightly understand it, an almost exquisite sadness in the distinction which is thus drawn by the Apostle between the old self of fourteen years ago, with this abundance of revelations, and the new self of the present, feebler and sadder than the old, worn with cares and sorrows, the

not glory, but in mine infirmities. ⁽⁶⁾ For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth

me to be, or that he heareth of me. ⁽⁷⁾ And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was

Chap. xii. 7-9.
St. Paul's thorn in the flesh, and the answer to his prayer for its removal.

daily rush of life and its ever-growing anxieties. Then he saw with open vision; now he walks by faith and not by the thing seen. He can hardly recognise his own identity, and can speak of the man who had then this capacity for the beatific vision as though he were another—almost as if he were dead and gone. The “*non sum qualis eram*” of decay and age presents manifold varieties of form, the soldier recalling the stir and the rush of battle, the poet finding that the vision and the “faculty divine” are no longer entrusted to his keeping, the eloquent orator who had “wielded at will a fierce democracy,” complaining of slow speech and of a stammering tongue; but this has a sadness peculiar to itself. Faith, hope, love, peace, righteousness, are still there, but there has passed away a glory from the earth, and the joy of that ecstatic rapture lies in the remote past, never to return on earth.

⁽⁶⁾ For though I would desire to glory . . .—He had said in the preceding verse that he will glory only in his infirmities. He is about to lay bare to their gaze the greatest of all those infirmities. “If I should boast of that,” he says, “I shall not be acting as a madman does” (the thought of insanity is throughout

dominant in the words “fool” and “folly”), “for I will confine myself to a simple statement of fact.”

⁽⁷⁾ There was given to me a thorn in the flesh.—The vague mystery with which St. Paul thus surrounds the special form of “infirmity” of which he speaks, has given rise to very different conjectures, which will require to be treated with more or less fulness. It will be well to begin with getting as closely as we can at the idea of the central word. The Greek word for “thorn,” then, might better be translated *stake*. It is used, *e.g.*, of stakes thrust into the ground to form a palisade round a grave—

“And round about they dug a trench full deep,
And wide and large, and round it fixed
their stakes.”—Homer, *Iliad*, vii. 441.

A sharp-pointed stake of this kind was often used as a means of torture in the punishment known as impaling, and the two Greek words for “impaling” and “crucifying” were indeed almost interchangeable (Herod. i. 128; ix. 18). So in Euripides (*Iphig. in Tauris*, 1430)—

“Say, shall we hurl them down from lofty
rock,
Or fix their bodies on the stake?”

It is significant that men like Celsus and Lucian, writing against the faith of Christians, used the term

given to me a thorn in the ^{a See Ezek. 28. 24.} flesh,^a the messenger of

"stake" instead of "cross," as more ignominious, and spoke of Jesus as having been "impaled" instead of "crucified" (Origen, *c. Cels.* ii. ; Lucian, *De morte Peregr.*, p. 762). So Chrysostom used the word "impaled" of St. Peter's crucifixion. On the other hand, medical writers, such as Dioscorides and Artemidorus, by whose use of the word, as possibly coming to him through St. Luke, St. Paul was likely to be influenced, apply the term to what we call a "splinter" getting into the flesh, and causing acute inflammation (*Diosc.* ii. 29; iv. 176). Dioscorides, it may be noted, was a native of Anazarba in Cilicia, and probably a contemporary of St. Paul's. The word used figuratively, therefore, comes to bring with it the sense of some acute form of suffering, something, to use a word of like history and significance, *excruciating* in its character. So used, it might, as far as the word itself is concerned, be applied to any sharp agony, either of mind or body.

The history of the interpretations which have been given to this mysterious term is not without interest as a psychological study. Men have clearly been influenced, to a large extent, by their subjective tendencies. They have measured the sufferings of St. Paul by their own experience, and thinking that he must have felt as they felt, have seen in his "thorn in the flesh" that which they felt to be their own sharpest trial. Some of these conjectures may be dismissed very briefly. It cannot be, as some have thought, the remembrance of his own guilt in persecuting the dis-

ciples of Christ, for that would not have been described as a "thorn in the flesh," nor could he well have prayed that it should depart from him. For a like reason, it could not have been, as some Protestant commentators have imagined, any doubt as to the certainty of his own salvation, or of his being included in God's pardoning love. We may safely set aside, again, the view that he refers to his struggle with heathen enemies, like Demetrius, or Judaizing rivals, for these had been included in his list of sufferers in chap. xi. 22, 23, and here he is clearly speaking of something generically new. There remain two hypotheses. (1) That he speaks of the conflict with sensual passion; and (2), that he refers to some chronic infirmity of body that brought with it constantly recurring attacks of acute pain. For each of these a strong case may be made out. In favour of (1) it may be urged that the language of St. Paul in not a few places implies the existence of such a struggle with temptation. He sees a law in his members warring against the law of his mind (Rom. vii. 23). Sin wrought in him all manner of concupiscence (Rom. vii. 8). He found it necessary to keep under his body, and bring it into subjection (1 Cor. ix. 27). What has been said as to the question, "Who is offended, and I burn not?" suggests a special sympathy with that form of struggle against evil; and in the "fire-tipt darts of the wicked one" of Eph. vi. 16 (where we have the participle of the same verb), we may, perhaps, trace an allusive reference to impulses of this nature. It is

Satan to buffet me, lest I | | should be exalted above

clear that with some temperaments temptations such as this, besides the moral pain which they bring with them, may inflict a bodily suffering little less than excruciating, and the words that speak of the "flesh" as the seat of suffering, and of its being a "messenger of Satan," at least fall in with the view thus presented. Nor is it enough to say, on the other hand, that St. Paul's character made such temptations impossible. The long line of patristic, and mediæval, and modern Romish interpreters, who have taken this view, though of little weight as an authority, is, at least, evidence that they knew the bitterness of such temptations, and though their thoughts may have been coloured by the experiences of the monastic life and enforced celibacy, as in the story of the temptations of St. Antony, we may fairly read in their testimony the fact that sensual temptation may assail men who are aiming at a high ascetic standard of holiness. Experience seems, indeed, to show that the ecstatic temperament, with its high-wrought emotional excitement, is more than most others liable to the attacks of this form of evil. So the daily evening hymn of St. Ambrose includes the prayer "*ne pollutantur corpora.*" So Augustine bewails the recurrence in dreams of the old sensuous temptations to which he had yielded in his youth (*Confess.* x. 30) and Jerome is not ashamed to tell the history of such temptations, alternating here also with ecstatic visions of divine glories, to the female friend whom he exhorts to persevere in her vow of chastity (*Epist. ad Eustochium*, c. 7). It

may be added that this view falls in with the tone in which St. Paul approaches "the thorn in the flesh" as the crown of all his infirmities. No self-humiliation could go beyond this disclosure of what most men hide. As in the confessions of Augustine and Jerome, just referred to, the last veil is withdrawn, and men are told that the man who has had visions of God is one of like passions with themselves, subject, as they are, to the strongest temptations of his sensuous nature. As in the triumphs of the Emperors of Rome, a slave rode in the same chariot with the conqueror, and bade him ever and anon remember that he also was a man, so here there was a continual reminder that he too might become as others were. If there was any danger of being exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, nothing could more easily bring a man down from that ideal height than the consciousness that this was his besetting temptation.

On the other hand, there are some serious considerations that militate against this theory. There is no trace of any sins of this nature in any of St. Paul's retrospects (as in Acts xxii. 3; xxiii. 1; xxvi. 4; Phil. iii. 4, 6) of his state before his conversion. His tone in Rom. vii. 25 is that of one who has fought and overcome in the struggle with "the flesh"; and it is clear from the whole context, that with St. Paul the "fleshy mind" does not necessarily involve sensual sin. The language of 1 Cor. vii. 7 ("I would that all men were even as I myself"), which is the nearest approach to a direct statement on the

subject, is scarcely compatible with the thought that, instead of the calmness of habitual self-control, the man who so spoke was all along fighting against impulses which were so strong as to bring with them actual torment. It may be added, as almost decisive, that St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, would use language that they could understand, and that there is not a jot or tittle of evidence that the word for "thorn" was ever used by any Greek writer of the sting of sensuous impulse. It was not likely, indeed, that they, accustomed to a licentious indulgence in this matter, would see in such an impulse any cause of pain and anguish. If the Apostle had meant this, it would have been necessary for him to express his meaning far more plainly. On the other hand, there is, as we have seen (Notes on chaps. i. 9; iv. 10—12; v. 2—4), abundant evidence that St. Paul did suffer from some acute form of bodily disease. The very word "stake," or "thorn," or "splinter," would suggest to the Corinthian readers of the Epistle the idea of corporeal rather than mental suffering. The "large letter" of his signature (Gal. vi. 11), the characteristic "steadfast gaze" (see Note on Acts xiii. 9), the wish of the Galatians, if it had been possible, to have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him (Gal. iv. 15), all point to brows and eyes as being the seat of suffering. The very word to "buffet" (see Note on Matt. xxvi. 67) suggests the same conclusion. Nor need we be surprised that this infirmity—neuralgia of the head and face, or inflammation of the eyes, perhaps, in some measure, the after consequences of the blindness at Damascus—should be described as

a "messenger of Satan." That was, in fact, the dominant Jewish thought as to the causation of disease. The sores and boils of Job (Job ii. 7), the spirit of infirmity of the woman whom Satan had bound (Luke xiii. 16), St. Paul's own reference to Satan as hindering his journeys (1 Thess. ii. 18), his delivering men to Satan for the destruction of their flesh and the salvation of their souls (1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. i. 20), St. Peter's description of our Lord as healing all that are oppressed of the devil (Acts v. 38)—these are enough to prove, that while men referred special forms of suffering of mind and body, chiefly the former, to the agency of demons, they were prepared to recognise the agency of Satan in almost every form of bodily calamity.

On these grounds, then, it is believed the balance turns in favour of the latter of the two hypotheses. A more complete solution of the problem may, perhaps, be found in accepting it as, in some measure, supplemented by the former. I venture to think, however, that all or most of the facts urged on behalf of that view, may legitimately come under the words "lest I should be exalted above measure." The man who is so exalted is in danger of sensual passions. The ecstatic is on the border-land of the orgiastic. He needs a check of some kind. If this were so with St. Paul, as with Luther and Augustine (and the language of Rom. vii. 8 must be admitted to point to some past struggles), what more effective check could there be than the sharp pain of body, crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts (Gal. v. 24), with which we have seen reason to identify the "thorn" of which St. Paul speaks? One who

measure. ⁽⁸⁾ For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. ⁽⁹⁾ And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength

is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Therefore I

thus lived as in "the body of this death" could thank God who, even in this way, gave him the victory over the law of sin (Rom. vii. 24). His sufferings were to him, as has been well pointed out by Dean Stanley (in a note on this verse), what the mysterious agony that used at times to seize on Alfred in the midst of feast and revel, had been to the saintly and heroic king, a discipline working for his perfection.

⁽⁸⁾ For this thing I besought the Lord thrice.—We are reminded of our Lord's three-fold prayer in Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 36; Luke xxii. 42—45). Was St. Paul himself reminded of it? There also the answer to the prayer was not compliance with its petition, but the gift of strength to bear and to endure.

⁽⁹⁾ And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee.—The words fit in, more or less, with each of the two views that have been discussed above. From one point of view, however, it seems infinitely more in harmony with our thoughts of God, that the prayer to be relieved from pain should be refused, because it was working out a higher perfection than was attainable without it, than that a deaf ear should have been turned to a prayer to be relieved from the temptation to impurity. Such a prayer seems to us to carry with it something like an assurance

of its own prevailing power. Some of the better MSS. omit the possessive "My," and with that reading the words take the form of a general axiom affirming that, in the highest sense, "might is perfected in weakness." The last word is the same as that translated "infirmity" in the next clause. The variation, as concealing this, is so far unfortunate.

Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities.—The word, as has just been said, is the same as the "weakness" in the answer to his prayer. He finds not comfort only, but actual delight, in his consciousness of weakness, because it is balanced by the sense that the might of Christ dwells in him and around him. The word for "rest" is literally, as a like word in John i. 14, to dwell as in a tent, and suggests the thought that the might of Christ was to him as the Shechinah cloud of glory encompassing him and protecting him.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities.—The thoughts of the Apostle go back to the sufferings of which he had spoken fully in chap. xi. and elsewhere. One new word is added, "reproaches" (better, *insults*), which elsewhere in the New Testament meets us only in Acts xxvii. 10, 21, in the sense of material damage. Here the reference is probably to the taunts and sneers

take pleasure in infirmities,
 Chap. xii. 10— in reproaches,
 13. St. Paul's in necessities,
 appeal to the in persecu-
 signs of his work tions, in dis-
 as an Apostle. tresses for Christ's sake :
 for when I am weak, then
 am I strong. ⁽¹¹⁾ I am be-
 come a fool in glorying; ye

have compelled me: for I
 ought to have been com-
 mended of you: for in
 nothing am I behind the
 very chiefest apostles,
 though I be nothing.
⁽¹²⁾ Truly the signs of an
 apostle were wrought
 among you in all patience,

to which we have traced allusions in chaps. i. 17; iii. 1; vii. 8; viii. 2; x. 10; xi. 6, 8, 16. He was able to bear even these with satisfaction when he felt that he was bearing them for the sake of Christ. He had learnt to add another paradox to those of chap. vi. 9, 10, and to feel that the greatest weakness was not only compatible with the highest strength, but might be the very condition of its energy.

⁽¹¹⁾ I am become a fool in glorying.—The two last words are wanting in the better MSS., and the verse opens with a somewhat thrilling abruptness,—*I am become insane—it was you* (emphatic) *who compelled me*. The words are partly ironical—partly speak of an impatient consciousness that what he had been saying would seem to give colour to the opprobrious epithets that had been flung at him. The passage on which we now enter, and of which we may think as begun after a pause, is remarkable for the reproduction, in a compressed form, of most of the topics, each with its characteristic phrase, on which he had before dwelt. The violence of the storm is over, but the sky is not yet clear, and we still hear the mutterings of the receding thunder. He remembers once more that he has been called

“insane”; that he has been taunted with “commending himself”; that he has been treated as “nothing” in comparison with those “apostles-extraordinary” who were setting themselves up as his rivals. “I,” he says, with an emphatic stress on the pronoun, “ought to have had no need for this painful self-assertion. *You* ought to have acknowledged my labour and my love for you.”

⁽¹²⁾ Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you.—The passage is remarkable for using the word “signs,” first, in the general sense, as “notes” or “tokens,” and then more specifically for works of supernatural power. On the special meaning of the three words, “signs,” “wonders,” “power,” see Note on Acts ii. 22. The passage is noticeable as being one of those in which St. Paul distinctly claims a supernatural power for himself, and appeals to its exercise. (Comp. Rom. xv. 19—written, it will be remembered, shortly after this—and 1 Cor. ii. 4.)

In all patience.—Better, *in endurance of every kind*, as referring to the hardships and privations specified in chap. xi. 23—28, in the midst of which the work had to be carried on.

in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. ⁽¹³⁾ For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you;

and I will not be burdensome to you :

for I seek not your's, but you : for the children ought not to

lay up for the parents, but the parents for the

Chap. xii. 14—21. Announcements of his intended visit, and expression of his feelings of anxiety in connection with it.

⁽¹³⁾ What is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches?—His mind travels back to the insinuation that he cared less for them than he did for the churches of Macedonia, because he had maintained his independence and had received no gifts from them. If they complained of this, they should, at least, remember that this was the only point of inferiority. They had experienced fully all the advantages that flowed from his special power as an Apostle. For that wrong, so far as it was a wrong, he asks their forgiveness.

That I myself was not burdensome.—He uses here, and in the next verse, the same characteristic word for “sponging” on them, which has been commented on in the Note on chap. xi. 9. He obviously dwells on it with a touch of irony, as a word that had been used of him by some of his rivals.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you.—The visit to Corinth of Acts xviii. 1, followed by a long sojourn, may perhaps be reckoned as the first occasion ; then came the projected journey from Ephesus to Corinth and thence to Macedonia (chap. i. 16) ; now he was preparing for the third journey, announced in 1 Cor.

xvi. 5—7, from Macedonia to Corinth. (See, however, the Note on chap. xiii. 1.)

I seek not your's, but you.

—The words point to the secret motive of the conduct which had annoyed some of the Corinthians. He loved them, as all true friends love, for their own sake, not for anything he might hope to gain from them. He must be sure that he had gained their hearts before he could receive their gifts as poor substitutes for their affections ; and therefore he announces beforehand that he meant to persevere in the same line of conduct, working for his own maintenance as before. Rom. xvi. 23 indicates that he so far deviated from his purpose as to accept the hospitality of Gaius of Corinth.

For the children ought not to lay up for the parents.—

Better, perhaps, *are not bound to lay by*. There is a touch of exquisite delicacy and tenderness, reminding us of like characteristics in the Epistle to Philemon, in this apology for the seeming wrong of which men had complained. He could claim the rights of a father, as in 1 Cor. iv. 15 ; might he not be allowed to fulfil a father's obligations, and to give to his children rather than receive from them ?

children. ⁽¹⁵⁾ And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you¹; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

⁽¹⁶⁾ But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless,

¹ Gr. *your souls.*

being crafty, I caught you with guile. ⁽¹⁷⁾ Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? ⁽¹⁸⁾ I desired Titus, and with *him* I sent a brother. Did Titus make

⁽¹⁵⁾ **And I will very gladly spend and be spent.**—The pronoun is emphatic, *I for my part*. The latter verb implies spending to the last farthing. As he sought not *theirs*, but *them*, so he is ready to spend for them not only all that he has, but even, as if to the verge of exhaustion, all that he is. And yet with all this there was the painful consciousness of toiling without adequate return. It seemed to him, in his intense craving for affection, as if their love varied inversely with his own.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **But be it so, I did not burden you.**—The pronoun is again emphatic. The word for “burden” is not the same as in verses 13, 14, but puts the fact less figuratively. The abruptness of the sentence requires us to trace between the lines the under-currents of unexpressed thoughts. The extreme, almost jealous, sensitiveness of the Apostle’s nature leads him to imagine the cynical sneer with which these assertions of disinterested work would be received. “Be it so,” he hears them saying; “we admit that he, in his own person, when he was with us, made no demands on our purses; but what are we to think of this ‘collection for the saints’? How do we know into whose pockets that money will go? We know him to be *subtle* enough”

(the adjective is that from which we get the “subtlety” of chaps. iv. 2, xi. 3) “to take us in somehow: what if the collection be a trap?” There is a specially taunting force in the Greek for “*being crafty*,” as taking the fact for granted, and assuming that it would inevitably lead on to some new development of that character in act.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **By any of them whom I sent unto you?**—The English expresses the meaning of the Greek, but does not show, as that does, the vehement agitation which led the writer, as he dictated the letter, to begin the sentence with one construction and finish it with another. *Did any of those I sent . . . did I by this means get more out of you than I ought?* He has in his mind, as far as we know, Timotheus, who had been sent before the First Epistle (1 Cor. iv. 17); Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, who were the bearers of that Epistle (1 Cor. xvi. 15); and Titus, who was sent, as we have seen, to learn what its effect had been. Had any of these, he asks, been asking for money on his account?

⁽¹⁸⁾ **I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother.**—Better, *the brother*. The Greek has the article, and he refers definitely to the first of the two

a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? *walked we* not in the same steps? ⁽¹⁹⁾ Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves

unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. ⁽²⁰⁾ For I fear, lest, when I come,

unnamed brethren alluded to in chap. viii. 18—22. The Greek idiom of what is known as the "epistolary aorist" hinders the English reader from seeing that St. Paul is referring to what was being done at the time when the letter was written. It would accordingly be better rendered, *I have besought Titus to go; I am sending the brother with him.* The ungenerous suspicions of some of the Corinthians had made him almost morbidly sensitive, and he repeats practically what he had said before (chap. viii. 20, 21), that his motive in sending these delegates was to guard against them. Having stated this, he can appeal to their past knowledge of Titus, as a guarantee for the future. Had he "sponged" on any man, or tried what he could get out of him? Had he not identified himself with the Apostle, both in the general spirit which animated him and in the details of his daily life? It is a natural inference from this that Titus also had worked for his own maintenance and lived in his own lodging. If we may assume the identity of Titus with the Justus into whose house St. Paul went when he left the synagogue at Corinth (see Note on Acts xviii. 7), the appeal to the knowledge which the Corinthians had of him gains a new significance.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you?

—Many of the best MSS. present the reading *palai* (long ago), instead of *palin* (again). In this case the sentence is better taken as an assertion, not as a question—"You are thinking, and have been thinking for a long time, that it is to you that we have been making our defence." The Greek verb for "excuse," is that which is always used of a formal *apologia*, or vindication (Luke xii. 11; xxi. 14; Acts xix. 33; xxiv. 10). St. Paul deprecates the idea that he has any wish to enter on such a vindication. He is anxious to explain his conduct, as in chaps. i. 15—24, viii. 20—24, xi. 7—12, but he does not acknowledge that he stands at the bar before their judgment-seat. He speaks, *i.e.*, in the same tone of independence as in 1 Cor. iv. 3—5. The motive which really prompts him to speak as he has spoken is not the wish to clear himself from aspersions, but "before God in Christ,"—under a profound sense that God is his Judge, and that Christ is, as it were, the sphere in which his thoughts revolve,—he is seeking to "edify," *i.e.*, to build them up in the faith or love of God. He has the same end in view in all this perturbed emotion as in the calm liturgical directions of 1 Cor. xiv. 12—26.

⁽²⁰⁾ For I fear, lest, when I come . . .—Something of the old anxiety which had led him to postpone his visit (chap. i. 23; 1 Cor. iv. 21) comes back upon his spirit.

I shall not find you such | be found unto you such as
as I would, and *that* I shall | ye would not: lest *there be*

He and some of those Corinthians are likely to meet under very unfavourable conditions, neither of them acceptable to the other, severity meeting with open or masked resistance.

Lest there be debates . . .
—The list that follows forms a suggestive parallelism of contrast to that in chap. vii. 11, the ethical imagination of the Apostle, with its keen perception of the shades of human character, dwelling now on the manifold forms of opposition, as before it had dwelt on the manifold fruits of repentance. It will be worth while to attempt to fix the exact significance of each word somewhat more accurately than is done in the Authorised version. “Debates,” rather *strifes* or *quarrels*, had in older English a darker shade of meaning than it has now. Men spoke of a “deadly *debate*” between friends. Chapman’s *Homer* makes Achilles complain that he has cast his life into “*debates* past end” (*Iliad*, ii. 331). “Envyings”—better, *jealousies*, another Greek word being appropriated for “envy” in the strict sense. The word, like “jealousy,” is capable of a good sense, as in chaps. viii. 11; ix. 2; xi. 2. It is well, perhaps, to notice how closely allied are the qualities which the word expresses, how soon “zeal” (chap. vii. 11; Phil. iii. 6) passes into “jealousy” in a good sense, and that again into “jealousy” in a bad sense. “Wrath.” The passion so described is treated by great ethical writers (Aristotle, *Eth. Nicom.* iii. 8) as almost inseparable from true courage. In the New Testament

it is always used either of human wrath in its evil aspects (Luke iv. 28; Acts xix. 28; Heb. xi. 27), or—but only in the Apocalypse, where it occurs in this sense frequently—of the wrath of God (Rev. xiv. 10, 19; xv. 1, 7; xvi. 1, 19). There is, therefore, no need to alter the English here. The three words occur in the same connection in Gal. v. 20, a nearly contemporary Epistle.

Strifes.—The Greek word (*eritheia*) begins with the same three letters as that for “strife,” and till a comparatively recent period was supposed to be connected with it, and so to be identical in meaning. It has, however, a very different history, not without interest, even for the English reader. The concrete form of the noun (*erithos*) meets us in Homer and elsewhere as a day-labourer, as in the description of the shield of Achilles:

“And there he wrought, a meadow
thick with corn,
And labourers reaping, sickles in
their hand.”—*Iliad*, xviii. 550.

The next step in the growth of the word was the verb “to serve for wages,” and this was transferred to those who in matters of state compete for honours and rewards, rather than for their country’s good. Aristotle (*Pol.* v. 2, § 6; 3, § 9) enumerates the fact which the word expresses as one of the causes of revolutions, but carefully distinguishes it from “party spirit,” or “faction,” as being more directly personal. *Rivalries* would, perhaps, be an adequate rendering; but what are known in political

debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: ⁽²¹⁾ and lest, when I come

again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and

life as the *cabals* of cliques or coteries as contrasted with open party-fights exactly correspond to the evils which the Apostle had in his thoughts.

Backbitings, whisperings.

—The English reads the idea of secret calumny into both words. In the Greek, however, the first expresses “open abuse or invective,” as in Jas. iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 1, 12. In contrast with this we have the “whispers” of the slanderers, the innuendoes and insinuations of the man who has not the courage for the more open attack. So the “whisperer” is spoken of with special scorn in Ecclus. xxi. 28; xxviii. 13. The word in its primary meaning is used for the low chirp of the swallow, which was, as it were, reproduced in the confidential whispers of the retailer of scandal. (See Note on “babblers” in Acts xvii. 18.)

Swellings, tumults. — The first word is found here only in the New Testament, but is formed regularly from the verb “to be puffed up,” which is prominent in 1 Cor. iv. 6, 18, 19; v. 2; viii. 1; xiii. 4. It was clearly, in St. Paul’s mind, the besetting sin of the Corinthians. As far as we know, the word may have been coined by him, but as connected with the medical idea of *flatus* and inflation, it may not improbably have been one of the technical terms, used figuratively, which he borrowed from St. Luke’s vocabulary. It is almost necessary to coin an English word to express

it. “Inflated egotisms” is an adequate paraphrase: “puffed-up-nesses” would be, perhaps, too bold a coinage. The word for “tumult” has met us before. (See Notes on chap. vi. 5; Luke xxi. 9; 1 Cor. xiv. 33.) *Disorders, confusions*, what figuratively we call the “chaos,” into which a public meeting sometimes falls, are what the word expresses, rather than the more open outbreak indicated by “tumult.”

⁽²¹⁾ **And lest, when I come again . . .**—The words do not imply more than one previous visit (Acts xviii. 1), but it can scarcely be said that they exclude the supposition of another. (See note on chap. xiii. 1.)

My God will humble me among you.—We lose the force of the Greek verb by not seeing that it reproduces the word which has been so prominent in the Epistle, and which has appeared in chap. vii. 6, as “cast down;” in chap. x. 1 as “base;” in chap. xi. 7 as “abasing.” There is something almost plaintive in the tone in which the Apostle speaks of the sin of his disciples as the only real “humiliation” which he has to fear. The readings vary; and one of them may be taken as a question: *Will God humble me again?* There is, however, it is believed, no adequate ground for altering the text.

That I shall bewail many which have sinned already.—Literally, *who have sinned before-*

have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

A.D. 60.

CHAPTER XIII. —

(1) This is the third time I am coming to you. In the

Chap. xiii. 1—4. Feelings as to his intended visit.

hand; leaving it uncertain what time is referred to. He may refer to sins before admission into the Church, of which men have never really repented, or to sins before the time of his writing, or before that of his arrival. On the whole, the first interpretation has most to commend it. He has in his thoughts such persons as those described in 1 Cor. vi. 9, and suspects that some of them have not really renounced the sins which he there names. Of the three forms of evil, the first is generic and the two latter more specific; the last probably indicating the darker forms of evil. It is obvious that the words cannot refer to the incestuous offender who had repented (chap. ii. 7), nor to the Church generally in connection with that offence (chap. vii. 9—11). Probably he had in view the party of license, who maintained the indifference of "eating things sacrificed to idols," and of "fornication," just as, in the previous verse, he had chiefly in view the party of his Judaising opponents.

XIII.

(1) This is the third time I am coming to you.—The words may point either to three actual visits—(1) that of Acts xviii. 1; (2) an unrecorded visit (of which, however, there is no trace), during St. Paul's stay at Ephesus; and (3) that now in contemplation—or (1) to one actual visit, as before;

(2) the proposed visit which had been abandoned (see Notes on chap. i. 16); and (3) that which he now has in view. The latter interpretation falls in best with the known facts of the case, and is in entire accordance both with his language in chap. xii. 14, and with his mode of expressing his intentions, as in 1 Cor. xvi. 5.

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.—There seems no adequate reason for not taking these words in their simple and natural meaning. The rule, quoted from Num. xxxv. 30, Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 15, was of the nature of an axiom of Jewish, one might almost say of natural, law. And it had received a fresh prominence from our Lord's reproduction of it in giving directions as for the discipline of the society which he came to found. (See Note on Matt. xviii. 16.) What more natural than that St. Paul should say, "When I come, there will be no more surmises and vague suspicions, but every offence will be dealt with in a vigorous and full inquiry"? There seems something strained, almost fantastic, in the interpretation which, catching at the accidental juxtaposition of "the third time" and the "three witnesses," assumes that the Apostle personifies his actual or intended visits, and treats them as the witnesses whose testimony was to be decisive. It is a fatal objection to this view

mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. ⁽²⁾ I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will

¹ Or, with him.

not spare: ⁽³⁾ since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to youward is not weak, but is mighty in you. ⁽⁴⁾ For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him,¹ but we shall live with him

that it turns the judge into a prosecutor, and makes him appeal to his own reiteration of his charges as evidence of their truth.

⁽²⁾ I told you before, and foretell you . . . —Better, *I have warned you before* (referring, probably, to the threat of 1 Cor. iv. 13—19, and implied in chap. i. 23). The chief objects of this rigour were to be those whom he had described previously as “having sinned beforehand” (see Note on chap. xii. 21); but he adds that his work as judge will extend to *all the rest* of the offenders. What he has in view is obviously passing a sentence of the nature of an excommunication on the offenders, “delivering them to Satan” (1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. i. 20), with the assured confidence that that sentence would be followed by some sharp bodily suffering. In that case men would have, as he says in the next verse, a crucial test whether Christ was speaking in him, and learn that he whom they despised as *infirm* had a reserve-force of spiritual power, showing itself in supernatural effects even in the regions of man’s natural life.

⁽³⁾ Which to youward is not weak.—There is still a touch of indignant sadness in the tone in

which the words are uttered. Men will not be able to cast that reproach of weakness upon Him whose might they will feel all too keenly.

⁽⁴⁾ For though he was crucified through weakness . . . —The better MSS. give another reading, without the contingent or concessive clause: *For even He was crucified*. St. Paul seems to see in Christ the highest representative instance of the axiomatic law by which he himself had been comforted, that strength is perfected in infirmities. For he too lived encompassed with the infirmities of man’s nature, and the possibility of the crucifixion flowed from that fact, as a natural sequel.

For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him.—The thought that underlies the apparently hard saying is that the disciples of Christ share at once in their Lord’s weakness and in His strength. “We, too, are weak,” the Apostle says; “we have our share in infirmities and sufferings, which are ennobled by the thought that they are ours because we are His; but we know that we shall live in the highest sense, in the activities of the spiritual life, which also we share with Him, and which comes to us by the power of

by the power of God toward you. ⁽⁵⁾ Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that

Chap. xiii. 5—14.
Closing words of counsel, prayer, and benediction.

Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ? ⁽⁶⁾ But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. ⁽⁷⁾ Now I pray to God that ye do no evil ; not that we should appear approved, but that ye

God ; and this life will be manifested in the exercise of our spiritual power towards you and for your good." To refer the words "we shall live" to the future life of the resurrection, though the thought is, of course, true in itself, is to miss the special force of the words in relation to the context.

⁽⁵⁾ **Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves.**—The position of "yourselves" in the Greek (before the verb in both clauses) shows that that is the word on which stress is emphatically laid, and the thought grows out of what had been said in verse 3 : "You seek a test of my power. Apply a test to *yourselves*. Try *yourselves* whether you are living and moving in that faith in Christ which you profess" (the objective and subjective senses of faith melting into one without any formal distinction). "Subject *yourselves* to the scrutiny of your own conscience." The latter word had been used in a like sense in 1 Cor. xi. 28. So far as we can distinguish between it and the Greek for "examine," the one suggests the idea of a special test, the other a general scrutiny.

How that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?—On the last word see

Notes on Rom. i. 28 ; 1 Cor. ix. 27. Here its exact meaning is defined by the context as that of failing to pass the scrutiny to which he calls them : "Christ is in you" (the central thought of the Apostle's teaching ; Gal. i. 16 ; Eph. ii. 22 ; iii. 17 ; Col. i. 27), "unless the sentence, after an impartial scrutiny by yourselves, or by a judge gifted with spiritual discernment, is that there are no tokens of His presence." The ideas which Calvinistic theology has attached to the word "reprobate" are, it need hardly be said, foreign to the true meaning of the word, both here and elsewhere.

⁽⁶⁾ **But I trust . . .**—Better, *But I hope . . .* The "we" that follows is emphatic : "whether *you* fail to pass the test or not, I have a good hope that you will know that *we* do not fail, whether the test be that which you demand (verse 3), or that which I apply to myself as in the sight of God."

⁽⁷⁾ **Now I pray to God that ye do no evil.**—The better MSS. give, *we pray*. The words that follow involve a subtle play of thought and feeling on the two forms of the trial or scrutiny of which he has just spoken. "We pray," he says, "that you may be kept from doing evil. Our purpose in that prayer is not that *we* may gain a reputation as successful workers in

should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates. ⁽⁶⁾ For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

⁽⁹⁾ For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, *even* your perfection. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Therefore I write these

your eyes or those of others, but that *you* may do that which is nobly good (may advance from a negative to a positive form of holiness), even though the result of that may be that we no longer put our apostolic supernatural powers into play, and so seem to fail in the trial to which you challenge us." This gives, it is believed, the true underlying thought of the words, and, though the paraphrase is somewhat full, it could not well be expressed in a narrower compass.

⁽⁶⁾ For we can do nothing against the truth.—Better, perhaps, *we are powerless*. Here, again, the meaning lies below the surface. The first impression which the words convey is that he is asserting his own thoroughness as a champion of the truth, so that it was a moral impossibility for him to do anything against it. The true sequence of thought, however, though it does not exclude that meaning, compels us to read much more between the lines. "Yes," he says, "we are content to seem to fail, as regards the exercise of our apostolic power to chastise offenders; for the condition of that power is that it is never exercised against the truth, and therefore if you walk in the truth, there will be no opening for its exercise." The feeling is analogous to that of Rom. ix. 3: "I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren's sake;" perhaps, also to that of the Baptist: "He must

increase, but I must decrease" (John iii. 30); perhaps, yet again, to that of the patriot dying with the prayer, "May my name be without honour if only my country may be saved."

⁽⁹⁾ For we are glad, when we are weak . . .—The last words cover many shades of meaning. We may think of the weakness of his bodily presence, of his physical infirmities, of the apparent failure of his supernatural powers because the condition of the Corinthian Church, as walking in faith and truth, presented no opening for their exercise. He can find cause for joy in all these, if only the disciples whom he loves are strong with the strength of God.

This also we wish, *even* your perfection.—Better, *your restoration*. This is the only passage in the New Testament in which the word occurs; but the corresponding verb is found in the "*mending* their nets" of Matt. iv. 21; Mark i. 19, and in the "*restore*" of Gal. vi. 1. Its proper meaning is to bring back to completeness. This, then, was what the Apostle had been aiming at all along. In his seeming harshness and self-assertion, as in his overflowing tenderness, he was looking forward to their restoration to their first love and their first purity. He would rather threaten than act, even at the cost of the threat appearing an empty vaunt if only he might be spared the necessity for acting.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Therefore I write these things being absent . . .—The

things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruc-

tion. ⁽¹¹⁾ Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. ⁽¹²⁾ Greet

words speak of an inner conflict, in which love has triumphed, not without pain, over feelings of bitterness and indignation. The storm has passed, and the sky is again clear. He does not recall what he has written, but he explains and half-apologises for it. It was better to speak with severity than to act. But even had it been necessary to act; as at one time he thought it would be, he wished them to understand that even then his aim would have been, as it was now, to restore them to their true completeness in Christ; not to inflict punishment for the sake of punishing, or as a mere display of power.

⁽¹¹⁾ **Finally, brethren, farewell.**—The word (literally, *rejoice*) was the natural close of a Greek letter, and is therefore adequately represented by the English "farewell," if only we remember that it was used in all the fulness of its meaning. "Rejoice—let that be our last word to you."

Be perfect.—Better, as before, *restore yourselves to completeness; amend yourselves.* In the words "be of good comfort" (better, perhaps, *be comforted*, with the implied thought that the comfort comes through accepting his word of counsel—see Note on Acts iv. 36) we trace an echo of what he had said in the opening of the Epistle, as to the "comfort" which had been given to him (chap. i. 4, 7). *Paracletis* in its two-fold aspect is,

in fact, the key-note of the whole Epistle. Taking the verb and the noun together, the word occurs twenty-eight times in it.

Be of one mind.—The phrase was one specially characteristic of St. Paul's teaching (Rom. xv. 6; Phil. ii. 2; iii. 16; iv. 2). His thoughts are apparently travelling back to the schisms over which he had grieved in 1 Cor. i.—iii., and to which he had referred in chap. xii. 20. What he seeks is the restoration of unity of purpose, and with that of inward and outward peace. If these conditions were fulfilled, the "God of love and peace would assuredly be with them," for peace rests ever upon the son of peace (Luke x. 6).

⁽¹²⁾ **Greet one another with an holy kiss.**—The tense of the Greek verb indicates that the Apostle is giving directions, not for a normal and, as it were, liturgical usage, but for a single act. In doing so he repeats what he had said in 1 Cor. xvi. 20. The same injunction appears in Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Thess. v. 26. What he meant was that, as the public reading of the Epistle came to a close, the men who listened should embrace each other and kiss each other's cheeks, in token that all offences were forgotten and forgiven, and that there was nothing but peace and goodwill between them. It was, perhaps, natural, that the counsel should be taken as

one another with an holy
kiss. ⁽¹³⁾ All the saints

salute you. ⁽¹⁴⁾ The grace
of the Lord Jesus Christ,

a rubric, even at the cost of its losing its real significance, and becoming a stereotyped formula. So in the Apostolic Constitutions (possibly of the third century) we find the rubric, "Let the deacons say to all, 'Salute ye one another with a holy kiss;' and let the clergy salute the bishop, the men of the laity salute the men, the women the women." The deacons were to watch that there was no disorder during the act (viii. 57). In the account given by Justin (*Apol.* i. 65) it appears as preceding the oblation of the bread and wine for the Eucharistic Feast, as it did in most of the Eastern liturgies, probably as a symbolic act of obedience to the command of Matt. v. 24. In the Western Church it came after the consecration of the elements and the Lord's Prayer. It was intermitted on Good Friday in the African Church (Tertull. *De Orat.* c. 14) as unsuitable for a day of mourning. It may be noted as the survival of a residuum of the old practice, that when the usage was suppressed by the Western Church, in the thirteenth century, it was replaced by the act of kissing a marble or ivory tablet, on which some sacred subject, such as the Crucifixion, had been carved, which was passed from one to another, and was known as the *osculatorium*, or "kissing instrument."

⁽¹³⁾ All the saints salute you.—The salutation in the First Epistle came, it will be remembered, from the "brethren" of the Church of Asia. This comes from the "saints" of Philippi. The phrase, familiar as it is, is not without interest, as

showing that St. Paul, wherever he might be, informed the Church of one locality when he was writing to another, and so made them feel that they were all members of the great family of God.

⁽¹⁴⁾ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ . . .—It is not without a special significance that the Epistle which has been, almost to the very close, the most agitated and stormy of all that came from St. Paul's pen, should end with a benediction which, as being fuller than any other found in the New Testament, was adopted from a very early period in the liturgies of many Eastern churches, such as Antioch, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem (Palmer, *Origines. Liturg.* i. 251). It may be noted that it did not gain its present position in the Prayer Book of the Church of England till the version of A.D. 1662, not having appeared at all till A.D. 1559, and then only at the close of the Litany.

The order of the names of the three Divine Persons is itself significant. Commonly, the name of the Father precedes that of the Son, as, *e.g.*, in chap. i. 2; Rom. i. 7, 1 Cor. i. 3. Here the order is inverted, as though in the Apostle's thoughts there was no "difference or inequality" between them, the question of priority being determined by the sequence of thought, and not by any essential distinction. To those who trace that sequence here there will seem sufficient reason for the order which we actually find. St. Paul had spoken of the comfort brought to his own soul by the words which he heard

and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be with you all.* Amen.

¶ The second *epistle* to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, a *city* of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.*

in vision from the lips of the Lord Jesus, "My *grace* is sufficient for thee" (chap. xii. 9). He had spoken of that *grace* as showing itself in self-abnegation for the sake of man (chap. viii. 9). What more natural than that the first wish of his heart for those who were dear to him should be that that *grace* might be with them, working on them and assimilating them to itself? But the "favour," or "grace," which thus flowed through Christ was derived from a yet higher source. It was the love of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (chap. v. 18—20), the love of the Eternal Father that was thus manifested in the "grace" of the Son. Could he separate those divine acts from that of Him whom he knew at once as the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ? (Rom. viii. 9—14; 1 Cor. ii. 11; vi. 11; Gal. iv. 6.) Was it not through their participation, their fellowship in that Spirit (the phrase meets us again in Phil. ii. 1) shedding down the love of God in their hearts (Rom. v. 5) that the *grace* of Christ and the love of the Father were translated from the region of abstract thoughts or mere empty words into the realities of a living experience?

And so the Epistle ends, not, we may imagine, if we may once picture to ourselves the actual *genesis* of the letter, without a certain

sense of relief and of repose. It had been a hard and difficult task to dictate it. The act of dictation had been broken by the pauses of strong emotion or physical exhaustion. The Apostle had had to say things that went against the grain, of which he could not feel absolutely sure that they were the right things to say. (See Note on chap. xi. 17.) And now all is done. He can look forward to coming to the Corinthian Church, not with a rod, but in love and in the spirit of meekness (1 Cor. iv. 21). What the actual result of that visit was we do not know in detail, but there are at least no traces of disappointment in the tone of the Epistle to the Romans, which was written during that visit. He has been welcomed with a generous hospitality (Rom. xvi. 23). He has not been disappointed in the collection for the saints (Rom. xv. 26), either in Macedonia or Achaia. If we trace a reminiscence of past conflicts in the warning against those who cause divisions (Rom. xvi. 18), it is rather with the calmness of one who looks back on a past danger than with the bitterness of the actual struggle.

* The note, added by some unknown transcriber, though having no shadow of authority, is, probably, in this instance, as has been shown in the Notes on chap. viii. 16—22, a legitimate inference from the *data* furnished by the Epistle.

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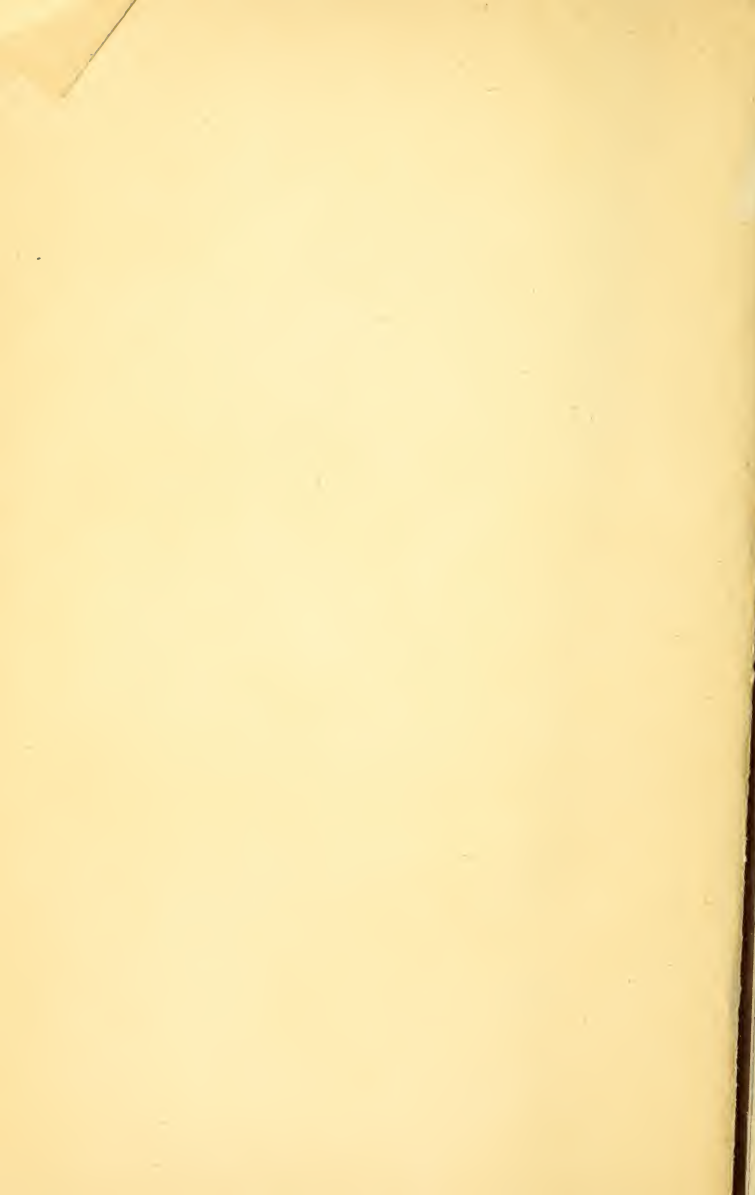
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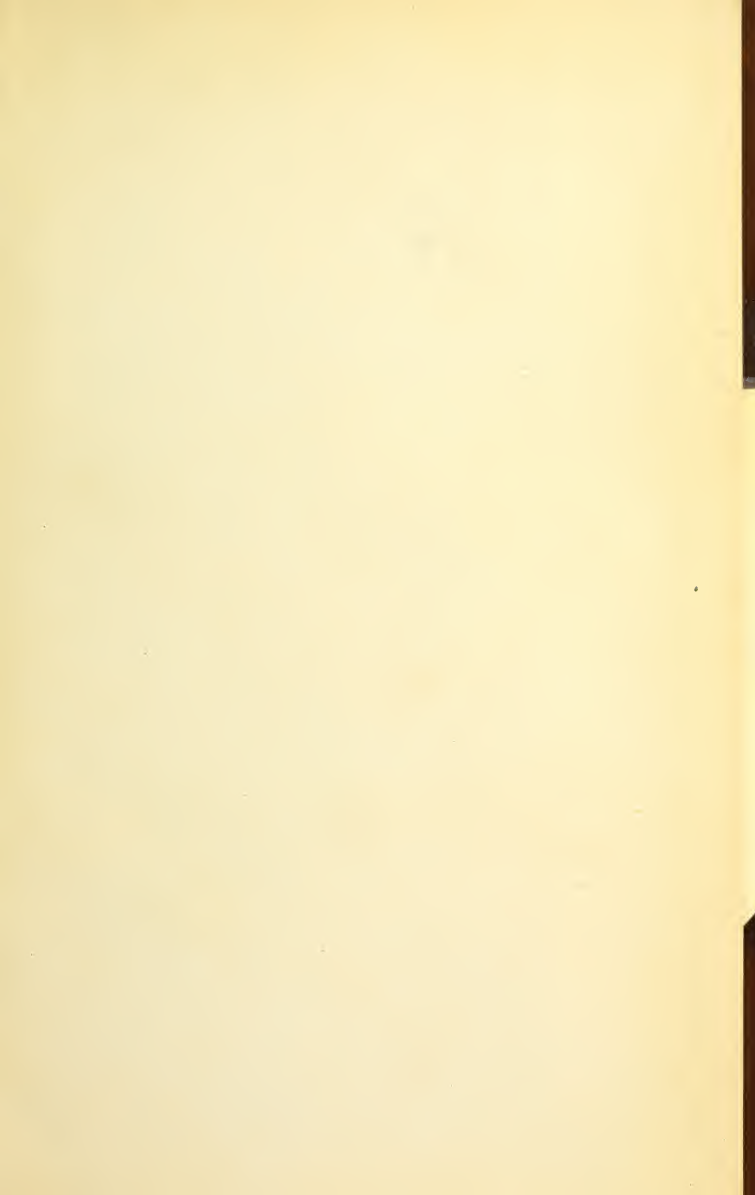
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