

THE AGES DIGITAL LIBRARY  
**COMMENTARY**

**BEET'S NOTES ON ROMANS  
THROUGH COLOSSIANS &  
PHILEMON, VOLUMES 1-4**

*by Joseph Agar Beet*

**Books For The Ages**  
AGES Software • Albany, OR USA  
Version 2.0 © 1996, 1997

**BEET'S NOTES**  
**ON**  
**ROMANS to PHILEMON**

**By**  
**JOSEPH AGAR BEET, D.D**

*no date*

**SAGE Software**  
Albany, Oregon  
© 1996

# EXPOSITION ON ROMANS

## SECTION 1

### *PAUL GREETES THE ROMAN CHRISTIANS*

#### CHAPTER 1:1-7

*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, set apart for the Gospel of God, which he promised before through His prophets in Holy Scriptures concerning His Son, who was born from David's seed according to flesh, who was marked out as born of God in power according to spirit, a spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we received grace and apostleship, for obedience of (or to) faith in all the nations, on behalf of His nature; among whom are ye also, called ones of Jesus Christ; to all the beloved ones of God that are at Rome, called saints; grace to you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Ver. 1.** Writing as a stranger to the Christians at Rome, Paul begins by telling them his name, his position in the Church, the work for which he was placed in that position, and how this work brings him into contact with them.

Paul: in Latin, 'Paulus', as in Acts 13:7: well known as the name of an illustrious Roman family.

Servant: see under Romans 6:16: one who acts habitually at the bidding of another.

'Servant' of Jesus Christ: Paul's first description of himself. The same title is given in Romans 6:22 to all Christians. In the O.T., the term "servant of Jehovah" sometimes (e.g. Joshua 1:1, 2, 7, 13, 15) denotes men who

received direct commands from God, and who therefore in a special sense did His bidding.

Jesus: name given to our Lord at birth as a man among men: see Matthew 1:21.

Christ: a Greek word equivalent to 'Messiah' in Hebrew (cp. John 1:41; 4:25) and denoting 'anointed'. Cp. Acts 4:26, 27 with Psalm 2:2. In 2 Samuel 2:14, 16, Saul is called "Jehovah's Messiah," and in the LXX. "the Lord's Christ." The priest is called in Leviticus 4:5 'Messiah' or 'Christ'. In Daniel 9:25 the word is expressly applied to the coming Deliverer and King. So Bk. of Enoch, ch. xlviii. 10. In this sense the word became common among the Jews. They used it constantly for the expected Savior, in reference to the kingdom of which He was the designated Heir: see John 4:25. The name 'Jesus' speaks of a known man who lived at Nazareth and was crucified at Jerusalem. To add to this the name 'Christ', was to declare that He is the hoped-for Deliverer and future King. By calling himself 'a servant of Jesus Christ', Paul acknowledges that Jesus is Messiah and pays Him honor by calling Him Master. These words also suggest the kind of work Paul has to do, viz. to aid in setting up His kingdom. And they express his thoughts as he takes up his pen to write this letter: he writes, not to please himself, but as a servant doing his master's work. They thus give him a claim upon his readers' attention. A man who knocks at our door and calls himself a servant of some great one implies that he has come on his master's business, and claims an attention to be measured by the importance, not of himself, but of his master.

A called apostle: one who by a divine call was made an apostle. It asserts Paul's position among the servants of Christ. 'Apostle': an English form of a Greek word denoting one 'sent' on some special business.

"Missionary," derived from the Latin, has almost the same meaning. So John 13:16: "nor an apostle greater than he that sent him." It is translated 'messenger' in 2 Corinthians 8:23; Philippians 2:25. Same word in 1 Kings 14:6, LXX. Alex. MS. It was given by Christ (Luke 6:13) to the first rank of His ministers, because (John 20:21) they were personally 'sent' by Him on a great mission: cp. 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11. By describing himself as an apostle, Paul claims this first rank. He was 'called' to it by

Christ as described in Acts 26:16-18: “to whom I now ‘send’ thee.” See also 1 Corinthians 9:1; Galatians 1:1.

Set apart for the Gospel of God: the work for which Paul was called to be an apostle. ‘Set apart’ or ‘marked off’: a line drawn round him separating him from others: cognate to ‘marked off’ in Romans 1:4. ‘Gospel’: the Greek word is cognate to “evangelist” and “evangelize,” and denotes ‘good news’, bringer of good news, etc. It is applied to personal matters in 2 Samuel 18:19, 20, 27, LXX.; Luke 1:19; 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 3:6. Cp. Isaiah 52:7 with Romans 10:15. The Gospel is ‘good news’ from ‘God’. ‘For’ this ‘good news’, i.e. to proclaim it, Paul was ‘set apart’. He had nothing else to do. Even when working as a tentmaker, he did so in order thus the more effectually to preach the Gospel: 1 Corinthians 9:12. In the purpose of God, Paul was set apart (Galatians 1:15, 16) before his birth: he received the actual call on the road to Damascus. In Acts 13:2 he was further set apart to take the Gospel to foreign countries. [The all-important preposition **εἰς**, which I have rendered ‘for’, (in A.V. and R.V. ‘unto’,) denotes primarily motion towards the inside of something, then tendency intentional or involuntary, and very frequently definite mental direction or purpose. It may be studied in Romans 1:5, 11, 16, 24, 27; 3:26; 4:20; 5:8, 12, 18; 6:3, 4; 7:10; 8:7, 28; 9:22, 23; Romans 15:24-26; 16:6. In Romans 2:4, it must be rendered ‘towards’. It denotes always direction, either of actual movement, or tendency, or thought and purpose.]

**Ver. 2.** Further information about the Gospel for which Paul was set apart.

Which he promised before: God foretold through the prophets not only good things to come but the announcement of the good things, i.e. that salvation would be preceded by glad tidings of salvation. See Isaiah 40:1-10; 52:7-10; Romans 10:15. In one sense, God proclaimed beforehand (Galatians 3:8) the good news to Abraham; but only as something far off and indistinct. To him and to the prophets it was only a promise of good things in a far future.

Prophets: men ‘through’ whom God spoke to their fellow-men: see note under 1 Corinthians 14:40: cp. Hebrews 1:1, The words following prove

that ‘the prophets’ referred to were those whose ‘writings’ have come down to us.

Scriptures: ‘writings’ of any kind.

Holy: that which stands in special relation to God: see note below. The phrase ‘Holy Scriptures’ separates these writings from all others, and classes them with the holy objects of the Old Covenant, e.g. the sabbath, temple, sacrifices, and priesthood, as belonging in a special sense to God. See Diss. III. The promise of good news passed through the prophets’ lips: it abides and speaks in the sacred writings.

This verse claims attention for the Gospel. That for which the way was prepared during centuries, and to proclaim the advent of which men like Isaiah and Jeremiah were sent, must indeed be great. To many of Paul’s readers, the prophets were almost superhuman. And to them the Old Testament was separated from all other books as holy, i.e. as belonging specially to God. This holy book and these prophets of God declared that in days to come good news from God would be announced. (In Romans 10, Paul will prove that his Gospel corresponds with what they foretold.) Therefore by his readers’ reverence for the book and the men he claims their attention. Again, by appealing to the prophets and the Scriptures, Paul pays honor to the Old Covenant. That the ancient prophets and books foretold the Gospel, increases our respect for them as well as for it. Paul thus guards against the error both of those who deny the abiding authority of the Old Testament and of those who claim as final the revelation therein recorded. We shall find that it was because these thoughts lay near the apostle’s heart that they came to his pen at the first mention of the Gospel. For coincidences, see Acts 13:32; 26:6; 3:18; 10:43.

**Ver. 3-4** The great subject-matter of the Gospel, still further claiming our reverent attention. Just as the title “Jesus Christ” set forth our Lord as a man among men and as the hope and future king of Israel, so the title

His Son declares His relation to God. That Paul uses this term to denote one definite person, and expects his readers to know to whom he refers, implies that Christ is the Son of God in a sense which marks Him out from

all others, i.e. that He stands in a relation to God shared by no one else. This unique relation finds fuller expression in Romans 8:3, 32.

Who was born: literally 'came into being', either absolutely as men do at birth, or 'came into' a new mode of 'being' as when men become what they were not before. It neither implies nor excludes, previous existence. That Paul refers to Christ's birth (cp. Galatians 4:4) through which He entered (John 1:14) a mode of being derived

from David's seed, we infer from these last words. He sprang by birth from the descendants of David: John 7:42; 2 Timothy 2:8.

Seed: common in the Bible (John 8:33, etc.) to denote offspring in whom a family lives on to other generations. Paul takes for granted, as needing no proof, that Christ sprang 'from David'. As we read them, the genealogies in Matthew 1, and Luke 3, are no complete proof of this: for they give only the descent of Joseph. But in this matter Paul is himself a reliable authority. The genealogy of Christ was important to the Jews of Paul's day; and was doubtless (Hebrews 7:14) sufficiently evident. To us it is of less importance: and evidence which to us would be superfluous is not given. Christ's descent from David gave Him a claim upon the Jews as a descendant of their ancient kings; and as a scion of the stock to which the future royalty was promised: Jeremiah 23:5; Psalm 132:11.

Flesh: the material of our bodies which we have in common with other men, and, in a different form, with all that breathes. See note under Romans 8:11.

According to 'flesh'; limits the foregoing assertion to the outer, lower, visible, and material side of the nature of Christ, i.e. to the constitution of His body, which indisputably came forth 'from David's seed'. And this bodily descent is sufficient to justify these words, here and in Romans 9:3, 5, without supposing that Paul thought also of the derivation of His human soul from human ancestors. That the human soul of Jesus was in some measure thus derived, this suggested limitation does not deny. For, to limit an assertion is not to limit the extent of that which is asserted, but limits only the sense which the writer intends his words to convey. In this case, that all living flesh is animated by a corresponding invisible principle, makes it easy to extend to this invisible principle some things said about

its visible frame. But the agency of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35) in the birth of Christ forbids us to infer that His human spirit stood in the same relation to human ancestry as do our spirits. This mysterious subject however was probably far from Paul's thought. It was sufficient for his purpose to say that, touching His material side, He 'was born from David's seed': for this made Him David's heir.

**Ver. 4.** Notice the stately parallel, and the greater length and fulness of the second clause, corresponding with the greater dignity there set forth. Beside that which his Master 'became', Paul now sets something which He was

marked out to be, viz. Son of God. Literally, a 'boundary line was drawn' between Him and others: so Numbers 34:6; Joshua 13:27, LXX. And, whereas the mode of being entered at birth was derived 'from David's seed', this visible boundary was derived

from His resurrection. Since the distinction thus marked was derived, not from something peculiar to that one event, but from its abstract significance as an uprising of one who had been dead, the event is called generically a 'resurrection of dead ones'. On earth, as we shall see in Diss. i. 7, Christ claimed to be, in a sense raising Him infinitely above all others, the Son of God. From His empty grave went forth proof that this claim was just. This proof is therefore a line drawn around Jesus on the page of human history and in human thought.

The words in power do not supplement the title 'Son of God'. For the contrast in Romans 1:3 does not suggest weakness. But the word 'marked-out' needs further explanation. The resurrection of Christ was a conspicuous manifestation of divine 'power'. And 'in' this manifested 'power' lay the proof of the justice of Christ's claim to be 'Son of God'. From His empty grave went forth, amid an outshining of divine power, a line which marks the infinite exaltation of Jesus above men and angels. See 2 Corinthians 13:4; Philippians 3:10; Ephesians 1:19f; Matthew 22:29; Acts 3:12; 4:7.

According to flesh, i.e. in reference to the constitution of His body, our Lord was born from David's seed: but



according to spirit, i.e. in reference to the inner, invisible, higher, immaterial, and animating side of His nature, He 'was marked out' as 'Son of God'. Paul now thinks no longer of the lips and hands derived from David's seed, but of the unseen living principle which moved those hands, spoke through those lips, and smiled through that human face. By His resurrection, in reference to this unseen principle within, He was marked out as standing in a relation to God infinitely higher than that of even the noblest of His creatures.

In the human form born at Bethlehem, there dwelt, as the divine source of the human activity of Christ, the spirit of the eternal Son of God. But there dwelt also (see my 'Through Christ to God' lect. xxxi.), closely associated with His human body, a created human soul, i.e. an animal life capable of hunger and thirst and bodily pain; and a human spirit permeated by, and reproducing the moral character of, the divine personality of the eternal Son. Each of these, as being invisible and immaterial, is spirit and not flesh. But the very close association of the soul with the body, its appetites corresponding, in all animals, with the nature of the body, suggests that this lower human soul of Jesus was in some measure derived from David's seed. On the other hand, the sinlessness of the human spirit of Jesus, and the agency of the Holy Spirit at His birth, mark off His relationship to the race through one parent as quite different from our relation through two parents. Apparently, just as at first God breathed into an erect human form a rational spirit, thus creating a race holding a relation to God not shared by animals around, so at the incarnation, by the agency of the personal and eternal Breath of God, He breathed into human nature a higher life, thus placing humanity in a new and more glorious relation to Himself. But of these distinctions Paul probably does not here think. He thinks only of two contrasted elements in Christ. The power manifested in His resurrection proved that through Jewish lips (and, as we infer, through the mediation of a human spirit and soul) had spoken the Eternal Son of God.

Spirit of Holiness: a spirit characterised by unreserved, devotion to God: see note under Romans 1:7. Such was, by its very nature, the spirit which animated the body born at Bethlehem. When we look at Christ's body, we find Him like ourselves, and we call Him David's Son: but when we consider the spirit which moved those lips and hands and feet, which

breathed in that human breast, turning always and essentially to God, we declare Him to be Son of God.

With singular unanimity the early commentators, (Origen is indefinite and confounds the divine nature of Christ with the Holy Spirit, and so is Augustine,) Chrysostom and Theodoret in the East, followed by Photius ('Question' 283), OEcumenius, and Theophylact, with the very early anonymous writer quoted as Ambrosiaster probably in the West, understand by 'spirit of holiness' the Holy Spirit. With them agree some moderns. The exposition given above, I have not found in any early writer. So general a consensus demands respectful attention, but not implicit obedience. For the following reason, with Meyer, Sanday, and other moderns, I am unable to accept it.

Of the Holy Spirit, there is no hint in the whole chapter. To make such reference clear, the usual title would have been needful. By not using this title, Paul suggests that he does not refer here to the personal Spirit of God. No other reason for the phrase 'spirit of holiness' instead of 'Holy Spirit', can I conceive. Moreover, if Paul refers to the Holy Spirit, he leaves quite indefinite His relation to the risen Savior. This would be the more remarkable because nowhere else does he speak plainly of the Holy Spirit (cp. Matthew 12:28; Luke 4:14) as a directive principle of the life of Christ. It is very unlikely that Paul would give a mere hint, in needlessly ambiguous language, of teaching which neither the context nor his own teaching elsewhere explains.

It cannot be objected that 'Spirit' is the name, not of the Second, but of the Third, Person of the Trinity. For, although this term specially designates this last, as being present to our thought chiefly as the animating divine principle of the Christian life, yet it is not confined to Him. The entire nature of God is spirit; as is that in us which is nearest to God. Moreover, the term is used here to designate, not expressly the divine nature of Christ, but simply the higher element of His nature. That in Him this higher nature is divine, we learn elsewhere.

The order of Romans 1:3, 4 is the order of Christ's historical manifestation. He first showed Himself to men as David's Son: and then by resurrection was proved to be the Son of God.

Jesus Christ our Lord: the Son in His relation to us. He is Jesus of Nazareth, the hope of Israel, our Lord.

Lord: one who has control over men and things. So Matthew 21:40, "Lord of the vineyard;" Matthew 12:8, "Lord of the Sabbath." It is correlative with "servant," as in Romans 14:4; Matthew 24:45, 50; 25:18-26; and is the title most frequently used to set forth Christ's relation to us, as in 1 Corinthians 8:6; 12:3; Ephesians 4:5. For its use in the O.T., see under Romans 9:29.

Our: probably without definite limitation. Of all Christians, Christ is Lord.

**Ver. 5.** Christ's relation to Paul and to his readers.

Through: διὰ with genitive: a most important N.T. word. It denotes the means, whether it be an unconscious instrument or an intelligent agent, through which an effect is brought about, the channel through which purpose passes into actuality; whether or not the agent be also the first cause. It denotes regularly Christ's relation to the universe and to the work of salvation: so Romans 1:8; 3:24; 5:1, 2, 10, 11, 17, 19, 21; 1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:3, 10, 17. The plural we does not refer to others who joined Paul in this letter, as in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, nor can it include the readers. For the phrase

in all the nations, added to give Paul's reason for writing to men at Rome, calls our attention away from the other apostles. It refers probably to Paul only. Such use of the plural in formal documents is common in all languages and ages. It was perhaps suggested by remembrance that others besides Paul had received this apostleship, and a still larger number the favor of God.

Grace: that quality which calls forth 'favor' or approbation in a beholder. Such objects are graceful. Since the favor called forth depends upon the character and abides in the heart of the beholder, we have the phrase "to find grace in one's sight;" as in Luke 1:30; Acts 7:46. Since this favor springs from generosity, we read of "grace given" and "received:" Romans 12:3, 6; 15:15; 2 Corinthians 6:1, and this verse. Favor prompts us to do good to its object; and this good done, arising simply from goodwill, stands in contrast to obligation, as in Romans 4:4. When we were in sin, God looked upon us. Repulsive as we were, in His sight we found favor. For he

saw in us His own image, so sadly marred: and the sight called forth in the breast of God that which prompted Him to save us. The grace of God is His love seeking out its object and contemplating it with a purpose of blessing.

‘Through’ the great Person just described, Paul and others became objects of the ‘favor’ of God. Not that Christ moved God to look on us with favor, but that the birth and death of Christ are the channel through which God’s favor reached us. For Christ is Himself a gift of the “grace of God:” Hebrews 2:9. See Romans 3:24-26; 8:32.

Apostleship: Christ was the divine agent ‘through whom’ God made Paul an ‘apostle’. Just as Elisha, a prophet sent from God and speaking with God’s authority, was appointed to his work by Elijah at God’s bidding, so Paul was appointed by the voice of Christ at the Father’s bidding. He was “an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the command of God:” 1 Timothy 1:1. See Galatians 1:1. First ‘favor’, then ‘apostleship’: for God’s favor is the source of all other blessings: 1 Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 3:8.

For obedience of faith: same words in Romans 16:26: purpose for which Paul was made an apostle, viz. that men may obey faith: Cp. 2 Corinthians 10:5, “for the obedience of Christ.” We obey faith by believing. Faith is itself submission to God. To make this prominent, Paul writes, not “for faith” as in Romans 1:17, but ‘for obedience of faith’. Cp. Acts 6:7, “obeyed the faith;” also Romans 10:3, 16; 2:8.

In all the nations: sphere in which God sent Paul to evoke obedience to faith.

‘Nations’, or ‘Gentiles’: cp. Romans 15:10 with Deuteronomy 32:43; Romans 15:11 with Psalm 117:1; and Romans 15:9 with Psalm 18:49. The Jews looked upon themselves as separate from all others, and therefore needed a word to mark the separation. They noticed that they were one; and called themselves a people, the people of God. The rest of mankind consisted of various nations, all strangers to Israel. Hence the contrast in Acts 26:17, 23. They therefore used the plural form ‘nations’, not merely for the aggregate of nations, but for the aggregate of individuals composing the nations. Consequently we must sometimes translate ‘Gentiles’, as in

Romans 2:14; 3:29; Acts 13:48; 14:2, 5; and sometimes ‘nations’ as in Romans 4:17, 18. The singular is always “nation,” as in Romans 10:19. Paul’s commission is for ‘all the nations’, and therefore includes Rome.

On behalf of His name: further object of the commission of Paul, viz. that the name of Christ may be known and honored. So Acts 9:16; 15:26; 21:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:12; Acts 3:16. To believe what that name implies, and to confess it, were the conditions of salvation. That this name might be on every lip and in every heart, Paul preached and lived, and was ready to die.

**Ver. 6.** Brings Paul’s readers within the sphere of his apostolic work. He was sent to lead men “in all the nations” to obey faith; and in these nations were the Christians at Rome.

Ye also: in addition to the other nations among whom (Romans 1:13) he has labored so long. Cp. Romans 1:15: “also to you at Rome.”

Called ones of Jesus Christ: they belonged to Christ, and had been made His by a divine summons. This summons, Paul represents as given by the Father: so Romans 8:30; 9:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:14. The Gospel is God’s voice calling men to Christ; and is as solemn as the voice from the burning bush, or that on the road to Damascus. They who have obeyed the call are ‘Christ’s called ones’. Just as by the voice of Christ God made Paul an apostle and gave him a right to call himself such, so by the Gospel God gave his readers to Christ and gave them a right to call themselves His. See under Romans 8:28. Thus Paul, while claiming his own relation to Christ, recognises that of those to whom he writes. It is better to render and punctuate as above, not ‘ye are called ones, etc.’: for the Roman Christians came within Paul’s sphere not by being called, but by being among the Gentiles.

**Ver. 7.** The definite greeting, for which Romans 1:1-6 have prepared the way.

Beloved of God: equivalent to “beloved by God” in 1 Thessalonians 1:4. God’s love is the source of all blessing, and the sure ground of our hope: cp. Romans 5:6; 8:39. Of this love, all men (Romans 11:28, John 3:16) are objects; but only believers are conscious objects. To them it is real and living, moulding their thoughts and life. Paul knows that the love which

smiles on himself smiles also on them; and that in a consciousness of the same Father's love, amid the same trials of life, both he and they rejoice and rest.

Called saints: further description of his readers.

'Saints' not only called to be saints, but actually 'holy men'. So Romans 15:25, 26, 31; 16:2, 15, etc.: cp. 1 Corinthians 1:2. They were objectively holy: see note below. God claimed to be henceforth the aim of their life, purposes, effort. Therefore, apart from their own conduct, they stood in a new and solemn relation to God, as men whom He had claimed for Himself. They might be, like the Corinthians, carnal; but they were still sanctified in Christ: 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:3. To admit sin or selfishness into Christians, is sacrilege. Hence the word 'saint', their common N.T. designation, points out their duty. It points out no less their privilege. By calling us 'saints', God declares His will that we live a life of which He is the one and only aim. Therefore, since our efforts have proved that such a life is utterly beyond our power, we may take back to God the name by which He calls us, and humbly claim that it be realized by His power in our heart and life.

After describing himself, his business, and his readers, Paul adds words of greeting:

grace and peace. "May you be objects of the 'favor' of God." This is the source of all blessing, and therefore holds the first place in N.T. salutations.

'Peace': rest arising from absence of disturbing causes within, or around, or before us: the opposite of confusion and unrest: 1 Corinthians 14:33; Isaiah 57:20, 21. It is a result of the favor of God. We are at rest because He smiles, and we know that He smiles, on us.

Father: a constant title of God, as is 'Lord' of Christ: cp. 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:5, 6. We look up to God as the Father from whom we sprang, and to Christ as the Master whose work we do. The 'grace' of God is an outcome of His fatherhood. He smiles on His children. And, because we know that our 'Father' smiles on us, we are at 'peace'.

The Lord Jesus Christ: in closest relation to the Father, as joint Source with Him of 'grace and peace'. This remarkable collocation of names, constant with Paul, places Christ infinitely above man and infinitely near to God. It completes the honor paid to Christ in this first sentence of the epistle.

Notice the beauty and symmetry of Paul's opening sentence. It is a crystal arch spanning the gulf between the Jew of Tarsus and the Christians at Rome. Paul begins by giving his name: he rises to the dignity of his office, and then to the Gospel he proclaims. From the Gospel he ascends to its great subject-matter, to Him who is Son of David and Son of God. From this summit of his arch he passes on to the apostleship again, and to the nations for whose good he received it. Among these nations he finds the Christians at Rome. He began to build by laying down his own claims; he finished by acknowledging theirs. The gulf is spanned. Across the waters of national separation, Paul has flung an arch whose firmly knit segments are living truths, and whose keystone is the incarnate Son of God. Over this arch he hastens with words of greeting from his Father and their Father, from his Master and their Master.

Every word increases the writer's claim upon the attention of his readers. He writes to them as one doing the work of the promised Messiah, who lived at Nazareth and died at Jerusalem. Among the servants of Christ he holds no mean place, but has been solemnly called to the first rank. He has been set apart by God for proclamation of those joyful tidings whose notes were heard from afar by the ancient prophets and still resound in the words of the sacred books. The divine mission of the prophets and the sacredness of their writings claim attention for one who announces as present what they foretold as future. This claim is strengthened by mention of Him who is the great matter of the good news. Paul proclaims the advent of a scion of the house to which eternal royalty was promised; of One who, by divine power, by victory over death, has been separated from all others as the Son of God. This Son of David and of God is Paul's Master and theirs. By His personal call, Paul has received the rank of an apostle. This office derives lustre from the grandeur of Him by whom it was conferred. The purpose of Paul's mission is that in all nations men may obey faith. A further purpose is that the name of Christ, written in these verses in characters so splendid, may be revered and loved by all.

Among these nations are Paul's readers. But he does not write in order to lead them to faith: for Christ has already made them His own by a divine call. They are objects of God's love, men whom He has claimed for Himself. Paul desires for them the smile of God, and the rest of spirit which only that smile can give. May it come to them from its only source, the common Father and the common Master.

In these words there is no mere rambling among sacred topics, no running after some great thought, no mere desire to put Christ's name into every sentence. But there is everywhere order and purpose. In Romans 1:5 we find Paul standing as an apostle on the level on which he stood in Romans 1:1. But how great an advance he has made! The long-foretold Gospel has given importance to the man set apart to proclaim it. The apostle has been into the presence of the Son of God; and the glory of that presence now irradiates the office received from one so great. He comes forth as an ambassador claiming for his Master the allegiance of all nations.

Observe, in this section and epistle, the facts and teaching assumed by Paul. He takes for granted the resurrection of Christ, and his own call by Christ; that Jesus claimed to be in a special sense the Son of God; that the prophets spoke from God; that their writings were sacred books; and that the Gospel is a divine call by which Christ claims men for God.

**HOLINESS.** The words 'holy, hallow, holiness', and 'saint, sanctify, sanctification', represent in the English Bible nearly always one Hebrew and one Greek word, this last being the constant equivalent of the former in the Greek Septuagint Version. These words, so important for understanding the Bible, the character of God, and our relation to Him, demand careful study.

The above words are found only in reference to religion. They were familiar to Jews and proselytes by their use in the O.T., and by well-known objects which were called 'holy', e.g. the Sabbath, Mount Sinai, the firstborn of man and beast, the tabernacle with its altars and vessels, the priests and their clothing, the sacrifices, consecrated houses and fields, the censers used by Korah and his company, the wall of Jerusalem, and the Person and Name of God. See Exodus 29:, 30:, 40:1-15; Leviticus 21, 27, Numbers 3:11-13, and innumerable other O.T. passages.



From these various and different objects and from an idea embodied in them all, we may now derive a definition of holiness. For we notice that all belong to God. He has claimed them for His own, He requires that they be used only to advance His purposes, and according to His bidding. And in this sense, i.e. as specially claimed by God and therefore in a special sense belonging to Him, they are holy. Hence the common phrase “holiness for Jehovah.” Cp. Leviticus 20:26. Holiness is written upon everything belonging to the Mosaic ritual, and is one of its most conspicuous features. It is as conspicuous as the shedding of blood, and as important.

The word ‘holy’, thus understood, is applied to both men and things in two ways, viz. in reference to the purpose and claim of God and to the purpose and conduct of man. Whatever God claims for His own, we may speak of as ‘holy’ without considering whether the claim is responded to. For, whatever man may do, God’s claim puts the object claimed in a new position. Men may profane it by setting God’s claim at nought; but they cannot destroy the claim. It remains to condemn the men who trample it under foot. The Sabbath, temple, priesthood, were holy, however polluted. But to pollute them was sacrilege, and defiance to God. This may be called objective holiness. If man’s will concur with the Will of God, if the object claimed be actually devoted to Him, if to Him its entire activity tends, we have what we may call subjective holiness: as in 1 Corinthians 7:34; 1 Thessalonians 5:23. It is described in Romans 6:11, “living for God, in Christ Jesus.” Cp. 2 Corinthians 5:15. This distinction of objective and subjective holiness is of the utmost importance. God sanctified the Sabbath and the firstborn: Genesis 2:3; Exodus 20:11; Numbers 3:11-51. Israel was bidden to sanctify it and them: Deuteronomy 5:12; Jeremiah 17:22-27; Exodus 13:1. God and His name are holy; therefore man must hallow them: Leviticus 20:26; 21:8; Isaiah 1:4; Leviticus 22:32; Isaiah 29:23.

These last quotations remind us that the word ‘holy’ is used not only to describe the objects which God claimed for Himself but also to set forth His own nature. And the connection proves that in both cases the word represents the same idea. But it is differently applied. For the objects claimed by God are “holy for Jehovah;” whereas He is “the Holy One of Israel.” When God claims to be the one aim of our existence, He not only puts us in a new position, and thus makes us objectively holy, but also

reveals Himself in a new character. Henceforth we think of Him as the great Being who claims to be the aim of our every purpose and effort. By calling Himself 'holy', God announces that this claim has its root and source in a definite element of His nature. He is the beginning, and the end. All things are from Him and for Him. As thus understood, the holiness of God bears a relation to that of men analogous to the relation of the Creator to the creature.

We now see a reason for the ceremonial holiness so conspicuous in the Old Covenant. To teach men, in the only way in which they could learn it, that He claims to be the one aim of their being, God commanded certain men and things to be set apart for Himself in outward ceremonial form. These He called 'holy'. When men had become familiar with the idea of holiness, thus set forth, God declared in Christ that this idea must be realized in every man and every thing, in spirit and soul and body. Hence the various holy objects in the O.T. are used in the N.T. to set forth the Christian life. We are a temple, priesthood, sacrifice: 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Romans 12:1. Our future life will be a Sabbath-keeping: Hebrews 4:9. These were embodiments, in things, men, and time, of the idea of holiness. They set forth in symbolic form the body, spirit, and life of the people of God.

When that which exists only for God is surrounded by objects not thus consecrated, holiness becomes a setting apart for God. The more alien from God the objects around, the more conspicuous is this separation. Just so, the temple was closed to all but priests, themselves set apart from their fellows and from common life. But separation is only an accidental and subordinate idea. The word 'holy' is frequently used without thought of separation, e.g. for the angels. In the world to come there will be absolute holiness, but no separation. For God's pleasure will be the aim of every word and act of His glorified sons. The idea of separation appears also in the holiness of God. For, that He is the one object of His creatures' purpose, effort, service, and worship, places Him and His Name at an infinite distance above all others. His claim reveals the difference between the creature and the Creator.

Since sin is an erection of self into the end and rule of life, it is utterly opposed to holiness. God's holiness makes Him intolerant of sin, because

sin robs Him of that which His holiness claims. Only the holy are pure, and only the pure are holy. But the words are not synonymous. Purity in the creature and opposition to sin in the Creator are the negative side of holiness. Holiness, however, is a positive attribute; and would have existed in God and in man even though there had been no sin.

Righteousness looks upon man as capable of obeying or disobeying a law; holiness, as capable of choosing and pursuing an aim, and of choosing God and His purposes to be the one aim of life. The antithesis of righteousness is transgression: that of holiness (see 2 Corinthians 5:15) is self. The contrast in the one case is Right or Wrong; in the other, Mine or God's.

Already we have met the word 'holy' three times. The 'Scriptures' are called 'holy'. For they stand in special relation to God as a divinely-given record of divinely-given revelations. The 'spirit' of the incarnate Son of God was an impersonation 'of holiness': for every movement of that spirit had God for its aim. Christians are called 'saints' or holy persons objectively, as claimed by God. To refuse that claim is to act as Aaron, who is called in Psalm 106:16 "the saint of Jehovah," would have done had he refused the priesthood. And it is their privilege to be subjectively holy.

On the whole subject, see further in my 'New Life in Christ' lectures xii.-xv., and xxxii.

## SECTION 2

### *HE HAS LONG DESIRED TO PREACH TO THEM*

#### CHAPTER 1:8-15

*In the first place, I thank my God through Jesus Christ about you all, that your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers beseeching if by any means at all a way will be opened for me, in the will of God, to come to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift of grace, in order that ye may be established; and that is, that we may be encouraged together in your midst through each other's faith, both yours and mine. Moreover, I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, that frequently I purposed to come to you and was hindered till now, in order that I might have some fruit among you also, as also among the other Gentiles. Both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to wise men and to foolish, I am a debtor. Hence my readiness to preach, also to you in Rome, the Gospel.*

**Ver. 8.** After greeting the believers at Rome, Paul declares his deep and long-cherished interest in them. Many thoughts arise, one after another, in his mind. He tells us the first; but does not arrange the others in order, pouring forth all in one full stream of thought and feeling. So in Romans 3:1. Paul's 'first' thought here, as in nearly all his letters, is gratitude. In approaching 'God', he 'first' thanks Him for blessings received, and then asks for more.

My God: Paul's own God, with whom he has personal and individual dealings. Even when thanking God for others, he turns his back on them and alone draws near to God. Cp. 2 Corinthians 12:21. For he feels that God's goodness to his readers is personal kindness to himself.

Through: as in Romans 1:5.

‘Through’ Jesus Christ: the channel of all blessing from God to man and of all thanks from man to God. Cp. Romans 7:25; Hebrews 13:15.

You all: consequently throughout the epistle we have no reproof or correction. Contrast 1 Corinthians 1:4, 11.

Faith: the earliest Christian grace. The fuller description of the readers in Colossians 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 3:6 arose perhaps from fuller information. By thanking God for their ‘faith’, Paul recognised that in some fair sense it came from God. See under Romans 12:3. It must have made itself known by works of faith: but what these were, we are not told.

In all the world. This warns us not to take literally, without careful examination, the universal expressions of the Bible: see under Romans 5:18. Wherever Paul goes in his travels, he hears of his readers’ faith. What he hears calls forth gratitude to God: for the universality of their good name is some proof that they deserve it.

**Ver.** 9-10. Explanation and confirmation of the foregoing: a reason for the gratitude just expressed. Paul thanks God for their faith, because he constantly prays for them, and because their faith is thus God’s answer to his prayer and a mark of God’s personal kindness to himself. Notice that Paul prays constantly for all the Churches to which he writes. In his devotions, he takes them one by one to God. Hence every blessing to them is a gift from God to him. The constancy of Paul’s prayer is greater than words can tell. He therefore appeals to

God, who is the only witness of his prayers.

Serve: as in Romans 1:25; 9:4; 12:1, not as in Romans 1:1: used in the Bible only for service of God, especially the priestly service of the temple. The temple was the palace of God: the priests were His domestic servants.

In the Gospel: sphere of Paul’s priestly work for God, viz. announcement of the good news about

His Son. Important parallel in Romans 15:16.

Spirit: that in man which is nearest to God and most like God. See note under Romans 8:17.

In my 'spirit': the inner, as the Gospel is the outer, sphere of Paul's service. The service of the Jewish priests might be only bodily and mechanical. But the preaching of the Gospel was a sacrifice offered in the inmost and uppermost chamber of Paul's being. So John 4:24. This inward service, in a matter so dear to God as that of 'His' own 'Son', gave solemnity to Paul's appeal. For the godless cannot appeal to God. But Paul's well-known devotion to the service of God was proof that his appeal was neither frivolous nor false. The words 'whom I serve in my spirit' expound and justify the words "my God" in Romans 1:8. They who in the solitude of their spirit bow down to God can appeal to Him as their God.

Paul never prays for his readers without earnestly asking to be allowed to visit them.

A-way-opened: same word in 1 Corinthians 16:2; 3 John 2. It denotes, under the figure of a good way opened, any kind of prosperity.

Now: a speedy visit hoped for.

At all: uncertainty as to details. The words

if by any means express a desire to come at any cost, and suggest difficulty and doubt. This prayer was answered in an unexpected manner.

In the will of God: implies submission. But submission did not prevent earnest and persevering prayer. Paul's desire was to go to Rome; but he will not do so till it becomes evident that what he desires is also 'the will of God'. Cp. Romans 15:32. He also remembers that the opening of a way for him depends, not upon circumstances, but upon 'God'. Cp. James 4:15.

**Ver. 11.** Reason and motive of Paul's prayer: he wishes to do them good.

Gift-of-grace: any mark of God's free favor. Same important word in Romans 5:15, 16; 6:23; 11:29; also in a technical sense in Romans 12:6, where see note. Cp. 1 Corinthians 1:7.

Spiritual: pertaining to the Holy Spirit, probably. All inward gifts of God are wrought in man's spirit by the Spirit of God: so 1 Corinthians 12:11. And Paul hopes to be a medium through which God will

impart such gifts to his readers at Rome. For from within those in whom the Spirit dwells flow rivers of living water: John 7:38.

Established: enabled to stand firmly in the Christian life, in spite of influences tending to throw them down.

May be 'established': not by Paul, but by God: Jude 24. But increased stability follows every 'spiritual gift'.

**Ver. 12.** A new thought: to do them good, is to receive good for himself. "If I impart to you a spiritual gift, making you firmer in the Christian life, both you and I will be

encouraged, i.e. moved to Christian hope and work (same word as 'exhort' in Romans 12:1); I

by your faith and you by mine. Notice the modesty of these words. Even the great apostle will receive blessing from the Roman Christians. Similar modesty in Romans 15:14, 15.

**Ver. 13.** Not only has Paul prayed to be allowed to see his readers, but he has

frequently purposed to come. This proves the earnestness of his prayer. Prayers not accompanied by serious effort to obtain the blessing asked for are an empty form.

I would not have you ignorant: so Romans 11:25; 1 Corinthians 10:1; 12:1; 2 Corinthians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13: it lays stress on what follows.

Hindered: explained in Romans 15:22. An object Paul had in view in his purpose to go to Rome, in addition to the objects described in Romans 1:11, 12, was to gather

fruit there as he had done among the other Gentiles. His success among others was a ground of hope for success at Rome.

Fruit: Romans 6:21, 22; 15:28; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9; Philippians 1:11, 22; 4:17: a good result derived from the organic outworking and growth of moral and spiritual life. To do good to others, is, according to the laws of the Kingdom of God, to receive a harvest of blessing for ourselves.

**Ver. 14.** Greeks and Barbarians: the common Greek summary of the civilised and uncivilised nations. Its use by Paul reveals to how great an extent in his day the civilisation of the world was Greek. The culture even of Rome was of Greek origin. He writes without thought probably to which class the Romans belong. The broad distinction in his day was between those who used the Greek language and partook of Greek civilisation and those who did not.

Wise: acquainted with arts and sciences learnt only by a special education. See note under 2 Corinthians 2:5.

Foolish: men of dull perception.” To those who know more, and to those who know less, than others,

I am a debtor.” Paul received the Gospel in trust for all, without distinction of nationality or intelligence, and is therefore under obligation, both to God who entrusted it and to those for whom it was entrusted, to proclaim it to all within his reach. He is a steward of the mysteries of God: 1 Corinthians 4:1; 1 Peter 4:10. Therefore his efforts to do them good are but the discharge of a duty to God and to them. The civilisation and learning of the Greeks, the coarseness and ignorance of the barbarians, do not lessen this obligation. The wise need the Gospel, the foolish are capable of receiving it; and therefore both have a claim on Paul. Notice here a modest but correct view of Christian beneficence. To do all we can, is but to pay a just debt. To claim gratitude for doing good, is to mistake utterly our position and obligation.

**Ver. 15.** Hence my readiness, etc. The obligation just mentioned is another reason for Paul’s desire to visit Rome. He wishes to see his readers in order to do them good, and thus to strengthen the faith they already possess.

Preach-the-Gospel: literally to ‘announce good news’: cognate verb to the word ‘Gospel’ in Romans 1:1. Same word in Romans 10:15; 15:20; 1 Corinthians 1:17, etc. It may be transliterated ‘evangelize’.



## REVIEW

“In writing to you, my first thought is gratitude to God: and I remember that all blessing comes through Christ. Wherever I go, I hear of your faith. The news fills me with thankfulness: for it is a gift of my God, and an answer to my prayers. How ceaseless are my prayers for you, is known only to Him whom in my heart of hearts I serve by proclaiming the good news of salvation through His Son. Whenever I pray for you, I pray that if well-pleasing to God I may be permitted by some means to visit you. My reason is that I desire to be a channel through which the Spirit may bestow some gift of God’s favor, and thus strengthen you. Such blessing to you will be a gain to me. If I come into your midst, I shall be encouraged by your faith and you by mine. Not only do I desire, but I have often purposed, to visit you: but hitherto my apostolic work has hindered me. For I wish to sow seed at Rome, and thus reap among you a harvest of blessing such as I have gathered among others. Moreover, I wish to discharge my obligation to Him who in His undeserved favor has entrusted to me, for the good of all men, the Gospel of Christ. This felt obligation makes me ready to preach the Gospel also at Rome.”

In 1, an ambassador claimed our respect by the greatness of his business and of his Master. In 2, a man who calls us brethren wins our affection by the warmth of his love. He thanks God because he hears good about us: and he never prays without praying for us and praying that God will enable him to see our face. For years he has been planning to make a long journey to do us good. He is sure that intercourse with us will give encouragement to him: and he looks upon our Church as a field in which he will reap a harvest of blessing. Though we have never seen him and his name is highly honored wherever there are Christians, he calls himself our debtor. In writing these words, Paul doubtless sought only to express his feelings towards these far-off brethren. But he could not have written words more calculated to increase the attention which his foregoing words called forth. In 1, our spirits bowed before one who stood so high in the service of so great a Master. But now the ambassador of Christ comes to us as one like ourselves. Across the waters which roll between him and us, we hear a brother’s voice and see a brother’s face.

## SECTION 3

### *FOR THE GOSPEL IS GOD'S POWER TO SAVE ALL THAT BELIEVE*

#### CHAPTER 1:16, 17

*For I am not ashamed of the Gospel. For it is a power of God, for salvation, to everyone that believes, both to Jew first and to Greek. For righteousness of God is revealed in it, by faith, for faith, according as it is written, "But the righteous man by faith will live."*

Paul concluded 2 with a new thought. He had expressed a desire to impart to his readers a spiritual gift and spiritual strength, to receive encouragement and gather fruit among them, and to discharge an obligation to them. In Romans 1:15, these desires assumed the form of a wish to preach the Gospel to them. Verse 16 gives a reason for this, viz. that the Gospel is a power of God to save. Therefore to preach it to the Christians at Rome will impart spiritual gifts and strength, will advance their salvation and thus bear fruit for Paul, and will discharge the obligation which the possession of such a Gospel laid upon him. Thus the last word of 2 is the key-note of 3.

**Ver. 16.** Paul mentions first, not the nature of the Gospel, but his own feelings about it. He is ready to preach it to them because he is

not ashamed of the Gospel. He is not ashamed of it because he knows its saving 'power'. The word 'shame' was perhaps suggested by the greatness of Rome and the apparent worthlessness of a mere word in a man's lips. But the thought of shame is banished by remembrance of the power and purpose of the Gospel. For Paul knew that in his words there lives and works the Creator's power, that in those words this power is put forth to save men ready to die, that his word will save all men of any nation or rank who believe it, and that all men alike need salvation. This last point will be proved in 4. Of such a word he is 'not ashamed' even in the world's great capital: and therefore he is ready to proclaim it even to the men of Rome.

Power: something able to produce results. By means of the good news, God performs works of power So 1 Corinthians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 2:13. In creation a word was the instrument of God's power, and the universe is upheld by the word of the power of Christ: Psalm 33:6, 9; Hebrews 1:3. The words which called Lazarus from the grave and healed the lame man at the temple gate were a 'power'

of God. Such also is the Gospel. While men speak it, the might of God produces, through the spoken word, works possible only to God. So James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23: cp. Acts 8:10.

Salvation: rescue of the lost, including the whole work of God in us till we are beyond the perils of the present life: see Romans 5:10; 13:11. Every moment by His power God saves us from evil.

For 'salvation': purpose and aim of the 'power of God' put forth in the proclamation of the good news.

Believes: see note under Romans 4:25.

Everyone that 'believes' the good news, of whatever nation or degree of culture, experiences the power which saves. To others, "the word of the cross is foolishness:" 1 Corinthians 1:18. Paul is ready to preach the Gospel at Rome because, to all who believe, it is a power of God to save.

Jew and Greek: another division of men. "Greeks and Barbarians" were equal in reference to the Kingdom of God. Both were far off; Ephesians 2:13. But the Jews were "the sons of the covenant" and "of the kingdom:" Acts 3:25; Matthew 8:12. They were first not only in time but in privilege: Acts 13:46; Romans 3:1. Therefore in the great day they will be first in punishment and in reward: Romans 2:9, 10. Same contrast in Ephesians 2:17.

'Greek': any who were not Jews, as in Mark 7:26, John 7:35; Acts 11:20; 14:1. This use of the word shows, as does Romans 1:14, how completely Greek thought and life had molded the world in which Paul moved. The word is denoted here as in Romans 1:12, not identity, but coincidence in thought or practical identity. The word and the power are not the same, but they go together. The one is the outward form, the other is the life-giving spirit.

**Ver. 17.** Righteousness, or ‘justice’: same word both in Hebrew and in Greek. It describes any object which has a standard with which it may be compared, and which agrees with that standard; that which is as it ought to be. Hence we have, in Leviticus 19:36, righteous weights and measures; in Matthew 20:4; Colossians 4:1, righteous wages; in 2 Timothy 4:8, a righteous judge; in Romans 2:5; Acts 4:19; John 7:24, righteous conduct and judgment. Aristotle (‘Nicom. Ethics’ bk. v. 1. 8) defines the word ‘righteous’ to mean “legal and equal.” The righteous man treats all men on the same principle, viz. according to the standard laid down by law. And this is the common use of the word in classical Greek. God is righteous (cp. Romans 3:26) in that His treatment of men agrees with the principles of right and wrong admitted by all.

It was ever in the mind of the Jew that God is the Judge by whom, and with whose law, man’s conduct must be compared; and that upon this comparison depends God’s smile or frown, and man’s life or death. Hence the phrase “righteous before God” in Luke 1:6; Acts 4:9. Sometimes, e.g. Deuteronomy 6:25; 24:13, the word suggests reward from God for right action. In O.T. and N.T., that man is righteous whose conduct agrees with the Law of God, and who therefore enjoys His approval and will obtain His reward; and his condition is ‘righteousness’.

‘Righteousness’ of God is here said to be revealed in the Gospel, by faith, for faith: and this revelation of righteousness is given as an explanation of the statement that the Gospel is a power of God to save all believers. In Romans 3:5, 25, 26 the same phrase denotes an attribute of God: cp. “is God unrighteous?” in Romans 1:5 and “Himself righteous” in Romans 1:26. But it cannot have this meaning here. For, that God is righteous, was revealed, not in the Gospel, but long before: nor would such revelation explain how the Gospel is a power of God to save all who believe, or be explained by the quotation from Habakkuk immediately following. Moreover, such manifestation of righteousness could not, as we read in Romans 3:21, be said to be “apart from law.” In Romans 10:3 we read of men who, “not knowing the righteousness of God, and seeking to set up their own, did not submit to the righteousness of God;” where again the phrase before us cannot describe an attribute of God. Nor can it in 2 Corinthians 5:21. But in Philippians 3:9 Paul writes, “not having a righteousness of my own, that which is from law, but that which is

through faith of Christ, the righteousness from God on the condition of faith.” The closeness of the parallel and the good sense given leave no room to doubt that these last words describe the ‘righteousness of God’ in Romans 1:17; 3:21, 22; Romans 10:3. As given by Him, it is called ‘God’s righteousness’, in contrast to any righteousness derived from obedience to law and therefore having its source in man.

Revealed, or ‘unveiled’: used in N.T. only of a veil lifted up by God; and only of truth actually apprehended by man, thus differing from the word ‘manifest’ in Romans 1:19; 3:21. The Jews sought God’s approval; but it was hidden from their eyes: cp. Romans 9:30, 31. The good news proclaims (cp. Romans 3:27) the new law of faith; and thus brings to light, to all who believe, the long-sought blessing. The revelation is made, from God’s side, through the Gospel: it is received, on man’s side,

by (literally from) faith, i.e. by belief of the preached word. To those who do not believe, the Gospel is still veiled: so 2 Corinthians 4:3.

For faith: purpose of God in choosing faith as the means of this revelation of righteousness: cp. Romans 1:5, “for obedience of faith.” In order that faith in Him may be the abiding state of His servants, God proclaims, “He that believes shall be saved;” and thus makes known to all believers a state in which God’s favor is enjoyed. The revelation is ‘by faith’, that it may lead ‘to faith’.

This verse explains the statement in Romans 1:16 that the good news is a power of God to save all that believe. As we shall see in 4, man was perishing, and his perdition was a just punishment of his sin. Now a righteous judge cannot rescue a criminal from a righteous sentence. But, in the Gospel, God proclaims a new law, viz. “He that believes shall be saved;” and thus bestows His own favor on all that believe. The believer is now, by the gift of God, righteous. He has “obtained righteousness, even the righteousness which is from faith:” Romans 9:30. And the righteous Judge breaks off the fetters, and sets the prisoner free. How the “power of God” works out “salvation for everyone that believes,” we shall learn in Romans 6, 8. To this salvation, ‘righteousness’ as a gift ‘of God’ is a necessary preliminary condition.

As it is written, etc.: not given in proof of the foregoing assertion, which rests simply on the word and authority of Christ; (see under Romans 3:22) but pointing out a harmony between the new Gospel and the ancient Scriptures. Habakkuk (Habakkuk 1) mourns the vileness and lawlessness around; and foresees as its retribution rapid and complete conquest by the Chaldeans. He appeals to the character of God, and expresses for himself and the godly in Judaea an assurance of deliverance grounded on God's character, "We shall not die:" Habakkuk 1:12. The prophet betakes himself to the watch-tower, and awaits the reply of God. In solemn tones God proclaims the destruction of the proud Chaldeans, and declares that while others perish the "righteous man by his faith shall live:" Romans 2:4. The Hebrew word rendered 'faith', although cognate to the ordinary verb meaning "to believe," denotes, not belief, but faithfulness, that constancy and stability of character which make a man an object of reliance to others. These quoted words assume that faithfulness is an element of the righteous man's character, and declare that by his faithfulness he shall survive. It is however quite evident that this faithfulness arises from faith, i.e. from belief of the promise of God. Indeed, Habakkuk 1:12 is an expression of faith. The prophet is unmoved because he relies upon God. In Habakkuk 2:4, the words 'shall live' refer primarily to the present life. When others perish, the righteous will escape. But in this sense the promise was only partially fulfilled. And the incompleteness of its fulfilment in the present life was a sure pledge of a life to come.

Thus, through the lips of the prophet, God proclaims, in face of a coming storm, that the righteous man will survive by his faith. In Christ, God spoke again. In face of the tempest so soon to overwhelm the Jewish nation, and some day to overwhelm the world, He announced that the man of faith shall live. And Paul, echoing this announcement, calls attention to the harmony between God's word in Christ and His word in Habakkuk. This harmony, amid so much divergence, confirms the words both of Habakkuk and of Paul and of Christ. The omission by Paul of the word 'his' in Habakkuk 2:4 is unimportant: for evidently it is

by his own faith that the righteous man will live. The omission makes prominent that the righteous man is a man of faith. In Habakkuk 2:4 the words "by his faith" must be connected with "shall live;" and are put first for the sake of emphasis. And this gives good sense in Romans 2:17. But

the difference is unimportant. We are told that the man who will survive is 'righteous' and has 'faith'. This is in remarkable harmony with Paul's assertion that the Gospel is a power of God for salvation to all that believe.

The assertion, here made, that God accepts as righteous all that believe the Gospel, is the foundation-stone of this epistle. It is stated without proof. With what right, we will inquire under Romans 3:22, where we shall find a restatement of this doctrine.

# DIVISION I

## ALL ARE GUILTY

### CHAPTERS 1:18-3:20

#### SECTION 4

#### *FOR GOD IS ANGRY WITH ALL SIN*

#### CHAPTER 1:18-32

*For there is revealed God's anger from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, of those who hold down the truth in unrighteousness: because that which is known of God is manifest among them: for God manifested it to them. For the invisible things of Him, from the foundation of the world, being perceived through the things made, are clearly seen, viz. His eternal power and divinity; that they may be without excuse, because, having come to know God, not as God did they glorify Him or gave thanks; but they became vain in their reasonings, and their heart without understanding was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became foolish; and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God for a likeness of an image of corruptible man and birds and quadrupeds and creeping things.*

*For which cause God gave them up, in the desires of their hearts, to uncleanness, that their bodies be dishonored among themselves, men who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and revered and served the creature rather than Him that created, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*



*Because of this, God gave them up to passions of dishonor. For both their females exchanged the natural use for that against nature; and in like manner the males, having left the natural use of the female, burned in their lust one for another, males with males working out unseemliness, and receiving in themselves the necessary recompense of their error.*

*And, according as they did not approve to have God in their understanding, God gave them up to a disapproved mind, to do the things not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, an evil disposition; whisperers, evil speakers, hateful to God, wanton, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, without obedience to parents, without understanding, without fidelity to covenants, without affection, without mercy; men who, knowing the decree of God that they who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do they but are pleased with those that practice them.*

This section confirms Romans 1:17 by proving something without which it would not be true, viz. that all men are under the anger of God. Verse 17 explained how the Gospel is a power to save all that believe, by saying that in it is revealed a divinely-given conformity to the Law. This explanation rests on an assumption that all men capable of believing the good news are, apart from it, destitute of God's favor. Otherwise, a revelation of his favor will not save them, but will bring to light only what they already possess. Therefore, in order to give force to Romans 1:17, this assumption must be proved. Otherwise, the force of Romans 1:16, which gave a reason for Paul's readiness to preach at Rome, will not be felt: for unless the Romans need salvation, the Gospel's power to save will not prompt Paul to bring it to them. Consequently, the entire weight of Romans 1:16, 17, which contain a summary of the epistle, rests upon the assumption that all men are, apart from the Gospel, under the anger of God. Paul's earnest efforts to preach to all men the good news of salvation were prompted by his deep conviction of the lost state of all.

In DIV. 1 Paul asserts, and then proves, God's anger against all sin. In 4, he proves it in reference to the Gentiles; in 5-7, in reference to the Jews.

He shows (8) that this is consistent with the privileges conferred on the Jews; and (9) with the Jewish Scriptures. He assumes in Romans 2:1; 3:9, 19 that all men are sinners; and therefore draws, in Romans 3:19, 20, the inference that all men are guilty before God.

The argument of this section presents peculiar difficulties. Its proofs are taken from the life and thought of the heathen in Paul's day, well known to him and his readers but not to us. We may in part reproduce it from ancient writers and from the analogy of modern heathenism. But we are not sure of the extent to which the statements of the old writers were true of the mass of the population, and of the degree to which modern heathens resembles that which surrounded Paul. Consequently, we have no firm hold of the facts on which his reasoning rests; and therefore we cannot feel its full force.

A study of it will however be of great profit. We shall understand the writer's conclusions, and the principles on which he argues. These we shall compare with what we see in ourselves and in the world around and with what we read in ancient literature; and we shall find that they shed light on some of the most mysterious problems of human nature.

**Ver. 18.** Not only is "righteousness of God revealed" in the Gospel but elsewhere

anger of God is revealed, or 'unveiled', i.e. brought to the knowledge of men.

'Anger', or 'wrath': an emotion or disposition which prompts us to punish, the opposite of "grace." It is common to God and men: cp. Ephesians 4:26. For the most part, it is now hidden in the breast of God; but it will burst forth upon the wicked "in the day of anger and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Romans 2:5. Paul here says that this anger is already being 'revealed' or made known; but in what way he does not, in Romans 1:18, tell us. The Jews read the anger of God in the pages of the Old Testament. But of this there is no hint here. Consequently, we must wait for, and in Romans 1:24-32 we shall find, another revelation of the anger of God. It is revealed, not like the Gospel by a voice which speaks on earth, but directly from heaven, whence God from His throne looks down upon all ungodliness. Notice two aspects of sin: 'ungodliness'

or want of respect for God, and ‘unrighteousness’ or want of conformity to the law laid down for man’s conduct. Every sin deserves both names. But in some, as in Romans 1:21-23, the ‘ungodliness’, in others, as in Romans 1:24-32, the ‘unrighteousness’ is more conspicuous.

All unrighteousness of men: rather than “all unrighteous men,” making prominent the exact object of God’s anger, viz. the sin rather than the sinner. Many and various forms of sin alike call forth the anger of God.

Of those who, etc.: further description of those with whom God is angry, giving the special aspect of sin which provokes God’s anger. All sinners hold down or ‘hold back’, i.e. resist, the truth: they prevent it from attaining its purpose. Sin is therefore positive resistance to God.

‘Truth’: correspondence between a reality and a declaration which professes to set it forth. Words are true when they correspond with objective reality: persons and things are true when they correspond with their profession. Hence a ‘truth’ is a declaration which has corresponding reality, or a reality which is correctly set forth. Since God is Himself the great reality, that which correctly sets forth His nature is pre-eminently ‘the Truth’. Paul will prove that the heathen have the truth. It was designed to mould and raise their thought and life; but they prefer ‘unrighteousness’, and thus ‘hold down the truth’.

The rest of 4 explains, accounts for, and proves, the assertion of Romans 1:18. It falls naturally into the following divisions: God is angry with all sin (a) because He made Himself known to men, Romans 1:19, 20; (b) but they refused to honor Him and fell into the folly of idolatry, Romans 1:21-23; (c) therefore God gave them up to dishonor, Romans 1:24; (d) men who put the folly of idolatry in place of the truth of God, Romans 1:25; (e) therefore God gave them up to dishonor and shame, Romans 1:26, 27; (f) they refused to know God, and God gave them up to all kinds of sin, Romans 1:28-32. Thus (d) and (e) are parallel to, and develop, (b) and (c).

**Ver. 19.** Because they know better, God is angry with these ungodly and unrighteous men.

That which is known of God: His nature so far as it was ‘known’ to the heathen. For to them Paul evidently refers: see Romans 1:23.

Manifest: set conspicuously before men's eyes, whether they see it or not. Same word in Romans 2:28; 1 Corinthians 3:13; 11:19; 14:25: cognate verb below, 'made-manifest', and in Romans 3:21; 16:26; 2 Corinthians 5:10, 11, etc.: another cognate verb in Romans 7:13; John 1:5; 5:35, translated 'to shine'. The word 'revealed' denotes that which is actually known: see under Romans 1:17.

For God, etc.; explains the foregoing by an historical fact. God wrote His own name before the eyes of men that all might read it. The statement in Romans 1:18 true of all men. But Romans 1:19, which begins the proof that all men have the truth, suggests the Gentiles, about whom alone there could be any doubt. This reference is the more natural because the Gentiles were the mass of mankind.

**Ver. 20.** Proof of the foregoing. From the fact that the Gentiles actually knew God, Paul infers that He manifested Himself to them.

The invisible things of Him: the existence and nature of the unseen God, equivalent to "that which is known of God," and including His eternal power and all that is involved in His divinity.

From the creation of the world: a note of time, as in Mark 13:19; 10:6. This measurement of time is chosen because by the works of creation God reveals His otherwise unseen nature. Notice here a revelation of God more widely spread, and earlier, than that of the Old Covenant. God's works sprang from, and correspond with, His nature; and therefore they reveal it.

Through the things made the unseen Worker is clearly-seen; being-perceived by the eye of the mind, which looks through the visible to that which is beyond and above it.

'Divinity': the whole of that which goes to make up our idea of God, all that in which God differs from us, including 'His eternal power'. In Nature, this eternal God, so mighty and so different from us, is actually seen and known by men. Paul's readers would judge of the truth of this assertion. And, if true, Romans 1:19 also is true. That men read in Nature the name of God, proves that it was written there by God. Therefore, since whatever God does He does with design, we infer that God wrote His name on the page of Creation in order that men might read it and thus know God. Just as God revealed Himself to the Jews through the lips of

inspired men, so He also revealed Himself to the Gentiles in the thousand voices of the material world.

That they might be without excuse: purpose of God in thus revealing His nature, viz. in order to leave men without excuse for dishonoring Him. This statement is evidently true. For all that comes from God must have a purpose. And the purpose of God's revelation of Himself in Nature could not be mere communication of knowledge: for knowledge is useless unless it lead to something beyond itself. Nor could its immediate purpose be to lead men to glorify God. For, as we shall see, man was fast bound in sin, and therefore unable to glorify God: and this revelation could not break his fetters. Its only possible result was a consciousness of guilt for dishonoring God. And, if so, this must have been its designed result. Therefore, apart from the authority of Paul, we are compelled by the facts of the case to accept his assertion that God revealed Himself in Nature in order to leave man without excuse for forgetting God. For the same purpose, the Law was given to the Jews: Romans 3:19. These revelations had, however, a further purpose of mercy and salvation. By evoking consciousness of guilt, they prepared a way for (Romans 1:17) a revelation of righteousness. But consciousness of guilt was all that they were able directly to produce; and is therefore spoken of as the end for which they were given.

Summary of Romans 1:18-20. The heathen knew God's nature from His works. From this Paul infers that God made it known to them; and that He did so in order to remove from them all excuse for ungodliness and ingratitude. This proves that God desires man's reverence and thanks; and proves that they who refuse to honor God resist the truth which God has revealed.

The assertion that through His works God was known to the heathen is abundantly confirmed by the literature of the ancient world. Of writers known to Paul's readers, we notice that both Plato and Cicero appeal to the material world as manifestly a work of an intelligent Creator. See especially Plato's 'Timaeus' pp. 28-30 and bk. ii. of Cicero's 'Nature of the Gods', quoted on pp. 16-19 of my 'Through Christ to God'.

**Ver.** 21-23. Reason why they were without excuse, or the conduct which God made inexcusable by this revelation of Himself. The word know is so

indefinite, especially with a personal object, that Paul could correctly say that the heathen ‘knew’ God, and, as in Galatians 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:5, that they did not know God. To what extent ‘they knew God’, he has already stated in Romans 1:20.

Glorify: to welcome as an object of admiration, and by word or act to express admiration for the object glorified. See note under Romans 1:23. The heathen did not give to God the admiration and expressions of admiration which from His manifestation of Himself in Nature they knew that He rightfully claimed.

‘Nor did they’ give thanks for His kindness to them. Instead of giving to God admiration and gratitude, they reasoned about Him in a way which could lead to no good result, and their useless reasonings reacted upon themselves:

they became vain (see under Romans 8:20) in their reasonings, and their heart, which was without understanding, lost the light needful for apprehension of God and ‘became’ darkened. So always. The eye which refused to see lost to some extent the power of sight.

The ‘heart’ is the inmost center of man. Hence the metaphors in Matthew 12:40; 2 Samuel 18:14; Jonah 2:3; Exodus 15:8. It is the seat of the understanding, and the source of the thoughts, desires, emotions, words, and actions; the motive power of human life, the helm of the human ship, from which the man looks out on the world around and shapes his course. Whatever is in the heart rules the conduct. Cp. Romans 1:24; 10:1, 9; Matthew 13:15; Ephesians 1:18; Matthew 15:18f; 1 Corinthians 2:9; 4:5; Hebrews 4:12. The modern distinction of head and heart is not found in the Bible. The heart, never the head, is the seat of the intelligence.

‘Their heart’, not ‘hearts’: so Romans 6:12; 1 Corinthians 6:19f; according to Greek usage. Each has one heart, and each one’s heart is looked at singly.

**Ver.** 22-23. Proof that their heart was without understanding, and darkened.

Professing to be wise: a ludicrous contrast to their folly and their worship of animals instead of God.

Glory: admiration evoked by grandeur real or apparent, and expressing itself in words or actions. In this subjective sense, it is used in Romans 4:20; 11:36; 15:7; 16:27: cp. John 5:41, 44; John 12:43. In classical Greek, the word denotes an opinion, the impression an object makes on the mind of a beholder. But in the Greek Bible it denotes frequently the objective quality which evokes admiration, i.e. manifested grandeur.

‘The glory’ of God denotes here and Romans 6:4; 9:23; Titus 2:13; Revelation 18:1; 21:11, 23 the manifested grandeur of God, so calculated to evoke His creatures’ admiration. In Romans 15:7; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 1:11, the same phrase denotes admiration for God evoked by His manifested grandeur. Cp. “glory of the Lord” in Luke 2:9; 2 Corinthians 3:18. Men glorify God when they receive Him as an object of their admiration, and when, by words or acts, they make Him known to others to be the object of their admiration. See also under Romans 3:23; 5:2.

To such depth of folly fell the men to whom Paul refers that they put aside the splendor of God, incapable of decay, and put in place of it an image of men and animals doomed to decay. The contrast between incorruptible (see under Romans 2:7) and corruptible puts their folly in clearest light.

Image: a concrete imitation.

Likeness: the generic quality in which one image is ‘like’ another: cp. Romans 5:14; 6:5; 8:3; Philippians 2:7. With this abstract quality of ‘an image’ of ‘a’ perishing man is contrasted the outshining grandeur of the immortal God.

And of birds and quadrupeds and creeping things: further marks of their folly. The objects of their worship pass before us in slow procession, and increase our wonder at the folly of those who turn from God to worship imitations of these brute creatures. We see the principle of veneration so deeply seated in them that they must worship something: and so foolish are they that these images are fairer in their eyes than the Creator of the universe.

The facts of idolatry here asserted lie before us in the writings and relics of antiquity. Statues of men were worshipped by the Greeks: and the

mummies of birds and reptiles, from the temples of Egypt, fill our museums. And, when Paul wrote, scarcely a serious voice had been raised in heathendom against this folly.

The clearness of the reasoning of the Greeks about other matters makes more conspicuous their failure in this all-important matter. That they saw not their folly, reveals their blindness.

Romans 1:21-23 prove that the heathen are without excuse for their idolatry: Romans 1:20 asserts that in order to leave them without excuse God manifested Himself to them in nature. In other words, the only possible result of this manifestation was its designed result. But this was not its ultimate aim. Nature, like the Law, (see Galatians 3:24,) was a guardian slave to lead men to Christ.

**Ver. 24.** Divinely-ordained result and punishment of their idolatry.

Gave-up: handed over into the power of another; as in Romans 4:25; 6:17; 8:32.

To uncleanness: same word in Romans 6:19; Ephesians 4:19: the enemy into whose hands God 'gave' them 'up'. It is further specified as a defilement characterised by having their bodies dishonored among themselves, i.e. one with another. Still further details in Romans 1:26, 27. Notice that sin is here represented as an enemy against whom the sinner is unable to protect himself: so Romans 7:23. Surrender to this awful foe is the divinely-inflicted penalty of turning from God to idols. This surrender took place in the desires (see under Romans 6:12) of their hearts. They longed for things around, often for bad things: and, full of desires they could not control, they were given up to shameful mutual pollution. In this surrender to their enemies the victims acquiesced: Ephesians 4:19.

Fortunately the surrender was not necessarily final. Many of Paul's readers had once been given up to similar sins: but in the land of bondage they had cried for deliverance, and their cry had been heard: so 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. We shall find that this verse is the center, and contains the kernel, of the whole section.

**Ver. 25.** Another indignant delineation, parallel to that in Romans 1:21-23, of the sin of idolatry so terribly punished.



The truth (see under Romans 2:18) of God: “His eternal power and divinity,” viewed as a reality correctly set forth in Nature.

The lie: outward form without any corresponding reality. Notice the awful contrast: the truth of God... the Lie. The heathen exchanged their divinely-given knowledge of the supreme reality for the unreality and error and deception of idolatry.

Revered: stronger than “glorified” in Romans 1:21. They made imitations of animals an object of their lowly adoration.

And served: as in Romans 1:9. It suggests the ritual of idolatry. It is evident that they worshipped the creature only, and Him that created not at all. But Paul uses the milder words rather than in order to make their folly the more evident by comparing the objects chosen and refused. To ‘bless’, is to speak good to, or of, a person; the meaning in each case being determined by the relation of the persons concerned. God blesses us by declaring the good He will do us: and His word conveys the good to us. We bless God by declaring how good He is: Luke 1:64; 2:28.

God is blessed: to endless ages an unceasing song will proclaim His goodness.

Amen: a Hebrew word denoting ‘certainly’, and adopted into N.T. Greek. It is translated ‘verily’ (A.V. and R.V.) in John 3:3, 5, 11, etc. At the end of a prayer, it expresses desire for an answer. Cp. Jeremiah 11:5; 28:6 where its meaning is explained, Numbers 5:22; Deuteronomy 27:15; also 2 Corinthians 1:20; Revelation 3:14.

Paul has been describing the folly of the heathen, and watching their worship and its degrading and perishing objects. Weary with the sight, he lifts his eyes to heaven. To the eye of faith appears the eternal throne, surrounded by a host of happy and intelligent worshippers. From afar, their hallelujahs fall upon his ear: and he knows that those songs will rise for ever, literally ‘to the ages’, the successive periods of the future. The glorious vision reveals to him the madness of the idolaters around. From Him whom angels worship, they turn to their own perishing imitations of perishing men and animals. Paul cannot repress a tribute of honor to the dishonored Creator. While he listens to the anthem, which he knows will

be eternal, he joins the chorus, and cries 'Amen'. Cp. Romans 9:5; 11:36; 16:27; Revelation 5:14.

Notice various phrases describing man's conception of God.

'That which is known of God' describes Him as apprehended by men.

'The invisible things of Him': because, though placed by God within reach of the piercing glance of man's mind, the nature of God is beyond the range of his eye.

'The glory of God': as calculated to evoke man's admiration, in contrast to the contemptible forms of heathen worship.

'The truth of God': a conception corresponding with reality, in contrast to the unreality of everything belonging to idolatry.

**Ver.** 26-27. Further exposition of the assertion in Romans 1:24. Notice the stately repetition:

because of this, God gave them up to passions of dishonor.

Females... males: terms applicable to animals. They were unworthy to be called women and men. The degradation of their 'females', among whom modesty lingers last, is put first, as the surest mark of national disgrace. That these pictures are true, the pages of ancient writers afford decisive and sad proof. The impurity of the Greeks was a great feature of their national life: and it seems to have been, in Paul's day, equalled at Rome.

And receiving, etc.: a comment on the foregoing, explaining 'God gave them up' and indicating the main argument of the section.

In themselves: in their own bodies dishonored by themselves.

The recompense: the self-inflicted shame which is, by God's just appointment, the necessary result of turning from God to idols. In other words, the personal degradation which inevitably accompanies idolatry is God's condemnation and punishment of it, and a revelation (Romans 1:18) of His anger against idolaters.

**Ver.** 28-32. Other immoral consequences of idolatry.

According as: God's conduct to them corresponding with theirs to Him.

They did not approve: they weighed the matter in their mind, and deliberately resolved not to make God an object of their thought. Notice, a third time, God gave them up. The repetition lays solemn emphasis on their punishment.

Disapproved mind: a mind tested and found worthless. They put to the test the question of giving God a place in their mind, and rejected it: and God gave them up to a mind weighed in the balances and found wanting.

To do the things not fitting: God's purpose in giving them up to a disapproved mind. He resolved that forgetfulness of Himself should be followed by sin, and thus made this sequence, as stated in Romans 1:27, inevitable. It became inevitable by the withdrawal of those divine influences which alone can save men from sin.

Filled with all unrighteousness: state of heart from which spring all kinds of sin.

Wickedness: that which injures others. Satan is "the wicked one:" 1 John 2:13.

Coveteousness: desire for more than our share.

An evil-disposition: that which prompts men to look at everything in a bad light, and to turn everything to a bad use.

Hateful-to-God: or 'hating God'. The former accords with Greek use, and gives a good sense. It is a comment on what goes before.

Wanton: those who do what they like, without considering whether they trample under foot the rights, the property, or the lives, of others: such was once Paul: 2 Timothy 1:13.

Men who, knowing, etc.: recalling Romans 1:21, and emphasising a chief thought of this section. The Greeks and Romans knew that the general principles of morality had a superhuman source; and that to sin against these was to resist a higher power. See under Romans 2:15.

Are pleased with, etc.: last and darkest count in this catalogue of sins. Many commit sin, carried away by selfishness or passion, who condemn it in others. To take pleasure in the sin of one's neighbor, shows a love of sin, not for some further gain, but for its own sake.

Abundant literature of the ancient world attests the truth of the above picture of those among whom Paul lived.

## REVIEW

The argument in Romans 1:16, 17 implies that all men are, apart from the Gospel, exposed to the anger of God. As a first step in proof of this, Paul asserts, in Romans 1:18, that God is angry with all sin because all sin is resistance to revealed truth. Of this assertion, the remainder of 4 is explanation and proof. To prove that God is angry with all sin, Paul adduces three facts:

1. That, by means of His works, the Gentiles know something about God;
2. That, instead of giving Him honor and thanks, they bowed down to images;
3. That they are guilty of shameful immorality.

From Fact 1, Paul infers that God made Himself known to the Gentiles in order to leave them without excuse for ungodliness and ingratitude. This inference, we will further examine. We learn from their writings that Plato, Cicero, and others knew something about God, and that in His works they read His name and nature. Therefore, by creating these works, God made Himself known to them. And, since whatever God does He does with design, we inferred under Romans 1:20 that God created the material universe in order through it to reveal Himself to men; and that He did so, not to satisfy curiosity, but with a further moral purpose. We ask now, For whom did God form this moral purpose? For the philosophers only? Did He write His name in letters which only they could understand? God reveals Himself, not to the wise and great, but to those of every degree of culture who sincerely seek Him: Matthew 11:25. If He revealed Himself to Plato, He must have done so to thousands of others in all positions of life. We therefore infer that God created the material universe in order that it might be a revelation of Himself to the whole human race, and that this revelation was within reach of all who honestly sought the truth; and that the nature of God thus revealed was in some measure known to all who did not shut their eyes to it. To this knowledge of God, Paul appeals in Acts 14:17; 17:24: see also Psalm 19:2; Wisdom 13:1-9. The last quotation and the work quoted are of great value as a record of Jewish thought before the appearance of Christ.

In Romans 1:20 Paul asserts that the moral purpose of God's revelation of Himself in Nature was to leave men without excuse for ungodliness; and, in Romans 3:19, that with the same purpose the Law was given to Israel. This purpose was to some extent attained. For in the best Gentile writings there breathes a consciousness of God.

That God revealed Himself in Nature in order to take away excuse for ungodliness and ingratitude, indicates that He will punish such forgetfulness of Himself; and is therefore a revelation of His 'anger' (Romans 1:18) 'against all ungodliness'.

Fact 2 is introduced, in Romans 1:21-23, as a description of the actual conduct which God made inexcusable by this revelation of Himself. In the ritual of heathenism, Paul shows the inexplicable folly of idolaters. He does not appeal to their folly as a proof of God's anger against them-for of this He has more convincing proof-but only as an aggravation of the sin of forgetting God. But so great is the folly of idolatry that we can account for it only as punitive blindness. So Paul explains, quoting O.T., the folly of Israel: Romans 11:8-10. It is therefore a mark of God's anger and of coming punishment.

Similarly, Fact 3, the deep shame of the heathen, can be accounted for only on the supposition that 'God' in His anger 'gave them up' to a hostile and immoral power. Thus in each of these facts, taken by itself, we have proof of God's anger against the persons referred to.

But this is not all. In the words 'God gave them up' Paul solemnly and repeatedly asserts that Fact 3 is a result of Fact 2 taken in connection with Fact 1; i.e. that the deep shame of the heathen is a divinely-ordained result of their idolatry. If this be so, the proof afforded by the facts taken singly is immensely increased by their connection: and the immorality of the heathen becomes an unquestionable and fearful proof of the anger of God against those who forget Him.

Of this solemn and repeated assertion, Paul gives no proof. To his readers, proof that idolatry fostered in chastity was needless. And I venture to suggest that he singled out this one sin as in a special sense a manifestation of divine anger because these unnatural crimes were almost universal, and yet were universally known to be wrong. Of each of these statements, we

have proof in the literature of his day. Indeed, occasional attempts to excuse current practices, betray a secret misgiving. Now, if the mass of the heathen in Paul's day were guilty of a sin from which nature recoils, this sin was, by its universality and its universal self-condemnation, a special mark of the anger of God. Its universality implies a wide-spread cause: and the cause is not far to seek. Put together these facts: a universal manifestation of God, designed to leave men without excuse for ungodliness; a universal turning from God to the inexplicable folly of idolatry; a universal sin which all condemn. Each of these is a mark of God's anger against sin. But they are inseparable: where we find one we find the others. Their inseparable connection cannot be accidental. We therefore infer, as Paul here asserts, that the universal rejection of the universal revelation, and the universal shame, are cause and effect. And, just as from the connection of cause and effect in the material world we infer the existence of an intelligent Creator, so from this moral cause and effect we now infer that God is the moral Governor of the universe and is determined to punish those who refuse Him homage.

If the above exposition be correct, the solemn and repeated words 'God gave them up' are Paul's own explanation of the statement in Romans 1:18, 'God's anger is revealed'. By making known His own greatness and power, and by giving up to folly and shame those who forget Him, God reveals plainly, to all who have eyes to see, His 'anger against ungodliness and unrighteousness'. Since this revelation comes from the Maker and Ruler of the world, it may be said to be 'from heaven'. After mentioning one sin which was so remarkable a proof of God's anger, Paul mentions others as a further result, and therefore a further proof, of the same.

The above argument disproves the teaching of the Epicureans, that anger is inconsistent with deity, and that the gods care not for man's conduct. See Acts 17:18 and 'Cicero On the Nature of the Gods' bk. i. 17. The opposite of this, Paul has proved; not so much by formal argument, as by pointing to a chain of moral sequences involving punishment already being inflicted on the ungodly.

Notice the intense reality of this section. There is no artificial order: but there is that higher order in which living thought finds its own correct expression. The writer turns again and again from the sin to the shame and

from the shame to the sin. Before his searching and continued gaze, the sin becomes more sinful and the shame more deeply shameful.

This epistle was probably written from Corinth: see Introd. iv. And nowhere did the shamelessness of idolatry parade itself more openly than at Corinth. The argument is therefore a mark of genuineness.

The chief **DOCTRINAL RESULTS** of this section are:

1. Paul's view of Natural Theology. With him, God's revelation of Himself in Nature holds a place in the moral training of the Gentiles analogous to that of the Law in the training of Israel. A remarkable coincidence in the only two recorded addresses of Paul to heathens, Acts 14:15; 17:24; each of which begins by appealing to the creation of the world. To the Jews, he begins by quoting the Old Testament. In each case, he appeals to an earlier revelation given to prepare a way for the Gospel; and thus seeks to call forth that consciousness of guilt without which the need of the Gospel is not felt. The revelation in Nature would probably bear its chief fruit in those Gentiles who heard the Gospel. While listening to it, they would condemn themselves, not for rejecting Christ, of whom they had never heard, but for disregarding a revelation which had been before their eyes from childhood. And, just as the Law retains its value even for those who have accepted the Gospel, so the worth of the revelation in Nature remains to those who behold the glory of God in the face of Christ. That God reveals Himself in Nature, raises Natural Science to a sacred study, and gives to it its noblest aim.

2. We learn that, by the just judgment of God, godlessness, folly, and shame go together. Happily these do not exist in the same forms, or to the same extent, with us as with these old heathens. But the principle remains. Are not they guilty of incredible folly who prefer to direct their highest thought and effort to the perishing objects around, rather than to those which will never pass away? And is not this folly chargeable to all who forget God? Again, just in proportion as the image of God fades from our view do we fall into thoughts, motives, and practices, which for very shame we must hide from our fellows. Human nature is the same. The principles here asserted attest themselves before our eyes and in our hearts. The inevitable connection of godlessness, folly, and sin proclaims



in words we cannot misunderstand that God is angry with those who forget Him. Even Socrates, in Xenophon's 'Memoirs' bk. iv. 4. 24, says that the fact that certain sins produce their own punishment proves that the law which forbids them is from God.

3. The real nature of sin. It is not a mere act, but an adverse power against which, unaided by God, man is powerless. It has allies in our own hearts. The deep shame of the heathen is with Paul fully accounted for by the fact that God gave them up to sin. Of this, all else is a necessary result: man's own moral strength to resist even gross sin is not reckoned for a moment. Hence Paul's indignation is called forth, not by their lust and wickedness, but by their dishonor to God. Of this, their lust is but the punishment. We shall therefore no longer look with Pharisaic wonder on cases of deep depravity. The enormities of crime are explained. We see in them the fearful nature and power of sin, and God's anger against forgetfulness of Himself. We shall be slow to condemn, quick to pity. In the depravity of others we shall see what ourselves would become if the strong hand of our God were withdrawn. And, in the presence of foes so tremendous, we shall not venture away from our ark of safety.

## SECTION 5

### GOD'S ANGER AGAINST SIN IS WITHOUT RESPECT OF PERSONS

#### CHAPTER 2:1-11

*For which cause thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest the other thou condemnest thyself: for thou that judgest dost practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God is, according to truth, upon them that practice such things. But reckonest thou this, O man, that judgest them that practice such things and dost them, that thou wilt escape the judgment of God? Or, the riches of His kindness and the forbearance and the longsuffering, dost thou despise, not knowing that the kindness of God is leading thee towards repentance? But according to thy hardness and a heart without repentance thou art treasuring for thyself anger in a day of anger and of revelation of God's righteous judgment, Who will give back to each one according to his works." To them who by way of perseverance in good work seek glory and honor and incorruptibility, He will give eternal life: but to them of mercenary spirit and disobedient to the truth but obedient to unrighteousness shall there be anger and fury, affliction and helplessness, upon every soul of man that works out evil, of Jew first and of Greek; but glory and honor and peace to everyone that works good, to Jew first and to Greek. For there is no respect of persons with God.*

In 4, Paul proved that God is angry with the heathen, by pointing to the cause of His anger, viz. the contempt shown in turning from Him to idols, and by pointing to a terrible result of it, viz. their shameful immorality. From this he now draws (5) an unexpected and universal inference, viz. that God is angry not only with the Gentiles but with all men. This universal inference he defends against supposed exceptions on the ground of God's kindness, by asserting in Romans 2:3-10 that God's judgment is

impartial. And he will show that neither (6) the gift of the Law nor (7) circumcision affords any ground for hope that God will deviate in the case of the Jews from this universal principle.

**Ver. 1.** For which cause, etc.: an unexpected result of 4, and another link in the chain of moral cause and effect.

Without excuse: recalling Romans 1:20. God manifested Himself in Nature to leave man without excuse for ungodliness: and now Paul asserts that, by giving up the heathen to shame and thus revealing His anger against ungodliness, He has left without excuse all who estimate moral conduct.

‘Judge’: to distinguish right and wrong, to pronounce sentence, but not necessarily an adverse sentence. We cannot avoid setting up ourselves as judges and pronouncing judgment, by our lips or in our hearts, on the actions of others. Consequently, the words

whoever thou art that judgest include all men. From this universal judging, we shall learn in Romans 2:15 that all men have a moral law. In 4, by referring to idolatry and to the revelation of God in Nature, Paul limited his remarks to the Gentiles. But now he infers, from God’s manifested anger against the Gentiles, that all men are without excuse, thus including the Jews: and, by excluding them in 4 and including them in 5, he compels us to think about them. From Romans 2:9, 10 we learn that the distinction of Jew and Gentile was in his mind. In 4, he gained the verdict of the Jews against the Gentiles; and he now declares that by this verdict both Jews and Gentiles are left without excuse.

For wherein, etc.: proof of the foregoing words. And this proof rests upon the words following:

for thou dost practice the same things. Paul looks every man in the face and charges him with committing the sins described above. This implies that apart from the Gospel all men are sinning. He does not say expressly that all men commit the unnatural sins described in Romans 1:26, 27: for these are followed by a long list of other sins. But he asserts plainly that all men do what they know that God forbids and may justly punish. We have however proof that the special sins just referred to, which were in Paul’s day so prevalent among the Gentiles, were also prevalent among those who called themselves the people of God. The best of the Jews

would be the least likely to absolve themselves from this charge of universal sinfulness: for their efforts to do right would teach them the deep corruption of their own hearts. The general moral debasement of the nation is depicted in dark colors on the pages of Josephus.

If Paul's accusation be true, it is also true that all who pass sentence on others, by doing so, pass an adverse sentence on themselves. A judge who takes his seat to try a man for forgery, and is himself a forger, by opening the trial condemns himself: for he admits that forgery is a crime, and therefore that he himself deserves punishment. In 4, Paul compelled the Jews to join in his sentence against the Gentiles. But the conduct which he compelled them to condemn as a mark of God's anger is, he now tells them, their own conduct. Therefore, every man who has the moral sense to concur in this condemnation leaves himself without excuse.

**Ver. 2.** The R.V. reads in the text, following the A.V., and 'we know'; putting in the margin, as read by "Many ancient authorities," for 'we know': a variation in one word. This latter reading would make Romans 2:2 confirm Romans 2:1, whereas the former would make it an additional assertion. The latter reading is given by Tischendorf; the former by the other editors, (see *Intro.* iii. 7,) who put the latter in their margin, thus expressing doubt. The external evidence seems to me slightly to favor the reading 'and we know'; and the internal evidence somewhat more so. But the practical difference is slight.

To their own self-condemnation, Paul now adds the sentence of a more tremendous judge.

The judgment of God: in this case evidently a sentence of condemnation.

We know, etc.: an appeal to their own conscience. Men may call in question the grounds of their belief that God will punish sin: but with a voice which they cannot contradict their own hearts tell them that He does so. In Xenophon's 'Anabasis' bk. ii. 5. 7, a Greek general reminds a Persian that to break oaths is to incur the anger of the gods, and that from their anger none can escape. Here we have one heathen appealing to another, to a stranger in race and religion, on the ground of a moral truth admitted by all.

According to truth: corresponding with the reality of the case, with man's actual conduct. All judges aim at this: God attains it.

Upon: as in Romans 1:18.

We now see the justice of the universal inference in Romans 2:1. God made His name known to the Gentiles, in order to take from them all excuse for ungodliness. They treated with contempt His revelation of Himself: and in proof of His anger He gave them up to gross sin. In a more definite manner God made Himself known to the Jews: and their own hearts tell them that they are guilty of the darkest ingratitude and the most shameful sin.

Therefore, if the gross sin of the Gentiles is a mark of God's anger against them for disregarding the revelation in Nature, and if God's judgment corresponds with man's real conduct, the gross sin of the Jews is a mark of God's anger against them for neglecting a more glorious revelation.

Possibly even 4 was designed chiefly for the Jews. It is a darker repetition of Nathan's parable. After securing their verdict against the character described, Paul turns round in a moment and says, Thou art the man.

Notice in Romans 2:2 a repetition, after complete proof, of the assertion in Romans 1:18.

**Ver. 3.** A pointed question bringing out in its worthlessness and absurdity a secret hope of escape cherished by some who are guilty of the sins which they condemn in others. While valid for all men, Paul's appeal refers probably to the Jews.

Dost thou reckon this? is this the result of thy reasoning? Paul singles out an objector and speaks to him as though he had the man standing before him. For to him every thought assumes living form and breathes and speaks.

Judgeth... and dost: solemn restatement of the man's inconsistency. He condemns himself by condemning others, and knows that his own self-condemnation is confirmed by God who judges every man according to his actual conduct: and yet he expects in some way to evade the sentence of God. The words 'according to truth' in Romans 2:2 and

the judgment of God in Romans 2:3 expose the folly of this expectation. From man's judgment escape is possible: but who shall escape the sentence of God?

**Ver. 4.** Another question, bringing out the secret ground of this fallacious hope. God is merciful; and has shown special

kindness to Israel by forbearance and longsuffering of long-continued sin. Therefore, though the man lives in sin, he expects to escape punishment. Paul declares that this hope is to despise 'His kindness' in ignorance of its purpose.

The riches of His 'kindness': His abundant gentleness towards men: cp. Romans 9:23. Paul frequently heaps word on word, because he feels how poor the best words are to express the great things of God. His 'forbearance' is shown in His holding back for a time His anger against sin: in the duration of His forbearance we see His 'longsuffering': and in the forbearance and longsuffering we see His abundant 'kindness'.

Repentance: a change of purpose, arising from change of circumstances or from dissatisfaction with a former purpose, and prompting a change of action. This original use of the word is seen in 1 Samuel 15:11, where God is said to repent, and in 1 Samuel 15:29, where we read that He cannot repent: cp. Jeremiah 4:28; 18:7-10. In a technical religious sense, viz. to denote a sinner's purpose to forsake sin and serve God, the word is found, without further specification, in Matthew 3:2, 8, 11; 4:17; Luke 24:47; Acts 17:30; 26:20. See also Acts 20:21.

Leading thee towards 'repentance': God is bringing to bear on this man influences tending towards a change of purpose and a resolve henceforth to do right. But evidently these divine influences are altogether without result. For in spite of them the man's 'heart' is 'without repentance': Romans 2:5. In English we should say, "seeks to lead thee to repentance." But the Greek idiom here used is equally correct and more graphic. For the hand of God is actually upon the man, drawing him towards something better. Paul asserts that God in His kindness exerts influences which, if yielded to, would change his life purpose.

'Towards': an aim or tendency: see under Romans 1:1. God delays punishment because His 'kindness' moves Him to use influence to lead the

man to a new purpose in life, viz. to serve God. But the sinner, not knowing this, supposes that God's kindness arises from indulgence towards sin. Now a ruler's indulgence towards sin is an evil; whereas God's kindness is infinitely good. This man misunderstands it to be a disposition which he would himself despise in any judge, and shows his contempt of it by refusing to be moved by it. He thus 'despises' the kindness of God. Yet upon this kindness, which he both misunderstands and resists, he leans for escape from 'the' just 'judgment of God'.

Notice that Paul singles out of the promiscuous mass of his opponents a man who is heaping up for himself future punishment, and tells him without hesitation that God is leading him towards repentance; and charges him with ignorance for not knowing this. From this we infer with certainty that upon all men God is bringing these influences to bear. For, if there were one exception, Paul could not use the language of this verse. Cp. 1 Timothy 2:4; John 12:32. Without these influences, repentance is impossible: John 6:44, 65.

**Ver. 5.** A plain statement of what the man is actually doing, the man who while continuing in sin cherishes a secret hope of escape.

Hardness: moral obstinacy which will not bend to divine influences: Romans 9:18; 11:7; Matthew 19:8; Acts 19:9; Hebrews 3:8.

A heart without-repentance: result and proof of his hardness.

According to his character and 'heart', he acts.

Treasuring: adding day by day to his sins, and therefore to the 'anger' of God, hidden now as in a treasure-house, but in safe keeping, till the day of anger and of revelation (or 'unveiling', see Romans 1:18) of God's righteous judgment. Notice here a definite 'day of judgment', as in Romans 2:16; Acts 17:31; this last an important coincidence. The increasing treasure of wrath, hidden now, will then be visible to all. Contrast Matthew 6:19. This implies gradation in punishment: Otherwise there could be no increase of it.

**Ver. 6.** An assertion supporting the foregoing. It commends itself to the moral sense of all men. And, as a word-for-word quotation of Psalm 62:12 (LXX.) and as giving the sense of innumerable statements in the O.T., it

would appeal to the Jew with divine authority. The Psalmist's enemies, while secretly plotting against him, professed to be his friends. He appeals to God, who, he declares, will recompense each according to his works. The passage refers evidently to Jewish enemies, and therefore implies that God will treat even Jews according to their deeds. The quotation does not expressly refer to the day of judgment. But the incompleteness of retribution on earth, taken in connection with the unfailing truth of these words, implies a recompense beyond the grave. These quoted words, if their truth be admitted, prove that the judgment of the great day will be just, that therefore all who live in sin are day by day increasing the punishment which in that day will fall upon them, and that the delay of punishment arises, not from God's indifference to sin, but from His desire that men may turn and live.

**Ver.** 7-10. Development of the great principle just asserted in O.T. language, in reference to its two sides of reward and punishment. In Romans 2:7 we have reward; in Romans 2:8, 9, punishment; and in Romans 2:10 reward again.

**Ver.** 7. Glory: see under Romans 1:23. It denotes here, as in Romans 5:2; 8:18, 21, the splendor with which God will cover His servants, and which will evoke the admiration of all.

Honor: a mark of the value we put upon an object: rendered 'price' in 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23. Same word in Romans 12:10; 13:7, 1 Corinthians 12:23, 24; 1 Timothy 5:17; 6:1. It denotes here a recognition by God of the faithfulness of His servants.

Incorruptibility: absence of injury or decay of any kind. Same word in 1 Corinthians 15:42, 50, 53, 54; 2 Timothy 1:10; Wisdom 2:23, 6:19, 20: a cognate word in Romans 1:23; 1 Corinthians 9:25; 15:52; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Peter 1:4, 23. Those who do right, God will cover (see Romans 2:10) with a splendor which will make them objects of universal admiration, will attest the value He puts upon them, and will abide undimmed for ever. For this reward, they now seek: it is the deliberate aim of their life, and the hope of it (see Romans 5:2) is to them a joy.

Perseverance, or 'endurance', literally 'continuance under': a brave holding up under burdens which would cast us down, a pressing forward in face of



foes who would drive us back. Same word in Romans 5:3, 4; 8:25; 12:12; 15:4, 5. It is one of the great words descriptive of the Christian life, representing it as a toil and conflict.

According to... good work: along a path of doing good, under difficulties and in face of enemies, they 'seek glory and honor'.

Eternal life: reward awaiting the class of persons here referred to. So Romans 5:21; 6:22, 23; Galatians 6:8; 1 Timothy 1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7; also Acts 13:46, 48 in a speech of Paul; Jude 21; Matthew 19:16, 29; 25:46; Mark 10:17, 30; Luke 10:25; 18:18, 30; and with conspicuous frequency John 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; John 12:25, 50; 17:2, 3; 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20. This use of the phrase by various N.T. writers leaves no room to doubt that it, or its Aramaic equivalent, was actually used by Christ. Same words in Daniel 12:2, LXX.; also Enoch chs. xxxvii. 4, xl. 9, lviii. 3: important parallels. These passages prove that Christ adopted an eschatological phrase prevalent among the Jews. His new and distinctive teaching was that eternal life will be the reward of all who put faith in Him.

'Life' beyond the grave is in the N.T. always a reward of well-doing, never the common lot of all men. This implies that it is a state of blessing; and this is confirmed, here and elsewhere, by the other terms used to describe this future life. The future state of the wicked is not 'life', but "death" and "destruction:" so Romans 5:12; 6:21; Galatians 6:8; Philippians 3:19.

'Eternal' or 'agelasting': duration continuing throughout some 'lifetime' or 'age' which the writer has in view. That the age in view here is absolutely endless, is implied by the word 'incorruptibility' here and in 1 Corinthians 9:25; 15:42-54; 2 Timothy 1:10; 1 Peter 1:4, by the purpose expressed in "may not perish" in John 3:16, etc.; and is made absolutely certain by the endless life and infinite love of our Father in heaven. See under Romans 16:25.

**Ver. 8-9.** Another class of conduct and retribution.

Those of a mercenary spirit: men actuated by low and selfish motives; a character always more or less assumed by sin, and in all forms and degrees essentially opposed to the Christian life.

Disobedient to the truth: equivalent to “hold down the truth with unrighteousness” in Romans 1:18. In Nature and in the Law of Moses, God manifested unseen realities. These were designed to rule the life and thought of men. But some men refuse to submit to this divine rule. Yet, as creatures, they are compelled to obey a power stronger than themselves; their only choice being a choice of masters. Refusing to obey the truth, i.e. to live in harmony with reality, they actually

obey unrighteousness: this last word is used here as in Romans 1:18, which this verse recalls. Cp. Romans 6:16.

Now follows the retribution awaiting the persons just described.

Anger: as in Romans 1:18, God’s determination to punish.

Fury: a passionate outbursting of ‘anger’. Both are forbidden in Ephesians 4:31; Colossians 3:8: but anger is permitted in Ephesians 4:26. Human passions are here attributed to God, because only thus can God’s indignation against sin and the tremendous punishment awaiting sinners be set forth. Same word in Revelation 14:10, 19; 15:1, 7, 16:1, and both words together in Revelation 16:19; 19:15. But not elsewhere in N.T. is ‘fury’ attributed to God.

Affliction: any kind of hardship, e.g. poverty, sickness, persecution, or punishment.

Helplessness: literally, narrowness of space, affording no way of escape; translated twice ‘straitened’ (A.V. and R.V.) in 2 Corinthians 6:12. Romans 8:35 suggests, and 2 Corinthians 4:8 proves, that it is stronger than ‘affliction’. The four words are a chain of cause and effect. God is angry, determined to punish sin. His ‘anger’ bursts forth in divine ‘fury’: this falls upon man in the form of ‘affliction’; and puts him, with no way of escape, in a position of absolute ‘helplessness’. These last words imply conscious suffering: so Matthew 13:42, 50.

Upon every soul, etc.: further description of those upon whom will fall this awful punishment. It will strike the ‘soul’, the seat of life; and will fall ‘upon’ (as in Romans 2:2; Romans 1:18) ‘every soul’ of man that works out evil. These last words are a short summary of the conduct described in Romans 2:8.

Jew first and Greek: as in Romans 1:16. In the day of judgment, distinctions are recognised; but they avail not. We may conceive the Jew standing nearer to, and the Greek farther from, the throne; as in Paul's day they stood (see Ephesians 2:13, 17) nearer to and farther from the sound of the Gospel. To the 'Jew', the Gospel came 'first', and on him the retribution will first fall: but the 'Greek' will not escape.

**Ver. 10.** Restatement of the reward awaiting the righteous, in contrast to the fate of the lost, just described; and therefore parallel to Romans 2:7. The glory and honor for which they seek will be given to them; and peace, as in Romans 1:7. It is an exact opposite of 'affliction' and 'helplessness', the one resulting from the favor, the other from the anger, of God. The repetition of 'Jew first and Greek' shows how prominent in Paul's thought was this distinction. To assert, while recognising it, the impartial judgment of God, is the chief purpose of this chapter.

**Ver. 11.** A great principle underlying the O.T. declaration in Romans 2: 6, asserted here in order to confirm the statement in Romans 2:9, 10 that God will punish and reward both Jew and Greek.

Respect-of-persons: literally, 'face-reception': to look at a man's face and exterior, instead of at his heart and life; to take into consideration his gold ring or fine clothing, and treat him accordingly. Same word in Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; James 2:1: cp. James 2:9; Acts 10:34; also Luke 20:21; Galatians 2:6. The statement that God does not look at mere externals commends itself to the moral sense of every man. It is clearly implied in the O.T. declaration of Romans 2:6; and it implies that the sentence of the great day will not be determined by the accident of birth. Yet some such accident is the only ground of trust of the man addressed in Romans 2:3. The remainder of Romans 2, is an exposition of this great principle in its bearing on the distinction of Jew and Gentile.

## REVIEW

In Romans 2:1, 2, Paul reasserts, as valid for all men, the assertion in Romans 1:18. That it admits of no exception whatever, he proves in Romans 2:3-11 by words taken from the O.T., and by expounding the principles which underlie them. He also correctly infers from these words that all who continue in sin are daily increasing the punishment which awaits them; and that, if they expect to escape because of God's kindness, they thereby show their ignorance of the purpose of that kindness and their contempt for it.

In 5, Paul has taught us that, apart from the Gospel, all men not only have committed but are committing sin; that God is bringing to bear on all men influences tending towards repentance; and that the judgment of the great day will be, both in its broad distinction of reward and punishment, and in the measure of punishment, according to works. This implies that the glad tidings of salvation announced in Romans 1:16 are not inconsistent with, and do not set aside, a final retribution according to works.

## SECTION 6

### **THE GIVING OF THE LAW IS NO PROOF THAT GOD WILL HAVE RESPECT OF PERSONS**

#### **CHAPTER 2:12-24**

*For so many as have sinned without law will also perish without law: and so many as have sinned in law will be judged by means of law. For not the hearers of law are righteous before God; but the doers of law will be justified (for whenever Gentiles, the men who have no law, do by nature the things of the Law, these not having law are to themselves a law; men who show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing joint-witness thereto, and their reasonings one with another when accusing or even excusing) in the day when God will judge the hidden things of men, according to my Gospel, through Christ Jesus.*

*Moreover, if thou bearest the name of Jew, and dost rest upon law, and dost exult in God, and knowest the will of God, and approvest the things that excel, being instructed out of the Law; and art persuaded that thyself art a guide of blind men, a light of those in darkness, an instructor of foolish ones, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and the truth in the Law- the man then that teachest another, dost thou not teach thyself? The man who as herald forbiddest to steal, dost thou steal? The man that biddest not to commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? The man that abhorrest the idols, dost thou rob temples? Thou who dost exult in law, through transgression of the Law thou dishonorest God. "For the name of God, because of you, is blasphemed among the Gentiles," according as it is written.*

This section introduces a new element, THE LAW; and confirms the great principle asserted in Romans 2:11 by proving that the gift of the Law to Israel only was no deviation from it. Paul asserts in Romans 2:12 that the

presence or absence of the Law will save no one: he proves this in Romans 2:13 by appealing to a principle which underlies all law; by showing in Romans 2:14, 15 that this principle applies even to the Gentiles; and by showing in Romans 2:17-24 that to deny its application to the Jews involves the greatest absurdity. In this way the hope struck down in 5 is traced to its source, viz. God's special kindness to Israel shown in the gift of the Law; and there mercilessly dispelled.

**Ver. 12.** Proof of Romans 2:11, even in view of the distinction of Jew and Gentile.

Law: a prescription of conduct by an authority claiming to determine what men are to do or not to do: see note under Romans 3:20.

Without-law: cognate word twice in 1 Corinthians 9:21: Gentiles, who in Romans 2:14 are twice said to "have no law." They sinned; but their sin had nothing to do with the historical and external 'law' given to Israel at Sinai. Yet they will perish or 'be destroyed': see note below: but their ruin will be 'without law', i.e. on principles independent of the Law of Moses, of which they never heard.

Sinned in law: cp. Romans 3:19: their sins were committed in a moral environment created by the Law given at Sinai. And this moral environment will be the standard or instrument by means of which they will be judged. The similar form of the two clauses portrays the similar treatment and fate of two classes of sinners. It thus confirms Romans 2:11.

**Ver. 13.** A great principle underlying all law and frequently asserted in the Law of Moses. It supports the foregoing words.

Hearers: in an age when books were scarce and when the Law was known chiefly through public reading of it. Cp. James 1:22; Acts 15:21.

Righteous before God: enjoying His approval as judge: see under Romans 1:17.

Will be justified: will receive a favorable sentence from the judge: see note under 9. That the future tense refers to the day of judgment, we shall learn in Romans 2:16: so Matthew 12:37, an important parallel and a meeting-point of two very different types of N.T. teaching. Not those who have listened to a law, but those who have done what it bids, will be

accepted by the judge. This is the very essence of all law: for law is a declaration of what men are to do. And it was proclaimed often in the Law of Moses and by the prophets. Cp. Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:10. Moreover, if this principle be admitted, if the rewards of law are given only to those who have obeyed it, and if its punishments are inflicted on those who have broken it, then, evidently, they who have sinned will be judged by means of the law in which they have sinned. Thus the Law itself proclaims the condemnation of those who continue in sin, and the folly of those who while living in sin hope to escape because of the special favor shown to Israel in the gift of the Law. Consequently, the gift of the Law to Israel is no presumption whatever that in their case God will deviate from His principle of judging all men without respect of persons.

**Ver. 14-15.** These verses confirm the universal principle asserted in Romans 2:13 by showing that it applies not only to Jews but to Gentiles. All

Gentiles belong to the definite category of the men who have no law. They have no external prescription of conduct like the Law of Sinai.

By-nature: by the outworking of forces born in us, as distinguished from results of education and later events, i.e. of influences which since our birth have molded our conduct and character: same word in Ephesians 2:3; Galatians 2:15; 4:8. 'By nature' the bee builds cells and lays up honey: and this proves that in the bee certain principles of architecture have been implanted by a higher power.

The things of the Law: actions bidden in the Law of Moses; so Romans 2:15, 'the work of the Law'. For instance, the Law says, "Honor thy father and thy mother." The Greeks, who never heard the Law, sometimes did this: so Xenophon, 'Memoirs' bk. iv. 4. 20, quoted in my 'Through Christ to God' p. 28. Their conduct, whenever they do 'the things of the Law', which cannot be a result of a law they never heard, must therefore spring from moral forces born in them. This obedience is only fragmentary, and therefore cannot justify: for the Law demands perfect obedience. So Galatians 3:10. But it is sufficient for Paul's argument.

Not having law: emphatic repetition of the point of the argument. The Gentiles have no law external to themselves; yet they sometimes do the

things bidden in the Law: they are therefore a law to themselves, i.e. there is within them, as part of themselves, something which is to them what the Books of Moses are to the Jews. This proof appears ‘whenever Gentiles do the things of the Law’.

**Ver. 15.** Further exposition and confirmation of the argument in Romans 2:14.

The work of the Law: the conduct prescribed in the Law of Moses, looked upon as a code of morals.

Hearts: as in Romans 1:21. Their occasional obedience proves that the God of Nature, who wrote His Law on the tables of stone given to Israel at Sinai, has engraved it on the walls of that inner chamber from which comes all human action. Many disobey this law written within. But, as Socrates argues in Xenophon’s ‘Memoirs’ referred to above, this does not disprove the authority of the law. Thus the Gentiles carry within them, written in their ‘hearts’, a standard of conduct which God has given to be the rule of their life.

Bearing-joint-witness: confirming what another witness has said: same word in Romans 8:16; 9:1.

Conscience, or ‘consciousness’: same word in Romans 9:1; 13:5; 2 Corinthians 1:12: the inborn faculty by which a man contemplates, and pronounces sentence upon, himself, his thoughts, emotions, purposes, words, and actions. It is the inward eye which reads the law written in the heart and compares with it the conduct of himself and others. Practically it is the law written within looked upon as a faculty of judgment: it is the inborn Moral Sense of man. This inward knowledge and inborn faculty of judgment, whose voice no one can contradict, confirms the evidence given by the occasional right action of the Gentiles, and proves that God has given to them a standard of right and wrong by which they will be judged.

And their reasonings, etc.: a second confirmation of the same. Every day the heathen ‘reasons’ in his mind whether something done by his neighbor is right or wrong. The result is that he ‘accuses’ his neighbor, or ‘excuses’ him from the accusations of others. These ‘reasonings’ imply a standard with which the conduct of men around is compared. And in all nations, as is proved by the literature of the ancient world, this standard is in its main



outlines the same: and in the main it corresponds with the moral teaching of the Law of Moses. Thus ‘the reasonings’ which find utterance in the blame or praise with which even the heathen speak one of another bear witness that God has given to them a law which is a part of themselves, and is to them what the book was to Israel.

Accusing: put first because in a world of sinners man’s verdict on his fellows is more frequently condemnatory than approving. But even their excusing of others implies a moral standard written within. Of this we have now three proofs, the occasional right conduct of the heathen, their inward estimate of their own actions, and their spoken estimate of the actions of men around them.

It is easy to feel the force of the above reasoning. The ancient writers of Greece and Rome prove clearly that the Gentiles among whom Paul moved sometimes did noble actions in harmony with the moral teaching of the Pentateuch; and that, speaking generally, the heart of the people, expressed in its approval and condemnation of men around, was in harmony with the same. This proves that, although they had no outward law, the Gentiles had an inner law which was a part of themselves, which guided their judgment, and was designed to guide their conduct. The force of this argument is not lessened by the fact that on some points this law was imperfect. The letters written within were partly defaced. But enough remained to prove their divine origin, and to be a standard by which the heathen will be judged.

This argument would not fall to the ground even if the Gentiles had been unconscious of the divine origin of this unwritten, yet deeply-written, law. For all admitted its existence, whether or not they knew whence it came. That it came from God, we infer from its agreement with the Law of Sinai: and that it came from God many ancient writers acknowledge. SOCRATES, in Xenophon’s ‘Memoirs’ bk. iv. 4. 19-21, referred to above, speaks of the unwritten laws held in every country, and quotes as samples honor to parents and the prohibition of incest. He says that since these laws are universally held and are evidently not a result of human legislation they must have been made by the gods. Still more explicit is CICERO in his ‘Laws’ bk. ii. 4: “This then, as it appears to me, has been the decision of the wisest philosophers, that law was neither a thing contrived by the

genius of man nor established by any decree of the people, but a certain eternal principle which governs the entire universe, wisely commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong. Therefore they called that primal and supreme law the mind of God enjoining or forbidding each separate thing in accordance with reason. On which account it is that this law, which the gods have bestowed on the human race, is so justly praised. For it is the reason and mind of a wise Being equally able to urge us to good and to deter us from evil.... For even he (Tarquin) had the light of reason deduced from the nature of things, which incites to good actions and dissuades from evil ones; and which does not begin for the first time to be a law when it is drawn up in writing, but from the first moment that it exists: and its existence is coeval with the divine mind. Therefore the true and supreme law, whose commands and prohibitions are equally authoritative, is the right reason of the Sovereign Jupiter.”

The above testimonies receive important confirmation from the supreme authority, recognised by many who reject the authority of the Bible, of the inborn moral sense. This last is by no means infallible; but until better instructed it is the law we are bound to obey. A man may make mistake in obeying Conscience: he never does right to disobey it. The peremptory authority of the moral sense, dominating all other considerations, reveals its divine source.

From this law written within, all external law receives its authority; and by it must all external law be judged. To it appeals not only the moral law given to Israel but the supreme revelation given in Christ. And the homage paid by the moral sense of man to the character and teaching of Christ is the strongest testimony to His divine mission. It is a voice of God in man bearing witness to the Voice of God speaking to us from the lips of the Incarnate Son.

This inborn voice of God is doubtless the chief agent through which “God is leading” men “towards repentance.”

The voice of conscience is a clear monition of a universal and impartial judgment to come. For its absolute authority assures us that it is able to vindicate its commands by adequate retribution. Such retribution we do not see in the present life; and are therefore compelled to expect it beyond the grave.

Paul has now confirmed the universal principle stated in Romans 2:13 by showing how it will apply to Gentiles as well as Jews: and, by pointing to a law which all have broken, he has confirmed the statement in Romans 2:12. The difference created by the partial gift of the Mosaic Law is not so great as at first sight appears. To all men, in different ways, God has given the one law. That He gave it to the Jews in more emphatic form, does not afford the slightest presumption that He will deviate in their favor from the great principle which underlies all law.

**Ver. 16.** Not connected with Romans 2:15: for the accusations and excuses were those made in Paul's own day. We must therefore take Romans 2:14-15 as a parenthesis. Paul declared in Romans 2:13 that only "the doers of law will be justified." But, instead of saying at what bar and when, he stops to prove that even the Gentiles have a law, and therefore come under the application of this great principle; and then in Romans 2:16 takes up the thought thus broken off.

In the day when God will judge: recalling Romans 2:5, "in the day of anger and revelation of God's righteous judgment."

The hidden things of men: cp. 1 Corinthians 4:5, "till the Lord come, who also will bring to light 'the hidden things' of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts." God will publicly pass sentence on the secrets which the man himself, in the solitude of his own conscience, has already condemned.

My Gospel: so Romans 16:25: the good news of salvation as Paul understands and proclaims it. He reminds his readers that the Gospel he everywhere preaches implies that God will judge the secrets of men at the great day. The doctrine of retribution beyond the grave must ever accompany, as a safeguard, the announcement of present salvation.

Through Christ Jesus: see note under Romans 1:5, and compare John 5:27; 1 Corinthians 4:5.

**Ver. 17-24.** Another confirmation of Romans 2:13, in addition to that given in Romans 2:14, 15. After supporting the principle that the doers, not the hearers, of law will be justified, by showing how it applies to the Gentiles, Paul now further supports the same by a personal and pointed

appeal which brings out the absurdity of the position of the man who practically rejects it.

**Verses 17, 18.** Jew: a name of which he is proud: cp. Galatians 2:15; Revelation 3:9.

Rest upon law: he feels secure because he possesses a standard of right and wrong, an authoritative declaration that those who obey will be rewarded and those who disobey punished. Paul evidently speaks now to the man addressed in Romans 2:3, 4. But there the word 'Jew' was kept back because others might cherish the fallacious hope there expressed; and because this hope, in Jew or Greek, was dispelled by the one universal principle that God has no respect of persons. In Romans 2:17-24, Paul's reasoning applies to Jews only.

Exult: so Romans 3:27; 5:2, 11; 11:18; a rising or gladness of spirit which has always in view the object external or internal which has called it forth, and which is always ready to express itself in words. We 'exult' in God, when our hearts rise within us at the thought of His greatness, His power, His love to us. This man, while living in sin and therefore under condemnation of God, is lifted up by the thought that Jehovah is God of the Jews.

And knowest the will of God: another ground of confidence. It enables him to distinguish and

approve the things that excel: for he is day by day instructed out of the Law. This vain confidence in a mere knowledge of the Law finds utterance in John 7:49.

Notice the gradation in Romans 2:17, 18. The man addressed remembers that he is a Jew, and that to his nation the tables of stone were given. This gives him, even while living in sin, an assurance of safety. From the Law, his thoughts rise to its great Author. That the Maker of the world is the God of the Jews, fills him with exultation. Through the Law he has looked into the mind, and knows the will, of God: amid the mistaken judgments of others, he has an infallible standard by which he can determine and approve that which is really good.

**Ver.** 19-20. A second flight of steps in the self-exaltation of the Jew. Having attained the position described in Romans 2:18, he confidently aspires to something higher. While he can see all things clearly in the light of the Law, others are in darkness: and he is fully

persuaded that he is a guide of those who wish to walk in the path of morality but have not eyes to see the way. He can give to blind men not only guidance but sight: for he is a light of those in darkness. He will undertake the whole moral training of those who have not the wisdom which he has learnt from the Law: for he is an instructor of foolish ones. They are babes; and he offers to be their teacher: for in the Law, which he 'has', knowledge and the truth present themselves in definite form to the mind of man.

'Instructor': one who undertakes whatever belongs to moral training, thus differing from a mere 'teacher'.

'Form': the sum-total of that by which the inward nature of an object presents itself to our senses, and thus makes itself known to us, that by which we distinguish one object from another. Whatever we can see, feel, or hear is the form of a material object: whatever we can conceive is the form of a mental object. Same word in 2 Timothy 3:5: cognate word in Philippians 2:6, 7; Mark 16:12. The revealed will of God is 'knowledge' when grasped by the mind of man; and 'the knowledge', as that best worth knowing. It is 'truth', because it corresponds with reality: it is 'the truth', because it sets forth the one great reality. 'The knowledge and the truth' represent the contents of 'the Law' in their relation to the mind of man and to objective reality. This man claims to be a teacher, because by his acquaintance with the sacred books his mind grasps the most worthy object-matter of intellectual effort, and a correct delineation of the eternal realities. The same eternal reality, and the same true matter of human knowledge, has in a still higher degree assumed form, and presented itself to the mind, in the Gospel of Christ.

Observe the beauty and symmetry of Romans 2:17-20. They fall into two divisions, each ending with a participial clause explaining the clauses before it. In the former, we have a learner; in the latter, a would-be teacher. The second DIVISION takes a loftier flight; and is therefore introduced by a word expressing confidence.

**Ver. 21-24.** A personal appeal, exposing the ridiculous position of the man addressed.

**Verses 21-22.** The man that teachest another: a short summary of the sentence begun in Romans 2:17; completed now by the question dost thou not teach thyself? “If thou hast this knowledge and art a teacher of others, is it true that thou leavest thyself untaught?”

Preachest: proclaimest as a ‘herald’, a state officer of importance and honor. He made announcements in the name of the Government, in peace or war, to enemies, allies, or subjects: so Daniel 3:4. The Jews looked upon themselves as heralds of God. The man before us does that which, as herald, he forbids others to do. He acts as Nebuchadnezzar’s herald would have done had he refused himself to bow to the image of gold.

Abhorrest the idols. In order to separate Israel as completely as possible from idolatry, God commanded them (e.g. Deuteronomy 7:25f) to look upon everything belonging in any way to idols as utterly hateful and disgusting. They were not to bring into their houses anything pertaining to false gods; else the curse of the idol would rest upon them. This divine detestation of idols, the man before us shares. Yet he robs-temples: a recognised crime (Acts 19:37) in the days of Paul, and looked upon as specially atrocious. It was prompted by the treasures often deposited in temples. Josephus says that Moses specially forbade to ‘rob temples: Antiq’. bk. iv. 8. 10. Here is a man to whom an idol is an object of abhorrence, to whom the touch of everything belonging to it is pollution. Yet he violently breaks into the very sanctuary of a false God and with his own hands brings into his own house the gold and silver which, because consecrated to an idol, God has pronounced accursed. Paul cannot possibly refer to the plunder, direct or indirect, of the temple at Jerusalem. For this was not inconsistent with abhorrence of idols: whereas the previous questions, of which this is the climax, show that Paul has in his mind a case of gross inconsistency.

The prohibition of the three sins here mentioned is a pattern of the teaching which this man, like many Jews of that day, thrusts upon others but refuses himself to practice. All these sins belong to ‘the secret things of men’, in Romans 2:16 for the man who commits them may still have an outward appearance of morality. Notice a gradation of guilt. This man

takes the property of another, invades the sanctity of his home, and hides in his own house things specially accursed by God.

**Ver.** 23. Solemn assertion, following indignant questions, as Romans 2:5 follows Romans 2:3, 4. Paul tells the man the practical result of the conduct just described.

Exult in law: combining “rest in law and exult in God” in Romans 2:17. He exults in the thought that to his nation God has given an authoritative standard of right and wrong; yet he tramples that standard under foot, and by so doing leads us to think slightly of the God who gave it.

Transgression: as in Romans 4:15; 5:14.

**Ver.** 24. Proof of the foregoing. ‘Blaspheme’: to speak so as to injure, whether against God, as here, or against men, as in Romans 3:8; 14:16; Matthew 27:39: an English form of the Greek word here used. Even the heathen saw the absurd contradiction of this man’s words and works. Yet from his bold profession they suppose him to enjoy the favor of the God of the Jews: and they spoke with contempt of a deity who, as they thought, smiled on such a worshipper.

Because of his profession and conduct, the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles.

According as it is written: same words in Romans 1:17, followed by a quotation. Here they follow a quotation nearly word for word from Isaiah 3:5, LXX. In each case they call attention, as in Romans 3:4, 10; 4:17, etc., to a harmony of Paul’s teaching with the Old Testament. The words ‘because of you’ and ‘among the Gentiles’ are not in the Hebrew, and were doubtless not in the original prophecy: but they are clearly implied there. Through the captivity (Isaiah 52:2) of His people, the name of God was constantly reviled. His power seemed to have been broken. Men said that the gods of Babylon had triumphed over Him who divided the Red Sea. These words were evidently spoken ‘among the Gentiles’ and ‘because of’ what had happened to the Jews. Hence the added words correctly reproduce the prophet’s meaning: and Paul does not hesitate to quote the current translation, though in an unimportant detail it was not verbally correct. The prophet’s words teach the great principle that the character and honor of God are at stake in His people. Men judge Him by what they

see in them. If we admit this principle-as we are compelled to do both by the prophet's words and by daily observation-we cannot be surprised that the Gentiles speak with contempt of Him whose worshippers teach others morality and themselves live in sin.

Here as in Romans 1:17 Paul appeals to the Scriptures not so much for a proof as to point out a harmony; a harmony greater than at first sight appears. In each case, God surrendered to their enemies (cp. Romans 1:24) those who, while professing to be His servants, actually turned away from Him: and, in each case, the degradation brought dishonor to Him whose name the degraded ones bore.

Review of Romans 2:17-24. In the light of the day which will reveal all secrets, Paul turns suddenly round upon a man who calls himself a Jew. In that name he glories. He rests secure because he belongs to the nation to whom the Law was given. He remembers that his fathers were chosen by God to be His own peculiar people; and the thought fills him with exultation. By study of the Law he knows the will of God, and is thus able to form a correct judgment on moral conduct and to approve the right. His possession of the Law and his knowledge of its contents give him confidence. Others are blind: he will be their guide. Himself full of light, he will fill them with light, and will lead in the right path men who have no wisdom to find it for themselves, and teach those who compared with himself are babes. All this he can do because he has the Law, in which the eternal realities, the highest object of human knowledge, are presented in intelligible form. But Paul asks with astonishment, Is it true that you who teach others are yourself untaught? He explains the meaning of this question. You proclaim as herald of the king the law against theft: do you break as well as proclaim that law? You speak against adultery: is it true that in secret you are guilty of it? You profess abhorrence of idols: to you the touch of them and of all that belongs to them is defilement. Is it true that you, regardless alike of the true God and the false gods, enter the inmost chamber of idolatry and steal from the temple and hide in your own house the treasures sacred to the heathen and accursed by God? The man is silent: the absurdity of his position is evident to all. With solemn earnestness Paul paints a still darker picture, the direct result of this gross inconsistency. By trampling under foot the Law given to guide your own conduct, you bring contempt on Him who gave it. By choosing your



nation to be His people, God made you the guardians of His name and honor. That glorious and fearful Name, which to know and to honor is life eternal, you have moved the heathen to mention with derision. They have seen and ridiculed the contrast of the words and works of their own teachers: see Lucian, 'Works' lxix. 19. They see the same contrast in you. From your bold profession they suppose that you possess the favor of the God of Israel: and they treat with contempt a deity who, as they think, smiles on you. By your deep depravity, as your fathers by their far-off bondage, you have led the Gentiles to blaspheme.

Notice the double absurdity of the man's position. His own conduct proves the worthlessness to himself of the teaching in which he boasts. If it is good for anything, it is to make men honest and chaste and separate from idols. This man trusts for salvation to that which his own conduct proves to be, so far as he is concerned, worthless. Again, his possession of the Law brings actual dishonor to God: and this is its only practical result. Men around think less of God because this man lives among them, and calls himself a disciple of God. It were more for His glory, and therefore for the good of those who know this man, if he were a professed heathen. Now we know that God is specially jealous for His own honor. Yet this man expects to escape the impartial judgment of God because of his possession of the Law, of which the only result is dishonor to God. That he knows the Law, is his greatest condemnation.

The above argument strikes with equal force against all conduct, of Jews or Christians, which is inconsistent with profession, and which thus brings dishonor to God.

The great principle that God's judgment will be without respect of persons, stated at the end of 5 as the foundation of its argument, has now been defended from an objection based on the fact that God has Himself made a distinction between man and man by giving the Mosaic Law to Israel only; and has been confirmed by proof that it applies equally to the two great divisions into which the giving of the Law has divided mankind. We found in Romans 2:12 a sort of summary of the section; and in Romans 2:13 a great principle underlying the very idea of law, a reassertion of the principle asserted in Romans 2:11. In Romans 2:14, 15 we saw that the principle of Romans 2:13 can be applied to Gentiles. And

in the light of the great day (Romans 2:16) we saw in Romans 2:17-24 how absurd it is to deny its application to the Jews: for everyone who does so takes up the ridiculous position there described. Thus the hope which found expression in Romans 2:3, 4 has been traced to, and dried up at, its chief source.

**DESTRUCTION.** The words ‘perish, destroyed, lost’, represent, and collectively reproduce the sense of, one Greek word denoting utter ‘ruin’, i.e. the end of the normal and beneficial state of that which is ‘lost’, the utter failure of the maker’s or owner’s purpose regarding it. In this sense of ‘ruin’ material or moral, the word is very frequent in the Greek drama. It is contrasted in 1 Corinthians 1:18 with “saved,” and in Luke 15:4, 6, 8, 9, 32 with “found.” But it does not imply or suggest that the ruined object has ceased, or will ever cease, to exist; although it by no means excludes this idea. Certainly the lost coin in Luke 15:8, 9 still existed uninjured: for it was afterwards found. But, by separation from its owner, it became to her practically non-existent; her purposes about it were utterly frustrated. The broken wine-skins in Matthew 9:17 ‘perished’ when they were so damaged as to be useless. But, though torn, they still existed.

A very common use of the word is to denote natural death, looked upon as utter ruin of human life on earth. But this by no means implies their annihilation: for most of the Greeks looked upon the dead as still conscious; and Christ says in Luke 11:51 that “Zachariah ‘perished’ between the altar and the house,” just as we speak of good men as ‘lost’ at sea.

With these associations of thought, the word is used in Romans 2:12; 9:22; 14:15 and throughout the N.T. to describe the future punishment of sin. As so used, it denotes loss of the “eternal life” promised (e.g. Romans 2:7; 6:23) to the righteous, the normal and blessed state of the children of God and the realisation of their original destiny, a life beginning in embryo now and to be fully developed at the great day. The loss of this glorious life is the utter ruin of the lost ones, the complete failure of the purpose of their being, and the loss of whatever gives worth to existence. All this, and no more, the word implies. It does not imply or suggest whether the ruined object continues to exist as a ruin, or has ceased to exist. Nor does the word itself exclude the possibility that the lost may be afterwards found.

In Romans 2:12, the word ‘will-perish’ asserts that the punishment described in Romans 2:8, 9 involves utter ruin; as does the word “death” in Romans 6:16, 21, 23, and “the second death” in Revelation 2:11; 20:4. But these terms do not define exactly the ultimate fate of the lost.

The meaning of the word ‘destruction’ and its bearing on the Eternal Punishment of Sin are discussed fully in my volume on ‘The Last Things’.

## SECTION 7

### ***CIRCUMCISION WILL NOT SAVE FROM GOD'S IMPARTIAL JUDGMENT***

#### **CHAPTER 2:25-29**

*For circumcision profits, if thou practice law; but if thou be a transgressor of law, thy circumcision is become uncircumcision. If then the uncircumcision keep the decrees of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? And the uncircumcision from nature, accomplishing the Law, shall judge thee who with letter and circumcision art a transgressor of law. For not he that is so in that which is manifest as a Jew; nor is that which is manifest, in flesh, circumcision. But he that is so in secret is a Jew; and circumcision of the heart is in Spirit, not letter, whose praise is not from men, but from God.*

Circumcision, which meets us for the first time at the beginning of 7, is as conspicuous a feature of it as was the Law in 6. The mention of 'circumcision' uncovers another secret ground on which the objector of Romans 2:3, 4 builds a hope of exceptional kindness on the day of judgment. In 6 he hoped to escape then because God had specially favored his nation by the gift to them only of the Mosaic Law. But the Law, to which the impenitent man ran for refuge, gave him up to the impartial justice of a dishonored God. Only one ground of hope remains. He bears in his body the sign and seal of the Covenant of God: by the express command of God he was circumcised. But, just as in 6 Paul showed that the Law, so now he will show that Circumcision, will not save an impenitent sinner from God's impartial judgment.

**Ver. 25.** This verse confirms the condemnation implied in Romans 2:23, 24, by proving that circumcision will not save a man from it; and thus still further supports the truth of God's impartial judgment, the great matter of this chapter.

Circumcision profits: it is better to be a circumcised Jew than an uncircumcised heathen. But the abiding advantage is only for those Jews who practice what the Law bids. What the advantage is, Paul will, in Romans 3:1, inquire. The inquiry is needless here, because, whatever the benefits be, this man is shut out from them by the condition on which only they can be obtained. Circumcision was the sign of a covenant in which blessing was conditioned by obedience to the Law. Therefore, as a visible pledge that God will bestow the promised blessings, it was a benefit; but only for those who 'practice law'.

But if... transgressor of law: a complementary truth implied in this limitation, viz. that they who break this law are practically uncircumcised. Circumcision was originally a token of God's covenant with Abraham: Genesis 17:11. The blessings therein promised were a numerous posterity, a special relation to God as His people, the land of Canaan, and that from them should go forth a blessing to all mankind. As first given in Genesis 15:18, the covenant was not limited by any condition whatever. It assumed the form, not of a law, but of a promise; an absolute promise independent of man's conduct. See Romans 4:13. Afterwards, circumcision was added as a condition of a personal share in the promised blessings: Genesis 17:10-14. Later still God made another covenant at Sinai, which He confirmed and enlarged in the plains of Moab: Exodus 24:7; Deuteronomy 29:1. This covenant promised the favor of God and abundant temporal blessing on condition of obedience to the Law, and threatened His fearful displeasure in case of disobedience: Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 23. Circumcision was enjoined (Leviticus 12:3) in the Law, and was thus a condition of blessing. It was therefore to the Jews of Paul's day a visible pledge that from Abraham's seed should go forth a blessing for the whole world, and that God would fulfil the covenant which promised personal blessings to those who obey the Law. Consequently, circumcision and the Law always stood together: John 7:23; Acts 15:1. To undergo circumcision was to accept the Old Covenant as the basis of man's dealings with God: Acts 15:5; Galatians 5:3; 6:13. Consequently, to 'a transgressor of law'

circumcision was practically void: it had become uncircumcision. See further under Galatians 5:2.

**Ver. 26.** An inference from Romans 2:25, of the fairness of which Paul asks his readers to judge.

Uncircumcision: an abstract term used for a concrete embodiment of its idea, as in all languages and ages: so Romans 3:30. Paul dismisses for a moment all thought about the man except that he is uncircumcised.

Keep: view with jealous care, as when one guards a treasure: Galatians 6:13; 1 Timothy 5:21; 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:14. To disobey the decrees of the Law, is to cast them away as worthless.

Reckoned: in the calculation of the great Judge. In Romans 2:3, Paul questioned the man as to his own reckoning about himself: he now compels him to answer a question about God's reckoning. "Since the blessings of which circumcision is a pledge are given only on condition of obedience to the Law, will not the heathen who fulfils this condition obtain the blessings? will he not on the great day stand, in the Judge's reckoning, in the position of a circumcised man?" This question implies that outward ordinances are of value, not in themselves, but only as means to moral ends; and that the end is sometimes otherwise gained.

**Ver. 27.** A solemn affirmation, following, as in Romans 2:5, 23, an unanswered question.

Uncircumcision from nature: absence of circumcision, resulting from the circumstances in which the man was born. See under Romans 2:14.

Accomplishing the Law: attaining the 'end' for which it was given, realising in action what the Law sets forth in words. Compare the word 'keep' in Romans 2:26. Because the Gentile observes with jealous care the decrees of the Law, God will treat him in the judgment as circumcised: and because in him the purpose of the Law has been achieved, his presence in the judgment will pronounce sentence on thousands of Jews in whom that purpose has been utterly defeated.

Shall judge: proclaim punishment awaiting him.

Thee who, etc.: vivid description of the unfaithful Jew. He has the letter of the Law before his eyes: in his body he bears the sign of the covenant: but he is none the less a transgressor of law. By his side in the judgment stands a man like Cornelius, in whom the moral purposes of the Law have been to

some extent attained. In the impenitent Jew, these purposes have been altogether thwarted. The presence of the Gentile proclaims, in a way not to be misunderstood, the punishment awaiting the Jew. This verse does but re-echo the words of one Greater than Paul: Matthew 12:41, 42.

The indicative future ‘shall-judge’ and the cases put conditionally in Romans 2:26, 14 imply plainly the possibility of the case here supposed. Same teaching in Acts 10:35; and a good example in Romans 2:2, 22. From Romans 3:9, 23 we infer that this obedience, tried by the absolute standard of the moral law, was imperfect, and therefore (Romans 2:20) could not justify. But it was sufficient to condemn utterly the immoral Jew. Romans 2:26, 27 also imply that in the great day the persons in question will enter eternal life: for the only distinction then (see Romans 2:7, 8) will be life or destruction. We therefore infer that some heathens will be saved through their obedience, though imperfect, to the law written in their hearts. This does not contradict Romans 3:20. For their obedience, because imperfect, gives them no claim to salvation. Like those who put faith in Christ, they will be saved by the undeserved favor of God, who will reckon-not their faith: for they never heard the Gospel, but-their imperfect obedience-for righteousness. This opens a door of hope for many in Christian lands whose religious advantages have been so few that they have never heard the Gospel in its purity and power. And it warns us not hastily to pronounce on the destiny of some upright men who have not the assurance of salvation enjoyed by many of the servants of Christ.

**Ver.** 28-29. A great principle, stated negatively and positively, and supporting Romans 2:27.

Manifest: set conspicuously before the eyes of men, as in Romans 1:19. It includes the various external forms which distinguish Jews from Gentiles.

Jew... Circumcision: recalling the same words in Romans 2:17, 25.

In the flesh: the weak and dying part of man, to which circumcision belongs. Paul says that the real distinction of men is not in outward things, and that the true mark of that distinction is not in the weak body soon to be laid in the grave.

In secret: so Romans 2:16, “God will judge the secret things.”

Circumcision of the heart: commanded in Deuteronomy 10:16 and promised in Deuteronomy 30:6, as the distinguishing mark of the true servants of God. All who have not this mark are “uncircumcised:” cp. Jeremiah 9:25, 26; Acts 7:51. The infinite superiority of ‘circumcision of heart’, as compared with that in which many Jews trusted, Paul assumes; and goes on to say how it is brought about, viz. in Spirit. This last cannot be the human spirit, as in Romans 1:8: for then it would be an empty repetition of ‘heart’. Most frequently, it denotes with Paul the Holy ‘Spirit’: and this gives a good sense here.

Letter: outward form of the written Law. For the outward rite, only a written command was needed: the inward change can be wrought only by the Spirit of God. In 2 Corinthians 3:3, 6, written shortly before this epistle, we have an important coincidence of thought; and, especially in 2 Corinthians 3:3, “written not with ink but with the Spirit of God,” a confirmation of the above exposition. This passing mention of the Spirit is an allusion to teaching afterwards more fully developed.

Praise not from men but from God: further description of inward religion, rebuking the vainglory which prompted so much of the outward religion of the Jews. Only that which obtains ‘praise from God’ will avail in the great day.

**Verses** 28, 29 state, in language recalling frequent and explicit O.T. teaching, a great principle which commends itself to the moral sense of all, and which supports both the statement in Romans 2:25 and the inferences drawn from it in Romans 2:26, 27. If the real distinctions are within, uncircumcision will not necessarily deprive a man of the blessings of the covenant and circumcision will not save from condemnation one whose sins are the more inexcusable because committed in spite of a written law and by a circumcised man. To prove this, is the chief purpose of Romans 2, of which Romans 2:28, 29 sum up the result. God will judge men (Romans 2:6) according to their works: and a man’s works flow from his inmost self. He is (Romans 2:11) no respecter of persons: and to respect persons is to treat a man, not according to his inward reality, but according to his appearance and circumstances. Any other theory lands us (Romans 2:21-24) in manifest absurdity. Thus is dispelled all hope of escape from the impartial judgment of God, whether based upon superior knowledge



derived from the Law or upon outward and visible union with the people of God. Chapter 2 treats of one subject, which naturally divides itself into the three sections I have adopted. Paul began by deducing in Romans 2:1, 2 from Romans 1:18-32 a universal truth. That this truth admits of no exceptions, he proves in Romans 2:3-11; and shows in Romans 2:12-24 that a knowledge of the Law, and in Romans 2:25-29 that circumcision, give a man no right to make himself an exception.

The earnestness and reality of Paul's tone prove that the opinions he combats were actually held and widely spread. Of this we have confirmation in the summary given in Matthew. 3 of the teaching of John the Baptist. He saw men who while living in sin trusted for salvation to their relation to Abraham, and meets them with arguments similar to those of this chapter. The ancient literature of the Jews reveals the same errors, opposed indeed by the better teachers, but widely current. So 'Thorath Adam' f. 100, ch. 2, "All Israel shall have a portion in the age to come:" Shemoth Rabba' f. 138. 13, "Let not heretics and apostates and impious ones of Israel say, Because we are circumcised, we do not descend into hell. What does the Holy and Blessed God? He sends an angel and makes them uncircumcised, that they may descend into hell." We have further and melancholy confirmation of the same in the applicability of the reasoning of this chapter to many Christians, not only in the dark ages, but in our own day and in the most enlightened Churches. Many who do what they know to be wrong rely for salvation, perhaps unconsciously, on their knowledge of the way of salvation-of which knowledge the only result is a readiness to teach or to condemn others less instructed or less orthodox than themselves-or on their outward connection with the people of God or their attention to religious ordinances. By teaching that God looks at the heart and judges all men according to their works, Paul pronounces sentence on all such. This may be seen by reading Christian instead of Jew in this chapter. The substitution only increases the force of the argument. The difference between the words and works of some who bear the name of Christ brings serious dishonor to His name, the name of Him who died to save them, and hinders the work He died to accomplish. God who of old required circumcision of the heart requires today that men worship Him in spirit and truth. These deadly errors among ourselves give to this chapter an abiding and infinite worth.

It also teaches the absolute necessity of repentance. Since God is angry with all sin, none except they who turn from sin can enjoy His favor. Consequently none can intelligently seek His favor except those who sincerely endeavor to avoid all sin, and none can intelligently believe that they possess it except those who actually conquer sin. Not only does Paul thus prove man's need of repentance, but by proclaiming God's anger against all sin he does all that words can do to lead men to it.

This chapter is a safeguard against a common perversion of the fundamental doctrine of this epistle, Justification through Faith. And Paul sets up the safeguard before he develops the doctrine to be guarded. DIV. 1, of which Romans 2 is so important a part, was introduced in Romans 1:18 as logically necessary for the completeness of Paul's argument. We see now its moral and spiritual necessity. Through failure of some teachers to give prominence to the truths of this chapter, the doctrine of Justification through Faith has been frequently and seriously perverted.

The teaching of Romans 2: holds a place in relation to the rest of the epistle analogous to that of the Epistle of James in relation to the Epistles of Paul; of the 1st Gospel in relation to the rest of the N.T.; and especially of the teaching of John the Baptist in relation to the teaching of Christ. The resemblance is seen in modes of thought and even in phrases and words. It is therefore of great value as a means of harmonizing these very different, and at first sight apparently contradictory, portions of the New Testament.

Notice carefully in Romans 1:19, 20, 24; 3:12-15, 26, 27 Paul's account of the religious position of the Gentiles. God has manifested Himself to them in the created universe, and has written His law upon their hearts in the inborn moral sense. He has punished them for their forgetfulness and contempt of Him, as shown in their idolatry, by giving them up to gross sin: and in the great day He will judge them according to their obedience or disobedience to the law written within. In that day, some who never heard of Moses will be accepted because, in their careful efforts to do right, the moral purpose of the Law of Moses was in some measure attained.

The chapter from the study of which we now rise receives its entire practical value from the chapters which follow. It is a voice crying in a wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Like the greatest of the

prophets, it points to that which is greater than itself. We may sum up the whole and its bearing on Romans 1 in the words of the Master, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

## SECTION 8

### *YET THE JEWS HAVE REAL ADVANTAGES*

#### CHAPTER 3:1-9

*What then is the advantage of the Jew, or what the profit of circumcision? Much, in every way. First, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. For why? If some had no faith, shall their lack of faith make of no effect the faith of God? Be it not so. Let God be true, but every man a liar: according as it is written, "In order that Thou mayest be justified in Thy words, and mayest overcome when Thou comest into judgment."*

*But if our unrighteousness gives proof of God's righteousness, what shall we say? Is God, who inflicts His anger, unrighteous? (I say it as a man.) Be it not so. Else, how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God through my lie abounded for His glory, why am I also judged as a sinner? And why not, according as we are evil-spoken of, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do the evil things that the good things may come? Whose judgment is just.*

*What then? Are we shielding ourselves? Not at all. For we have before-accused both Jews and Greeks that all are under sin.*

This section has two broadly-marked divisions. Romans 3:1-4 answer an objection suggested by Romans 2:28, 29: and Romans 3:5-9 overturn a final objection to the teaching of Romans 2, an objection suggested by this answer.

**Ver. 1.** Question prompted by the assertion in Romans 2:25 that to those who keep the Law "circumcision profits," and the assertion in Romans 2:28, 29 that the distinctions which avail are not outward but inward. In what then does the Jew go beyond the Gentile, and what is the profit of circumcision?

**Ver. 2.** He gains much, from every point of view. Several proofs come to Paul's mind. As in Romans 1:8, he mentions the first of them. A more complete catalogue of advantages is given in Romans 9:4.

Entrusted-with: literally 'believed': same word in same sense in 1 Corinthians 9:17; Galatians 2:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 Timothy 1:11; Titus 1:3; Luke 16:11; John 2:24: see note under Romans 4:25.

The oracles of God: solemn utterances: so (LXX.) Psalm 107:11; 12:6; Numbers 24:4; etc.; and Hebrews 5:12; 1 Peter 4:11. Same word used by the Greeks for the answers, chiefly prophetic, given by their gods at Delphi or elsewhere to those who sought their counsel. But I have no proof that the phrase is ever used to denote the Old Testament as a whole. It is therefore best to understand by 'the oracles of God' the direct utterances of God to man preserved in the O.T. and forming its most important element. Such are Genesis 12:1-3, 7; 13:14; Ezekiel 2:1-8; 3:1, 3-11; and they are the Holy of Holies of the sanctuary of the Jewish Scriptures, Like the Greek 'oracles', they were chiefly prophetic. They were 'entrusted' to the Jews (cp. Acts 7:38) for the ultimate good of all men. And possession of them was, in Paul's day, the great advantage 'of the Jew'. While the Greeks were vainly discussing the nature of the gods, the Jews read in the sacred books about the Creator of the world, who became the God of Abraham. This was Paul's 'first' proof of 'the profit' of being a circumcised Jew rather than a heathen. Another significance of the rite is mentioned in Romans 4:11.

**Ver. 3.** Questions confirming the above proof of the advantage of being a Jew, by calling out and overturning an objection. This objection breaks off the list of advantages Paul was beginning to give.

Had-no-faith: in Christ and the Gospel. For this was all-important in Paul's day for determining a Jew's relation to God.

If some: how large a proportion of the nation 'had no faith' in Christ, the readers knew well. But the unbelievers were at most only a part of the nation.

Faith (or 'faithfulness') of God: not reliance upon God, as in Mark 11:22 (cp. Galatians 2:16, 20); but that stability and constancy of God on which His servants rely in sure confidence that He will fulfil His promises. For

the verse following proves that an attribute of God is in question. See note under Romans 4:25.

**Make-of-no-effect:** to make inoperative and without result: same word in Romans 3:31; 4:14; 6:6; 7:2, 6, and very often with Paul. If God do not fulfil His promises, His own faithfulness will go for nothing. The ancient oracles were designed to prepare a way for, and to lead men to, Christ and the Gospel. But the mass of the nation had rejected Him and disbelieved the good news. And it might be thought that God will refuse to fulfil promises, e.g. Jeremiah 31:31ff and Ezekiel 36:25ff, which to so many had failed of their purpose. If so, the oracles have lost their value, and possession of them is no longer an advantage to the Jew. But Paul's question reminds us that in the promises the faithfulness of God is pledged, and that to suppose that they will fail is to suppose that man's want of faith will make God unfaithful. Cp. 2 Timothy 2:13.

**Ver. 4.** An emphatic negative answer to the foregoing question, confirmed by a quotation from the Old Testament.

God is true in that His words always correspond with reality. See under Romans 1:18. If he were unfaithful, he would be untrue. For He foresees whatever He will do. When He spoke the promises, He foresaw Israel's unbelief and His own conduct in reference to it. Consequently, to give promises which He foresaw that He would not fulfil, would be deliberate falsehood. And this we cannot conceive. Rather let us say that 'God' is 'true', and therefore faithful, in His treatment of a race of which every man is guilty of falsehood. The objection is answered. Every believing Jew can claim fulfilment of the promises old and new, even though the mass of the nation has rejected Him in whom the promises were to be fulfilled. Therefore the unbelief of others does not destroy the benefit of being born in a land where the promises are known.

According as it is written: as in Romans 1:17. What Paul has just deduced from the character of God is in harmony with the ancient Scriptures. Paul quotes, word for word, LXX. Psalm 51:4.

**Justified:** looked upon, declared to be, and treated as, righteous: see note under Romans 3:26.

In Thy words: the matter in which God submits Himself to the judgment of men.

Mayest overcome: as when a man gains his suit in a court of law.

Comest into judgment: by submitting his conduct and words to the judgment of men. The Psalmist confesses his own sin, "Against Thee only I have sinned, and that which is evil before Thee I have done; "

in order that, in condemning that sin, God's words may be seen to be just and He may receive at the bar of man's moral sense a verdict of approval. This implies the justice of God's condemnation of sinners even in Israel.

The exact rendering of the Hebrew is, "In order that Thou mayest be righteous when Thou speakest, be pure when thou judgest." But the common Greek rendering was sufficiently accurate for Paul's purpose. For the words 'righteous' and 'pure' denote evidently righteousness and purity in the eyes of men: and the whole passage implies that God seeks, even when pronouncing judgment, the approval of men. If so, He may be said to 'come into judgment' and to be 'justified'.

Paul has now guarded against serious perversion his teaching in Romans 2:28, 29. Some might infer from it that he looked upon the outward distinctions of the Jew as worthless, and denied the divine origin of the covenant which created them. To Jews, this would be a serious objection to his teaching, and a weapon with which they would oppose it: and on the other hand it might lead those who accepted it to underrate the earlier dispensation. Paul guards against this double danger by declaring the great advantage of the Jews, and by quoting as the chief of them their possession of the records of the historic revelations of God to Israel. And he proves that the worth of these records is not lessened by the unbelief of so many of those to whom for the world's good they were entrusted. For, in the promises, God's character is involved: and this cannot be set aside by man's unfaithfulness.

Notice here and throughout the epistle Paul's carefulness to defend at every point the divine origin of the Old Covenant.

The great lesson of Romans 3:3, 4 is that God's character is a pledge that, whatever man may do, He will fulfil His promises on the conditions

therein expressed. It is easy to apply this to ourselves. As we come to claim the promises of God, we remember that these promises have been by us again and again neglected and doubted and disbelieved; and that at this moment they are set at nought by the mass of mankind. Dare we expect that God will fulfil promises so frequently trampled under foot? Yes: He will fulfil them even to the letter. For our unbelief cannot make Him unfaithful. The inseparable connection of His character and His words is proof that every promise will be fulfilled. And, if so, the promises, however neglected, are of inestimable value to those who possess them. Under them lies, and in them we take hold of, the faithfulness of God.

A tradition embodied, both in the Hebrew text and in the LXX., in the superscription to Psalms 51 attributes it to David as an expression of his deep penitence after Nathan's rebuke (2 Samuel 12:7) of his sin with Bathsheba. And we notice that, in spite of this terrible sin, which was severely punished, God fulfilled His covenanted promise to David recorded in 2 Samuel 7:4-17. No better example could be found of the faithfulness of God in spite of the unfaithfulness of man.

**Ver. 5-9.** The quotation in Romans 3:4, which is illustrated by the story of David's deep sin, reminds us that the sin of man, so far from provoking unfaithfulness in God, sometimes brings out into clearer light His faithfulness and truth. But even this truth may be perverted into a last refuge for the man who lives in sin and yet hopes to escape from judgment. By the question in Romans 3:5, Paul discovers the refuge; and shows in Romans 3:6-9 how untenable it is.

**Ver. 5.** Two questions, in which the readers are supposed to join. They introduce, by way of inference from Romans 3:4, an objection.

Unrighteousness: including the unbelief of most of the Jews, the falsehood of all men, and David's sin.

God's righteousness: that God is righteous, as in Romans 3:25, 26. This meaning, different from that in Romans 3:21, 22; 1:17, is determined by the question,

Is God unrighteous? and by the word 'justified' in Romans 3:4. It is the agreement between God's treatment of men and the principles underlying the Law. Men behold and declare this agreement, and thus justify God. We



often observe that, as in the case of David, man's sin gives occasion for a manifestation of God's strict justice. Paul asks, What shall we infer from this? Shall we say, because our 'unrighteousness' gives-proof-of 'God's righteousness', that 'God' is 'unrighteous' when 'He' inflicts His anger, i.e. when he punishes men for their sin? These questions expose a covert attack on the teaching of Rom 2, viz. that to punish sin is unjust, because the punishment reveals the uprightness of God.

As a man: asking a foolish question.

**Ver. 6-8.** An absolute denial, supported by two other questions. The principle underlying the questions of Romans 3:5 would make it impossible for God to judge the world, and would justify an immoral maxim.

**Ver. 7.** Following Tischendorf, and Westcott's text, the R.V. reads but 'if', making Romans 3:7 an additional statement or a new argument. Lachmann and Tregelles read for 'if', making it expound or confirm the argument underlying Romans 3:6. This latter reading is given in the margins of Westcott and of the Revisers. The documentary evidence seems to me slightly to favor it. Moreover, the argument in Romans 3:6 needs exposition and support: and this it finds in Romans 3:7. This logical connection might easily be overlooked by a copyist; and the words 'but if' might be suggested by the same words in Romans 3:5. Consequently, the slight change from 'for' to 'but' is more easily accounted for than the converse change. For these reasons, I prefer the reading in the Revisers' margin, and take Romans 3:7 as expounding the argument underlying Romans 3:6.

My lie... I also: Paul appeals to his own case.

The truth of God: as in Romans 3:4.

Abound: work itself out into abundant results: so Romans 5:15; 15:13.

For His glory: so 2 Corinthians 4:15: direction and tendency of this abundant manifestation of God's truthfulness, viz. to evoke man's admiration of the moral grandeur of God. Paul declared in Romans 3:4 that God is truthful in His treatment and judgment of a race of liars. Therefore every lie, by bringing upon itself the foretold punishment, will give

additional proof of God's veracity and thus more abundantly reveal His moral greatness. And if so, every man in 'the world' may claim immunity from punishment. Every Jew and Gentile may come before the judgment-seat and say,

Why am 'I also' judged as a sinner? Even Paul himself, if all that his enemies said about him were true, could say this. Admit once this principle, and 'God' cannot 'judge the world'. Notice how the language and tone of this verse differ from the coldness of Western thought and speech. Paul meets a man who claims immunity from punishment because his sin brings glory to God; and at once puts himself by the man's side and says that he also and everyone else may claim the same immunity.

**Ver. 8.** Another disproof of the principle underlying the question in Romans 3:5.

Evil-spoken-of: blasphemed, as in Romans 2:24.

We: probably Paul and other Christian teachers. Some spoke evil of Paul and his companions by saying that they taught men to

do bad things in order that good results might follow. Without discussing the truth of this charge, Paul makes use of a correct principle underlying it. The actions which it is unjust to punish it must be just to perform. If the end justifies the means, a man cannot be blamed who deliberately does wrong in order to bring about a good result. But this is what Paul's enemies bring as a charge against him. By so doing, they admit that the principle involved is wrong: and if so, the question in Romans 3:5b must be answered, as Paul has answered it, in the negative.

Whose judgment: the sentence pronounced by God on those who assert the principle attributed to Paul, a principle which he agrees with his opponents in condemning.

**Ver. 9.** What then? how do matters stand? so Romans 6:15; 11:7.

Are-we-shielding-ourselves? literally 'holding before ourselves', i.e. as an excuse. This plain grammatical meaning (R.V. marg.) of the word here used gives good sense, and is therefore better than the unintelligible R.V. text, are we in worse case than they? We have seen that the principle called in question in Romans 3:5, viz. that it is unjust of God to punish sins which

give proof of His justice, involves two serious moral consequences, viz. that not even a liar could be condemned as a sinner, and that it would be right to do wrong in order that good may come. We must therefore either accept these consequences or deny the principle which involves them. Paul asks, Which alternative do we take? Is it our object to prove that there are no moral distinctions and will be no judgment? Are we, by stating this alternative, 'holding before ourselves' a shield behind which we may escape punishment?

Not at all, or 'in every way not': absolute rejection of this side of the alternative. This rejection is proved by the foregoing argument in Romans 1:18-2:29:

for we have before-accused, etc. Both Jews and Greeks, all: the latter in 4, and the former in 5-7.

Under sin: so Romans 7:14: looked upon as a crushing weight 'under' which the sinner lies, or a power from whose grasp he cannot escape. Notice here an assertion, even more plain than Romans 2:1, that all men are sinners. This tremendous and universal charge is complete proof that the arguments in Romans 3:5-8 are not an excuse for sin.

Romans 3:5-9 reveal Paul's purpose in choosing for his proof-text Psalm 51:4. It suggests a truth which may be perverted into a last excuse for sin. David's sin showed forth the sinlessness of God, and thus served a moral purpose: and all sin will eventually do the same. But is it not unjust for God to punish the sin of which He makes use to manifest His own glory and to accomplish His own purposes? Such a question is proof of human folly. Paul meets it with an indignant negative. If this be unjust, to judge the world is unjust and therefore impossible. In this world of liars every man might say, My lie, by bringing on my head the threatened punishment, will show forth the truthfulness of God. If others escape because their sin glorifies God, why may not I also escape? Thus the whole world would find excuse. Again, since all sin will eventually reveal the absolute uprightness of God, a man might deliberately go into sin with this in view. It would be right to do wrong: because all wrong will show forth the righteousness of God. A man might justly do the very things which our enemies bring as a charge against us that we teach men to do. But our opponents, by making this a charge against us, condemn it. In their

condemnation, I agree. Hence either God is just when He punishes the sin of which He makes use to accomplish His own purposes, or the teaching with which we are falsely charged is right and the judgment day is a fiction. Which alternative do we accept? Are we weaving a cover for our sin? The arguments in Romans 1:18-2:29 prove that we are not. We have already charged all men with sin, and proved that all sinners are exposed to punishment. The question in Romans 3:5b is answered: a shield which would equally protect all sinners protects none.

Romans 3:1-9 supplements Romans 2. The man who, in Romans 2:2, claimed to escape the universal sentence has failed to make good his claim: he can hide himself neither (Romans 3:3-11) in the mercy of God, nor (Romans 3:12-24) in his possession of the Law, nor (Romans 3:25-29) in circumcision. Yet he cannot say that the accuser who has cast to the winds his excuses has thereby cast to the winds the reality of the advantages given by God to his fathers and to himself: for the privileges which he has failed to use are many and great. He cannot appeal to the glory which will accrue to God from his condemnation as a reason why the condemnation should not be carried out: for this appeal, if valid, would be valid for the whole world. The prisoner stands without reply before his accuser and before God.

## SECTION 9

### *THE JEWS ARE CONDEMNED BY THEIR OWN LAW*

#### CHAPTER 3:10-20

*According as it is written, “There is not a righteous man, not even one. There is not an understanding one: there is not a man who seeks out God. All have turned away: together they have become useless. There is none that does kindness: there is not even one.” “An opened grave, their throat is: with their tongues they were beguiling.” “Poison of asps is under their lips.” “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” “Quick are their feet to pour out blood... ruin and calamity are in their ways: and a way of peace they have not known.” “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

*But we know that so many things as the Law says, to those in the Law it speaks, in order that every mouth may be shut, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God. Because from works of law will no flesh be justified in His sight: for through law comes knowledge of sin.*

Paul will now prove that the accusation in Romans 3:9, which sums up the result of the argument of DIV. 1, is in harmony with the ancient Scriptures:

according as it is written: cp. Romans 3:4; Romans 1:17. This he does by grouping together, without mentioning the human authors, five passages from the Psalms and one from the Book of Isaiah. The first asserts universality of sin in the Psalmist's day: four others imply that the sin even of circumcised Jews is hateful to God and will receive punishment: and the last confirms the teaching of Romans 1:21 that outward sin arises from inward neglect of God. Paul quotes for the most part word for word from the LXX. The differences between the quotations and the original text do not affect the argument. Examination will show that in each case the ancient writer means all, and more than all, Paul's argument requires.

**Ver. 10-12.** From Psalm 14:1-3, repeated in Psalm 53:1-3. God looks down from heaven to see if there are any who show their intelligence by seeking to know and please Him. Here is the result. His eye cannot detect one righteous man. Not one acts wisely, or makes it the object of life to find out God. All have strayed from the right path: all have together failed to attain their Maker's purpose. Not even one does good. Evidently the Psalmist's words include Jews as well as Gentiles. Consequently Paul's charge in Romans 3:9 is but a repetition of an O.T. declaration about Jews and Gentiles of an earlier day.

**Ver. 13-17.** Descriptions of bad men.

An opened grave: so Jeremiah 5:16. So deadly were the arrows of the Chaldeans that the quiver from which they came seemed like a 'grave opened' to receive the dead whom the arrows slew. But more deadly than arrows are the words of the men described in Psalm 5:9. They encourage or provoke to acts of violence and bloodshed: the opening of their mouth involves the opening of a grave to receive those whose death will result from their words. Hence, in the vividness of Eastern imagination,

their throat is called a 'grave opened' to receive the slain. David himself, if not with his lips yet with his pen, dug a grave for Uriah: 2 Samuel 11:14. That the word 'throat' denotes here, as in Psalm 115:7, an organ of speech, is proved by the words 'tongues' and 'lips' following.

Beguiling: their tongues being used as instruments of guile. This made their words as dangerous and deadly as

poison of asps, which lies concealed under their lips: word for word from Psalm 140:3. The Psalmist cries for deliverance from bloody and deceitful men. He is afraid of their secret plots. The lips with which the plots are communicated to others, and thus matured, are as deadly to him as the poison of a serpent. He appeals to God against them, and calls for their destruction.

Whose mouth, etc.: from Psalm 10:7: a description of proud men who lay snares for the poor and innocent, and expect to escape, saying that God has forgotten their deeds and will not punish. The Psalmist appeals to God as one who beholds mischief and spite, and will requite it. This teaching of

the Psalms is confirmed by a quotation from Isaiah 59:7, 8. Here are men whose

feet are quick when their purpose is to shed blood. If you trace their steps, you find that they have left behind them ruin and calamity. War and violence are their only element:

and a way of peace they have not known. Yet these men were Israelites: for the prophet declares (Isaiah 59:2) that their sins have separated them from their God. Therefore, in his view, God is angry with the sins even of those who possess the Law and bear in their bodies the seal of the covenant.

**Ver. 18.** An explanation of the conduct described in the foregoing quotations: from Psalm 36:1. As the writer ponders the transgression of the wicked, he learns its cause, absence of

fear of God. He is not before their eyes as an object inspiring 'fear': hence their wickedness.

The real force of the above quotations lies not so much in the words quoted as in the entire context, and in the fact that such quotations might be indefinitely multiplied. They are a fair sample of the entire O.T., and prove its complete agreement with the teaching of Romans 2. For the bad men here described were undoubtedly Jews.

On what principle, and with what precise object, did Paul select these quotations? We cannot conceive that he gives here a universal, or even a comparatively fair, description of the nation. He has rather gathered together into one awful picture the very darkest lines of the many delineations of character contained in the Jewish Scriptures. The men before us are of the worst kind. The opening of their mouths is the opening of a grave: they are deadly as vipers: their language is a curse: the prospect of murder hurries them on with rapid steps: where they have been, destruction and calamity are: and how to walk so as to be at peace, they know not. The delineations form one picture: Romans 3:13, 14 describe their words; Romans 3:15-17, their actions; and Romans 3:18 gives the cause of the whole. Paul has, in my view, put together this mosaic of sin in order to prove that the O.T. teaches that Jewish privileges do not in themselves save even from the lowest depths of sin. He does not say that

the objector in Romans 2 is as bad as these men. But whatever he pleads for himself these men might have pleaded. These bad men, whose names are forgotten but in whose character is plainly written the condemnation of God, arise from oblivion to declare that outward privileges, even though they come from God, and outward connection with the people of God, do not necessarily save.

**Ver. 19.** A principle which both readers and opponents know, and which gives divine authority to the foregoing quotations. That quotations from the Psalms and the Book of Isaiah are spoken of as a voice of the Law, implies that these books are an authoritative declaration of God's will concerning man's conduct and of the principles on which He governs, and will judge, the world; and prove that in Paul's view even man's cry to God for deliverance, e.g. Psalms 140, was also in some real sense God's voice to man.

To those in the Law: those to whom the sacred books were given, and to whom they were therefore the moral element of life and action. Cp. 1 Corinthians 9:21: "in law of Christ."

It speaks: consequently the foregoing quotations are God's voice to Paul's readers.

In order that, etc.: purpose for which the words quoted from the Psalms and the Book of Isaiah were written.

Every mouth shut: without excuse for sin. It recalls the excuses in Romans 2.

All the world: Jews and Gentiles, without exception.

Under judgment: exposed to punishment, because without excuse for their sin. Paul here asserts that God gave the Law, which finds in the O.T. permanent literary embodiment, in order that every man may stand before Him silent and condemned, i.e. in conscious and helpless exposure to punishment. Notice that this purpose of the Law of Moses, of which the teaching of the prophets was a divinely-inspired exposition, is identical with the purpose of God's manifestation of Himself in Nature, as stated in Romans 1:20: "that they may be without excuse." We need not infer that this was the only purpose of these revelations: see Psalm 119:105.



This purpose was far from the thought of the writers of the Psalms. It therefore implies that these last had an Author and purpose greater than the human authors and their immediate purpose. It therefore confirms the proof, afforded by the use of the term ‘the Law’ to describe the quoted Psalms, that in them spoke One greater than man.

**Ver. 20.** Because, etc.: a universal principle stated in order to explain how the Law brings all men silent and guilty before God, and thus explaining why God used this means for this end. These words recall Psalm 143:2. The writer prays God not to enter into judgment with him, on the ground that in His sight no living person is or will be counted righteous. That no one will, implies that no one can be justified.

From works of law: actions in obedience to a written prescription, looked upon as a source or means of the judge’s approval.

Flesh: the material of which our bodies are composed: see note under Romans 8:11. Since it is the only form in which human nature presents itself to us, ‘all flesh’ includes all mankind. It represents humanity as limited by the conditions imposed by the material of the bodies in which we live and through which we act. We shall learn from Romans 6:12 that the sin which prevents our justification by works has its throne in the flesh.

This universal denial excludes justification by works both in this life and at the bar of God.

For through law, etc.: explanation and confirmation of the foregoing assertion. That these words are neither explained nor proved, reveals Paul’s confidence that they need neither explanation nor proof. They appeal to the experience of all. We find that all progress in knowledge of the Law reveals a law which we have broken. It is true that in Christ we find deliverance from the power and stain of sin: consequently, by revealing with increasing clearness our own sinfulness and thus driving us to Christ for salvation, the Law leads us day by day to closer conformity to the will of God. But this is wrought by the Gospel, and only indirectly by the Law; not by obedience to a command, but by belief of the Gospel. Now, if the Law reveals disobedience in all to whom it is given, it cannot justify. For justification through law can be obtained only by obedience.

Therefore, by imparting knowledge of sin, the Law reveals its own powerlessness to justify.

**Ver. 20** gives complete proof of the assertion in Romans 3:19 that consciousness of guilt is not only an actual result of the Law but the purpose and end for which it was given. God gave to men commands which He knew they would not obey; and threatened punishment in case of disobedience. What was His purpose in so doing? Not directly to produce obedience. For, if so, the Law was a failure: and God's foreknowledge makes it inconceivable that He would use means which He knew would not succeed. We are therefore, even apart from his apostolic authority, compelled to accept Paul's assertion that the actual result of the Law was also its designed result. God gave it in order to make us conscious of our lost state, and thus to prepare us for a revelation of righteousness through Christ. In ages to come, we shall look back upon the Law, not as a failure, but as a guardian-slave (Galatians 3:24) who led us to Christ, and as an essential link of the chain which raised us from sin to eternal obedience and blessedness.

Notice how much Romans 3:19, 20 increase the force of the foregoing quotations. In the quoted words the Law speaks, and declares how God will treat those to whom it is given: and God's purpose in giving the Law was precisely the purpose which, by the arguments of DIV. 1, Paul has sought to accomplish.

**THE LAW.** A law is a setting forth, by an authority claiming to determine and limit the action of men, of what they are to do and not to do. So Proverbs 3:1: "My son, forget not my law, but let thy heart keep my commands." The state claims this right over its citizens; and therefore its enactments are called 'laws'. And, since without penalties enactments are powerless, the laws of the state announce both what the citizens are to do and not to do and the punishment of disobedience. The laws of an absolute monarch are an announcement of the principles on which he will treat his subjects.

On the ultimate foundation of law in the inborn moral sense of man, see the important quotation on p. 79. {Romans 2:15}

To Israel God was the only King and Lawgiver and Judge. Consequently, in the Bible, unless otherwise stated, the word 'law' denotes always the Law of God.

In Genesis 26:5 God says, "Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My ordinances, and My laws." At Sinai God gave to Israel, through the agency of Moses, a body of definite prescriptions, to be henceforth their national law, and the basis of God's future dealings with the nation whom He had joined to Himself by solemn covenant. A rudimentary code of civil law is said to have been written by Moses at Sinai: Exodus 24:4. Statutes of sacrificial worship were added, each called 'a law': Leviticus 6:9, 14, 25. In the plains of Moab, shortly before his death, Moses restated the Law, wrote it, and publicly gave the book to Israel as the authoritative standard of the will of God, according to which the people were to live and according to which they will be rewarded or punished: Deuteronomy 31:9, 26. Henceforth we read of 'the Book of the Law': Joshua 1:8; 8:34; 2 Kings 22:8, 11; Nehemiah 8:1. The Book itself, as being the authoritative and only permanent embodiment of God's will, is called 'the Law': 1 Kings 2:3; 1 Chronicles 16:40; 2 Chronicles 23:18; 31:3; 35:26; Ezra 3:2. Hence the term 'the Law' became, and is still with the Jews, the common title of the Pentateuch: Romans 3:21; Luke 24:44; Acts 24:14.

The ordinances given in the wilderness are attributed to Moses in 1 Corinthians 9:9; Hebrews 9:19; 10:28; Luke 2:22; 24:44; John 1:17, 45; 7:19, 23; Acts 13:39; 15:5. A narrative in Genesis is quoted in Galatians 4:21 as 'the Law'. In Romans 3:10-18; John 10:34, quotations from the Psalms and one from the Book of Isaiah have the authority of 'the Law'; these books being thus placed on a level with the Pentateuch. Thus extended, 'the Law' denotes in the N.T., unless otherwise defined, the Jewish Scriptures looked upon as a rule of life given by God to man, and as a declaration of the principles of God's government of the world.

Looking now at the contents of these books, we notice that one spirit animates the whole. Its voice is, Do this and live. This is the essence of law: and this principle assumes authoritative form in the Old Covenant and in the Jewish Scriptures. The written word is the body, this principle is the spirit, of the Law. Hence the apparent variety in the use of the word.

Just as the word 'man' refers sometimes to bodily form, at other times to mental and moral character, so the term 'the Law' refers sometimes to the Pentateuch and the other Holy Scriptures, and at other times to the great principle which inspires these ancient writings, viz. that God will treat men according to their deeds. The special reference must in each case be determined by the context. But in all cases the underlying meaning is the same. It is unsafe to rely in a translation upon the presence or absence of the definite article. But in the original the anarthrous term 'law' refers, I believe, almost always to the general principle, Do this and live; and 'the Law' to the historical and literary form in which this principle took shape in the ears and eyes and thoughts of Israel.

We have already met the word 'law' in various connections of thought. We saw in Romans 2:12 that possession of the Law separated mankind into two great theological divisions; that (Romans 2:13) not those who hear, but those who obey, the words written therein will be justified; that (Romans 2:17, 20, 23) in possession of the Book some trusted for salvation, and thought themselves wise because instructed from its pages; and that (Romans 2:24) by transgressing the written word they brought dishonor to God. The contents of the Book were written in the hearts of the Gentiles, who thus became to themselves, in some measure, what the Book was to the Jews: Romans 2:14. By this means Gentiles sometimes accomplish, without having read them, the purpose for which the written commands were given to Israel: Romans 2:27. The great purpose of the Law, wrought out unconsciously by its human agents, was to leave all men without excuse for sin; and, because by nature none are able to obey it, to bring all men under conscious liability to punishment.

A threefold purpose is, in this epistle, attributed to the Law; viz. that (Romans 5:20) through it the one sin of Adam might multiply itself into the many sins of his children, that (Romans 3:19) all sinners and therefore all men may be without excuse for sin and may know that God will punish them, and that (Romans 7:13) they may become conscious of the indwelling and irresistible power of sin which prevents them from doing what they know to be right and even wish to perform. In other words, the Law was given to Israel and written in the hearts of all men, in order to bring about in all men actual personal sin, and consciousness of inward bondage and of coming punishment. These are the divinely-chosen and

mysterious steps to a glorious goal, viz. actual obedience to the will of God, begun imperfectly on earth and to be fully realized in the life to come. But beyond these first steps the Law cannot lead us. DIVISION I., embracing Romans 1:18-3:20, is a proof of the assertion in Romans 1:18. The proof and the defense of it against prevalent objection are now complete. By pointing to God's revelation of Himself in Nature, and to the immoral results of ungodliness, Paul proved in Romans 1:19-32 that God is angry with all ungodliness and sin. And if so, since all are sinners, God is angry with all men: Romans 2:1. In Romans 2:2, Paul repeats, after complete proof, the assertion in Romans 1:18. To expect exemption from this universal principle because of God's forbearance, is a mark of ignorance: Romans 2:3-11. No reason for such expectation is found either in (Romans 2:12-24) the Law or in (Romans 2:25-29) circumcision. Yet the possession of the Law is to the Jew an advantage which the unbelief of the mass of the nation does not set aside: Romans 3:1-4. Their unbelief will but demonstrate the righteousness of God; yet even this will not save them from punishment: Romans 3:5-8. In Romans 3:9, Paul triumphantly combines the assertion in Romans 1:18 and its universal application in Romans 2:1, 2. In Romans 3:10-20, he shows that what he has proved agrees with the teaching of the ancient Scriptures, DIV. 1 was introduced to show that the righteousness revealed in the Gospel by faith proves the Gospel to be a power of God to save all that believe. The proof is now complete. Paul has shown us a world perishing because of God's anger against sin: therefore, if the good news from God announces God's favor towards all that believe, it is indeed to them the mighty arm of God stretched out to save.

Notice the clearness and force of Paul's arguments. They rest in part on great principles which commend themselves to the moral sense of all, and which underlie the teaching of the entire Old Testament; and in part on social facts within the immediate observation of Paul's readers, and to some extent, even at this distance of time, within our own observation. If we admit the principles and facts, Paul's arguments compel us to admit his conclusions. Notice also that, just as in Romans 2:6, 13, 24, 29; 3:4 he shows that the principles from which his conclusions are drawn are in harmony with the Old Testament, so in Romans 3:10-18 he shows that his conclusions are in harmony with the same. So conclusive is his reasoning

that we have forgotten the apostolic authority of the reasoner. If Div. 1: were only a fragment from an unknown author, it would still carry complete conviction.

Observe carefully Paul's use of the Jewish Scriptures. He nowhere appeals to isolated or difficult texts. Each passage is a representative of many others teaching the same truth. Examination proves that each quotation fairly involves the principle it was adduced to support. We may well take this great teacher as a pattern of Old Testament exposition.

In DIV. 1, Paul has not carried us above the level of the Old Covenant. He has only gathered into one focus whatever the ancient Scriptures, looked upon as law, said and proved in former days. The name of Christ has occurred only once; and then not as the Savior, but as the Judge, of the world. DIV. 1 bears to the rest of the epistle the relation which the Old Covenant bears to the New. It is therefore a testimony to the permanent moral worth of the Old Testament.

We have heard the Law: it has pronounced our condemnation and made us conscious of our need of salvation. And, since God is angry with all sin, no salvation will supply our need except one which makes us free from the guilt, the power, and the stain of sin.

## DIVISION II

### JUSTIFICATION AND ITS RESULTS

#### CHAPTERS 3:21-5:

#### SECTION 10

#### JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH AND THROUGH CHRIST

#### CHAPTER 3:21-26

*But now, apart from law, a righteousness of God has been manifested, witness being born to it by the Law and the Prophets, a righteousness of God through belief of Jesus Christ, for all that believe. For there is no difference: for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation through faith, in His blood, for demonstration of His righteousness, because of the passing over of the beforecommitted sins in the forbearance of God, for the demonstration of His righteousness in the present season, in order that He may be Himself righteous and a justifier of him that has faith of Jesus.*

**Ver. 21.** But now, etc.: sudden and joyful transition from the condemnation of the Law to the light of the Gospel.

Apart from law: independent of, and in some sense contradicting, the great principle underlying the Jewish Scriptures, viz. that the favor of God is conditioned by obedience to His commands. It is practically the same as “apart from works of law” in Romans 3:28.

Righteousness of God: as in Romans 1:17.

Manifested: set conspicuously before the eyes of men, as in Romans 1:19. Compare and contrast Romans 1:17. The righteousness of God has-been-‘manifested’ (perfect tense) once for all by the appearance of Christ and by His announcement of salvation: day by day “it is revealed by faith” (present tense), i.e. brought into the consciousness of each one, as each one believes.

Witness-being-born-to-it: day by day, as the ancient Scriptures are read. This testimony was mentioned in Romans 1:2: and a specimen was given in Romans 1:17. Much more of it will be given in Romans 4, 9, 10.

The Law: the Pentateuch only.

The Prophets: the other chief DIVISION of the Jewish Scriptures: cp. Matthew 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40. A fuller description is given in Luke 24:44: “the Law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms.” The phrase here is not only a common DIVISION of the O.T. but describes two conspicuous elements which run through the whole: for very much of ‘the Law’ is expressly or symbolically prophetic, ‘and the Prophets’ announce or rather reiterate God’s will about man’s conduct. The word law refers to the principle of law, which is the great feature of the Pentateuch: the term ‘the Law’ refers to the book in which it assumes written form.

**Ver. 22a.** Additional information about the righteousness of God, viz. the channel through which, and the persons for whom, it comes.

Belief (or ‘faith’) of Jesus Christ: an assurance of which Christ is Himself the personal object, a sure confidence that the words of Christ are true and will come true because they are spoken by One who cannot deceive and who is able to perform His own promises. Same construction with the genitive in Romans 3:26; Galatians 2:16 twice, Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 3:12; Philippians 3:9; Mark 11:22.

For all that believe: persons for whom the gift of righteousness is proclaimed in the Gospel. The emphatic word ‘all’, like “everyone” in Romans 1:16, includes Jew and Gentile, whether previously moral or immoral. We can conceive the favor of God given through faith, yet only to a portion of those that believe. These words declare that faith is the only condition.



Some have supposed that, although salvation is proclaimed for all who believe, God has secretly resolved to bestow only upon a portion of the race selected by Himself those influences without which repentance and faith are impossible. If so, salvation is limited, not really by man's unbelief, but by God's eternal purpose. This view seems to me at variance with the teaching of this verse: and I hope to prove in a note under Romans 9:33 that it is utterly at variance with the teaching of Paul.

This verse states the personal object of our faith, but not its object-matter. It tells us whom, but not expressly what, we must believe. But there can be no belief without something believed, no mental rest in an idea without an idea in which to rest. See note under Romans 4:25. And evidently the object-matter of saving faith is the good news announced by Christ: so 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Mark 1:15. We obtain the favor of God by belief that through the death of Christ God bestows His favor as a gift upon us who believe, this belief being reliance with all the interests at stake on the word and faithfulness and power of God.

The conspicuous phrase 'righteousness of God' in Romans 3:21 and again in Romans 3:22 at once recalls the same phrase in Romans 1:17; and takes up and carries forward the thread of discourse which was broken off in Romans 1:18 in order to prove the need of the salvation announced in Romans 3:16, 17. This proof is given in Romans 1:18-3:20, which I have comprised in DIV. 1, an integral portion of the epistle, the dark background of that Gospel of salvation which is its chief matter. Under this deep shadow we went suddenly in Romans 1:18, and emerged from it as suddenly in Romans 3:21; and on emerging we found ourselves where we were before we entered it. This return to, and restatement of, teaching stated at the beginning of the doctrinal part of the epistle marks out this teaching as the foundation-stone of the Epistle to the Romans.

Paul has now taught us that it has been publicly announced that, without requiring previous obedience to the Law but in harmony with the teaching of Moses and the prophets, God bestows, as a gift, a state which He approves; and that this gift is obtained by believing the words of Christ and is designed for all that believe. In other words, he teaches that God accepts as righteous all who believe the glad tidings of salvation announced by Christ. This doctrine, in the equivalent form of justification through

faith, meets us again in Romans 3:24, 26, 28, 30; is illustrated from the O.T., in the form of “faith reckoned for righteousness,” throughout Romans 4; and is made in Romans 5:1-11 a ground of exultant hope of coming glory. The same doctrine is with equal clearness stated and defended in the Epistle to the Galatians. That his readers are justified, is taught in 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:7; and that by faith they are already in the way of salvation, which is the same doctrine in another form, is stated in other epistles bearing the name of Paul. By an important coincidence, the same doctrine in the same phrase is in Acts 13:39 attributed to Paul in a recorded address; as is similar teaching in Romans 16:31; 26:18. All this taken together is decisive documentary evidence that as matter of historic fact Paul taught, in language equivalent to that used in Romans 1:17; 3:21, 22, that God accepts as righteous, in spite of their past sins, all who believe the Gospel. This teaching, which we may conveniently speak of as **JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH**, is the **FIRST** and chief **FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE** of the Epistle to the Romans and of the theology of Paul.

We now ask, How came Paul to claim, without proof, his readers’ belief for this important and fundamental doctrine? An answer is suggested by the fact that although the phrase “justified through faith” is found only with Paul, the equivalent doctrine that all who believe the Gospel are in the way of salvation is found in other N.T. documents altogether different in thought and phrase from the epistles of Paul. In the Fourth Gospel Christ is said to have frequently taught that all who believe in Him will have and already have eternal life: e.g. Romans 3:15ff, 35f, 5:24; 6:29, 35, 40, 47. If so, they already possess by faith the favor of God. Similar teaching, in Mark 1:15; 16:16; Luke 8:12; 18:14. And in Matthew 8:10; 9:22, 29; 15:28; 17:20; 21:21 we have, attributed to Christ, teaching wonderfully in harmony with the same. So also James 2:1, 14-26; 5:15; 1 Peter 2:6, 7; 1 John 5:1-13. We notice also that the doctrine that God accepts as righteous all who believe in Him is unknown to writers earlier than Christ except somewhat vaguely as a prophecy of the future, e.g. in Habakkuk 2:4; Isaiah 28:16; but that since His day it has been taught by many calling themselves His disciples. All this is decisive documentary evidence that this doctrine was actually taught not only by Paul but by Christ. And that Paul learnt it from Christ, he asserts in Galatians 1:11. That it was

accepted by all Christians everywhere because they knew that it was taught by Christ, is a complete explanation, and the only conceivable explanation, of the confidence with which Paul assumes it without proof and makes it the foundation-stone of his theology. See further in Diss. vi. of my 'Galatians'.

**Ver.** 22b-23. A short recapitulation of DIV. 1, proving the universal need of salvation implied in the universal assertion 'all that believe'; just as DIV. 1, introduced in Romans 1:18, justifies similar words in Romans 1:16.

For there is no difference: summary of Rom 2. Same words in same connection in Romans 10:12. They are here supported by a reassertion of the teaching in Romans 2:1; 3:9, 19: for all have sinned. The Greek aorist includes all sins in all ages up to the moment of writing. It must therefore be translated by the English perfect. For our preterite pushes the event into the past, and thus gives to it a definiteness, as separated from the present, which the Greek "indefinite" tense has not.

Glory: admiration evoked by an object in the mind of a beholder, or that quality in the object which evokes admiration: see under Romans 1:21. In Romans 1:23; 6:4; 9:23

'the glory' of God denotes the manifested grandeur of God evoking His creatures admiration; and in Romans 3:7; 4:20; 11:36; 15:7 the admiration thus evoked. So "the glory of Jehovah" in Exodus 16:10; 24:16, 17, and frequently in the O.T.; cp. Luke 2:9. But this meaning does not give good sense here and in Romans 5:2. In Romans 2:7, 10, the word 'glory', i.e. a splendor evoking admiration, describes the reward of the righteous: so Romans 8:18, 21; 1 Corinthians 2:7; 15:43; Colossians 1:27; 3:4. They will share the splendor of Christ: Romans 8:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:14. This must be the meaning in Romans 5:2: "'hope of the glory of God;'" and it gives good sense here. For this future splendor, although concealed from view, is a present possession of the servants of Christ. Their afflictions are working out for them "an eternal weight of 'glory,'" and already they can say "we have a house eternal in the heavens:" 2 Corinthians 4:17; 5:1. Thus understood, 'the glory of God' here and in Romans 5:2 is the splendor which God gives, just as "righteousness of God" in Romans 3:21, 22; 1:17; 10:3 is a righteousness which God gives. In both cases, the divine

gift is related to a divine attribute; but must be carefully distinguished from it.

Fall-short-of: fall behind others, or fail to reach some goal set before them. Believers are already (Romans 8:17) sharers of Christ's heritage of glory: but of this heritage they who have not by faith obtained a righteousness of God are destitute. In this sense, through their sin, they 'fall short of the glory of God'. The middle voice scarcely implies that they are conscious of their failure: it implies only that it reacts in some way upon themselves.

**Ver.** 24-28. A participial clause, grammatically subordinate to Romans 3:23, followed by other subordinate clauses, but really introducing a new and all-important doctrine, viz. justification through the death of Christ. By introducing this great doctrine in this subordinate form, Paul intimates its logical connection with the doctrine of universal sin and failure. The prominence of this last doctrine throughout this epistle reveals its large place in the thought of Paul.

**Ver.** 24. Justified: a judge's decision in a man's favor, as in Romans 2:13. But in this last passage the word refers to the day of judgment; whereas here the present tense being- 'justified' refers to a judgment now going on. Same word in same present tense in Romans 3:26, 28; Romans 4:5. That it is introduced without further explanation, implies that its meaning is involved in what Paul has already said. If, as we learnt under Romans 3:21, 22, God accepts as righteous all who believe the Gospel, then is the Gospel a formal announcement of justification for all who believe it. They have no need to wait till the day of judgment to know their destiny: the judge has already pronounced their acquittal. In the Gospel, they read their own justification. It is (Romans 1:17) revealed by faith. Thus day by day men are 'being justified' as one and another put faith in Christ. Paul could not say "having been justified:" for this is not true of 'all' who 'have sinned'. Moreover, he does not speak of justification in the past tense till Romans 5:1. He refers to it now only generally as a process going on. Cp. 2 Corinthians 5:19: "reconciling the world to Himself."

Freely: as a gift: so Revelation 21:6; 22:17.

By His grace: source of the gift, in the undeserved favor of God, i.e. the love of God contemplating its objects with a purpose of blessing: see under Romans 1:5.

Redemption, or ‘ransoming-off’: a setting free on payment, or by payment, of a price, combining the ideas of liberation and price. Same word in Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:7, 14; 4:30; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:15; 11:35; simpler cognates in Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 24:21; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18; Luke 1:68; 2:38; Hebrews 9:12; Acts 7:35. These cognates are common in classic Greek for liberation of captives by payment of a ransom; and in the LXX. for the liberation by price or substitute of those, e.g. the firstborn, on whom the Mosaic Law had a claim. Cp. Exodus 13:13; Numbers 18:15; Leviticus 27:27-33; Numbers 3:46-51. Like most others denoting a combination of ideas, these words are sometimes used when only one of the ideas is present, viz. liberation: so Exodus 6:6; 15:13, etc. This last idea is evidently present here. For, “to justify the ungodly” (see Romans 4:5) involves liberation from the ruin which is the due penalty of sin: see Romans 4:5; 6:22, 23. Whether, and in what sense, this liberation involves payment of a price, we must learn from the further teaching of Paul.

Through the ‘redemption’, etc.: channel through which the justification goes forth from God; just as “faith” is the channel (Romans 3:22, 28, 30) through which it reaches the sinner.

In Christ Jesus: His personality being the element or environment in which the liberation takes place. This important phrase, peculiar to Paul, except that in a slightly different form it is very common in the Gospel and First Epistle of John, (see also 1 Peter 3:16; Jude 1,) meets us again in Romans 6:11; 23; 7:1, 39. It is a conspicuous and important feature of the teaching of Paul. See under Romans 6:11.

**Ver. 25.** Whom God set forth, etc.: further explanation of the redemption in Christ.

Propitiation: cognates in 1 John 2:2, 4:10; Hebrews 2:17; Luke 18:13; also (LXX.) Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 16:30, 32-34; Numbers 16:46, 47. These passages make the meaning of the word quite clear. Propitiation was a means of forgiveness. To propitiate, was to shelter the sinner from the

punishment due to his sin. In each case the propitiation was provided and commanded by God. The O.T. use of the word recalls the sacrificial ritual of the Law of Moses: and the words in His blood place the blood shed on the cross of Christ in relation to that which was so conspicuous in the Mosaic ritual. In Homer's 'Iliad' bk. i. 147, 386, 444, 472 and elsewhere in classic Greek, the word is used in the sense of deprecating the anger and regaining the favor of an offended deity, the name of the God being put in the accusative: similarly Genesis 32:20; Proverbs 16:14. But this construction and conception are not found, in reference to God, throughout the Bible. In the passage before us, as in 1 John 4:10, God Himself provides the propitiation.

In Hebrews 9:5; Exodus 25:17-22, the exact word used in Romans 3:25 denotes the mercy-seat, the place of propitiation. But to any comparison of Christ with the mercy-seat we have no reference throughout the New Testament. Moreover, the death of Christ is here mentioned as a demonstration, not of the mercy, but of the righteousness, of God. To call Him a mercy-seat, would add nothing to the meaning of this great statement of doctrine; whereas, to call Him a 'propitiation', connects His death with the ancient sacrifices; as in 1 Corinthians 5:7; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Peter 1:19; Hebrews 9:26. It is therefore better to take the word to mean a 'propitiatory' sacrifice, a means of atonement. In the ancient ritual, the blood of the sacrifice procured for the offerer forgiveness. God 'set-forth' Christ conspicuously before the eyes of men to be a sacrifice by which they might escape from the punishment due to their sins. The word 'propitiation' derives its force from the proof in DIV. 1 that all men are exposed to punishment.

Through faith: means by which the propitiation becomes effective for each one. As each one believes, he goes from under the anger of God. God 'set forth' Christ 'in His own blood:' presented Him to the eyes of men covered with His own blood. This indicates wherein lay the 'propitiatory' efficacy of this sacrifice. The above connection of thought is better than 'faith in His blood:' for the phrase 'faith in' (Ephesians 1:15; 1 Timothy 3:13; 2 Timothy 1:13; 3:15) is not common with Paul: and we nowhere else find such an idea as faith in the blood of Christ. But the practical difference is not great: for justifying faith takes account of the death of Christ as the means of our pardon.

Since the validity of the propitiation in Christ was ‘in His blood’, i.e. in His violent death, His blood and life were the ransom price of our justification: so Ephesians 1:7; Matthew 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Revelation 5:9. For in all human language every costly means used to obtain a result not otherwise possible is correctly called the price paid for it. Thus the word ‘propitiation’ sheds light on the foregoing word ‘redemption’.

For demonstration of, etc.: purpose for which God set forth Christ as a propitiation.

His righteousness: as in Romans 3:5: the divine attribute by which God impartially administers His own laws and will judge the world. This meaning, differing from that of the same phrase in Romans 3:21, 22, is required by the words ‘Himself righteous’ in Romans 3:26. Such administrative ‘righteousness’, we commonly call ‘justice:’ but in Greek the words are the same.

Because of the passing over, etc.: conduct of God in the past prompting Him now to give proof of His justice. ‘Passing over’: not forgiveness, but apparent tolerance of sin shown in delay to inflict punishment.

The before-committed sins: during the long ages of the past history of Israel.

In the forbearance of God: as in Romans 2:4: His holding back the due punishment of their sins: cp. Acts 17:30; 14:16. God gave proof (Romans 1:24-27) of His anger against sin by now and then inflicting punishment on the Gentiles and on Israel. But He did not inflict the full penalty: else the whole race would have perished. He did not forgive, but to a large extent He ‘passed over,’ the sins of men. Now, for a king to overlook crime, to forbear to punish, or even to delay punishment, is unjust. And God’s character was lowered in the eyes of some by His forbearance, which they misinterpreted to be an indication that they will escape punishment. God gave Christ to die ‘in order to demonstrate His justice’ in view of a tolerance of past sins which seemed to obscure it.

**Ver. 26.** For the demonstration of His righteousness: conspicuous and emphatic repetition of the same words in Romans 3:25.

In the present season: the days of Christ, who, as we read in Romans 5:6, “in due ‘season’ died for ungodly ones,” in contrast to God’s forbearance in earlier ages.

In order that He, etc.: further and final purpose of this demonstration of God’s justice, and of His gift of Christ to die. This purpose implies that, apart from the demonstration of God’s justice in the death of Christ, God could not be at the same time Himself just and a justifier of those who put ‘faith’ in ‘Jesus.’ For certainly He would not have given His Son to die in order to reach an end which might have been reached at less cost. In other words, Paul here asserts that God gave Christ to die in order to harmonize with His own attribute of justice the justification of believers announced in the Gospel.

Faith of Jesus: ‘belief of’ the words of ‘Jesus,’ as in Romans 3:22. ‘Him that has ‘faith:’ literally ‘him’ whose position and character are derived ‘from’ a ‘faith of’ which ‘Jesus’ is the personal Object: same phrase in Romans 3:30; Romans 1:17; 4:16; 9:30, 32; 10:6, etc. These words keep before us Doctrine I, asserted in Romans 3:22.

Romans 3:26 is Paul’s last and highest word about the death of Christ; and it is the fullest teaching in the New Testament, explaining all its other teaching on the same solemn subject. If the death of Christ was needful in order to demonstrate the justice of God in view of the justification of sinners announced in the Gospel and in view of His own past forbearance of sin, then Justice itself demanded this demonstration. For a ruler is bound not only to administer impartially his own laws but to make his impartiality manifest to all; because whatever obscures his justice defeats the ends of justice, and whatever manifests it aids those ends. Now, if God gave Christ to die in order to harmonize with His own justice the justification of believers, then was Christ’s death absolutely necessary for man’s salvation: for God could not possibly be unjust. Consequently, by the death of Christ was removed an absolute barrier to man’s salvation having its foundation in the eternal nature of God.

The above teaching explains the word ‘redemption’ in Romans 3:24: for if, as we have just seen, man’s salvation was impossible apart from some such demonstration of God’s justice as is found in Christ’s death, then was this last the price paid for our salvation. We need not ask, To whom



paid? For the phrase is one of the most common and expressive of human metaphors. There was no bargaining with Satan, or between the Persons of the Godhead, but there was an infinite price paid. The word 'propitiation' in Romans 3:25 is also explained: for through the death of Christ believers are saved from the penalty of their sins which otherwise would have fallen on their own heads, just as in Egypt the firstborn was saved from death by the death of the Paschal lamb.

In Romans 3: 24-26, Paul asserts, without proof, the **SECOND FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE** of this epistle, viz. that God gave Christ to die in order to harmonize with His own justice, and thus make possible, the justification of believers. The same doctrine He reasserts in Romans 4:25, and draws from it important inferences in Romans 5:6-10; 6:3-10; 7:4; 8:32-34; 14:9, 15: it is equally prominent in other epistles from his pen. The complete confidence with which he asserts and assumes it, without proof, leaves no room to doubt that this remarkable doctrine was actually taught and held by the apostle Paul and by the Christians among whom he moved.

That our life comes through Christ's death, is taught clearly in Hebrews 9:12-28; 10:1-19; 1 Peter 1:18; 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Revelation 1:5; 5:6-9; 7:14. Similar teaching is attributed to Christ in each of the Four Gospels: Matthew 20:28; 26:28; Mark 10:45; 14:24; Luke 22:20; John 6:51; 10:11; 12:24. That these numerous and various documents agree in teaching this remarkable doctrine, proves clearly that it was universally held by the first generation of the disciples of Jesus; and that it was actually taught by Him. For only thus can the agreement be accounted for.

This proof is greatly strengthened by the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Wherever there are Christians, they celebrate His death by the most solemn act of their worship. The universality of this custom proves clearly that it dates from the origin of Christianity. Now, if the servants of Christ live because He died, we wonder not that they commemorate His death by a feast: and we wonder not that in the most solemn crisis of His life He commanded them to keep this commemorative feast, thus giving it a unique position as the one recurrent rite of His Church, and thus indicating His purpose to make it a channel of special blessing. But, of this rite, and of the importance attached to it by Christians everywhere, I can conceive no

other explanation. It is thus an abiding witness to the doctrine before us. A similar though less definite witness is born by the animal sacrifices so conspicuous in the Mosaic ritual and in the worship of the ancient world. In almost every nation men believed that in some cases the guilty could be saved only by the blood of an innocent victim. Whence this strange belief? If the teaching of Romans 3:24-26 be true, we can conceive that He who wrote His law in the hearts of all in some way taught men to offer animal sacrifices, in order that, by their evident insufficiency, they might proclaim the need of a nobler Victim.

On the whole subject, see Diss. vii. of my 'Galatians,' on "The Cross of Christ;" and Part iii. of my 'Through Christ to God,' on "The Death of Christ."

Paul has now, after proving that all men are or have been under condemnation, asserted two great doctrines, viz. (1) that God receives into His favor all who believe the good news announced by Christ, and (2) that this salvation comes through the death of Christ, whom God gave to die in order to harmonize with His own justice the justification of those who put faith in Christ. Of these doctrines, the first is implied in, and the second is the only explanation of, teaching which can be traced by abundant and decisive documentary evidence to the lips of Christ. We may therefore, apart from the apostolic authority of Paul, accept each of these doctrines with perfect confidence as a sure basis for further theological research.

## REVIEW OF 10

Through the Gospel announced by Christ, God has, apart from obedience to law and from natural distinctions, manifested a righteousness which is His own gift to all believers. Such was needed: for all have sinned, and are thus destitute of the heritage of glory which belongs to the sons of God. This Gospel implies justification by God's free favor: and this is itself a proof of the moral failure of our race, a proof strengthened by the assertion of Paul that it was made possible only through the death of Christ. This last was therefore the ransom-price of our salvation. The payment was made, and the liberation takes place, in Him who was born at Bethlehem to be our King. Because no other means would avail, God set Him forth before the eyes of men, covered with His own blood, to be a propitiatory sacrifice sheltering from the punishment due to their sins those who believe. God did this in order thus to afford proof of His own righteousness, a proof made needful by His past forbearance and by His present purpose to proclaim pardon for those who believe the words of Jesus. To delay punishment, and still more to pardon the guilty, by mere prerogative, is unjust and therefore impossible to God. But that which by itself would have been unworthy of a righteous ruler, God has harmonized with His own absolute justice by the demonstration of it given in the death of Christ.

**JUSTIFICATION.** The word rendered in N.T. 'justify' denotes 'to make righteous,' but always in a forensic or subjective sense. In non-biblical Greek, it denotes to claim as a right, to judge right, or to treat with justice, sometimes in the sense of condemning and punishing. In the LXX. it is a technical term for a judge's sentence in a man's favor, in Deuteronomy 25:1; Isaiah 5:23; and of God the Judge of the world, in Exodus 23:7; 1 Kings 8:32; 2 Chronicles 6:23; Isaiah 50:8. In Job 33:32, it denotes approval by a friend: and in 2 Samuel 15:4; Psalm 82:3 it is a judges' righteous sentence, thus approaching from another side the classic use of the word. The only passage in the LXX. in which the word can possibly denote objective conformity to the Law is Isaiah 53:11; and its use elsewhere suggests that even here it means simply to procure for guilty men the acquittal of the great Judge.

In complete agreement with this use of the word in the LXX., is its use in the New Testament. From her works and her children has gone forth a declaration that Wisdom is in the right: Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:35. We read in Luke 10:29; 16:15 of men who ‘justified’ themselves, in the sight of others and perhaps of themselves. Even the publicans, in Luke 7:29, “‘justified’ God.” i.e. declared Him, by receiving Baptism, to be in the right in His severe words to them through the lips of John; in the sense in which the word is used in the quotation in Romans 3:4. In Matthew 12:37, as in Romans 2:13, the word denotes a favorable sentence of God at the great assize; and refers in James 2:24, 25 to God’s approbation of Abraham expressed in Genesis 22:16, and to His approbation of Rahab’s faith as shown in her rescue amid the destruction of Jericho. Christ’s words about the publican in Luke 18:14 foreshadowed Paul’s use of the word: for he “went down to his house ‘justified.’” Throughout the Bible the word ‘justify’ denotes, never impartation of inward righteousness, but always a reckoning or declaring or treating as righteous.

This constant use of the word, in close harmony with its somewhat different use in classic Greek, determines its meaning in Romans 3:20, 24, 26, 28, 30; 4:5; 5:1, 9 and in Galatians 2:16, 17; 3:8, 24: and this determines the meaning of the equivalent word ‘righteousness’ in Romans 1:17; 3:21, 22; 9:30; 10:3, 4, 6. All these passages refer, not to actual conformity to the moral law, but to God’s forgiving reception into His favor of those who put faith in Christ. And this is confirmed by the phrase “faith reckoned for righteousness” used in Romans 4:3, 5, 9, 24 as an equivalent to “justified through faith.” For the word ‘reckoned’ is evidently forensic.

To the above meaning of the word it cannot be objected that a forensic righteousness without actual conformity to the moral law is worthless. For, as we shall see, justification through faith is followed by adoption into the family of God, and by the gift of the Spirit of Adoption to be the animating principle of a new life of devotion to God. But this all-important teaching is clothed in other phraseology. It is not suggested by the word now before us. See further in Diss. vi. of my ‘Galatians’.

Since we appear before God charged with sin, to us justification is acquittal. And, since we are actually guilty, it is practically pardon. But it

is not looked upon as such: for, whereas pardon is a setting aside of law, justification is a carrying out of the new Law of Faith.

In the N.T., no writer except Paul uses the phrase “justified through faith.” Notice therefore an all-important coincidence in Acts 13:38, 39, in a recorded address of Paul.

## SECTION 11

### ALL BOASTING IS NOW SHUT OUT

#### CHAPTER 3:27-30

*Where then is the exultation? It has been shut out. Through what kind of law? Of works? No, but through a law of faith. For we reckon that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law. Or, of Jews only is He the God? Lot also of Gentiles? Yes, also of Gentiles; if, at least, there is one God who will justify circumcision by faith and uncircumcision through their faith.*

**Ver. 27.** Where then, etc.: question suggested by 10, and bringing out a logical consequence of it.

The exultation: the well-known exultation of Romans 2:17, 23. That Paul refers specially to Jewish boasting, is evident from Romans 3:29, 30. But all human boasting is shut out by 10: for its teaching rests on the truth that no man, by his own effort, can save himself. Paul looks round and cries, Where now is your exultation? It has vanished from view: it has been shut out. By what means? 'By means of' a 'law,' i.e. a divine proclamation of the way in which God will rule and judge His people?

What kind of law? one which re-echoes the voice of Moses, Do this and live?

No. God has shut out all boasting by promulgating a law which says, Believe and live. The Gospel is correctly called a 'law:' for it is an authoritative declaration of God's will concerning us, and of the principles on which He will govern us. It is a law of faith: for it requires faith, and is thus distinguished from the Mosaic Law which required works. Important coincidences in John 6:29; 1 John 3:23. The word law reminds us that the voice of Christ is equal in authority to the voice from Sinai.

**Ver. 28.** Restatement of Doctrine I, taught in Romans 3:21, 22; so put as to be evidently a proof of the answer just given. The reading here is uncertain. The documentary evidence is about equally divided. All the

Critical Editors prefer ‘for,’ though Tregelles and Westcott express doubt, by putting ‘therefore’ in their margin. The Revisers prefer ‘therefore,’ putting ‘for’ in the margin, as read by “many ancient authorities.” This is therefore a case in which internal evidence may be allowed to decide. The reading ‘for’ would make Romans 3:28, a proof of Romans 3:27; the reading ‘therefore’ would make it an inference. Now this restatement of Paul’s great doctrine cannot be an inference from a consequence of that doctrine, viz. that by it all boasting has been shut out: but it comes in appropriately as a restatement of the source from which the consequence flows. I therefore prefer the Editors’ reading, For we reckon, etc. The point of the proof here given lies in the sharp contrast of faith and works of law, which echoes a similar contrast in Romans 3:21, 22. The Gospel proclaims righteousness for all who believe it, without reference to previous obedience to law. Now the Gospel is an authoritative declaration of the will of God, and has therefore the force of law. By promulgating this new law, God has shut out all boasting on the ground of good works: for the new law implies that works cannot save.

**Ver. 29.** Another ground of Jewish boasting. Do you exult in God as though He had nothing to do with any except Jews? Is He not the God also of Gentiles? Yes, also of Gentiles: Paul’s answer, re-echoing his question.

**Ver. 30.** A second restatement of Doctrine I, in a form suited to overturn this second objection, strengthened by a great truth in which the Jews gloried, viz. the oneness of God.

Circumcision: as in Romans 2:26. It was a visible mark of the covenant on which rested the vain belief of the Jews that God was their God only.

By faith (Romans 1:17) and through ‘faith’ (Romans 3:22) are practically the same.

Their faith: that which the Gentiles evidently have. If there be one God, and if He will justify all on the same terms, then is He the God of both Jews and Gentiles. Notice here an important argument. The oneness of God is a proof that He is the God of all men: for a national God must be one among many. Thus a doctrine to which the Jews clung tenaciously

supports the teaching of Paul and overthrows the exclusiveness of the Jews.

We here meet again the two objections dealt with in 6 and 7. those based on the Law and on circumcision. Each is overturned by a restatement of Paul's great doctrine of Justification through faith, in forms suited to the objections they are designed to rebut.

In Romans 2:13, Paul overturned the first objection by pointing to a principle which underlies all law. He now shows that the Gospel, which has authority equal to that of the ancient law, likewise overturns it. And He shows that the Gospel, read in the light of a truth which the Jews were ever ready to assert, overturns also the second objection.

That Paul mentions, as the first result of the Gospel, a matter so small as exclusion of Jewish boasting, may surprise us. But this boasting was probably the chief hindrance to the spread of the Gospel among the Jews. It lingered even among Jewish Christians: so Galatians 3:2; 4:21; 5:4. Paul wishes to show at once that it is utterly inconsistent with the Gospel. Moreover, that the Gospel shuts out all Jewish boasting, was to many a serious objection to it. So serious is this objection that Paul is compelled to meet it before he goes on to develop the spiritual results of the Gospel. By the reasoning of Romans 3:27-30, he suggests the objection: in Romans 3:31, he states it: and in Rom 4 he will entirely overturn it. Thus this section opens a way for the next.



## SECTION 12

### *JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM THE CASE OF ABRAHAM*

#### CHAPTERS 3:31-4:17

*Do we then make law of no effect through faith? Be it not so. Nay, we establish law. What then shall we say that Abraham has found, our forefather according to flesh? For if by (or from) works Abraham was justified, he has a ground of exultation; but not in reference to God. For what says the Scripture? "But Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness."*

*But to him that does work, the reward is not reckoned according to grace but according to debt: but to him that does no work, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. According as also David describes the blessedness of the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works, "Blessed are they whose lawlessnesses have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered over. A blessed man is he to whom the Lord will not reckon sin."*

*This pronouncing-blessed then, is it upon the circumcision, or also upon the uncircumcision? For we say that to Abraham was reckoned his faith for righteousness. How then was it reckoned? While in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received a sign, that of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had in his uncircumcision; that he may be father of all that believe in uncircumcision, that to them also the righteousness may be reckoned; and father of the circumcision, to them not of circumcision only, but also to them who walk in the steps of the faith in uncircumcision of our father Abraham.*

*For not through law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world, but through a righteousness of faith. For if they of law are heirs, faith has been made vain, and the promise has been made of no effect. For the Law works out anger: but where no law is, neither is there transgression. Because of this, it is by faith, in order that it may be according to grace, in order that the promise may be sure to all the seed, not to that of the Law only but also to that of the faith of Abraham, who is father of us all-according as it is written, "Because a father of many nations I have made thee"—before God whom he believed, who makes alive the dead ones, and calls the things which are not as though they were.*

**Ver. 31.** A question suggested by the inference in Romans 3:29, 30 that justification through faith shuts out all boasting that God is in a special sense the God of the Jews. This assumption was based on the fact that to them only He gave the Law. Paul asks, Do we, by preaching a doctrine which ignores the distinction of Jew and Gentile, set aside the Law, which created that distinction?

Law: in its usual sense, viz. the Old Testament, viewed in its general character as a declaration of God's will and as a standard of right and wrong. There is nothing here, as there was in Romans 3:21, to limit the word to the Pentateuch.

Of-no-effect: as in Romans 3:3; cp. Matthew 15:6. It might seem that Paul, who preaches faith without reference to circumcision or previous obedience to law, denied the authority of the Old Testament. For there the favor of God depends on obedience to precepts, and circumcision is commanded as a sign of God's special covenant with Abraham's children. Now, to the Jews, the Old Testament was the authoritative standard of right and wrong. Does not the doctrine of justification through faith discredit, not only Jewish boasting, but those sacred books which were to the Jews the ground of moral obligation? If so, two bad results will follow. Paul's teaching will weaken, in those who receive it, the authority of the Scriptures, and thus weaken the moral obligations therein embodied; and the Gospel will be rejected by others whose conscience tells them that the

voice of Sinai, which still speaks from the pages of the Old Testament, is the voice of God. Cp. Acts 6:13.

We establish law: by preaching faith as the condition of justification, we give additional proof of the divine authority of the sacred books.

So serious and so plausible is the above objection that we cannot conceive Paul, who is so careful to prove everything, meeting it by a mere assertion, viz. that contained in this verse. A full proof of this assertion, we shall find in his exposition, in Romans 4, of the faith of Abraham. Even the narratives of the O.T. are included in the Law: for they announce the principles of God's government. For another example of a narrative in Genesis quoted as 'law,' see Galatians 4:21.

**Ver. 1.** What shall we say? what shall we infer? as in Romans 3:5. If we defend the authority of the O.T., how shall we explain its teaching about Abraham?

Our forefather: speaking as a Jew to Jews.

According to flesh: in contrast to the spiritual fatherhood of Romans 4:11.

**Ver. 2.** Reason for introducing the case of Abraham. God's covenant with him proves that he found favor with God, and was in this sense justified. Now, if this justification was derived from works, he has a ground-of-exultation. This last word is cognate to, and recalls, those in Romans 3:27; 2:17, 23. Paul proclaims a Gospel which shuts out all boasting; and he now introduces the case of Abraham in order to test by it the objection that, by overturning Jewish boasting, the Gospel overturns the ancient law.

But not in reference to God: his exultation would be, not an exultation in God, like that in Romans 5:11, but something infinitely inferior. If from works done in obedience to law Abraham had obtained the favor and covenant of God, God would be to him, not the free Giver of every good, but only a master who pays according to work done; and Abraham's confidence would rest upon, and his expectation be measured by, his own morality. Cp. Galatians 6:4. The Gospel gives us that nobler joy which arises from confidence in God. This better exultation, a justification derived from works could not give, to Abraham or to us.

**Ver. 3.** By introducing Abraham after saying that the Gospel confirms the Law, by admitting that justification from works would give him a boasting which Paul has proved that no man can have, and that it would deprive him of the only well-grounded exultation, Paul has implied clearly that Abraham's justification was derived from a source other than works. This he now proceeds to prove:

for what says the Scripture? This last word denotes a single passage. The whole collection is called "Scriptures," as in Romans 1:2; 15:4; 16:26.

Paul quotes Genesis 15:6, perhaps the most important verse of the Old Testament. In Romans 12:1, 7; 13:14, we read of God's promises to Abraham and of Abraham's conduct on receiving them; but from Romans 15:3, 4 we learn that the promise had not been fully believed. In Romans 15:5, God solemnly repeats it. And now, for the first time in the Bible, we are told the effect produced in man's heart by the word of God: "He believed in Jehovah," i.e. he was fully assured that God's promise of posterity as numerous as the stars will be fulfilled. See under Romans 4:18. These words are the more conspicuous because of the purely outward character of nearly all Bible narratives. Equally remarkable are the words following.

Righteousness: fulfilment of a condition, inward or outward, on which God is pleased to bestow blessing, spiritual or temporal: see under Romans 1:17. God reckoned Abraham's faith to be a fulfilment of the only condition required; and, because he believed, gave to him the blessing promised. God commanded him to offer sacrifice; and in that sacrifice again revealed Himself. "In the same day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram:" Genesis 15:9, 18. Of that covenant, circumcision was afterwards appointed to be the sign: Romans 17:10. Thus Abraham's faith put him in a new relation to God.

'Reckon': as in Romans 2:26; 8:36; Genesis 31:15; Proverbs 17:28, etc.

'Reckon for righteousness': an important parallel in Psalm 106:31, which is a comment on Numbers 25:10-13. God graciously 'reckoned' the loyal act of Phineas as something which He will reward with an eternal priesthood. Similarly, in Deuteronomy 24:13, He promised to reward the return of a pledged garment; and, in Romans 6:25, general obedience to His

commands. Same phrase in 1 Macc. ii. 52, expounding Genesis 22:16-18. Hence, in James 2:21, Abraham is said to have been justified by offering Isaac. The two phrases are practically equivalent. The reckoning may be spoken of as the mental act of God; and justification as the formal declaration of it.

Thus the Book of the Law declares that Abraham obtained the favor and covenant of God by belief of a promise. And, of that covenant, all the blessings which afterwards came to Israel were a result. Whatever distinguished the sacred nation from the rest of mankind, their deliverance from Egypt, the Law, the possession of Canaan, and the voice of the prophets, was given because of Abraham's faith: so Exodus 2:24; Deuteronomy 9:5. The question in Romans 4:1 is answered. 'Abraham found' justification through faith. Consequently, the preaching of faith is in unexpected harmony with the Old Testament; and thus confirms the divine authority of the Law.

Genesis 15:6 is quoted also in Galatians 3:6; James 2:23; and ten times in the works of Philo, an older Jewish contemporary of Paul.

The rest of 12 expounds Genesis 15:6. In Romans 4:4, 5, Paul will show that it implies justification apart from works, which in Romans 4:6-8 he will confirm from Psalm 32:1, 2; and justification without circumcision, of which rite he will in Romans 4:9-12 explain the purpose. He will show in Romans 4:13-15 why the promise was given to Abraham apart from law; and (Romans 4:16, 17) on the simple condition of faith. He will thus show that the Law is in harmony, not only with the Gospel proclaimed in 10, but with the levelling of Jew and Gentile which was to the Jews so serious an objection to it.

**Ver. 4-5.** Proof, from Genesis 15:6, that Abraham was justified apart from works, and had therefore no ground of exultation. Verse 4 describes the case of one whose claim rests on works, and Romans 4:5 that of another who has no works on which to base a claim. It is then evident that Abraham belongs, not to the former, but to the latter, class. Paul assumes that there is no merit in faith, that it does not lay God under the least obligation to reward us. Consequently, whatever follows faith comes, not by necessary moral sequence, but by the undeserved favor of God: so Romans 4:16. Therefore, that Abraham obtained the covenant through

faith, proves that he had done no work to merit so great reward. For we cannot give a man as a mark grace, i.e. undeserved favor, what we already owe him as a debt. Consequently, the recorded faith of Abraham puts him apart from those who obtain blessing by good works.

The reward: or pay for work done.

**Ver. 5.** The opposite class, to which Abraham does belong. That a man's faith is reckoned for righteousness, and thus put in place of works, proves that he does no good work which fulfils the required condition.

'Ungodly': as in Romans 1:18. That Abraham was such, we need not infer: and his obedience to God's call proves his fear of God. Paul states a general principle, in a form which applies to his readers rather than to Abraham. He obtained by faith a numerous posterity, and through the promised seed a fulfilment of the earlier promise that in him should all families of the earth be blessed. The promise made to us is escape from the wrath of God, and eternal life. To make this dependent on faith, implies that all men are exposed to punishment: and to expect justification through faith is an acknowledgment of ungodliness, and a reliance

upon Him who justifies the ungodly. By thus turning from Abraham to the sinner, Paul prepares a way for the quotation in the next verse.

Thus Genesis 15:6, which asserts that Abraham was justified through faith, implies also that he was justified apart from works. Therefore he has no ground of self-exultation, but a good ground of exultation in view of God. Consequently, Paul, by proclaiming a new law which shuts out all boasting on the ground of works, does not overthrow, but supports, the authority of the Old Covenant and of the Jewish Scriptures.

**Ver. 6-8.** A quotation from Psalm 32:1, 2, in harmony with the foregoing.

David: as in Romans 11:9 from Psalm 69:22, 23. The name is found (Hebrews. and LXX.) in the heading of each Psalm. But to this we cannot give any critical value. Paul quotes the O.T. as he found it. See further in Diss. III.

Blessedness: the highest form of happiness, found only under the smile of God: so Matthew 5:3-11. This sacred sense is not absent in Acts 26:2, 1 Corinthians 7:40. So Aristotle, 'Nic. Ethics' bk. x. 8. 8: "To the gods, the

whole of life is blessed; to men, so far as it is some likeness to divine activity:" cp. 1 Timothy 1:11, "the blessed God," 1 Timothy 6:15.

'David' is quoted to support, not "faith reckoned for righteousness," but righteousness apart from works. Here we have a man guilty of acts of lawlessness and of sins. But they are forgiven and covered-over: cp. James 5:20.

To reckon sin, is practically to inflict punishment: so 2 Timothy 4:16; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Philemon 18. We have in Psalms 32 the joyful song of a pardoned man. Breaches of law have been forgiven, and a veil cast over sins. Consequently, in the future God will not 'reckon' the man a sinner.

The Lord: see under Romans 9:29. In Psalm 32:5, the Psalmist confesses his sin, and rejoices in forgiveness. He finds in God a refuge from trouble, and bids others rejoice in Him: Psalm 32:7, 11. We have here a clear case of righteousness without works, of a man on whom, in spite of past sins, God smiles with forgiving grace. Thus the negative side of Paul's teaching is proved to be in harmony with the ancient Scriptures. Although Psalms 32 is not quoted in proof of justification through faith, we notice Psalm 32:10," He that trusts in Jehovah, mercy shall compass him about."

Psalm 32 is quoted only in passing: and Paul returns at once to Genesis 15:6. As the words quoted do not mention faith, they were probably not quoted to prove expressly that the preaching of faith supports the Law. But, as we learn from Romans 3:19, they have the authority of law. And, by supporting an inference following necessarily from justification through faith, viz. justification without works, they point to another harmony of the Law and the Gospel; and thus confirm the divine origin of both.

**Ver.** 9-12. Further evidence, from the historic origin of circumcision, in support of the Gospel which announces righteousness apart from it, followed by an exposition of the purpose of the rite.

**Ver.** 9-10. This announcement-of-blessedness: in Psalm 32:1, 2. Is it for the circumcision as such, or also for the uncircumcision? abstract for the concrete, as in Romans 2:26; 3:30.

For we say, etc.: reason for Paul's question, in which he takes his readers along with him, and for the tone of triumph in which he asks it. Paul and

they have now learnt from Genesis 15:6 that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. He asks, How then was it reckoned? While in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? To this last question, there is only one answer. For fourteen years, Abraham was in covenant with God before he was circumcised. Consequently, the rite is not needful for the validity of faith or for a covenant relation with God. All the distinguishing blessings of the Jewish race were a reward of the faith of an uncircumcised man. Paul's answer is an emphatic repetition of his own question.

**Ver.** 11-12. An explanation of the purpose of the rite, supplementing and strengthening the foregoing argument.

Sign of: Matthew 24:30; Luke 11:29.

Circumcision was enjoined as a visible mark or token of the covenant of God with Abraham in the day when he believed: Genesis 17:11; 15:18.

A Seal: a solemn and formal attestation of that to which it is annexed. So 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 2 Timothy 2:19. Specially appropriate to circumcision, this being a visible and permanent attestation. The sign of the covenant, ordained by God in the day when Abraham believed, was a divinely-erected monument of the covenant and of the validity of faith even apart from circumcision.

That he may be, etc.: purpose of this sign and seal, viz. that the faith of Abraham, thus made prominent, may lead many others to a similar faith, and 'that' thus 'he may be' father of a great family of believers; and that all who believe, even without circumcision, may be able to call Abraham their father, and to claim the inheritance of sons. The meaning of 'father' is explained by 'heirs' in Romans 4:14: cp. Galatians 3:9, 29, also Genesis 4:20, 21.

That to them also, etc.: further purpose of the rite. God's purpose was, by leading both Jews and Gentiles to a similar faith, to make them partakers of the righteousness which comes through faith.

Father of circumcision: suggested by 'also' in Romans 4:11, which implies that God's purpose embraced others besides Gentiles. Even among those who bear in their bodies the sign of the covenant, Abraham was to have a



spiritual posterity. But his true children are those only who imitate the faith of their father, which was earlier and nobler than circumcision.

Walk: go along a line: so Galatians 5:25; 6:16; Philippians 3:16; Acts 21:24. Cp. Romans 6:4; 8:4; 13:13; 14:15. Every act is a step forward in some direction.

Faith in uncircumcision: emphatic repetition of the point of the argument in Romans 4:9-12.

**Ver.** 13. Not through law; about which as little was said as about circumcision when God made the covenant with Abraham.

The promise: as stated in Genesis 12:1-3, 7; 15:18; 22:17. In these passages nothing was said about 'law,' in reference either to Abraham or to his seed. The fulfilment of the promise was not conditioned by obedience to a prescribed rule of conduct.

That he should be heir of the world: the promise described, not in the form given to Abraham, but as we, taught by the Gospel, now understand it. Abraham's children, i.e. those who imitate his faith, will one day possess a new earth and heaven: and this, because given to his spiritual children, will be the reward of his faith. Of this greater gift, Canaan was but an earnest. It will be obtained,

'not through law', but through a righteousness of faith, i.e. a state which the judge approves and which comes through faith. On the historic independence of the promise to Abraham and the Mosaic Law, see Galatians 3:17.

**Ver.** 14-15. Reason why the promise was given apart from law.

They of law: who make law their starting-point in seeking life, and whose claim is derived from law: so Galatians 3:10; cp. Romans 2:8; 3:26; Galatians 3:7, 9.

Heirs: who receive the blessing in virtue of their imitation of, and therefore spiritual descent from, Abraham.

Is-made-vain, or 'empty': same word in 1 Corinthians 1:17; 9:15; Philippians 2:7.

Made-of-no-effect: as in Romans 3:3, 31; Galatians 3:17. These two words are practically equivalent. Of the statement in Romans 4:14, 4:15 is a proof.

Works-out anger: brings men under the anger of God. For none can obey the Law as it claims to be obeyed: and God is angry with all who disobey.

But where no law is, there are no prescribed limits, and therefore no transgression or 'overstepping' of limits: same word in Romans 2:23; 5:14. Before the Law, there was sin, but it did not assume the form of transgression. If when God gave the promises, He had annexed the Law as their condition, He would have made fulfilment impossible. For none can keep the Law as it needs to be kept. Therefore He said nothing about law. He thus winked at or passed over the sinfulness of those to whom He spoke; in view of the propitiation afterwards provided: cp. Romans 3:25.

Notice here another summary of DIV. 1 The causes which made justification from works impossible to us made it impossible to Abraham. The constant recurrence of this teaching reveals its importance in Paul's theology.

**Ver. 16.** Because of this: viz. that the Law works out anger, and would if it were the condition of fulfilment make the promise without result. Therefore the inheritance is by faith. According to grace: God fixed faith as its condition in order that it might be in proportion, not to man's merit, but to God's undeserved favor. As in Romans 4:4, Paul assumes that there is no merit in faith.

Sure: a firm basis for confident reliance. God made 'faith' the condition of the promise, in order that all the seed, not only Jews but Gentiles also, may have a firm ground for expectation of fulfilment, and this measured not by their works but by God's grace. Had obedience to law been its condition, they could have looked forward to nothing except His anger.

Who is father, etc.: actual fulfilment of the purpose stated in Romans 4:11.

Of us all: including Jews and Gentiles.

**Ver. 17.** According as... I have made thee: a parenthesis asserting that the foregoing is in harmony with a promise of God to Abraham (Genesis 17:5) at the time of the change of his name. Israel was not

many nations but one nation: and the sons of Hagar and Keturah were not heirs of the covenant. To what then did this promise refer?

To something important: for it was embodied in a change of name. The only adequate explanation of it is that it refers to Abraham's spiritual children. Jew and Greek, Englishman and German, call him today their father. Thus the Gospel again confirms the divine origin of the Law by affording an explanation and fulfilment of a prophecy therein contained and otherwise unexplained.

Before God, etc.: completing the sentence interrupted by the parenthesis. Abraham stands before God

whom he believed, who, as we shall see under Romans 4:19, makes alive the dead, and calls, i.e. summons to His service and disposes of as He will, the things which are not as though they were. This description of God calls to our mind those elements of His nature on which Abraham's faith rested. Cp. Genesis 17:1: "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be thou perfect." God speaks to men and things not yet existing, and they come into being, and dispose themselves at His command. These words refer to the many nations whom, before they existed, God gave to Abraham to be his children. Before Him whose voice is heard and obeyed by nations unborn, to whom the decay of natural powers, even when amounting practically to death, was no obstacle, Abraham stood; and believed. And, because he believed, he stood in that day before God as the father of the whole family of believers of every nation and age.

## REVIEW

We shall best understand this section by attempting to rebuild Paul's argument from the materials he used. In Genesis 12:2, 7; 13:16, God promised to make of Abraham a great nation, to give to his children the land of Canaan, and to make them numerous as the dust of the earth. In obedience to God, Abraham left his fatherland. But in Genesis 15:1-3 we find him in fear and unbelief. It is night; and there is darkness around and within. Although God has promised him a numerous posterity, Abraham speaks of a servant as his heir. God brings him out from the tent in which the lonely man nurses his loneliness, directs him away from the darkness around to the everlasting brightness above, and declares that his children shall be numerous as the stars. Abraham stands before Him who made the stars and calls them by their names, who is the Author of life, whom even death cannot withstand, who controls even men and things not yet existing. He hears the promise, believes it. and looks forward with confidence to his children unborn. His faith is recorded in the Book of the Law, where, in Genesis 15:6, we read for the first time the effect upon the heart of man of the word of God. We also read that God accepted Abraham's belief of the promise as a fulfilment of the divinely-appointed condition of fulfilment. In that hour he stood before God as father of unnumbered children. The words of Genesis 15:6 are soon explained by the act of God. Sacrifices are slain; and in the presence of shed blood God makes "in that day" a covenant with Abraham. Of this covenant, the birth of Isaac, the deliverance from Egypt, the giving of the Law, the possession of Canaan, and all the distinctive privileges of Israel, were a fulfilment; We see then that the blessings of the Old Covenant were obtained by Abraham, for himself and for his children, by faith.

Again, since Abraham obtained the covenant by believing a promise, it is evident that he had performed no works of which it was a due reward; else it would have been given him as a debt. The words of Genesis 15:6 remove him from those who earn something by work and put him among those who know that they are sinners and believe the word of Him who justifies the ungodly. Consequently, Abraham was justified without works. Therefore, though he may well exult in view of the grace of God, he can

exult no more than we in view of his own works. Justification without works is also taught by David, who calls himself a sinner and rejoices in a pardoning God. Again, when Abraham believed, he was uncircumcised: and nothing was said about the rite till fourteen years after he received the covenant. Therefore, circumcision is not essential to the validity of faith, or to the favor and covenant of God. What then is the use of circumcision? It was a sign of God's covenant with Abraham: Genesis 17:11. And, since the covenant was obtained through faith, circumcision, the visible and divinely ordained sign of it, was a solemn and public attestation by God that faith, even without circumcision, is sufficient to obtain the favor of God. In our days, God has announced justification for all men on the one condition of faith. Therefore, remembering that the Old Covenant was preparatory to the New, we cannot doubt that the rite of circumcision was ordained in order to call attention to Abraham's faith, and thus to lead his children to similar faith. And, since the Gospel proclaims salvation for Jew and Gentile alike, we cannot doubt that circumcision was delayed in order to teach the believing Gentiles of future ages that they may claim Abraham as their father and the righteousness of faith as their inheritance.

We are prepared for this levelling of Jew and Gentile by the fact that, at the time of Abraham's faith, as little was said about the Law as about circumcision. The reason is evident. If the promises had been conditional on obedience to law, they would have been practically useless, and Abraham's faith an illusion. For neither he nor his children could keep the Law. The only result would have been disobedience and punishment. We therefore infer that nothing was said about law in order that sin, although existing, might not be a breach of the covenant; and that faith was chosen as its condition because God was minded to bestow the blessing as a gift of pure favor, and in order that believers, both Jews and Gentiles, might look forward with certainty to a fulfilment of the promise. In the Christian Church, we see fulfilled the purpose for which circumcision was ordained, and the promise that Abraham should be a father of many nations. He stands today in actual fact, as he stood then in the purpose and foresight of God, as the father of us all.

In 11, Paul proved that the Gospel breaks down the barrier hitherto existing between Jew and Gentile. Now this barrier was erected by the Law. To break it down, seemed to be a denial of the divine origin and

authority of those Sacred Books which were to Israel the ground of moral obligation. But now Paul has proved from these Books that the covenant which was to the Jews the source of all their instinctive privileges was obtained by Abraham through faith and apart from circumcision and from law. An inference from this, viz. justification without works, has been confirmed from another part of the Holy Scriptures. This unexpected harmony confirms both Law and Gospel, for it reveals their common source. Consequently, the Gospel, which by the resurrection of Christ is itself proved to be divine, affords proof of the divine origin of the Law. If therefore, after saying that the Gospel confirms the Law, we are asked what benefits Abraham obtained for himself and his descendants, our reply is, justification through faith, without works and without circumcision.

In this section, Paul has touched one of the strongest internal proofs of the divine origin of the revelations recorded in the Bible, viz. the profound harmony which, amid a great variety of outward form breathes through the whole.

## SECTION 13

### DESCRIPTION OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH

#### CHAPTER 4:18-25

*Who against hope believed in hope, in order that he might become father of many nations, according to the spoken word, "So shall be thy seed." And, without being weakened in faith, he considered his own body as good as dead, being about a hundred years old, and the death of the womb of Sarah. But in view of the promise of God he did not doubt with unbelief, but was made strong by faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He has promised He is able also to do. For which cause it was also reckoned to him for righteousness. Moreover, it was not written because of him only, that it was reckoned to him, but also because of us, to whom it will be reckoned, to those that believe on Him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was given up because of our trespasses and was raised because of our justification.*

In 12, we learnt that Abraham obtained by faith the blessings of the Old Covenant. We saw him standing in the presence, and believing the word, of Him who makes the dead to live. Paul will now analyse Abraham's faith, and show that it is a model for ours.

**Ver. 18.** 'Hope': in N.T., expectation of good; in classic Greek, expectation of good or ill, e.g. Thuc. i. 1.

Against hope... in hope: literally 'upon hope'; so Romans 5:2; 8:20; Acts 2:26; 26:6. Abraham's faith was a reliance upon the future when, humanly speaking, the future promised nothing.

To the end that, etc.: purpose of this faith. That what follows was a result of it, is at once evident: for it led to the birth of Isaac and the fulfilment of the promises; and, by setting an example, it led thousands to exercise similar faith and to look back upon Abraham as their spiritual father. But it

is needless to give to the preposition here used **εἰς τὸ κ.τ.λ.**) any other than its ordinary sense of purpose: so in Romans 4:11. For we cannot doubt that God led Abraham to believe in order to set an example to thousands who should afterwards walk in his steps. In the Bible, frequently a purpose far above their thought is attributed to the acts of men. This comes from a consciousness that nothing takes place without God's permission, and that nothing is permitted except what will work out His purposes. Hence men's acts have a meaning the actors think not of. When Abraham trampled under foot the expectation of nature, resting upon the expectation of faith, he was by his faith working out the purpose of God, a purpose corresponding to the promise believed. Cp. Matthew 2:15, 23.

The spoken word: spoken by God to Abraham. Contrast "as it is written" in Romans 4:17.

**Ver.** 19-21. A wonderful analysis of Abraham's faith and hope.

**Ver.** 19. Negative aspect of his faith. The word 'not' after considered is omitted in the four oldest MSS. and by all the Critical Editors; and is certainly spurious. It may have been put in by a copyist who thought it needful to make up the sense, and supposed that some earlier copyist had omitted it. The practical difference is not great. In the one case, we are told that Abraham did not take into account his advanced age; in the other, that he was unmoved by his consideration of it. In either case, he was unmoved by the fact of his old age.

Dead... death: reproductive powers, in both Abraham and Sarah, being dead.

A hundred years old: referring to Genesis 17:1; not to Genesis 15:6, when Abraham first believed God's promise of a numerous posterity. When Ishmael was born, Abraham looked upon him as the promised seed: Genesis 17:18. But God tried his faith by declaring in Genesis 17:16 that the promised child should spring from Sarah. In Genesis 17:17, we see the effort of his faith to overcome this new difficulty; and we infer with certainty that his faith was again victorious. Belief of this last promise was all that God required; and the birth of Isaac soon followed. To this matured faith, Paul now refers.



**Ver. 20-21.** Positive description of Abraham's faith. He looked with unshaken faith, at his own aged body; but he looked also at

the promise of God. That doubt is contrasted with faith, implies that God requires a faith which excludes doubt. So Romans 14:23; Matthew 21:21; Mark 11:23; James 1:6. Had Abraham 'doubted', it would have been with unbelief.

Strong by faith: able to break down obstacles: cp. Hebrews 11:33.

Giving glory, etc.: he recognised with admiration the grandeur of God.

Being fully assured, etc.: a description of Abraham's faith. Faith in a promise is a full assurance that the speaker will fulfil it. Here the fulfilment involved power greater than that of nature. Consequently, Abraham's assurance that God's word will come true implied an assurance that

He is able to suspend the ordinary course of nature: for otherwise He cannot

do what He has promised. Notice here an emphatic repetition of the ground of Abraham's faith. Owing to the kind of 'promise' believed, it was a reliance upon the power of God. Such reliance is the highest tribute of

'glory' to God: contrast Romans 1:21. But faith is, here and everywhere, an assurance that God not only can, but actually will, perform His word. Abraham contemplated the natural impossibility of a child being born from himself and Sarah. But he fixed his eye on the promise of God and on the infinite grandeur and power of Him who had promised. This banished doubt and unbelief, and gave him the strength of faith. His faith was a reliance on the word and power of God.

**Ver. 22.** For which cause: because he was fully assured, etc. This may refer to Genesis 15:6 or Genesis 17:15-23: cp. 1 Macc. ii. 52. Because Abraham's faith was what has just been described, God accepted it as the condition required for fulfilment of the promise. This prepares a way for Romans 4:23-25.

**Ver. 23-24.** Bearing upon us, of the story of Abraham.

It was not written because of him only, i.e. to pay honor to him, but also because of us, i.e. for our good. By this assertion, Paul attributes to

Genesis a purpose far above the thought of its human author and therefore attributes the book, in some real sense, to one who foresaw the day of Christ. So Romans 3:19; 15:4; 1 Corinthians 9:10; 10:11; Galatians 3:8. Of all this, the O.T. contains abundant evidence. For the far-reaching harmony underlying the Old and New Testaments, of which Romans 4 is so wonderful an example, must have a common and superhuman source. And if, as Paul everywhere assumes, the Old Testament contains actual revelations from God to man, and these preparing a way for the supreme revelation in Christ, we cannot doubt that, in the providence of God, they were written down in order that the permanent records might help the faith of those who in later ages should put faith in Christ. In other words, we need not doubt that the benefits actually derived by Christians from the Old Testament were designed by God. And if so, the world-wide importance of the Gospel makes this the chief purpose for which the Jewish Scriptures were given. The future tense, will be reckoned, cannot refer to the judgment day: for justification will then be, not by faith, but, as we read in Romans 2:13, by works. And the word 'us' forbids us to refer it exclusively or mainly to those who in time to come will be justified. It is best to suppose that Paul puts himself beside the writer of Genesis and looks forward to the Gospel as still future. Just so in Romans 5:14 "the coming One" refers to the incarnation of Christ; and "we shall be," in Romans 6:5, to our present Christian life. Similarly, in Romans 7:14, Paul throws himself back into the days when he was under the Law; and in Romans 8:30 throws himself forward and looks back upon his final glorification as already achieved. This sudden change of mental standpoint is a mark of the intense vividness of his thought. He ever identifies himself with that about which he writes.

Believe on: as in Romans 4:5. To believe a promise, is to lean upon him that gave it.

Him that raised Jesus: on whose superhuman power both Abraham relied and we now rely. Just as to him belief of the promise was impossible without an assurance that God is able to set aside the decay of nature, so now we cannot believe Christ's promise of eternal life unless we are sure that God is able to open the gates of death. For, that God 'raised Jesus' from the dead, is an essential element of the Gospel: so Romans 10:9; Acts 17:18, 31. That Abraham's faith had in view a miracle in the future, ours

one in the past, does not mar the similarity. For, past or future, each involved the infinite power of God. This reference to the raising of Christ suggested the words ‘dead’ and ‘make alive the dead’ in Romans 4:19, 17. The birth of Isaac was virtually a resurrection of the dead. Again, the resurrection of Christ, once believed, becomes a proof of the power of God, and therefore a pledge that He will fulfil all His promises: so Acts 17:31; Ephesians 1:20; 1 Peter 1:21. Hence, the description here of God whom we believe is parallel to that in Romans 4:17 of Him whom Abraham believed.

**Ver. 25.** Two great facts closely related, one to Doctrine 2. Justification through the Death of Christ, of which the significance will be expounded in Romans 5:1-11; and the other to Doctrine 1. Justification through Faith, which has just been illustrated by the faith of Abraham. Thus this verse is a bridge between Romans 4 and 5.

Trespases: sins looked upon as a moral fall where we ought to have stood upright: cp. Romans 11:11.

Given-up: surrendered to a hostile power, as in Romans 1:24, 26, 28; 8:32.

Because we fell, Jesus was given over into the hands of His enemies that He might be a propitiation for our sins. And, just as our sins, taken in connection with God’s purpose to save us, moved Him to give up Christ to die, so our need of justification moved Him to raise Christ from the dead: for without this proof of the divine mission of Christ there would have been no faith in Him and no justification through faith. So 1 Corinthians 15:17; 1 Peter 1:3, 21; notice the want of faith in Luke 24:11, 21.

God raised Christ from the grave in order to give to His disciples a firm foundation on which their faith may rest securely as a means of ‘justification’. This last word will become the key-note of the next section.

The use of the same preposition **διὰ** (with accusative) with a past fact and a purpose touching the future need not surprise us. In each case it denotes, as always, a motive for action. When God resolved to justify, His own purpose became to Him a motive. Compare ‘The Nicene Creed,’ “Because of us men and because of our salvation:” a very close parallel. The simplicity of this exposition renders needless Godet’s suggestion that Paul

refers to “a sentence of justification pronounced in favor of guilty humanity” in the resurrection of Christ. For of such collective ‘justification’ Paul never speaks; and the reference of the word here is fixed by the word justified immediately following.

In this section, no reference is made to any similarity or connection between the promises believed by Abraham and by us. The comparison does not embrace the object-matter of faith, but only the mental act and the personal object, viz. the God of power whose word is in each case believed. The promises believed and the blessings obtained are altogether different. But the disposition of mind and heart is the same. The total difference between the two cases is a great advantage: for it compels us to look, not at one particular promise, but at a great underlying principle, viz. that every promise is fulfilled to those who believe it. God promises to us, and by faith we obtain, pardon and holiness and every grace. At the same time, the careful reader will observe that the promises to Abraham receive their complete fulfilment only in the fulfilment of the promises given to us; and that this fulfilment is brought about by the resurrection of Christ. The connection is referred to in Galatians 3:16. Thus He is the center towards which tends every step in the setting up of the Kingdom of God.

Sections 11-13 defend a point in 10 specially liable to objection, viz. faith as the one condition of righteousness. 11 provokes the objection, by showing that this condition overthrows all Jewish and human boasting. This is in complete harmony with the teaching of DIV. 1. 12 meets the objection by showing that faith was the condition on which were bestowed upon Abraham all the blessings of the Old Covenant. And 13 teaches that his faith was similar to that required from us. The defense of faith as a condition of justification is now complete. The doctrine is assumed in the opening words of the next chapter; and then all mention of faith ceases till Romans 9:30, when the harmony of the Old and New will again meet us.

FAITH and ‘belief’ and the cognate verb believe represent the same Greek and Hebrew words. They denote mental rest in an idea, touching past, present, or future. The idea in which we are at rest is often mentioned as the object-matter of our belief. We say, I believe it, or I believe that it is so: cp. Romans 6:8; 10:9; John 9:18; 16:30; 1 John 5:1, 5; Mark 11:23, 24; also John 11:26; 1 John 4:16; Acts 13:41. The assurance may arise from

perception by the senses, as in Matthew 15:32; John 20:8, 29; from testimony of others; from a course of reasoning, as in Romans 6:8; or from pure fancy. It may rest on good grounds, and correspond with reality; or on evidence altogether insufficient, and be, as in 2 Thessalonians 2:11, an utter delusion. Yet in all these cases, if the mind be at rest in an idea, we say, He believes it.

The most important beliefs are those which bear upon the future, and upon our own interests. Faith then assumes the form of expectation. We look forward, with an inward rest proportionate to the degree of our faith, to the realisation of that which we believe. Such beliefs call forth our strongest emotions, and frequently direct our actions. And only so far as objects and events are reflected in our belief do they influence our action.

The variety of the effects of belief arises, not from different kinds or sources of it, and not altogether from different degrees of confidence, but chiefly from variety of its object-matter. When we believe, we submit ourselves to be influenced by the object-matter of our belief. But our submission is voluntary: and each act which springs from faith is a fresh and free submission. For we may refuse, if we will, to act according to our convictions. But such refusal always tends to weaken and destroy the conviction trampled under foot.

A person is frequently introduced as the object of our belief. When we say, I believe him, we mean that our assurance arises from, and rests upon, the word and character of a speaker. In John 4:21; 14:11; Acts 27:25; 8:12, we have both the personal object and the object-matter of faith.

Justifying faith is "belief of Jesus Christ:" Romans 3:22; Galatians 2:16. This can only mean belief of the word of Christ, a mental rest reposing on His promise of life eternal for all who believe. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13, we have "belief of the truth;" this last being the object-matter of saving faith. In Romans 4:5, 24, we have one who "believes on Him that justifies the ungodly," and "on Him that raised Jesus." Abraham's faith was an assurance, resting on the power of God, that He will fulfil, in spite of natural impossibility, His promise of a numerous posterity.

In the O.T., e.g. Psalm 13:5; 32:10, we very often find "trust in God," and much less often, e.g. Numbers 14:11; Deuteronomy 1:32, the phrase

“believe in Him.” In the N.T., we have very often the words ‘faith’ and ‘believe,’ with God and Christ as their personal object; and more seldom “trust in Him.” The difference is significant. Trust is a confident expectation resting on a man’s character, but not necessarily on a definite promise. Consequently, all saving ‘belief’ in God is ‘trust:’ for it is a reliance upon His character that He will fulfil His words. But it is often more than trust: it is a definite assurance resting upon, and corresponding with, a definite promise of God. To ancient Israel, God revealed Himself; and upon His revealed character His people rested their hopes of deliverance and prosperity. In our happier days, God has spoken in plain words His purposes of mercy for us; and upon His very words we lean and expect their exact fulfilment.

To denote a belief involving trust, the Hebrews used the phrase ‘believe in,’ implying confident expectation touching the future conduct of the person believed in: so Genesis 15:6; Exodus 14:31; 19:9; Jeremiah 12:6; Micah 7:5; Proverbs 26:25; 1 Samuel 27:12; contrast Genesis 45:26; Proverbs 14:15. The phrase believe in πιστευειν εις) is a conspicuous feature of the Fourth Gospel, also 1 John 5:10, 13; but is rare elsewhere: Matthew 18:6; Acts 10:43; 14:23; 19:4; Romans 10:14; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 1:8; cp. Acts 20:21; 24:24; 26:18. This rarity of the phrase is obscured by the Revisers’ rendering of Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; Romans 3:22, 26; Galatians 2:16, 20; 3:22; Ephesians 3:12; Philippians 3:9; Colossians 2:12. But we have no intelligible and correct English rendering of the phrase there used. Another phrase πιστευειν εν) is found in Mark 1:15; John 3:15; cp. Ephesians 1:15; Colossians 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:13; 2 Timothy 1:13; 3:15.

Since saving faith is reliance upon God’s known character, we may speak of ‘implicit’ faith, viz. such estimate of His character as, apart from any particular promise, is prepared to accept with confidence and expectation whatever He says; and of ‘explicit’ faith, viz. a definite assurance of the fulfilment of a definite promise. In the former sense, the phrase ‘believe in Him’ is very common in the Fourth Gospel. But all faith in Christ has reference, direct or indirect, to His spoken word.

It is now evident that JUSTIFYING FAITH is an assurance, resting upon the word and character of God, that He now receives into His favor,

according to His promise in Christ, us who here and now accept that promise. And we have seen that this faith has a close parallel in the faith by which Abraham accepted, and obtained fulfilment of, God's promise to him of a numerous posterity through which blessing should come to all mankind. Under Romans 6:11, we shall find another exercise of faith, laying hold of other promises, and followed by still more wonderful results.

So far I have spoken of faith without reference to the Holy Spirit. In so doing, I have imitated Paul, who up to this point has not mentioned the work of the Spirit. We have studied faith merely as a mental process. For the spiritual source of our assurance of the favor of God, see notes under Romans 8:17.

## SECTION 14

### A WELL-GROUNDED HOPE

#### CHAPTER 5:1-11

*Let us then, justified by faith, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have been brought, by our faith, into the grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we also exult in our afflictions; knowing that the affliction works out endurance; and the endurance, proof; and the proof, hope. And the hope does not put to shame: because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts, through the Holy Spirit, which was given to us. For Christ, while we were still powerless, in due season died on behalf of ungodly ones. For hardly on behalf of a righteous man will one die: for, on behalf of the good man, perhaps some one even dares to die. But a proof of His own love to us God gives, that while we were still sinners Christ died on our behalf. Much more then, having now been justified in His blood, we shall be saved through Him from the anger. For if, while enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more having been reconciled we shall be saved by His life. And not only reconciled, but also exulting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already received the reconciliation.*

In Romans 3:21-26, we learnt that God gives righteousness through faith to all who believe; and that He gave Christ to die in order to make this gift of righteousness consistent with His own righteousness. In Romans 3:27; -Romans 4:25, we learnt that justification through faith, although it overthrows all Jewish boasting, is in harmony with God's treatment of Abraham. In Romans 5:1, Paul will assume that justification is through faith and through Christ, and will then go on to develop logically the results of these doctrines. We shall find (in Romans 5:1, 2) that they give us peace with God and a joyful hope of glory; a hope (Romans 5:3, 4) not



overthrown but confirmed by our present troubles, and resting on (Romans 5:5-11) the sure ground of the proved love of God.

**Ver. 1. Justified by faith:** a summary of Doctrine I, asserted in Romans 3:21, 22 and defended in Romans 4:1-24.

‘By faith’: as in Romans 3:30.

Let us have peace: a practical and logical consequence of being justified by faith.

‘Let-us-have peace’ was read probably by Tertullian at the close of the 2nd century; and is found in all, or very nearly all, the Latin copies used throughout the Western Church. The same reading is repeatedly quoted and expounded by Origen and Chrysostom, who do not seem to have known the other reading; and is found in all existing Greek copies earlier than the 9th century, and in some of the best cursives. The earliest trace of the reading ‘we have peace’ is in the Sinai MS., in a correction of the other reading made perhaps in the 4th century. In the Vatican MS. a similar correction was made, perhaps in the 6th century. Three of the later uncials and a majority of the Greek cursives read ‘we have peace.’ So do the existing copies of the writings of three Greek Fathers of the 4th and 5th centuries. But the point in question does not affect their arguments. Therefore as their works exist only in a few copies made after this reading had become common, we cannot be sure that it was actually adopted by these Fathers. No early version has it except the later Syriac, which exists here, I believe, only in one copy.

If we looked only at documentary evidence, we should at once decide that Paul wrote ‘let us have peace.’ But some able expositors, e.g. Meyer, Godet, and Oltramare, have thought this reading much less suited to the context than the weakly-supported reading ‘we have peace.’ They say that exhortation would be out of place at the beginning of a calm exposition like that now before us; and that, since in Romans 5:9-11 Paul takes for granted that his readers are already reconciled, he would not now urge them to be at peace with God. They therefore suppose that, in very early times, the single letter which compels us to translate ‘let us have’ crept as an error into some important copy, and thus led to what would in this case be an almost universal corruption of the verse.

This opinion is simple desperation. It requires us to believe, not only that all existing Greek copies earlier than the 9th century were made, directly or indirectly, from this one corrupted MS., but that copies of it were carried into both East and West, and that from them only were made all the Latin versions and MSS, and the four Eastern versions, and that copies of this corrupted MS. were the only copies known to the commentators Origen and Chrysostom. It is more easy to believe that the reading ‘we have peace’ is a correction arising from inability to understand the other.

Perhaps we have such a correction before our eyes in the Sinai MS. When once made, it would commend itself by its greater simplicity, and might be gradually adopted in the Greek Church as the ordinary reading. This would account for its presence in a majority of the later Greek copies, and for its absence from all the Latin copies and from the early Eastern versions.

The reading I have adopted was given by Lachmann in his margin, and is given without note by all later Critical Editors. It is given by the Revisers, with a remarkable marginal note saying that “Some authorities read ‘we have.’” They render it, “Being therefore justified by faith, let us have peace with God.” This rendering is in my view incorrect; and has been the cause of the rejection, by so many able expositors, of the reading found in all our best ancient copies.

It has generally been assumed that the words ‘justified by faith’ imply that the readers are already justified, and make this a reason why they should ‘have peace with God.’ But this interpretation is by no means the only one which the words admit or indeed suggest. The aorist participle implies only that peace with God must be preceded by justification by faith, and leaves the context to determine whether justification is looked upon as actual and as a reason for having peace with God, or as a means by which it must be obtained. This last is the use of the aorist participle in all the many passages in the N.T. in which it precedes a subjunctive or imperative. Compare 1 Corinthians 6:15; Acts 15:36; Ephesians 4:25; also Aristotle ‘Nicom. Ethics’ bks. iii. 5. 23, vi. 3. 1. The same construction is found even with a future indicative in Romans 15:28; Acts 24:25: contrast Romans 5:9, 10.

This interpretation gives good sense here. The present subjunctive, ‘let us have peace,’ denotes, not an entrance into, but an abiding state of ‘peace

with God,' which Paul sets before his readers as their present privilege. The aorist participle preceding it implies that this abiding state must be preceded by the event of justification. In other words, this verse asserts that the doctrine of justification through faith, already stated and defended, puts within our reach an abiding state of peace with God.

The above exposition is required by the meaning of the phrases 'justified by faith' and 'peace with God.' For, as we have seen, to justify the guilty is to pardon: and every king is at peace with those whom he pardons. The justified are already, by the very meaning of the word, at peace with God; and remain so as long as they continue in a state of justification. To exhort such to have peace with God, as in the R.V., is mere tautology. This tautology is avoided in my exposition. For, though justification involves peace with God, the two phrases represent the same blessing in different aspects. Justification is a judge's declaration in a man's favor: the phrase 'peace with God' reminds us that formerly there was ruinous war between us and God, and asserts that this war has ceased. It is our privilege to be henceforth at peace with God. The same idea is kept before us in Romans 5:10, 11, in the phrases "reconciled to God" and "received the reconciliation."

The only objection to this exposition is that in Romans 5:2, 9-11 and in Romans 8:1 Paul speaks of his readers as already justified. To this objection, an answer is found in Paul's habit of writing from an ideal and rapidly-changing standpoint. In Romans 3:7, he puts himself among liars, and asks "why am I also still judged as a sinner?" In Romans 2:1; 3:9, he leaves out of sight those saved by Christ, and writes as though all men were still sinning, and therefore under condemnation. In Romans 3:21, 22, we hear a proclamation of pardon; and in Romans 4 its condition is discussed. As Paul describes Abraham's faith and justification, he declares that it was recorded in order to confirm beforehand the good news to be afterwards brought by Christ. As he stands by the writer of Genesis, he looks forward (Romans 4:24) to the day when faith "will be reckoned for righteousness" to all who believe the Gospel. A prospect of peace with God opens before him. While he contemplates it, the Gospel day dawns upon him. In this verse, he calls his readers to wake up to the brightness of its rising. What he bids them do, he conceives to be actually taking place in

himself and in them. In Romans 5:2, the sun has risen; and we stand in the sunshine of God's favor.

If this exposition be correct, the subjunctive present, 'let us have peace,' is rhetorical. Paul might have written, as so many later copies have given us his words, 'we have peace.' But he prefers to urge his readers to appropriate the blessing about which he writes; and immediately afterwards assumes that they are doing what he bids them. In other words, my rendering is much nearer to that of the Authorised Version than is that of the Revisers. It also permits us to translate in Romans 5:2, 3 'we exult' instead of the same rendering in R.V. "let us rejoice."

Dr. Sanday in 'The International Commentary,' if I rightly understand him, accepts my exposition. His paraphrase of Romans 5:1 is, "We Christians ought to enter upon our privileges. By that strong and eager impulse with which we enroll ourselves as Christ's we may be accepted as righteous in the sight of God, and it becomes our duty to enjoy to the full the new state of peace with Him which we owe to our Lord Jesus the Messiah." In other words, he represents Paul as setting before his readers justification, which he has already expounded, as a gateway to peace with God. In his exposition, he correctly says, "The aor. part. δικαιωθεντες marks the initial moment of the state ειρηνην εχουμεν. The declaration of 'not guilty,' which the sinner comes under by a heartfelt embracing of Christianity, at once does away with the state of hostility in which he had stood to God, and substitutes for it a state of peace which he has only to realise." Dr. Sanday acknowledges that my exposition "is perfectly tenable on the score of grammar; and it is also true that justification necessarily involves peace with God." His only criticism is that my "argument goes too much upon the assumption that ειρ. εχ.='obtain peace,' which we have seen to be erroneous." But this I have neither said nor suggested. These words denote only an abiding state of peace with God.

My exposition of the words 'let us have peace' finds further support in Romans 5:2, 3, where I have rendered 'and we exult,' a rendering accepted by Dr. Sanday: see my note.

'Peace' with God: not "peace from God" as in Romans 1:7, nor "the peace of God" as in Philippians 4:7, but a new relation to God. Its sudden introduction without explanation and the argument based upon it imply

that it is involved in Paul's previous teaching. And this we see at once. Since all men have sinned, and God has threatened (Romans 2:12) to destroy all who continue in sin, He is in a correct and awful sense the adversary and enemy of such. They are at war with God. Just so every good king is an uncompromising foe of all who break his laws. Although he loves his subjects and desires to be at peace with them, he lifts his arm to smite those that rebel: for by rebellion they injure themselves and others. Similarly in the O.T. we find God an active enemy of Sin and in some sense of sinners: Exodus 17:16; Malachi 1:4; Ezekiel 39:1. In the great day, His anger and fury (Romans 2:8) will burst forth against them. And not only is God against sinners but they are against Him: Romans 8:7. For they are fighting the battle of Sin, His inveterate enemy: Romans 6:13. They are thoughtlessly resisting His purposes of mercy for themselves and others. There are therefore two obstacles to peace between God and sinners, viz. their opposition to Him, and His justice which demands their punishment. Of these, the latter obstacle is the more serious. For, whereas our opposition to God arises from ignorance and therefore may be removed by divine teaching, God's purpose to punish sin is right and good, and cannot, as we saw under Romans 3:26, be set aside except in conjunction with such manifestation of His justice as is given in the death of Christ. In this sense we are "reconciled to God through the death of His Son:" Romans 5:10. It is now evident that justification is a declaration of peace between God and man. For pardon always implies that the king's officers will no longer pursue or detain the pardoned man, but if needful protect him. Consequently, justification involves 'peace with God.'

These last words set before us another view of our position: for they remind us that in former days we had an adversary against whom resistance was useless, and fatal to ourselves. He was our adversary because we were bad and He is good. But now the conflict is past; and we can go into His presence without fear. Of this 'peace with God,' the peace which God gives (Romans 1:7; Philippians 4:7) is a result.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ: parallel to "through the redemption in Christ" in Romans 3:24. These words are the keynote of the chapter. They are further expounded in Romans 5:10: "through the death of His Son."

**Ver. 2.** Through whom also, etc.: through the agency of Christ we are not only saved from a disastrous war with God but

‘also’ brought into a position in which we enjoy the grace or smile of God, and therefore stand securely. We were far off from God’s favor: Romans 3:23. But Jesus took us by the hand and ‘brought’ us near. Same word in Ephesians 2:18, cognate word in 1 Peter 3:18: close parallels.

This access is by faith: keeping before us the condition of pardon. Had we not believed, we should still be far off. Since justification is a gift of God’s undeserved favor (Romans 3:24; 4:4, 16), Christ, through whose death God’s favor reached us, may be said to have brought us ‘into this grace.’ Under His smile, conscious of His favor, ‘we stand,’ i.e. we maintain our position in spite of burdens which would otherwise weigh us down and in face of foes who would otherwise drive us back. Same word in Romans 11:20; 1 Corinthians 10:12; 15:1; 2 Corinthians 1:24; Ephesians 6:11-14.

Exult: as in Romans 2:17. Grammatically we may render either ‘and let-us-exult’ or and we-‘exult.’ If we accept the above-given exposition of “let us have peace,” we may accept here-and in Romans 5:3 the latter rendering. And this gives much better sense. To say that we actually exult in hope of glory and even in afflictions, is much more in harmony with the heroic confidence of Paul than is an exhortation to exult.

The glory of God: the splendor in which God dwells and with which He will clothe His servants: Romans 1:23; 8:17f; 21, 30; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:14. Notice the immediate consequences of justification, viz. peace with God, approach to God, the favor of God, a sure standing-ground, hope of the coming splendor, and exultation in view of it.

**Ver. 3-4.** Not only but also, etc.: another exultation in addition to the above.

Afflictions: same word as in Romans 2:9, but in very different connection. Even the hardships which were so large a part of the outward life of the Roman Christians do not destroy but increase their exultant hope. This arises from knowing the effect of these hardships.

They work-out endurance, i.e. they evoke and develop an heroic character which enables us to bear up and go forward under the burdens of life. Same

word in Romans 2:7. This endurance, since it is altogether beyond our power, affords proof that God is with us, and therefore that the Gospel we have believed is true.

Proof: as in 2 Corinthians 2:9; 8:2; 9:13; 13:3. It denotes a good appearance after trial.

This 'proof' increases our hope: for it reveals the solidity of the foundation on which rests our expectation of the glory of heaven. Each link in this chain of cause and effect is essential. Our 'afflictions' strengthen our 'hope,' not directly, but by the 'endurance' which they evoke. Our 'endurance' increases our 'hope,' but only by giving 'proof' of the strength of the arm on which we lean. But, apart from 'the afflictions,' there would be no room for this 'endurance' and this 'proof.' Hence Paul says that each 'works out' the other. As illustrations, compare Acts 5:41; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Philippians 1:28; James 1:2-4.

Notice the certainty of victory expressed in the words 'affliction works out endurance.' Of no other result, does Paul think. The faith which speaks thus is itself a pledge of victory. These words of Paul are true not only of all the trials of individuals but of the history of the Church as a whole. The endurance of others is a proof of what God will work in us if need be. Because of the courage which God gave them, we meet our foes, be they ever so strong, with a shout of victory.

The Revisers' rendering 'let us rejoice' in Romans 5:2, 3 seems to me much poorer than the A.V. rendering 'we rejoice' which they have put in their margin. As we have seen, it is not required by the reading 'let us have peace,' where the subjunctive mood is only rhetorical: and the two indicatives in Romans 5:2, 'we have had access' and 'we stand,' suggest the rendering I have given. The rendering 'exult' is better than 'rejoice,' which should be reserved for another Greek verb.

**Verses 3, 4** meet, and more than overturn, the objection that present trials are a counter-balance to the glory awaiting us. Our trials strengthen our hope, and thus increase our joy. The fury of the storm only reveals the strength of the rock on which God has placed our feet.

**Ver. 5.** And our hope: which is not overthrown, but strengthened, by present trials.

Does not put to shame: an abiding characteristic of it. Many a hope which has enabled a man bravely to battle with great difficulties has eventually by its failure covered him with ridicule. Paul asserts that this is not the case with the Christian hope. Of this assertion, Romans 5:5b-11 are a proof. Cp. Psalm 22:4, 5.

The love of God: expounded in Romans 5:8 to be God's love to us.

Poured-out: abundantly put within us, as in Acts 2:17; 10:45. In our hearts: as in Romans 1:21, the seat of the understanding and the will. God's love is put within us as an object of our thought, and as a power evoking and moulding our emotions, purposes, actions: in other words, the knowledge that God loves us fills and rules us. These words appeal to our experience. Each will interpret them according as he has found God's love to be a living power within him.

The Holy Spirit: now first mentioned, except the momentary reference in Romans 2:29.

Which was given to us: to all the justified: otherwise Paul could not appeal to the love made known by the Spirit as a sure ground of the hope which immediately follows justification. Cp. Romans 8:9.

'In our hearts': not 'into.' The Spirit first Himself enters to be the soul of our soul, and then from within makes known to us God's love. That Paul makes no further reference to the Holy Spirit, implies that his argument rests upon God's love to us, not upon the fact that His love was revealed to us by the Spirit. The proof of God's love in Romans 5:6-8 rests simply on the historic fact of Christ's death. The reference to the Spirit is only casual. Paul cannot speak of God's love, on which rests our glorious hope, without a tribute of honor to the Spirit through whose agency God makes known His love. This passing reference is a precursor of important teaching in Romans 8.

**Ver. 6-8.** Proof that God loves us: Romans 5:6 appeals to the fact that Christ died for us, Romans 5:7 compares this fact with the highest proofs of human love, and Romans 5:8 deduces from this comparison a proof of Christ's love.



**Ver. 6.** Christ: put prominently forward as Himself the great proof of God's love.

Powerless: unable to save ourselves, either by atonement for the past or by future obedience.

In due season: at the most suitable point of time: cp. Galatians 4:4. This is in part evident even to us, and is an additional proof of God's love.

On-behalf-of: **υπερ** with gen.: it denotes benefit or help or service, and is thus distinguished from **αντι** (Matthew 20:28), which means 'instead of' Cp. 2 Macc. vi. 28; vii. 9; viii. 21, "to die on behalf of the laws;" Ignatius to 'The Romans' ch. iv., "to die on behalf of God." What the benefit is, must be inferred from the context.

'Christ' died 'on behalf of' ungodly-ones, i.e. in order that they may be saved: cp. Romans 8:32; 14:15, etc. And since, had He not died, we must, He may be said as in Matthew 20:28 to have died instead of us.

'Ungodly': as in Romans 4:5.

**Ver. 7.** Proof, by contrast with the most that man will do for man, of the greatness of the love implied in the foregoing statement.

Hardly, or 'scarcely': an extreme supposition.

Righteous: one whose conduct agrees with the Law. The above unlikely supposition is justified by a case which perhaps occurs.

Good: beneficent, and therefore more than 'righteous'.

The 'good' man: one whose conspicuous beneficence makes him a definite object of thought.

Dares: suggesting the fearful reality of facing death, even for 'the good man.' Notice the hesitation of these words as going almost beyond possibility, and the prominence given to the character of the man for whom conceivably one might perhaps venture to die. All human experience tells how rare is the case here supposed.

**Ver. 8.** Proof of God's love for us involved in what Christ has actually done on behalf of sinners, in contrast to the difficult suggestion of a man

dying even for the good man. This event of the past is ever with us, and each day gives-proof of God's love.

Still 'sinners': continuing in sin even while God was giving proof of His love to them.

**Ver. 9.** Triumphant inference from the proof of God's love given in Romans 5:6-8, supporting the assertion in Romans 5:5 that His love makes it impossible that our hope will put us to shame.

Much more: not greater abundance, as in Romans 11:12, but greater certainty, as in Romans 5:10, 15, 17. It is much more easy to believe that we shall be saved by Christ's 'life' than that we have been justified by His death. To believe the latter, compels us to believe the former.

Now: in contrast to days gone by.

In His blood: recalling same words in Romans 3:25: a vivid picture. The blood which flowed from His hands and feet purchased our pardon.

'Shall be saved': final deliverance from all evil: so Romans 10:10; 13:11; Philippians 1:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; 2 Timothy 2:10. This salvation has already begun and is progressing: so Romans 8:24; Ephesians 2:5; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 2:15. Paul here looks forward to its completion.

From the anger: of God against sin: so Romans 1:18; 2:5, 8; 1 Thessalonians 1:10. From the past Paul draws an inference for the future. If God loves us so much as to pardon our sins at the cost of the blood of Christ, He will not leave the pardoned ones to perish in the day of judgment.

**Ver. 10.** Fuller restatement of the above argument.

Enemies: sinners (Romans 5:8) exposed to God's righteous hostility to sin. So Romans 11:28; Colossians 1:21; Ephesians 2:16.

Reconciled: brought into a peaceful relation to God: so 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:20, 22. It is not merely or chiefly removal of our hostility to God, but our deliverance from His righteous hostility and anger against sin.

This is God's work: hence we-were-'reconciled.' For the meaning of this phrase, see Matthew 5:24; 1 Corinthians 7:11; 1 Samuel 29:4. It denotes here the removal, by means of Christ's death, of a barrier to peace with God having its foundation in the essential justice of God.

Of His Son: the point of the argument. Christ's death proves God's love to us: for He is the Son of God.

We shall be saved: repeating the argument of Romans 5:9.

In His life: by means of the power of the living and ascended Savior, this looked upon as the environment of our salvation. What God has already done has cost the death of His Son. To complete our deliverance, will require no fresh suffering; but will require only the living power of Christ. The costliness of the beginning is a pledge of the completion of the work. Similar argument in Romans 8:32.

**Ver. 11.** A supplementary argument supporting the confidence expressed in Romans 5:10, and another exultation in addition to those in Romans 5:2, 3.

Not only have we been reconciled but we are exulting in God. Cp. Romans 2:17, 23. This recalls "exult in hope" in Romans 5:2, and "exult in afflictions" in Romans 5:3.

Through our Lord, etc.: recalling Romans 5:1, and noting the completion of the argument there begun. Not only have we been reconciled to God through the death of His Son, but day by day we find in God matter of joyful confidence.

Through whom, etc.: emphatic repetition of the truth that our salvation in all its elements is through Christ.

Already: or 'now,' as in Romans 5:9. The argument is this. Our present joyful confidence is itself a pledge that our hope of final salvation will be fulfilled. For it has its root in God and has been evoked in us by means of the coming and death and resurrection of Christ. Such a confidence, thus evoked, cannot deceive. It therefore confirms the proof of blessing to come already deduced from our reconciliation through the death of Christ.

The argument begun in Romans 5:5b is now complete. God's love to us has been proved by the death of Christ for sinners compared with what man will do for the best of his fellows. And it has been shown that what God has already done for us at so great cost, and the confidence in God thus evoked, are a sure pledge that He will save us to the end. If so, we shall enter (Romans 5:2) the glory of God; and our hope of glory, strengthened by endurance of so many hardships, will not put us to shame.

Notice the perfect confidence with which Paul assumes that all his readers, like himself, were once 'sinners' and 'enemies' of God; that they have been 'justified' and 'reconciled,' and are now at 'peace with God;' and that they know this. For nothing less than a full assurance of the favor of God could prompt the joyful exultation which glows in every line of this section, an exultation not quenched but intensified by the hardships of life.

In Romans 5:10, as in Romans 1:3, 4, we find the title 'Son of God.' That 'enemies' have been reconciled to God 'through the death of His Son,' implies an infinite difference between Him and them, a difference based upon His relation to God as His Son. Moreover, Paul's appeal to the death of Christ as a proof of the love, not of Christ, but of God, reveals the peculiar closeness of Christ's relation to God. For it suggests a father who gives up his own son, whom he loves with a peculiar affection, to rescue others who are not his sons. This implies that Christ's relation to God is altogether different from ours. This important doctrine, Paul assumes here, as in Romans 1:3, 4, without proof, except the historic proof afforded by His resurrection. See Diss. i. And on this great doctrine rests the whole argument of this section.

In Romans 2:29, we felt for a moment the presence of the Spirit, as author of the circumcision of the heart. With this slight exception, the Holy Spirit and the love of God come before us now for the first time, and in the same verse. The connection is significant. The love of God, which is His inmost essence, is made known to us only by the inward presence of the Spirit of God. A knowledge of His love and the presence of the Spirit belong to the new life which in this chapter we have entered.

The love of God was manifested in the historic fact of the death of Christ; and is proved by Paul, from this fact, by human argument. Nevertheless,

the assurance of God's love is produced in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Notice here the true place and office and connection of the facts of Christianity, of human reasoning, and of the Holy Spirit. Upon the facts is built up a logical argument: into this argument the Spirit breathes life and power, and thus makes the facts real to us. Therefore, before Paul begins to reason about the facts he pays homage to the Spirit. But he is none the less careful to prove by conclusive reasoning the historic certainty on which rests the Christian hope. It is always dangerous to accept as the voice of the Spirit that which does not rest on historic fact and sound logic. See notes under Romans 8:17.

Let us now analyse the spiritual life described in this section. Here are men once living in sin because forgetful of God. They were therefore looked upon by God as enemies; and were powerless to escape from, or make peace with, their great adversary. But God loved them: and, since their salvation was not otherwise possible, He gave His Son to die for them, and proclaimed through His death the justification of all who believe. They believed; and were justified, and thus reconciled to their adversary, and consequently are now at peace with God. Christ has brought them near to God. They know that they are justified, and that their justification is a gift of God's favor towards them. Conscious of this, they stand securely, and look forward with exultation to an entrance into the glory in which God dwells. It is true that their path is crowded with enemies who press heavily upon them: but in spite of these they go forward. Each victory reveals the strength of the arm on which they lean. Thus each conflict increases their assurance of final victory: and the trials of life, of which they understand the purpose, call forth in them a song of triumph. When they believed, God gave His Spirit to dwell in their hearts: and the Spirit has made them conscious that God loves them. Their assurance of His love, though produced by the Spirit, rests upon outward evidence which can be tested by human reasoning. Their present position has cost the death of Christ, and is therefore a proof of God's love, and a pledge that God will not leave them to perish. Indeed, their exultation in God is itself a proof of this. Therefore, although their entire life rests upon a hope of the future, their position is secure. For their hope is one which puts no man to shame.

## SECTION 15

### THE CURSE OF ADAM IS REVERSED

#### CHAPTER 5:12-19

*Because of this, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and in this way to all men death passed through, in as much as all sinned- For until the Law sin was in the world. But sin is not reckoned while there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned as king from Adam until Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the Coming One.*

*Nevertheless, not as the trespass, so also the gift of grace. For if, by the trespass of the one, the many died, much more did the grace of God and the free gift, in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ, abound for the many. And not as through one having sinned, is the free gift. For on the one hand the judgment came by one for condemnation, but the gift of grace came by many trespasses for a decree of righteousness. For if by the trespass of the one death became king through the one, much more shall they who receive the abundance of the grace and of the free gift of righteousness reign in life as kings through the one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as through one trespass a result came for all men tending towards condemnation, so also through one decree of righteousness a result came for all men tending towards justification of life. For, just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous.*

**Ver. 12.** Because of this: introducing a logical result of the fact, stated in Romans 5:11, that through Christ we have been reconciled to God, viz. that in Christ we have a parallel to the estrangement of our race from God through Adam's sin.

Man: a human being of any age or sex: cp. John 16:21. From Romans 5:14 (cp. 1 Corinthians 15:22) we learn that the one ‘man’ was Adam: contrast Sirach xxv. 24, quoted below. Had not he sinned, death would not have gained a mastery over the whole race.

Sin: personified as an active, ruling principle: so Romans 5:21; 6:12, 13, 17, 19.

‘Sin’ entered: therefore before that time it was outside the world, i.e. the human race, the only part of the world capable of sin. In Genesis 1:31, we find a sinless world. These words suggest that Adam’s sin was in some sense a cause of the many sins of his children: see note below.

And in this way: through sin and through one man.

Passed through: extended its dominion to all men. The death of each individual is a compulsory tribute to the sovereignty then usurped.

Inasmuch as all sinned: a reason why through one man’s sin death spread its sway over the entire race, thus expounding ‘in this way.’ Paul says that when Adam sinned, ‘all sinned.’ This cannot refer to their own personal sins: for, as will be proved in Romans 5:13, these are not the cause of the universal reign of death. The meaning of these difficult words, Paul will further expound in Romans 5:18, 19.

Notice here a plain assertion that all men die because Adam sinned: so 1 Corinthians 15:22. This is also the easiest explanation of John 8:44. The same teaching may be fairly inferred from Genesis 2:17; 3:19, 22. But it is not elsewhere clearly taught in the Bible. We find it however in Wisdom ii. 23, “God created man for incorruptibility... but by envy of the devil death entered into the world;” and in Sir. xxv. 24, “Because of her we all die.” These quotations, from different authors, prove that the teaching before us was known among the Jews before the time of Christ. See further in note below on “Original Sin.”

**Ver.** 12 is incomplete: it states only one side of an important comparison. For, although grammatically the clause ‘also in this way, etc.’ might be taken as introducing the second member of the comparison, this would yield no adequate contrast. Evidently the comparison is broken off in order to prove the former side of it. The second side is informally introduced in

Romans 5:15; and the whole comparison is formally stated in Romans 5:18, 19. Similar broken constructions are found in Galatians 2:6-9; Ephesians 2:1-5.

**Ver.** 13-14. Proof, from historic facts, of the doctrine stated in Romans 5:12. That Paul interrupts his comparison in order to prove this first member of it, shows that it was not so generally accepted as to make proof needless.

Law: the Law of Moses looked at in its abstract quality as a prescription of conduct: so Romans 2:12.

Until the 'Law': throughout the time preceding the giving of the Law: see Romans 2:14.

Sin reckoned: so Romans 4:8. We have here a universal principle bearing upon the foregoing historic fact. It is true that during the whole period up to the time of Moses sin was in the world. But this will not account for the reign of death. For, although death is the penalty of sin, the penalty is not inflicted while there is no law.

Nevertheless, death reigned-as-king: although there was no law prescribing such penalty.

There 'was sin... death reigned': but the latter was not a result of the former, because the connecting link, 'law,' was absent.

Likeness (as in Romans 1:23) of Adam's transgression: their sin was not, like his, an overstepping of a marked-out line. These words leave room for any men from Adam to Moses who may have broken definite commands prescribing a penalty, and who therefore died because of their own sin. Paul reminds us that the reign of death was not limited to any such cases.

This argument is Paul's proof of the teaching in Romans 5:12 that all men die because Adam sinned. It is true that all have sinned and that death is the penalty of sin prescribed to Adam in Paradise and afterwards in the Law given to Israel. But the universal reign of death long before Moses cannot be an infliction of the penalty threatened to him. It must therefore be an infliction on Adam's children of the penalty laid upon him (Genesis 3:19) for his first transgression.



The above argument is not invalidated by the law written in the heart, by which, as we read in Romans 2:14, 15, they who have not received the Mosaic Law will be judged and punished. For this law belongs to the inner and unseen world, and in that unseen world its penalty will be inflicted. The punishment of bodily death belongs to the outer and visible world; and therefore cannot be inflicted in fulfilment of a law written only within.

A similar argument may be drawn from the death of infants. Upon them, though innocent of actual sin, the punishment of death is inflicted. This proves that they come into the world sharing the punishment, and therefore in effect the sin, of Adam. But it suited Paul better to use an argument which keeps the Law before his readers. The case of infants confirms the conclusion at which, by another path, Paul arrived.

Notice that to Paul death is essentially and always the penalty of sin. He sees men die; and inquires for whose sin the penalty is inflicted. His view is confirmed by the fact that both in Paradise and at Sinai God threatened to punish sin by death, and thus set it apart from all natural processes as a mark of His anger. See further in the note below.

Type: so Romans 6:17: a Greek word denoting a mark made by the pressure of something hard. It is used in John 20:25 for a mark of nails; in Acts 7:43 for a copy or imitation; and in Acts 7:44; Hebrews 8:5 for a model or pattern to be imitated. Hence commonly for a pattern to be followed: 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11; Philippians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7; 1 Peter 5:3.

The Coming One: Christ, to whom, standing by Adam, Paul looks forward as still to come. After teaching that God put Adam in such relation to mankind that his sin brought death to all men, he now teaches that in this, in an inverse direction, Adam was a pattern of Christ. He thus introduces the second side of the comparison broken off at the end of Romans 5:12. This second side will occupy Romans 5:15-19.

**Ver. 15.** Nevertheless, not as, etc.: although Adam is a type of Christ, the comparison between the trespass (see Romans 4:25) of Adam and the gift-of-grace (see Romans 1:11) of Christ does not hold good in everything. Where it fails, Paul will explain in Romans 5:16. But he has introduced a new word, 'gift-of-grace,' and must explain and justify it before he proves

the denial of which it is a part. This explanation occupies the rest of Romans 5:15: it is also a partial statement of the other side of the comparison broken off in Romans 5:12.

For if, etc.: explanation of ‘the gift-of-grace’ which Paul has just put beside ‘the trespass’ of Adam.

By the trespass of the one, the many died: a restatement of Romans 5:12.

The free-gift: explained in Romans 5:17 as “‘the free gift’ of righteousness.”

It is a manifestation of the grace of God: cp. Romans 3:24: “justified as a ‘free gift’ by His grace.” God’s favor and the gift of righteousness reached us in the grace of the one man, i.e. amid the favor shown to us by Jesus Christ. Cp. 2 Corinthians 8:9.

Abounded for: as in Romans 3:7: produced overflowing results in a definite direction, viz. ‘towards the many’. These last words denote a tendency, not necessarily an actual result. Nor does the indefinite term ‘the many’ denote necessarily the same number of persons in each case: see under Romans 5:19. The article implies only in each case a definite object of thought.

Much more: greater certainty, as in Romans 5:9, 10. For here there can be no comparison in quantity. But considering God’s character, it is ‘much more’ easy to believe that the many are blessed than that the many die through one man. The former, Paul has proved: and his proof of it compels us to believe the latter. A similar kind of argument in Romans 5:9, 10.

**Ver. 16.** Paul now adds to the surpassing comparison in Romans 5:15b a restatement of the denial in Romans 5:15a, i.e. of the one point in which the comparison does not hold good:

and not as, etc. The free gift through Christ differs from the death which came through Adam in that the latter was occasioned only by one ‘man’ having sinned: i.e. by one man’s sin. This denial is expounded and proved in Romans 5:16b, 17.

The judgment: the sentence pronounced in Paradise on Adam’s sin. In consequence of one ‘man,’ i.e. of his sin, this judgment became adverse, i.e. condemnation. These words look upon sin from a new point of view, viz.

that of the judge who condemns it. This result followed from the action of 'one' man.

But the gift-of-grace follows, and undoes the effect of, many trespasses, and leads up to a decree-of-righteousness, i.e. acquittal, a direct contrast to 'condemnation.' See under Romans 5:18.

**Ver. 17.** Practical result of the decree of acquittal just mentioned, prefaced by a restatement of the darker side of the comparison.

Death became king: restatement of "the many died" in Romans 5:15, in a form already adopted in Romans 5:14. This reign of death was the punishment following the condemnation pronounced in Paradise.

The abundance of the grace and of the free gift of righteousness: resuming and expounding similar words in Romans 5:15.

They who receive, etc.: only to those who believe does the blessing which comes through Christ surpass the loss through Adam. Notice the emphatic repetition, keeping before us the point of comparison:

by the one 'man's' trespass... through the one... through the one. Also the tone of triumph. Through Adam's sin death became our king. His dread summons, we are compelled to obey. But a day is coming when upon the throne now occupied by death ourselves will sit and reign in endless life.

That the numbers affected are not the same on both sides, does not mar the comparison: for Paul writes as a believer to believers. To them the gift through Christ outweighs the effect not only of Adam's sin but of their own (Romans 5:16) 'many trespasses.'

**Ver. 18.** After the digression in Romans 5:13, 14, inserted to prove the former side of the great comparison in Romans 5:12, and the second digression (Romans 5:15-17), in which he proves that the parallel does not hold good in all details, and also states the essential and glorious matter of the second side of the comparison, Paul comes now formally to state in Romans 5:18 and to restate in Romans 5:19 the whole comparison. The resumed thread is indicated by the phrase 'for all men,' already used in Romans 5:12 for the former side, now for the first time used for both sides, of the comparison.

Therefore: a logical summing up and inference, as in Romans 7:3, 25; 8:12; 9:16, 18; 14:12, 19.

Through one trespass: emphatic resumption of similar words in Romans 5:15, 17.

For all men: resuming the same words in Romans 5:12.

For condemnation: resuming the same words in Romans 5:16.

Decree-of-righteousness: acquittal, as in Romans 5:16, where its meaning is determined by its contrast to 'condemnation.' In Romans 5:16, this acquittal was mentioned as an outworking of God's grace: here it is a channel through which come 'justification' and 'life' eternal. It is best to take the word as denoting the Gospel announcement of pardon for all who believe, this being looked upon as a judicial decree and as pronounced once for all in Christ.

For all men: a definite universal phrase which cannot denote less than the entire race, a meaning it must have in the former part of this verse. Same words, in same universal sense, in 1 Timothy 2:1, 4; Titus 2:11. In Romans 12:17; 1 Corinthians 7:7; 15:19; 2 Corinthians 3:2, the compass is less definite, but still universal.

Justification: announcement of pardon, as in Romans 4:25.

Of life: result of justification. So Romans 5:17.

The meaning of Romans 5:18 is obscured by the absence of any verb in either clause. So Romans 5:15a, 16a and b. The verb here must be supplied from the foregoing argument. The verse reads literally, 'Therefore, as through one trespass for all men, for condemnation, so also through one decree of righteousness for all men for justification of life.' The word εἰς which I have rendered 'for,' denotes tendency, whether of actual result or more frequently of purpose. In Romans 7:10, we have both uses in one short verse; the commandment was designed for life, but actually it resulted in death. The precise meaning in each case must be determined by the context. In Romans 5:18a, we have an actual result: through one moral fall an influence has gone forth which has reached all men, and has resulted to all in condemnation to death. Through one proclamation of pardon has gone forth an influence designed for all men and leading to justification and

life eternal. Over against a universal result, Paul sets a universal purpose to counteract that result. This universal purpose is all that his words grammatically mean, and all that his argument demands. When he speaks in the indicative future of actual results, as in Romans 5:17, 19, he does not use the definite term 'all men.'

**Ver. 19.** Summary of the reasons and explanations, as Romans 5:18 summed up the conclusions, of Romans 5:12-17; 5:18 corresponds with "to all men death passed through;" Romans 5:19, with "inasmuch as all sinned."

Constituted sinners: made sharers of the punishment inflicted on Adam, and in this sense made sharers of his sin: a forensic reckoning. In a still deeper sense we have become sinners through Adam's sin: see note below. But of this deeper sense we have no hint here.

Obedience: Christ's obedience to death, as in Philippians 2:8. For in Romans 3:24-26, of which Romans 5 is a practical and experimental exposition, justification is attributed, not to Christ's obedient life, of which as yet in this epistle we have read nothing, but conspicuously to His death and blood.

Shall be constituted righteous: faith reckoned for righteousness, as each one from time to time appropriates by faith the one decree of righteousness. The future tense as in Romans 4:24, "us to whom it shall be reckoned:" cp. Romans 5:14, "the Coming One." This is better than to refer it to the great day: for believers are already accepted as righteous. Paul puts himself between Adam and Christ, and looks back to the sentence pronounced on the many because of Adam's sin and forward to the justification which in Gospel days will be announced to the many because of Christ's obedience to death.

The change from 'all men' in Romans 5:12, 18 to the many in Romans 5:15, 19 cannot have been adopted merely to remind us of the large number of persons referred to. For this would be more forcefully done by the words 'all men.' But Paul could not say that 'all men' will be constituted righteous. For there are some of whom he writes with tears, in Philippians 3:19, that their "end is destruction." And in Romans 5:17 he limits his assertion to "those who will receive the abundance of the grace." That in

the 2nd clause of Romans 5:19 the phrase the many does not include so many as it does in the 1st clause, does not mar the comparison. For the blessing is designed for all men, and will be actually received by all except those who reject it.

We will now build up Paul's argument from his own premises. God created man without sin, and gave him a law of which death was the penalty. Adam broke the law, and was condemned to die: and this sentence we find inflicted also upon his descendants. It is true that they are sinners: but, since no law prescribing death as penalty has been given to them, their death cannot be a punishment of their own sins. We therefore infer that the condemnation pronounced on Adam was designed for them, and that God treated them as in some sense sharers of his sin. In later days, another Man appears. He was obedient, even when obedience involved death. Through His death, pardon is proclaimed for all who believe: and through Him many enjoy God's favor and will reign in endless life. Since the Gospel offers salvation to all men and is designed for all, we have in it a parallel, in an opposite direction, to the condemnation pronounced in Paradise, and in Adam a pattern of Christ. But we have more than a parallel. We also have broken definite commands. For our own sins, we deserve to die: but through Christ we shall escape the result, not only of Adam's sin, but of our own many trespasses. Therefore to all men the blessing is equal to the curse: for it offers eternal life to all. To believers, it is infinitely greater.

**Ver.** 18 implies clearly that God's purpose to save embraced all men. It therefore contradicts any theory which limits the efficacy of the Gospel by some secret purpose of God to withhold from some men the influences leading to repentance and faith which He brings to bear on others. The universality of these influences is implied, as we have seen, in Romans 2:4. It is asserted or implied in Romans 14:15; 1 Corinthians 8:11; 1 Timothy 2:4; 4:10, Titus 2:11; John 3:16; 6:51; 12:47; 1:29; 1 John 4:14; 2:2. Against these passages, there is nothing to set. For the more limited reference in Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25; John 10:11, 15; 15:13; 11:52 is included in the wider; and is easily explained. Similarly, the still narrower references in 2 Corinthians 8:9; Galatians 2:20. For they who accept salvation are in a special sense objects of Christ's love, even as compared with those who reject it. The entire N.T. assumes that the ruin of the wicked is due only to their rejection of a salvation designed for all.

In Romans 5:1-11, Doctrine 2, Justification through the Death of Christ, was expounded in its bearing on the individual: in Romans 5:12-19, it is expounded in its bearing on the race as a whole and on our relation to the father of the race. In the reversal not only of the evils we have brought upon ourselves but of those resulting from a curse pronounced in the infancy of mankind, we see the importance and the triumph of the Gospel. Again, in Romans 4, Paul supported Doctrine 1, Justification through Faith, by pointing out its harmony with God's treatment of Abraham. He has now supported Doctrine 2 by pointing out its harmony with God's treatment of Adam; and has thus given a wonderful and unexpected confirmation both of the Gospel and of the story of Paradise. Lastly and chiefly, we here find in the Gospel a solution (the only conceivable solution) of what would otherwise be an inexplicable mystery. Independently of the Gospel, Paul has proved that all men suffer and die because of the sin of one who lived before they were born. This would be, if it were the whole case, inconsistent with every conception we can form of the justice of God. We now find that it is not the whole case. The pardon proclaimed through Christ for all who believe justifies the curse pronounced on all because of Adam's sin. Thus the dark shadow of death discloses a bright light shining beyond it.

Notice that Paul accepts the story of Paradise as embodying important truth. But, that he refers only to broad principles, leaves us uncertain whether he held the literal meaning of all its details.

**ORIGINAL SIN.** We have no indication that the word death in Romans 5:12-19 means anything except the death of the body. The argument rests on the story of Genesis; and there we have no hint of any death except (Genesis 3:19) the return of dust to dust. The proof in Romans 5:14 of the statement in Romans 5:12 refers evidently to the visible reign of natural death. And the comparison of Adam and Christ requires no other meaning of the word. Through one man's sin, the race was condemned to go down into the grave: and through one man's obedience and one divine proclamation of pardon believers will obtain a life beyond the grave. The whole argument is but a development of 1 Corinthians 15:22.

Nor have we any direct reference to universal depravity as a result of Adam's sin. Had it been Paul's purpose to assert this result, this section

would have been out of its place in the epistle. For as yet he has not referred explicitly to any moral change wrought in us by Christ. We may go further and say that the Bible nowhere teaches plainly and explicitly that in consequence of Adam's sin all men are born naturally prone to evil. That this important doctrine may however be inferred with complete certainty from the teaching of this section read in the light of other teaching of Holy Scripture, I shall now endeavor to show.

In Romans 2:1, 3, 5, Paul assumed that, apart from the Gospel, all men are committing sin. In spite of (Romans 2:14, 26) occasional and fragmentary obedience, he has convicted (Romans 3:9) both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. By works of law (Romans 5:20) Will no flesh be justified before Him: for (Romans 5:23) all have sinned. Unless justified through faith, all men are (Romans 5:6-10) morally powerless godless, sinners, and enemies of God. All are or have been slaves of sin: Romans 6:17, 19, 20. The awful reality of this bondage is described in Romans 7:23, 24. It is closely connected with bodily life: for (Romans 8:8) they that are in flesh cannot please God. All this implies an inborn and universal tendency to evil. And throughout the N.T. we find similar teaching.

We cannot conceive man to have been thus made by a righteous and loving Creator. And that everything that He made was very good, is asserted in Genesis 1:31. A change has taken place: we seek its cause.

In Romans 6:16-22, we shall learn that to sin is to surrender ourselves to an evil power greater than our own, to be its slaves. This is plainly and solemnly asserted by Christ in John 8:34. Therefore, unless the sinner be rescued by one mightier than himself, his first trespass will inevitably be followed by a course of sin. If so, by his first sin Adam must have lost his moral balance, and fallen under the power of sin. And, since even the powers of evil are in God's hand, this inner result of sin must have been by His permission and ordinance. It was therefore a divinely-inflicted punishment. God decreed that the first act of disobedience should be followed by proneness to sin.

It is now evident that the consequences of Adam's sin were both outward and inward. God gave up his body to the worms, and (cp. Romans 1:24, 26, 28) his spirit, in some real measure, to the power of sin.



The former part of this penalty, we find inflicted on all Adam's children. This, Paul describes by saying, in Romans 5:10, 19, that in him they all sinned, and that through his disobedience many were constituted sinners. This suggests an original relation between him and them such that, in its physical consequence, his sin became theirs. It is equally certain that the latter part of the penalty is inflicted upon all. For we find that all men are actually, unless saved by Christ, slaves of sin. This cannot have been their state as created. We can account for it only by supposing that they share not only the physical but the moral effect of their father's fall. By sin he sold himself into moral bondage: and because of his sin his children are born slaves to sin.

The above is confirmed by an important picture of universal sin in Ephesians 2:1-3, concluding with the words "and were by nature children of anger, as the rest." Paul here traces actual sins to an inborn tendency. Similarly in John 3:6 Christ traces the necessity for a new birth to the origin of our bodily life, "born from the flesh." In Psalm 51:5; Job 11:12; 14:4; 15:14, we have indications of an inborn defect of human nature. Since this defect cannot be attributed to the Creator, it must have another cause: and this cause lies open to our view in the fall of the first father of our race, from whom we inherit the corruption of death.

This inference is confirmed by all the facts of human heredity. Indisputably men inherit from their parents not only special physical weaknesses but special tendencies to various sins.

In this sense we may say that Adam's sin was reckoned or imputed to his children: not that God looks on them as though they were in any way responsible for it, but simply that the evils which God threatened should follow sin have fallen upon Adam's descendants, by the decree of God, because Adam sinned. About the state of men unsaved, see further at the close of 22.

In Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22, Paul asserts plainly, following earlier Jewish writers, e.g. Wisdom ii. 23, Sirach xxv. 24, that the doom of death now resting on all men is a result of Adam's sin. On the other hand, modern Science leaves no room to doubt that animals died long ages before man appeared; and that the death of man is closely related to that of animals. This apparent contradiction demands careful consideration.

The statement that “through one man sin entered into the world” does not necessarily include the death of animals. For the term ‘the world’ may fairly be limited to the human race, as in Romans 3:6, “God will judge the world,” and in Romans 3:19, “all the world become guilty before God;” where all else except the human race lies outside the writer’s thought. Consequently Paul’s statement is not directly contradicted by the earlier death of animals.

The real question before us is, What would have happened if Adam had not sinned? This question Natural Science cannot answer. For the intelligence and moral sense of man cannot be accounted for by any forces observed working in animal life; and therefore reveal in him an element higher than everything in animals and closely related to the unseen Creator of animals and men.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, each of these elements, the animal and the divine, claims to rule the entire life of man. Between them, capable of being influenced by either, is the mysterious self-determination of man. All this belongs to his original constitution.

[(1) This is well argued, by a naturalist of the first rank, in Wallace’s ‘Darwinism,’ pp. 461-474.]

In the inevitable conflict resulting from this dual constitution, man accepted as his Lord the lower element of his nature. Like an animal, he ate attractive food, disregarding the divine prohibition. We need not wonder that by so doing he fell under the doom of death to which all animal life had long been subject. But we cannot doubt that man was absolutely free to yield submission to the higher, instead of the lower, side of his nature. And we have no proof whatever that, if he had done this, and thus claimed his affinity to God, he would have fallen under the doom of animals.

This possibility lies outside the range of Natural Science. This last reports that animals died long before man appeared, and that to their death the death of man is closely related. Beyond this it cannot go; except that it finds in man phenomena which cannot be accounted for by the forces observed in animals, thus revealing in him a higher life. It cannot therefore contradict the teaching of the great apostle.

This teaching is confirmed by the repulsiveness of the phenomena of death, a repulsiveness increasing as we ascend the scale of life. This

repulsiveness suggests irresistibly that a world in which death is the doom of every living thing is not itself the consummation of the Creator's purpose. It compels us to look for a new earth and heaven not darkened by the shadow of death. Against this hope, Natural Science, which sees only things around, has nothing to say. The objection we are considering need not therefore deter us from accepting the doctrine before us.

We shall however do well to remember that this doctrine is taught in the N.T. only by Paul; and that it is not made, even by him, a fundamental truth on which other teaching is built. It is introduced only to show how far-reaching is the salvation announced by Christ; and therefore ought not to be quoted as one of the great doctrines of the Gospel.

## SECTION 16

### THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

#### CHAPTER 5:20, 21

*But a law entered beside, in order that the trespass might multiply. But where sin multiplied, grace abounded beyond measure; in order that, just as sin became king in death, in this way also grace might become king, through righteousness, for eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

In 15, we saw the bearing, each upon the other, of the two greatest events in the spiritual history of mankind, viz. the Fall and the Gospel. But Paul cannot overlook the third greatest event, the giving of the Law. He will now tell us the place and purpose of the Law in its relation to the other two events. This will teach us both its importance and its subordinate position: it was only a means to an end, but a divinely-chosen means to the noblest of all ends.

**Ver. 20.** A law: the Mosaic Law, in its abstract character. God gave from Sinai a rule of conduct.

Entered-beside, or ‘along-side’: coming in between sin and death, and the Gospel.

In order that, etc.: purpose of God in giving a rule of conduct.

The trespass: Adam’s disobedience, as in Romans 5:15.

Multiply, or ‘become-more’: in the “many trespasses” of Romans 5:16. The express commands given at Sinai, following the one command given in Paradise, were followed by many acts of disobedience. If, as we have just seen, Adam’s children inherited his fallen nature, these many trespasses were a result, and in this sense a multiplication, of his first trespass. Moreover, this was the only possible result of the gift of a divine law to a race born in sin. Paul therefore speaks of it as the designed result: ‘in order that, etc.’

But where, etc.: another and surpassing event.

Sin: the abstract principle underlying the concrete trespass. It prepares a way for the personification of sin in Romans 5:21.

Grace abounded-beyond-measure: the favor of God produced results far surpassing those of ‘the’ one ‘trespass.’ As explained in Romans 5:15-17, they were superabundant in reversing the effects not of one but of many trespasses, and in giving life to many, each of whom deserved death for his own transgression. The one act of disobedience was followed by many such acts: and thus the empire of sin extended its sway. But this multiplication of the trespass, instead of evoking a corresponding outburst of divine anger, called forth God’s goodwill, in the form of saving mercy, in measure greater than the spread of the evil.

**Ver. 21.** Purpose of this superabounding grace, and ultimate purpose of the Law.

Sin became-king: so Romans 5:14, 17, “death became king.”

In death: the visible throne from which sin proclaims its tremendous power. Every corpse laid in the grave is a result of sin, and reveals its power. Moreover, sometimes men have committed sin for fear of death: cp. Hebrews 2:15.

Grace may-reign-as-king: the undeserved favor of God personified; as death and sin have been. God’s purpose is that His own undeserved favor, with royal bounty, may rule and bless those who once were under the sway of sin and death.

Through righteousness: recalling “the gift of righteousness,” in Romans 5:17. It is a necessary condition of

life eternal. This last (see under Romans 2:7) is the ultimate aim of God’s favor towards us. So Romans 6:22, 23.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord: the one channel of grace and righteousness and life eternal. It is a conspicuous feature of Romans 5: see Romans 5:1, 11, 17: cp. Romans 1:5, 8; 3:24; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 5:18.

The purpose of the Law as here stated supplements and explains that stated in Romans 3:19. The Law commends itself to our moral sense as

right; and, by bidding us do something beyond our power, it inevitably produces a consciousness of guilt, and leads up to further disobedience. All this was foreseen and designed by God as a means to a further end, viz. pardon and life. So Galatians 3:23, 24.

The above teaching about the Law of Moses is in part true of the law written in the heart. Had there been in Adam's children no inborn moral sense, his moral fall would not have produced the far-reaching and terrible results we now see. By erecting in every man this barrier against sin, God has revealed the mighty power of sin which breaks down the barrier, and the terrible moral consequences of Adam's fall. But to this inner law there is no reference here. DIVISION II is now complete. The whole of it is a logical development of two great doctrines asserted in Romans 3:21-26. In Romans 3:27 — Romans 4:25, Paul shows that Doct. I, Justification through Faith, shuts out all self-exultation, but is in harmony with God's treatment of Abraham: in Romans 5, he develops Doct. 2, Justification through the Death of Christ, and shows that it gives us a well-grounded exultation in hope of glory, and is in harmony with, and is the only conceivable explanation of, God's dealings with mankind in Adam

The complete confidence with which Paul accepts the facts and utterances of Genesis and uses them to defend the great doctrines of the Gospel proves that in the days of the apostles the substantial truth of Genesis was admitted by Jews and Christians. See further is Diss. III. If we accept the great doctrines asserted and assumed in Romans 3:21-26, and the truth of Genesis, Paul's reasoning will compel us to accept the teaching of the whole division.

DIV. 2, like DIV. 1, concludes with an exposition of the purpose of the Law. The difference between the two expositions marks the progress we have made. DIV. 1 left us trembling beneath the shadow of Sinai, silent and guilty. But we have just learnt that the thunders of the Law are a voice of mercy, designed to lead us to Christ and thus to eternal life. DIV. 1 made us conscious of our guilt: DIV. 2 has reconciled us to God, brought us under His smile, and opened before our eyes a prospect of eternal glory. But as yet we have heard nothing about an inward moral change. This will be the lesson of the great Division before whose portal we now stand

## DIVISION III

### THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

#### CHAPTERS 6-8

#### SECTION 17

#### *IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST WE DIED TO SIN*

#### CHAPTER 6:1-10

*What then shall we say? Let us continue in sin, in order that grace may multiply? Be it not so. We who died to sin, how shall we still live in it? Or, are ye ignorant that so many of us as were baptized for Christ were baptized for His death? We were buried therefore with Him through this baptism for death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have become united in growth in the likeness of His death, we shall on the other hand be so in that of His resurrection also knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, in order that the body of sin may be made of no effect, that we may no longer be servants to sin. For he that has died is justified from sin. But if we died with Christ we believe that we shall also live with Him; knowing that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more: of Him, death is no longer Lord. For the death He died, He died to sin, once: but the life He lives, He lives for God.*

On entering Romans 6, we are at once conscious of a complete change of tone and feeling, a change more remarkable than that in Romans 3:21, because not accounted for by the altered position and prospects of the

persons referred to. Justification, the great feature of DIV. 2, meets us no more: other ideas take its place. We have entered another court of this wing of the temple of truth. DIV. 1 revealed to us the anger of God against all sin: DIV. 2 has now revealed deliverance from this anger, and restoration to His favor. DIV. 3 will reveal deliverance from the power of sin, and a new life free from sin. The one teaches what we receive through Christ; the other what we are in Christ. The order is significant: first reconciliation to God, then rescue from the power of sin. In Romans 6, we have the new life in its relation to sin and to God; in Romans 7, in its relation to the Law; in Rom 8, in its relation to the Holy Spirit. DIV. 2 was a logical development of the two great doctrines stated in Romans 3:21-26; in Div. III., we shall find other fundamental doctrines, from which will be derived results of an altogether different kind.

**Ver. 1.** What then shall we say? as in Romans 3:5; 4:1. Shall we infer from Romans 5:20, 21 that we may accomplish God's purposes by adding to the number of our sins in order that they may show forth the superabundant favor of God? The connection of thought is kept up by the words

grace and multiply. What Paul here suggests was the actual result of his own early hostility to the Gospel: 1 Timothy 1:14.

**Ver. 2.** An emphatic denial, supported by two questions introducing a new and important topic. Thus the questions in Romans 6:1 are stepping-stones to the new teaching in DIV. 3, and show that it guards from immoral perversion the teaching of DIV. 2 We must not 'continue' in 'sin,' because (Romans 6:1-10) God's purpose is that we be dead to sin and living for God, and because (Romans 6:15-23) sin is obedience to a master whose purpose is death.

Died to sin: separated from it, as a dead man is completely separated from the environment in which he lived: same phrase in Romans 6:10, 11; Galatians 2:19; 6:14; cp. Colossians 2:20, "died with Christ from the rudiments of the world." Paul assumes that we are in some sense 'dead to sin.' If he can prove this, he will compel us, by the very meaning of his words, to admit that in the same sense we can no longer live in it.



**Ver. 3.** Another question introducing, as something which the readers ought to know, a proof that we are dead to sin.

Baptized: the formal and visible gate into the Christian life. Since Paul has not yet spoken of salvation except through faith, we must understand him to refer here to the baptism of believers: so Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12. It was a conspicuous mode of confession, which, together with faith, is a condition of salvation: cp. Romans 10:9.

For: see under Romans 1:1.

Baptized for: as in Galatians 3:27; Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:16; 19:5; 1 Corinthians 10:2; 1:13, 15; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:4. It means that baptism is designed to place the baptized in a new relation to the object named; but does not say exactly what the relation is. We shall learn in Romans 6:5 that this new relation is an inward and spiritual contact with Christ which makes the baptized sharers of His life and moral nature: cp. 1 Corinthians 6:17; Galatians 3:27.

That God designs the justified to be thus united to Christ, Paul further expounds in Romans 6:4-10, by calling attention to those elements in Him which we are to share.

For His death: more exact statement of the new relation to Christ to which baptism has special reference. This recalls Doctrine 2, stated in Romans 3:25; 4:25; 5:9, 10. Paul thus approaches his proof that his readers have 'died to sin.'

**Ver. 4.** Inference from Romans 6:3.

Buried-with Him: so Colossians 2:11.

If baptism was a baptism for death, i.e. if it symbolized a union with Christ in His death, it was the funeral service of the old life; a formal announcement that the baptized were dead, and a visible removal of them from the world, Jewish or heathen, in which they formerly lived.

From the earliest sub-apostolic writings, we learn that immersion was the usual form of baptism. So Epistle of Barnabas Romans 11: "We go down into the water full of sins and defilement; and we go up bearing fruit in the heart." To this, probably, Paul here refers. Even the form of their

admission to the Church sets forth a spiritual burial and resurrection. But this is a mere allusion: and the argument is complete without it. The hour of his readers' baptism, in which they ranged themselves formally in the ranks of the persecuted followers of Christ, was no doubt indelibly printed in their memory. Paul here teaches them the significance and purpose of that rite, and the nature of the new life they then formally entered.

That immersion was not the only valid mode of baptism, we learn from 'The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles' Romans 7, where, in reference to baptism, the writer bids, if water be not abundant, to "pour water three times on the head, in the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit."

In order that, etc.: further purpose to be accomplished by our union with Christ.

Christ not only died but was raised from the dead, among whom He lay.

Through the glory of the Father: amid an outshining of the splendor of God manifested in Christ's rescue from the grave.

Just as 'Christ', etc.: in harmony with the historic fact that Christ's death was followed by a glorious resurrection, God's purpose is that we also as well as Christ henceforth live a resurrection 'life.' Of this life, 'newness' (see Romans 7:6) is a conspicuous feature. For the change is so complete that in Christ the old things have passed away or rather are become new: 2 Corinthians 5:17. And, since life is movement,

in this newness of life God designs us to walk. This last is a favorite metaphor of Paul: Romans 8:4; 13:13; 14:15; Ephesians 2:2, 10, etc.; also John 8:12; 12:35; 1 John 2:6.

**Ver. 5.** Proof that our burial with Christ was designed to lead to a life altogether new.

If: argumentative, as in Romans 6:8; Romans 5:10, etc.

United-in-growth: literally 'growing-together,' so that our development corresponds with, and is an organic outflow of, His.

Likeness: as Romans 1:23; 5:14. By union with Him, we undergo a death 'like' His.

On the other hand: **αλλὰ**: a strong adversative particle indicating that the second cause utterly overpowers the first, Same word in Romans 3:31; 5:14; 8:37. “It is true that we suffer a death like His: but this we need not regret; for from it we infer that we shall share a resurrection like His.”

We shall be: probably a rhetorical or logical future. For believers are already living a resurrection life. Same use of the future in Romans 6:8, where the argument of this verse is repeated, after an exposition of the former part of it: cp. Romans 4:24; 5:14, 19.

**Ver. 6.** Collateral explanation of our union with Christ in His death, followed by a statement of its purpose.

Our old man: so Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9: our old self. So complete is the change that Paul says that ‘the man’ himself is dead.

Crucified-together-with: so Galatians 2:20; Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32; John 19:32: shared with Christ His death on the cross. In what aspect of His death we are to be sharers with Him, we shall learn in Romans 6:10: how we are to become such, we shall learn in Romans 6:11. Paul here asserts that on the cross of Christ not only His life on earth but our own former selves came to an end.

In order that, etc.: purpose of this union with Christ in His death.

The body of Sin: the sinner’s own body in which (see Romans 6:12, 13) sin has set up its royal throne, whose desires he obeys, and whose members he presents to sin as instruments of unrighteousness. See also Romans 7:5, 23. The importance of the body in Paul’s theology and the subsequent argument here permit no other interpretation.

Made-of-no-effect: as in Romans 3:3; 4:14. In former times the indolence, appetites, necessities, and dangers of the body ruled us with an influence we could not resist; and led us into sin. It thus became a ‘body of sin.’ But, now that our old self has been nailed to the cross of Christ, our body has lost its adverse power.

No longer servants (or ‘slaves’: see Romans 1:1) to sin: purpose of this destruction of the power of the body, and ultimate aim of our crucifixion with Christ. In explanation of the words ‘grown-together with the likeness of His death’ in Romans 6:5, Paul says that we have shared the death of

Christ on the cross, in order that our bodies, hitherto organs of sin, may lose their control over us, and in order that thus we may escape from our former bondage to sin.

**Ver. 7.** Explains the foregoing ultimate purpose of our crucifixion with Christ.

He that has died, or, as we should say, 'is dead:' the believer, whom Paul looks upon as not merely dying but 'dead' on the cross. His former life has actually come to an end.

Justified: proclaimed by law free from sin, this being looked at as an adversary at law claiming rights over us. The word thus returns to its simplest meaning, in O.T. and N.T., of judgment in a man's favor. Cp. Sirach xxvi. 29: "With difficulty will a merchant be saved from wrong-doing: and a huckster will not be 'justified from sin.'" Over a criminal who has been put to death, the law has no further claim. And Paul here argues that in Christ's death we are dead, and therefore legally free from the master to whose power, for our sins, we were justly surrendered.

**Ver. 8-10.** Proof of the latter part, as Romans 6:6, 7 proved the former part, of Romans 6:5.

Died with Christ: crucified with Him, in Romans 6:6.

We believe: an assured conviction. It is also faith in God: for our hope of life rests, like Abraham's faith, on His promise and character.

Shall live with Him: logical future as in Romans 6:5: very appropriate here because this life will continue to endless ages.

Knowing that, etc.: ground of the assurance just expressed, viz. the deathless life of Christ, raised from the dead.

He dies no more: an unchanging truth, suitably put in the present tense.

Of Him, death is no longer Lord: recalling the royalty usurped in Romans 5:14, 17, to which even Christ submitted.

Of Romans 6:9; -Romans 6:10 is proof Christ's death on the cross was a death to sin: these last words emphatic. Since death is the end of life, and removes a man absolutely from the environment in which he lived, this

phrase can only mean that in some real sense, by His death on the cross, Christ escaped absolutely from all contact with sin; just as by death the martyr escapes from his persecutors and his prison. And this we can understand. In Gethsemane, He groaned under the burden of our sins; after His arrest, He was exposed to the insult and fury of bad men; and during many hours He hung in agony on the cross. All this was painful and shameful, though not defiling, contact with sin. And we know not how much it was aggravated by inward conflict with sin. But at sunset the Sufferer was free: by death He had for ever escaped from all contact with the powers of darkness. In this very real sense, the death

which He died, He died to sin. For His death on the cross put an end to the mysterious relation to sin into which for our sakes He entered.

Once, or 'once for all:' cp. Hebrews 7:27; 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10. The separation from sin was final. Moreover, though dead, Christ still 'lives.' This is implied in Romans 6:8, 'we shall live with Him.'

And the life which He lives, He lives for-God. This last word is the dative of advantage, as in 2 Corinthians 5:15, and five times in 1 Corinthians 6:13. It asserts that, of the life of our Risen Lord, God is the one aim, that His every purpose and effort aims only to accomplish the purposes of God. Such was also His life on earth: John 4:34; 6:38; 17:4. And such doubtless was the life of the pre-incarnate Son of God. Notice here a complete picture of Christ raised from the dead. By His death on the cross He escaped once and for ever from all contact with sin, and He now lives a life of which God is the one and only aim. This is the new life which they who share His escape from sin by His death on the cross expect (Romans 6:8) also to share.

The different renderings of the dative, 'dead to sin... living for God,' are unavoidable. Literally, Paul's words mean, 'dead in relation to sin... living in relation to God.' But the whole context shows that the relation 'to sin' is separation from it, and the relation 'to God' is devotion to Him. The R.V. rendering 'dead unto sin but alive unto God' is unmeaning. Uniformity is dearly purchased at such a price.

We will now endeavor to rebuild the argument of Romans 6:1-10.

Christ lived once under the curse of sin, and in a body subject to death. But He died; and rose from the dead. By dying, He escaped for ever from all painful contact with sin and sinners, and from death, the result of sin: and He now lives a life of unreserved devotion to God. In former days, we were slaves to sin, and were thus exposed to the righteous anger of God. To make our justification consistent with His own justice, God gave Christ to die; and raised Him from the dead in order that He may be the personal Object of justifying faith. God's purpose is so to unite us to Christ that we may share all that He has and is: and for this end we were united to Him in baptism. We were thus formally joined to One who was by death set free from sin and death, and who was raised by God to a deathless life. Therefore, so far as the purpose of God is accomplished in us, we are dead with Christ. And, if so, all law proclaims us free. We therefore infer that God's purpose is to set us free from all bondage to our own bodies and to sin. We also infer that God designs us to share the resurrection life of Christ. For we see Him, not only rescued from His enemies by His own death, but living in heaven a life of which God is the only aim. This assures us that God designs us to be united to Christ both in His separation from sin and in His active devotion to God. Therefore, so far as God's purpose is accomplished in us, we are (Romans 6:2) dead to sin. Consequently, to continue (Romans 6:1) to live in sin, is to resist God's purpose and to renounce the new life to which baptism was designed to be the visible portal.

In the above argument, we find, stated and assumed without proof but with perfect confidence, and made a basis of important moral teaching, a **THIRD FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE**, viz. that God designs the justified to share, so far as creatures can share, by vital union with Christ, all that He has and is, to be like Him by inward contact with Him. This doctrine will meet us again in Romans 6:11; Romans 7:4; 8:1, 17; also in 1 Corinthians 6:17; 2 Corinthians 5:15, 17; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 1:19, 20; 2:5, 6, etc. Similar teaching in John 15:1-8; 17:21, 26; 1 John 2:6, 24, 28; 3:6, 24; 4:17. That this remarkable doctrine is assumed with complete confidence but without proof by the two greatest apostles, men altogether different in temperament and modes of thought and almost unknown to each other, and that by one of them it is expressly attributed to Christ, can be accounted for only on the supposition that, like Justification through

Faith and through the Death of Christ, it was in some equivalent form actually taught by Christ. This proof is independent of the apostolic authority of Paul.

Notice that the above argument assumes Paul's Second Fundamental Doctrine, viz. Justification through the Death of Christ, taught in Romans 3:24-26; 4:25; 5:9, 10. For the only sense in which we can be crucified, dead, and buried with Christ, and thus dead to sin, is that through His death we are saved from sin. Moreover, the conspicuous place of the resurrection of Christ in Romans 6:4, 5, 9 reveals its importance as a link in the chain of salvation, and Paul's firm confidence that He had actually risen: cp. Romans 1:4. This importance is explained in Romans 4:24, 25, where we read that the faith which justifies is a reliance "on Him who raised Jesus from the dead," and that He "was raised for our justification." Thus the argument now before us assumes Paul's First great Doctrine of Justification through Faith. As we proceed, we shall find that these earlier doctrines imply, as a necessary moral sequence, the new doctrine now before us. Thus each of these three great doctrines implies and confirms and supplements the others. EXPOSITION OF DIV. III

## SECTION 18

### WE SERVE SIN NO MORE

#### CHAPTER 6:11-14

*So also ye, reckon yourselves to be dead to sin but living for God in Christ Jesus. Then let not sin reign as king in your mortal body, in order to obey its desires. Neither present the members of your body, as weapons of unrighteousness, to sin; but present yourselves to God as if living from the dead, and the members of your body, as weapons of righteousness, to God. For of you sin shall not be Lord: for ye are not under law but under grace.*

In Romans 6:1-10, Paul proved that God wills us to be dead to sin and living a new life: in Romans 6:11-14, he teaches how God's purpose may be realized in us, and bids us claim its realisation: in Romans 6:15-23, he will go on to prove, by comparison of the old and new, that this realisation is for our highest good.

**Ver. 11.** Practical application of Romans 6:10.

So also ye: just as Christ once for all died to sin and lives for God, the case of the servants being added to, and corresponding with, that of their Lord.

Reckon: a mental calculation, as in Romans 2:3; 3:28. Since, in this case, it results in a rational and assured conviction resting upon the word and character of God, it is the mental process of faith.

Dead to sin: completely delivered from it, as Christ escaped from His enemies by His death on the cross.

Living for God: as Christ lives (Romans 6:10) upon the throne. [The particle **μεν** makes these two sides, negative and positive, of the new life distinct objects of thought.]

In Christ Jesus: by inward and spiritual contact and union with Him who once died to sin and ever lives for God. So Romans 6:23; Romans 3:24; 8:1, 2; 12:5; Ephesians 1:3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, etc. Same phrase in a



slightly different form in John 6:56; 14:20; 15:2-7; 17:21; 1 John 2:6, 24, 28, etc. It is a conspicuous feature of the teaching of Paul and of John; and represents Christ as the secure refuge and home and vital atmosphere of His servants, in which they are safe and at rest and live. Notice here a double relation to Christ: they are 'like' Him, sharing His death to sin and life of devotion to God; and 'in' Him, their likeness to Him being an outflow of inward and vital contact with Him.

The exhortation of this verse is not, like that in Romans 5:1, merely rhetorical. For it is repeated with evident practical earnestness in Romans 6:12, 13, 15-21, as a needful warning and encouragement. The experience here set forth is thus contrasted with pardon or justification, which the N.T. writers never exhort their readers to claim, but always assume that they already have: cp. Romans 5:9, 10, 11; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 2:12. We have here two stages or sides of the new life, closely related but distinct in thought and usually in time. For many venture to believe that God here and now forgives their past sins, and thus by faith obtain forgiveness, who have not yet dared to believe that in Christ's grave their past life of sin is buried, and that by inward union with Him they will henceforth live a life of unreserved devotion to God.

In this verse, we learn how to obtain this full salvation. viz. by reckoning, at God's bidding and in reliance upon His promise and His wonder-working power, that what He bids us reckon He will Himself, in the moment of our reckoning and henceforth, work in us by inward contact with Him who Himself died to sin and ever lives for God. This involves the great truth that, whatever God requires us to do and to be, He will work in us through Christ and in Christ. In Romans 8:2-16, we shall learn that this inward union with Christ and new life in Christ is wrought in us by the agency of the Spirit of God.

We come therefore to the cross and to the empty grave of Christ. We remember the sinlessness and the devotion to God of the dead and risen Savior; and we know that He died in order that we, by spiritual union with Him, may be like Him. Perhaps until this moment we have been defiled and enslaved by sin and only in small part loyal to God. But God bids us reckon ourselves to be sharers of the death and life of Christ. In view of the earnest love and infinite power manifested in the death and resurrection

of Christ, we dare not hesitate; and in contradiction to our past experience and to our present sense of utter weakness, we say, In Him I am dead to sin and henceforth living only for God. What we say, we reckon at God's bidding to be true; and God realises in us, in proportion to our faith, by uniting us to Christ, His own word and our faith. Thousands have thus found by happy experience of the grace and power of God, in a measure unknown to them before, a new life of victory over sin and of loyal devotion to God.

Notice in this verse a **FOURTH FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE** viz. that the new life of victory over sin and devotion to God is wrought by God, through faith, in those who believe. This doctrine may be called (see under Romans 6:19) Sanctification through Faith. It is in close harmony with, and a needful supplement to, Justification through Faith. For complete harmony with God, victory over all sin and unreserved devotion to God are as needful as forgiveness: and we are as little able by our own works to obtain the one as the other. When therefore we have learnt that God, who accepts as righteous those that believe, designs them to be sharers of the moral life of Christ, we are prepared to learn that also this new life in Christ is God's gift to those that believe. This close correspondence and natural inference account for the informal manner in which this fourth doctrine comes before us. It was needless to state it explicitly, or to defend it. For the exposition and defense of justifying faith. In Romans 4 avails equally for sanctifying faith. Like the faith of Abraham, expounded in Romans 4:17-21, the faith which apprehends the new life in Christ is a reliance upon the word and power of God. Paul's explicit assertion and abundant defense of faith as the condition of justification give him a right to assume it silently, as he does here, as the condition of sanctification.

Like justifying faith, sanctifying faith is a reliance upon the word and character of God. But they differ in their object-matter. The one accepts and appropriates the promise of pardon for all who believe: the other accepts and appropriates the promise of complete salvation from all sin and of a new life of devotion to God like that of Christ. Moreover, this latter is at once verified by a conscious experience of victory over sin and of felt loyalty to God: and this inward verification verifies also the faith with which we ventured to accept the Gospel of pardon.

**Ver. 12.** Further exhortation arising out of the exhortation foregoing.

Sin reign: as in Romans 5:21.

In your body: as the throne and basis of its royal power. Cp. Revelation 3:21: “sit with Me ‘in’ My throne.”

Mortal: emphatic, as in Romans 8:11, “your ‘mortal’ bodies.” That our body is not yet rescued from corruption and is therefore still under the dominion of the foe, is a reason why we should not submit to a power which seeks to dominate us by means of our body.

In order to obey, etc.: purpose for which men permit sin to usurp authority over them through their bodies, viz. they wish to gratify, i.e. ‘to obey’ its desires.

‘Desire’: a definite wish going after an object pleasant or helpful. Same word in Romans 1:24; 7:7, 8; 13:14: cp. “‘desire’ of the flesh” in Galatians 5:16, 24; Ephesians 2:3. It is in itself neither good nor bad: see Philippians 1:23, 1 Thessalonians 2:17; Luke 15:16; 16:21; 17:22; 22:15. The moral color of the desire is reflected on it from the context. Hence the unsuitability of the R.V. rendering ‘lust.’ But obedience to ‘the desires of the body’ as a directive principle of action always leads to sin. For the body is the lower side of our nature, is essentially selfish, caring for nothing except itself, and is unconscious of the moral law. It therefore needs to be held in by a strong hand, to be laid (see Romans 6:13) on the altar of God, and to be used for His service. To permit the body to rule, i.e. to make gratification of its appetites, or even its preservation, the end of life, is to permit sin to reign over us as king, and our bodies, already doomed to decay, to become its throne. Against such submission, and such motive, Paul warns his readers.

**Ver. 13.** Another exhortation, the negative side expounding the practical result of obeying the desires of the body, and the positive side expounding what is involved in “living for God.”

Present: so Romans 6:16, 19; 12:1; cp. Romans 6:16:2; Colossians 1:22, 28: to place at the disposal of another.

Members: the various parts of the body, each with its own faculty: Romans 12:4; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 14, 18, 19; Matthew 5:29, 30, etc. Its looser modern use has led me to render members of your body.

Weapons: instruments for carrying on war: Romans 13:12; 2 Corinthians 6:7; 10:4; John 18:3. Being used for an evil purpose, they are 'weapons' of unrighteousness. To obey the desires of our body, is to place our hands and lips at the disposal of sin to be 'weapons' which it will use in 'unrighteous' war.

Yourselves: the personality behind the bodily powers, given up, not to sin, but to God.

Present 'yourselves' as if living from the dead: looking upon yourselves 'as if' your life had come to an end, as if ye had been laid in, and raised from, the grave, and thus raised 'from' among the 'dead,' and as if now 'living' a resurrection life; and, thus viewing your position, place 'yourselves' at the disposal of 'God.'

And your members, etc.: a detail involved in 'present yourselves.'

Weapons of righteousness: a marked contrast: our hands and lips given to God to be used by Him in His righteous war. Instead of obeying the desires of our body, and thus permitting sin to erect its throne there and to use our bodily powers for its own ends, Paul bids us place our whole personality at the disposal of God, resolving that henceforth our hands shall do His work, our feet run on His errands, and our lips speak His message, in His conflict against sin. Notice here a new view of Christian duty. God bids us, not merely to avoid sin, but to place ourselves with all we have and are at His disposal for use in the tremendous struggle now going on between good and evil.

**Ver. 14.** Encouragement to obey the foregoing exhortation. This last implies complete deliverance from service of sin. And Paul assures us, sin shall not be your Lord.

Under law: governed by God on the principle, Do this and live, i.e. treated by Him according to our obedience. Such was God's relation to Israel under the Old Covenant. Hence the Jews were 'under law:' 1 Corinthians 9:20; Galatians 4:4, 5. Some Christians desired to remain under the same

terms: Galatians 4:21. This momentary reference to the Law prepares a way for further teaching about it in Romans 7.

Under grace: under a method of government determined not by mere justice but by the undeserved 'favor' of God, i.e. 'under' the reign (Romans 5:21) of 'grace.' God makes, not our deserts, but His own goodwill the standard of His treatment of us. Otherwise He would never have given His Son to die for us, or have brought to bear upon us, while in our sins, those influences (see Romans 2:4) which led us to repentance and salvation. Upon the ground that God will treat us, not according to our works, i.e. according to the letter of the Law, but according to His undeserved favor, rest all our hopes of blessing from Him.

In Romans 6:11-14, we have the Law and the Gospel of the new life in Christ, what God claims from us and what He is ready to work in us. He claims that we devote to Him and His service our whole personality and all our bodily powers. Incidentally we learn that He who makes this claim is engaged in tremendous conflict, and that He claims our devotion in order that He may use us in His righteous war against sin. Unfortunately we are not free to render to God the devotion He justly claims. For His foe is our Lord: we are the fettered slaves of sin, and therefore cannot serve God. Paul bids us look upon ourselves as if we were dead, dead on the cross of Christ and buried in His grave, and thus free from our former bondage; and, though dead, yet living, sharing the life of the Risen One, a life of unreserved loyalty to God.

In obedience to this claim, we now lay, upon the altar consecrated by the blood of Christ, ourselves and all our bodily powers; and we do this in faith, relying upon the promise and power of God that from this moment we shall be free from our old master and shall live by inward contact with Christ a life like His. This consecration and faith are a higher counterpart to the repentance and faith which are the condition of justification.

## SECTION 19

### *EXPERIENCE PROVES HOW BAD IS THE SERVICE OF SIN*

#### CHAPTER 6:15-23

*What then? Let us sin because we are not under law but under grace? Be it not so. Know ye not that, to whom ye present yourselves servants for obedience, his servants ye are, of him whom ye obey, whether of sin for death or of obedience for righteousness? But thanks to God that ye were servants of sin, but ye obeyed from the heart the type of teaching to which ye were given up. And, having been made free from sin, ye were made servants to righteousness. After the manner of men I speak, because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as ye presented the members of your body, as servants, to uncleanness and to lawlessness, for lawlessness, so now present the members of your body, as servants, to righteousness for sanctification. For, when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness. What fruit had ye at that time from the things of which ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now, having been made free from sin and having been made servants to God, ye have your fruit, for sanctification; and the end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death: but God's gift of grace is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The two courses set before us in Romans 6:13, Paul will now further describe, and will thus give good reasons why we should refuse the one and choose the other.

**Ver. 15.** What then? as in Romans 6:1. Does anyone say,

Let us sin because God treats us not on principles of strict law but of undeserved grace? This is another objection, in addition to that in Romans 6:1, to the Gospel. This last reveals the 'favor' of God to our race; and, relying on His favor, some have carelessly run into sin.

**Ver. 16.** They who thus sin know not what they do.

Present yourselves: thrust prominently forward to recall the same words in Romans 6:13. The natural order would be, 'Do ye not know that ye are servants of him to whom ye present yourselves, etc.' This verse implies the universal principle that if we 'obey' a man we so far make ourselves his 'servants' and use our powers to work out his purposes. So Aristotle, 'Nic. Ethics' bk. viii. 11. 6: "The 'servant' (slave) is a living instrument; the instrument, a lifeless 'servant.'" Therefore, before we do the bidding of another, we must inquire who he is and what are his purposes.

Servant, or 'slave': so Romans 1:1: one who acts habitually at the bidding of another, his Lord; cp. Matthew 8:9: a cognate verb in Romans 6:6. It was the common word for Greek and Roman slaves: hence the contrast with "made free" in Romans 6:18, 20, 22; cp. 1 Corinthians 7:21, 22; 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:11; Revelation 6:15. In contrast to a freeman, the slave was compelled to do the bidding of his Lord.

For obedience: purpose for which one gives himself up to be. a slave. This is emphasised by the repetition, whom ye obey.

Whether of sin... or of obedience: the only alternative. That to commit sin is to be a slave of sin, Christ solemnly asserts in John 8:34.

Death: not of the body, which is not a result of our own sin, but of the whole man: so Romans 6:21, 23; Romans 8:13; Revelation 20:14; cp. Matthew 10:28. It is the "destruction" of Romans 2:12; Philippians 3:19; the final penalty of sin. All 'sin' tends inevitably to 'death:' therefore, in Paul's personification, they who commit sin may be said to surrender themselves to the abstract principle of 'sin' in order to work out 'death.' On the other hand,

'obedience,' also personified, tends always to righteousness, i.e. to conformity with the moral law. See under Romans 1:17. This verse implies that the only alternative is either to commit 'sin' and thus work out its constant tendency, 'death,' or to 'obey' God and thus act in harmony with that which the moral law requires.

**Ver. 17.** Review of the past, in the light of Romans 6:16, and evoking thanks to God.

Ye were slaves, etc.: their former bondage, by its contrast with their present liberty, itself calls forth gratitude.

Type: as in Romans 5:14.

‘Type’ of teaching: in outline, like the mark (John 20:25) made by iron on clay. The English word ‘stamp’ is used in a similar way.

Given-up: as in Romans 1:24, 26, 28; 4:25, and especially Acts 14:26.

These words imply that the obedience of the Roman Christians was submission to the Gospel in that form in which, by the Providence of God, it had been preached to them. Practically it was the Gospel as preached to Gentiles, (cp. Romans 1:5; Acts 17:30,) in contrast to Jewish perversions; but not in contrast to the teaching of other apostles. For we cannot conceive Paul thanking God that the Romans heard the Gospel from men taught by himself rather than from the disciples of Peter or John. The patriarchs, and the Israelites under Moses and afterwards under the prophets, were handed over to other types of teaching.

**Ver. 18.** Further description of the change. Being “dead to sin,” they were made free from sin. Paul here assumes that his readers have made the reckoning to which in Romans 6:11 he exhorted them.

Made-servants, literally ‘enslaved,’ to righteousness: cp. 1 Corinthians 7:22, “the freeman, having been called, is a ‘slave’ of Christ.” The whole context (see my note) and the sustained contrast of ‘slave’ and ‘freeman’ demand some such rendering. We are not hired servants who can leave their master’s employ. For we are Christ’s by creation and ransom; and are therefore bound to Him by a tie we cannot break. Yet we are free: for His service is our delight.

‘Servants to righteousness’: bound by loyalty to Christ to do that which the moral law demands.

**Ver. 19.** After the manner of men: cp. Romans 3:5. It might seem improper to describe the servants of Christ by the common term for slaves. But Paul teaches divine truth by the words of common life; and here warns us to distinguish between the outward form and the underlying



truth. This warning holds good for the whole Bible: to men God always speaks as men do.

Flesh: see note under Romans 8:11.

Weakness of your 'flesh': inability to understand, arising from the limitations of bodily life, which always tend to warp our mental vision; and from the peculiar limitations of the Roman Christians. Paul uses a comparison made needful by their only partial emancipation from the intellectual rule of flesh and blood.

Now follows, as a reason for the foregoing warning, an exhortation closely parallel to that in Romans 6:13.

Just as... so now: the past affording a pattern, in an opposite direction, for the present. Instead of "weapons," as in Romans 6:13, we have here servants, or 'slaves': used as a neuter adjective.

Uncleanness... lawlessness: further personifications parallel to, and specifying, "sin" in Romans 6:16. They remind us that sin defiles, and forces into antagonism to the Law, those who obey it.

For lawlessness: in order to do that which the Law forbids: parallel to "for death" in Romans 6:16. Sin leads, first to defilement and lawlessness, and then to death.

To righteousness: as in Romans 6:18.

Sanctification: the act of making holy: so Romans 6:22; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4, 7; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:2. See note under Romans 1:7. As claimed by God, all Christians are already objectively holy: so Romans 1:7. Paul now bids his readers to lay their various bodily powers upon the altar of God to do His work in harmony with the moral law, in order that thus they may become subjectively holy: for 'sanctification'. Cp. 1 Corinthians 7:34; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

**Ver.** 20-22. A comparison of the two kinds of service, based on experience.

Free in regard of righteousness: if there is any bondage in doing right, they were 'free' from it. They have therefore given the service of sin a fair trial.

What fruit? what good result, as an organic outworking of certain actions? See under Romans 1:13. The actions are past, but the shame still remains:

ye are now ashamed. Paul passes in silence over the answer which memory and conscience are compelled to give; and states the reason why his readers reaped no harvest from the fields of shame in which they toiled.

The end: the final outworking in which influences attain their goal: so Romans 6:22; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 15:24; 2 Corinthians 11:15; Philippians 3:19. Inasmuch as influences which have attained their full result cease to operate—otherwise they have not attained their full result—the word sometimes connotes the idea of cessation. So Luke 1:33. But the idea of a goal attained is always present. The final outworking of

those things to which Paul refers is death: as in Romans 6:16. His readers gathered no 'fruit' from their former actions: 'for' they trod a path whose 'end' is 'death.'

**Ver. 22.** Their present position, in joyful contrast to their former fruitless toil.

Having-been-made-free... having-been-made-servants: solemn repetition, from Romans 6:19.

Ye have your fruit: the good results of your toil are your abiding possession: cp. Philippians 1:22.

For sanctification: as in Romans 6:19: direction and tendency of these good results. They tend towards the devotion of our powers to the service of God.

The end: in conspicuous antithesis to the same words in Romans 6:21.

Eternal life: see under Romans 2:7. It recalls Romans 5:21. Notice in solemn contrast, in Romans 6:21, 22, the two poles of N.T. eschatology: 'death... eternal life.'

**Ver. 23.** Compact restatement of the foregoing contrast.

Wages: so Luke 3:14; 1 Corinthians 9:7; 2 Corinthians 11:8: the common term for the pay and rations of a soldier, thus recalling Romans 6:13. They who serve in the army of sin receive death in return for their service.

Gift-of-grace: recalling the same word in Romans 5:15, 16.

‘Death’ is ‘the’ just ‘wages’ of sin: but eternal life is a gift of ‘the’ undeserved ‘favor’ of God.

In Christ Jesus: as in Romans 6:11. Eternal life is ours in virtue of His death and resurrection, and by vital union with the dead and risen One.

Our Lord: the Master whom we serve. This addition (contrast Romans 6:11) recalls the idea of service, and the contrast of masters, which run through Romans 6:12-23. In each case, the end is in harmony with the nature of the master obeyed.

The contrast of past and present in Romans 6:16-23 is a very powerful motive for avoiding all sin, and is therefore a complete answer to the question in Romans 6:15. To commit sin, is to place our bodily faculties at the disposal of an unseen power absolutely and actively hostile to God and tending always to death, a murderer from the beginning. On the other hand, the consecration of our faculties to the service of God produces for us good and abiding results culminating in eternal life. To commit sin, and thus to abandon the service of God, because God treats us, not on principles of mere justice, but with undeserved favor, is to destroy ourselves simply because we have power to do so.

Chapter 6 deals with one subject, the believer’s relation to his former life of sin, in answer to the question of Romans 6:1. We must not continue in sin in order to work out the gracious purposes of God: for His purpose is that our former life of sin be buried in the grave of Christ and that we henceforth share His resurrection life: Romans 6:2-10. Paul then teaches how this purpose of God may be accomplished in us, viz. by reckoning it to be here and now achieved in us by inward union with Christ; and urges us to claim the fulfilment of this purpose: Romans 6:11-13. To this he encourages us, in Romans 6:14, by pointing to our altered relation to God; and gives, in Romans 6:16-23, a very strong motive for unreserved consecration to the service of God. The chapter concludes with words

almost the same as those at the end of Romans 5. But how vast the progress we have made. Each chapter brings us within view of life eternal. But, as a consequence of the reign of grace through Christ, announced in Romans 5., we have now an inward and vital union with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection, resulting in complete deliverance from the service of sin and in a life of unreserved devotion to God like that of Christ. In Romans 5, we had justification, knowledge of God's love to us, and a joyful hope of glory: we are now sharers of the holy and immortal life of Christ.

## SECTION 20

### THROUGH CHRIST WE DIED TO THE LAW

#### CHAPTER 7:1-6

*Or, are ye ignorant, brethren, (for to men who know law, I speak,) that the Law is Lord of the man for so long time as he lives? For the woman with a husband, to the living husband, is bound by law: but if the husband die, she is made of no effect from the law of the husband. Therefore, while the husband lives, an adulteress she will be called if she become another man's: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so as not to be can adulteress, though she have become another man's. So that, my brethren, also ye were made dead to the Law through the body of Christ that ye might become another's, His who was raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. For when we were in the flesh, the emotions of sins, aroused through the Law, were at work in the members of our body, in order to bear fruit for death. But now we have been made of no effect from the Law, having died to that in which we were held down, so that we may serve in newness of Spirit, and not in oldness of letter.*

The argument of Romans 6, might to some appear invalid because it left out of sight the Law and the curse therein pronounced against all who commit sin. Our surrender to the bondage of sin was a just punishment of our disobedience. Does not God, by breaking off fetters imposed by the Law, dishonor the Law? This question Paul will answer by discussing in Romans 7, the teaching of Rom 6, in its bearing on the Law. It was suggested by the words 'not under law' in Romans 6:14. He will prove in Romans 7:1-6 that by a strictly legal process we have been set free from the Law which formerly bound us to the service of sin and forbade our union with Christ; in 10:7-12, that, though freedom from the Law gives us life, yet the Law is not bad; and in 10:13-25 he will show us the purpose and working of the death-bringing Law, and thus prove its excellence.

**Ver. 1.** To men who know law: to Jews and others familiar with the Law of Moses, and to Gentiles familiar with the universal principles underlying all 'law.' This is the new and important feature of Romans 7, as of Romans 2:12-29.

The Law: the divinely given and authoritative Law of Moses, ever present in the religious thought of Jews. But the principle here asserted applies to every authoritative prescription of conduct. We therefore cannot infer from this verse that Paul's readers were chiefly Jews.

Is-Lord of: as in Romans 6:9.

So long time as he lives: conceding to 'the Law' all it can claim, the concession suggesting a limitation.

**Ver. 2.** The woman with a husband: a case in point involving the whole principle of law. The emphatic word living suggests a limitation valid in all law, and expressly stated in the rest of the verse.

Bound: a feature of all law: it limits our action.

Made-of-no-effect from: as in Romans 3:3, 31; 4:14; 6:6: made practically non-existent in the eyes of the Law. It is equivalent to 'free from' in Romans 7:3.

But if the husband die, the woman goes beyond the operation of the law of the husband: i.e. the statute which forbids her to marry another. For the phrase 'law of,' see Leviticus 6:9, 14, etc.

**Ver. 3.** Fuller statement of the case of a married woman, as an inference from the principle stated in Romans 7:1:

therefore, etc. 'The husband' may be a tyrant and murderer: 'another,' kind and good, may wish to make her his wife. Yet,

while the husband lives, 'the Law' steps in and brands her as an adulteress if she attempts to escape from the tyrant by giving herself to another man.

But if the husband die: same words as in Romans 7:2. By his death she ceases to be a wife; and passes, according to an essential principle of law, from under control of the law which forbade her second marriage. Death, without setting aside

the law, has made her free from it. The case of the wife is specially suitable to the matter before us. For, in other cases, e.g. a man condemned to imprisonment for a term of years, the person set free by death is by death removed from our observation. But the widow is before our eyes, living and free. Moreover, her case suggests an important and beautiful metaphor: cp. 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-27.

**Ver. 4.** Application of the foregoing case to ourselves:

so that also ye, etc. Made-dead to the Law: placed beyond its control, as though we were dead: cp. Galatians 2:19, a close parallel.

Through the body of Christ: nailed to the cross. Through Christ's death, we were set free from the divine law which condemned us, for our sins, to be slaves of sin.

That ye might become another's: God's purpose in saving us from bondage to sin, viz. that we might be united to Christ. Inasmuch as we are saved by the death of Him to whom God designs us to be united, it is needful to add that

He was raised from the dead: cp. Romans 6:4, 5, 9. Had He not died, we had not been released: had He not risen, he would not have become our husband.

Bear-fruit for God: practically the same as "fruit for sanctification" in Romans 6:22. We were united to Christ that we may live a life producing good results, such as will advance the purposes of God.

To fill up the comparison, we must consider ourselves to have been, not merely the servant, but the wife, of sin. Our husband was a murderer. But we had chosen him for our Lord: and the Law recognised the marriage. God's original purpose was that we should be the bride of His Son. But we gave ourselves to Sin; and the Law then forbade our union with Christ. In Romans 6, however, we have learnt that through Christ's death we ourselves are dead. Therefore, according to Romans 7:1-3, we are legally free from the Law which forbade our marriage with Christ. We are made free by the death of One to whom we are so closely related that in the eyes of the Law His death is our death.

Translated into the language of common life, this verse teaches that through the death of Christ is removed a barrier to our restoration to normal and blessed relation to Christ and to God having its foundation in the Law of God.

**Ver. 5.** Reason why, “in order to bear fruit for God,” we must needs be “made dead to the Law;” and a restatement of the contrast of past and present.

In the flesh: the material of our body as the environment in which the spirit lives, moves, and acts, an environment controlling at that time our entire action and thought. It is not so now. The flesh is (see Galatians 2:20; 2 Corinthians 10:3) the physical, but no longer the moral, element of our life. For although we ever feel its influence, it no longer controls us.

The emotions of sins: emotions of desire evoked by forbidden objects in those who yield to their influence, and tending to produce sinful acts. They were evoked

by means of the Law: strange words designed to awaken surprise and to prompt the objection in Romans 7:7. They will be explained in Romans 7:7-11.

When we were ‘in the flesh,’ these ‘emotions’ were at work (cp. 2 Corinthians 4:12; Ephesians 2:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:7)

in our members, the various parts of our bodies, moving our lips, hands, and feet, to words, deeds, and ways, of sin. When the body with its appetites was the controlling element of our life, it was the seat of emotions prompting sin.

In order to bear fruit etc: tendency and purpose of these emotions. They made us fruitful; but the fruit was poison. Of this, Paul’s own earlier history was a literal and sad example.

For death: as in Romans 6:16, 21, 23.

‘Fruit for death’: in awful contrast to “fruit for God,” in Romans 7:4. Since these emotions, evoked by means of the Law, were at work with such deadly intent, we must needs die to the Law in order that we may bear fruit for God.



**Ver. 6.** But now: introducing, as in Romans 6:22, the joyful contrast ever present to Paul's thought.

Made-of-no-effect from the Law: as in Romans 7:2, which it recalls.

Having died to that in which, etc.: event which released us from the Law

'in which' we were held-down, or 'held-fast': same word in Romans 1:18.

So that we may serve: happy result of our liberation. [The infinitive with **οὕτως** states not objective fact, as does the indicative, but a subjective view of cause and effect.]

'Serve': same word as in Romans 7:25; Romans 6:6; cognate to 'servants' in Romans 6:16, 17, 19, 20, and to 'made-servants' in Romans 7:18, 22. This family of words is a conspicuous feature of Romans 6:6-Romans 7:6. Notice that we are still servants or slaves, but (Romans 6:22) to different masters and in a 'new' environment.

Newness of Spirit: a 'new' order of things of which the characterizing feature is the animating presence of the 'Spirit' of God, in contrast to an old environment characterized by possession of a written letter. Same contrast of 'Spirit' and 'letter' in Romans 2:29; and, more fully developed, in 2 Corinthians 3:3, 6, where "the 'Spirit' of God" is contrasted with the letters written on the tables of stone. And this is probably the reference of the word 'Spirit' here and in Romans 2:29: for it is evidently a forerunner of "the Spirit of God" in Romans 8:9, 11, 14. If so, the 'letter' must be the written Law of Moses, in possession of which the Jews (Romans 2:23) boasted. The 'new' feature of our present service is that our Master has given us, not a mere written word bidding us do this or that, but an animating Spirit, who opens our minds to understand and approve the will of God, and enables us to do it. This gift of the Spirit makes our present service altogether 'new,' and our former service altogether 'old.'

The above argument has less force for us than for Paul's readers. To any who objected that the teaching of Romans 6, would set aside the Law of Moses, it was a complete reply to say that the Law claims jurisdiction only over the living, and that believers are practically dead. But to us God has given a more tremendous and far-reaching law. To those who reject it, the Gospel is itself a condemning law: for they who disbelieve its promises

are compelled to believe its threatenings. And from this law death is no deliverance: for its threatenings control the world to come. Hence the argument, in the form in which it stands here, does not meet our case.

But, underneath the Jewish form of this argument, lie great and abiding principles of immense importance. It is a reassertion, in another form, of Paul's exposition, in Romans 3:26, of the purpose for which God gave Christ to die, viz. to harmonize with His own justice the justification of believers. For, that we are in Romans 7:4 said to be "dead to the Law through the body of Christ" can only mean that through His death is removed a barrier to salvation having its foundation in the Law of God. Now the Law is a literary embodiment of the justice of God.

Consequently, to say that the Law forbid our rescue, is to say that the justice of God forbid it. But Paul has taught that God set forth Christ as a propitiation in His blood, in order that God may be Himself just and a justifier of Him that believes in Jesus. If so, through the death of Christ we are set free, in harmony with the principle of law, from the law which condemned us to be slaves of the master we had so perversely chosen. This important coincidence of thought, under totally different phraseology, confirms our interpretation of Romans 3:26; is confirmed by Galatians 2:19; 3:13; Colossians 2:14, and by an interesting illustration in Hebrews 9:16, 17, in all which passages the death of Christ is placed in relation to the Law; and sheds important light on the necessity and purpose of the death of Christ. This coincidence is the more important because no other N.T. writer connects the death of Christ with the justice or the law of God.

This teaching has also experimental value. Many conscientious men feel that for God to pardon their sins and to smile upon sinners would be to set aside the eternal principles which underlie morality. And, because they know that God will not do this, they dare not believe His proclamation of pardon. They are in the position of a woman who has made a ruinous marriage from which now there is no escape. But in these verses we are reminded that the death of Christ, by revealing the inevitable connection of sin and death, has satisfied the external moral principles which forbid our pardon; and that now, without infringing them, God may and will set us free.

ChapterS 6:1-7:. 6 describes the new life in its relation to sin, to the Law, to Christ, and to God. It is complete deliverance from sin, removes us legally from the domain of 'the Law' which condemned us, unites us 'to Christ' in His death and burial and in His resurrection life, a life of fruitful devotion 'to God.' Notice the complete confidence with which Paul accepts the death and resurrection of Christ as historic facts, and as essential factors in God's purpose of salvation, a confidence moulding his thought and creating new modes of thought and new phraseology peculiar to him. In his theology, the events which closed the life of Christ on earth are reproduced in His servants. This confidence, in (Galatians 1:13) a former persecutor, can be explained only by the reality of that which he believed: and no account of Paul's teaching which does not explain this remarkable element in it can be tolerated for a moment.

Certain strange assertions in Romans 7:5, needing explanation and defense, will next claim the apostle's attention.

## SECTION 21

### YET THE LAW IS NOT BAD

#### CHAPTER 7:7-12

*What then shall we say? Is the Law sin? Be it not so. Nevertheless, I had not known sin except through law: for I should not know desire except the Law said, "Thou shalt not desire." But sin, having taken occasion, through the commandment worked out in me every desire. For apart from law sin is dead. Moreover, I was alive apart from law once. But when the commandment came, sin returned to life; and I died. And to me the commandment which was for life, this was found to be for death. For sin, having taken occasion, through the commandment deceived me and through it slew me. So that on the one hand the Law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good:*

**Ver. 7.** What then shall we say? What inference shall we draw? as in Romans 6:1; 4:1.

The Law: of Moses, from which Paul quotes the tenth commandment.

Sin: an embodiment of sin; cp. 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 8:7. In Romans 7:5, Paul gave as a reason why we were put to death to the Law that "through the Law came the emotions of sins" which "were at work" in our bodily powers with deadly purpose. He now asks, Are we to infer from this that the Law itself is essentially hostile to God? and thus suggests a most serious objection to his foregoing teaching. This inference, Paul meets with an emphatic negative; and then gives the correct inference. He did not say, nor do his words imply, that the Law is the voice of an enemy;

nevertheless, he does say that, had there been no law as an avenue of approach, there had been no sin. To this reply and the following argument, Paul gives great reality and force by narrating his own experience:

I had not known sin. That he narrates it in proof of a general principle, implies that it is the experience of all. The word 'law' does not limit this

experience to Jews: for the great principles of morality which underlie all law are written (see Romans 2:14) in the hearts of all men. But Paul, writing as a Jew, has in his mind the Law in that form in which he received it, viz. the voice of Sinai and the books in which from childhood that voice had spoken to him. Hence, as a sample of the Law, he quotes the tenth commandment. To 'know sin,' denotes, not as in Romans 3:20 a consciousness of having sinned, but that acquaintance with the nature and power of sin which is an immediate and terrible result of committing sin. This deeper meaning is involved in the further description given in Romans 7:8. In this sense, the forbidden tree was the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," and Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21) "knew no sin;" but (Isaiah 53:3) He knew grief; and Paul knew (2 Corinthians 5:11) "the fear of the Lord."

Through law: recalling same words in Romans 7:5. The foregoing statement, Paul proves by quoting, as a fair example, one of the many commands of

the Law: thou shalt not desire: word for word (LXX.) from Exodus 20:17.

Desire: as in Romans 1:24; 6:12: not necessarily bad desire. The tenth commandment forbids, not all desire, but desire of other men's goods. Paul takes for granted that we know the rest of the passage. That he refers throughout Romans 7:7, 8 to evil desire, is made clear by the whole context. In proof of the general statement 'I had not know sin,' he quotes the commandment most easily and frequently broken, the breach of which leads to that of all others. Had it not been for the Law, Paul would have been a stranger even to the beginnings of sin in wrong desire.

**Ver. 8.** Occasion: Luke 11:54; 2 Corinthians 5:12; 11:12: a starting-point, the first step in a line of action. In the tenth commandment (cp. Romans 13:9)

sin found a starting-point for deadly activity; and through it worked-out (as in Romans 1:27; 2:9; 4:15; 5:3)

in Paul every kind of desire. Sin thus made itself known to him. This is what Paul meant in Romans 7:5 by "the emotions of sins which were through the Law." Notice the contrast of 'working-in' and 'working-out' in Romans 7:5, 8: so Philippians 2:12, 13. The one denotes inward activity; the other, actual result.

For apart, etc.: a general principle proving the foregoing. Notice a further personification of ‘sin.’ We have seen it as a king enthroned in the bodies of men, making unrighteous war, using men as weapons and paying them wages, cherishing and working out purposes of death. Paul now proves that only through the Law were sinful desires wrought in him, by saying that

‘apart’ from law sin is dead. Since sin is here personified as active and powerful, to say that it is ‘dead,’ is to say that it is inactive and powerless. Just so a dead lion has claws and sinews, but no strength or activity. In James 2:17-26, a dead faith is one which produces no results: contrast a “living hope” and “living word of God” in 1 Peter 1:3, 23.

The principle here stated and the argument built upon it demand further study. “Sin is lawlessness:” 1 John 3:4. It is doing what God has forbidden. Consequently, had not certain objects been marked off as forbidden, there could not have been even wrong desire: for all desires would have been right. Therefore, but for the Law, we should never have known what it is to desire forbidden things; nor have known by experience the depraving effects of such desires. There would have been no moral character, and no sin. This we may illustrate from the story of Paradise. If God had given no prohibition, the tempter would have had no weapon of attack; and our parents would have been utterly beyond his reach. He brought in his mouth a command of God, and used it as a weapon of deception and murder evoking first desire and then actual sin. Only thus can we conceive sin entering into human life. In this sense, sin is powerless apart from law; and all sinful emotions come through law. So 1 Corinthians 15:56: “The power of sin is the Law.”

**Ver. 9-11.** Further description and fatal result of the personal experience narrated in Romans 7:8. Paul says,

Once, in a day gone by, I was alive or ‘living,’ without law, having no command requiring obedience. Then the commandment, the 10th or others, came: at its coming sin lived-again, as a dead body waking up into life: and I died. On this event Paul makes the sad comment, the commandment which was designed for life, i.e. to give or maintain life, this was found by me to be for death. [Notice the preposition *εἰς*, which always denotes tendency, denoting first purpose, as usually, and then result. This different

use of the same preposition in the same short sentence is made easy by the personification of sin. For, if sin be personified, we may speak of its tendency as a purpose.] The ‘commandment’ given in Paradise was designed to save ‘life’ by guarding our parents from the tree of death. The Law of Moses had the same purpose: Leviticus 18:5; Deuteronomy 5:33. Indeed, all that comes from the Author of Life, is designed to give or maintain life. In those who believe, the Law attains its end by leading them to Christ: Galatians 3:24.

Then follows, in Romans 7:11, a sad restatement, in almost the same words, of the great calamity stated in Romans 7:8. An added detail is that

sin... deceived me: so Genesis 3:13. Same strong word in 2 Corinthians 11:3 (cp. 1 Timothy 2:14), in reference to Eve; also Romans 16:18; 1 Corinthians 3:18. Sin kills by persuading that the forbidden object is good; so Genesis 3:5.

Slew me: restating Romans 7:9, ‘I died.’ It is a result of the “desire” evoked by sin: Romans 7:8. While sin lay dead or dormant, Paul was alive: but at the voice of the Law it woke up to life, and slew him.

We have seen, under Romans 7:9, that to Paul sin was once ‘dead’ in the sense of being powerless and inoperative; and that at the coming of the Law it sprang into ‘life’ in the sense that in the commands of the Law it found a starting-point for activity and effect. We now ask, In what sense was Paul himself once ‘alive’ or ‘living,’ apart from law, and in what sense at the coming of the Law can it be said that he ‘died?’ These words, when applied to Paul, a man capable of life and death in the fullest sense, must have a meaning far deeper than they can have when applied to sin, a mere abstract principle. But this deeper meaning must be in harmony with the essential significance of the words and with Paul’s argument.

The sadness of Romans 7:9-11 implies that the death which Paul ‘died’ was a great calamity. It was wrought by sin using the Law as a weapon. Already in Romans 6:16, 21, 23 we have learnt that death is a result of sin. This can be no other than the “destruction” or ruin (see under Romans 2:12) which awaits sinners beyond the grave, destruction of body and soul. Now in Romans 8:10 Paul speaks of the body as already ‘dead,’ because already doomed inevitably to the grave; and in Ephesians 2:1, 5; 1

Timothy 5:6 of sinners as already 'dead' by means of their sins. So 1 John 3:14. This language is easily explained. We constantly speak of that which is inevitable as though it had actually taken place: for the future tense suggests uncertainty. The bad man is not dying but dead. For a dying man may recover by his own vital force, or a doctor may save him: but no power can save a bad man from the awful penalty of sin and give him moral life except that of Him who raises the dead. This language is the more appropriate because the sinner is in a very real sense separated from God the Source of life, destitute of the Holy Spirit who is the breath of the new life of the sons of God, and is, like a corpse, in a state of progressive (moral) corruption.

In this sense, in spite of the outward morality mentioned in Philippians 3:6, Paul was dead before (Romans 8:2) "the Spirit of Life" in Christ Jesus made him free. Just as Lazarus could look back to a time when his body lay rotting in the grave, so Paul remembered a time when he was in a state which, but for the life-giving power of God, would have inevitably developed into eternal death.

Of this death, the Law was the instrument. For, had there been no prohibition, Paul could not have sinned and thus fallen under the death-penalty of sin.

When was Paul 'alive, without law?' Not while he was persecuting the Church and thus fighting against God. For he was then (Romans 2:12; 6:14, 1 Corinthians 9:20) in law and under law: and indisputably (Ephesians 2:1-5) he was spiritually dead. To say that he was then 'alive,' is utterly alien from the thought of Paul and of the entire New Testament. But at a still earlier day, in infancy before the age of responsibility, he possessed a real though immature life which death of the body could not destroy. However deeply a man be sunk in sin, however completely under its power today, he can look back to the early dawn of memory and say, In those days God smiled on me, and in the full sense of the word I was alive: and this is the saddest thought the bad man can have. But the infant grew to boyhood. Through his mother's lips, the commandment came to him; and he learnt that God had forbidden him to do this and that. Now awoke to activity the innate but slumbering power of sin. Following the guidance of nature, like other men, he fell under the anger of God and



became dead by means of his trespasses: Ephesians 2:3, 5. His death was loss of the life he possessed in the days of innocence, was wrought by sin, and by means of the law.

The above exposition is the only one possible. For in no sense can a man be called 'alive' when he is asleep in sin, or be said to 'die' when he wakes up to consciousness of his awful position. Nor could the loss of such life, or such moral awakening, be spoken of in the tone of sadness which breathes in Romans 7:9, 11. For such awakening, however painful, was not a calamity, but the dawn of a new life.

On the other hand, the metaphorical language used here and in Ephesians 2:1-5 must be interpreted with utmost caution. The mortality of infancy reminds us that by birth we are in some measure heirs of the penalty of Adam's sin: and in Ephesians 2:3; John 3:6 we find an inborn defect leading to actual sin and making needful a new birth. The passage before us is simply a pathetic picture, in the vivid thought of Paul, of a part of his own experience.

That the term 'alive' is never elsewhere in the N.T. applied to infants, is no serious objection to the above exposition. For we read very little about their spiritual position. The sacred volume does not gratify our curiosity in this direction. But the term 'life' is frequently used to describe those on whom God smiles; and our Lord's reception of little children proves that God smiles on them. Nor is this exposition inconsistent with the probably greater prevalence of sin among the Gentiles than among the Jews. For the Gentiles have the law written in every man's heart. Moreover, the fuller revelation of God to Israel evoked a spiritual life, which finds expression in the Psalms, far above the highest spiritual life of the Gentiles, and which could not but bear fruit in a higher morality.

**Ver. 5** has now been explained and proved, and the Law has been vindicated. It is merely a weapon with which sin slew Paul. But we do not blame a sword because in the hands of an enemy it has slain the man for whose defense it was made. His death only reveals the strength of the foe who tore it from his grasp and used it for his destruction. Take an illustration. A man is condemned for murder. The law against murder was designed to save his life, by keeping others from killing him. It will now destroy his life. But this is no proof that the law is bad, or that it was

enacted by an enemy: it proves only the strength of the evil disposition which, in spite of the law, drove the man to murder and to the gallows. Similarly Paul's case is inexpressibly sad; but the fault is not with the Law, but with sin. Thus, while explaining and justifying Romans 7:5, Paul has really cleared the Law from a charge which that verse seemed to bring against it, and his own teaching from the charge of antagonism to the Law of God.

**Ver. 12.** So that, etc.: result of the foregoing argument. [The particle μιν without δε following indicates that the sentence is broken off, like Romans 5:12, and that only a preliminary part of the result is here stated. The remainder we shall find in Romans 7:13.] Paul has not actually proved that 'the Law' is 'holy;' but has shown that Romans 7:5 does not imply that it is unholy.

The Law... the commandment: recalling Romans 7:7, 8.

Holy: cp. Romans 1:2: in definite relation to God and tending to work out His purposes.

'Commandment': the 10th, quoted in Romans 7:7. It is a specification of that part of 'the Law' which actually slew Paul. He therefore lingers over it, and expounds what is implied in its being 'holy.'

Righteous: in harmony with the essential principles of right and wrong.

Good: beneficial in its working. Such is whatever is 'holy,' i.e. belonging to God. The word 'good' sounds so strange to one to whom the Law has been the means of death that at this point Paul breaks off and asks a question which will become a starting-point for other teaching. In the answer to this question, he will state more fully the result of the foregoing argument.

## SECTION 22

### THE LAW REVEALS THE BADNESS AND POWER OF SIN

#### CHAPTER 7:13-25

*The good thing then, did it to me become death? Be it not so. But sin did; in order that it might be seen to be sin through the good thing working out for me death, in order that sin might become beyond measure a sinner through the commandment. For we know that the Law is spiritual: but I am a man of flesh, sold under sin. For what I am working out, I do not know: for not what I wish, this I practice, but what I hate, this I do. But if what I do not wish, this I do, I agree with the Law that it is good. And now no longer do I work it out, but sin dwelling in me. For I know that there does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh, a good thing. For to wish is present to me, but to work out the good is not. For not what I wish I do, a good thing, but what I do not wish, an evil thing, this I practice. But if what I do not wish, this I do, no longer do I work it out, but sin dwelling in me. I find therefore that to me who wish for the Law, to do the good, that to me the evil is present. For I take pleasure with the Law of God according to the inward man: but I see another law in the members of my body carrying on war against the law of my mind and taking me captive to the law of sin which is in the members of my body. Calamity-stricken man that I am! who will rescue me from the body of this death? Thanks to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore I myself with the mind serve the Law of God, but with the flesh a law of sin.*

**Ver. 13.** The good thing then, etc.: question prompted by the foregoing word good, so incongruous to the sad experience just narrated. Paul asks, after asserting that the Law is good, Am I to infer that this

‘good thing’ has become to me death? This was so to the man condemned to death under the law against murder: see p. 198. {Romans 7:11} But for himself Paul denies it, and goes on to state the actual case.

But sin: a subject without a predicate, which must be supplied from the context, followed by a nearer, and then an ultimate, purpose. In these purposes, we find evidently the chief matter of this verse, viz. the purpose for which the Law, ‘the good thing,’ was given. It is true, as Paul stated in Romans 7:10, that the Law, which he has just declared to be ‘good,’ had become to him a means of ‘death.’ But this is not the whole case: for in that death there was a further purpose, and this purpose changes completely the whole aspect of the sad calamity which befell Paul. This will appear as the argument proceeds.

The above-described calamity happened

in order that ‘sin’ might be seen to be sin: i.e. in order that its real character might be manifested.

Through the good thing, to me working out death: mode of this manifestation.

‘Working-out’: bringing about results, as in Romans 7:8: so Romans 7:15, 17, 18, 20.

In order that beyond measure, etc.: a further purpose, or further description of the foregoing purpose. The abstract principle of sin becomes ‘beyond measure’ a sinner by ‘working out’ more and still more deadly consequences. That these are brought about through the commandment, itself ‘good,’ reveals the tremendous and evil power of ‘sin.’ The word ‘sinner’ keeps up the personification of ‘sin.’ Notice its conspicuous prominence in this verse.

We have here another account, in addition to those in Romans 3:19; 5:20, of the purpose of the Law. Each statement illustrates the others. The Law was a result of Adam’s sin, and came in order that it might be multiplied into the many sins of his children, in order that thus the real nature of sin might appear. Consequently Paul’s death was due ultimately, not to the Law, but to sin. A still further purpose of the Law is stated in Galatians 3:24: “that we may be justified by faith.” But this is not yet in view.

**Ver. 14.** A conspicuous change from past to present. In order to explain a bygone event in his own experience, Paul now describes the constitution of the Law, and of himself; and his own bondage to 'sin.' Whether Romans 7:14-24, which evidently describe the same experience, describe Paul's state while writing this letter, we will consider later.

We know: as in Romans 2:2; 3:19, calling attention to what even Paul's opponents admit.

Spiritual: as in Romans 1:11: pertaining to the 'Spirit' of God, who is frequently contrasted with the 'flesh.' see Romans 8:4-9. 'The Law' expresses the mind of the Holy Spirit.

Man-of-flesh, or 'fleshen': same word in 1 Corinthians 3:1; 2 Corinthians 3:3; Hebrews 7:7, and (LXX.) 2 Chronicles 32:8; Ezekiel 36:26. See note under Romans 8:11. Paul's entire personality was dominated by his material side.

Sold: recalling a slave-market, and thus giving vividness to the picture.

Under sin: as in Romans 3:9: the slave-master in whose power Paul now legally is. Cp. 1 Kings 21:20, 25; Isaiah 50:1. Notice the practical result of being, while 'the Law is spiritual,' a man of 'flesh.' The flesh is not bad: for it is a creature of God. But it is the lower side of man's nature, where sin erects its throne and whence it rules the man. Consequently one who is under control of his own body is a sold slave of sin. He therefore cannot (Romans 8:7, 8) obey a law expressing the mind of the Spirit of God, who is utterly adverse (see Galatians 5:17) to the rule of the body. The only possible immediate consequence of the gift of such a law to a man of flesh is a revelation of his bondage. And this inevitable consequence is in Romans 7:13 described as the purpose of the sad experience described in Romans 7:11.

**Ver. 15-17.** Further description of the bondage of the man of flesh.

Work out: achieve results, as in Romans 7:13. Like other servants, Paul does not understand the results he is working out. That a soldier on the field marches and counter-marches he knows not why, and actually achieves results beyond his thought, proves that he is a servant working out the purposes of another. Just so, all sinners know not what they do:

Luke 23:34. This ignorance Paul accounts for by saying that his action is not determined by, but runs counter to, his own wish. This is a mark, not only of service, but of compulsory and distasteful service. Then follows, in Romans 7:16, an inference from this distasteful service, viz. that Paul agrees with the Law and recognises that it is good; and in Romans 7:17 another inference, viz. that Paul is not the author of his own actions, but that they are wrought out by another dwelling in him. This stranger who has seized the helm of Paul's ship, he calls sin.

**Ver. 18-20.** Proof of the correctness of the name just given to the stranger dwelling in Paul, completing the proof that he is (Romans 7:14) a sold slave of sin.

I know: a secret of Paul's own heart: contrast "we know" in Romans 7:14.

That is, in my flesh: limiting the above denial to the outer and material side of his nature. In that side which is nearest to the world around, and through which actions are wrought, there dwells a foreign element; and Paul knows that it is not good. The proof is that in him is desire but no realisation. From this he infers that his flesh, the medium through which desire passes into action, is occupied by an enemy. And, since that which he desires and cannot do is good, and that which he does not desire yet does is evil, he infers with sad certainty that this enemy is sin. The words 'good' and 'evil' in Romans 7:19 note the progress in argument since Romans 7:15, where Paul merely asserts the contrast between his desires and actions, without any moral judgment on them. After thus identifying the enemy who is the real author of his actions, Paul restates, in Romans 7:20, word for word, the inference stated in Romans 7:17.

**Ver. 21.** Compact summing up of the main statement in Romans 7:15-20.

[The grammatical construction of Romans 7:21 is most difficult. The chief difficulty is the construction of **τον νομον**. If we were to leave out these words, we could take **τω θελοντι εμοι ποιειν το καλον** in apposition to the second **εμοι**, thrust forward out of its place in order to emphasise Paul's desire to do good even while evil is present. We could then render, 'I find therefore, to me who desire to do the good, that to me the evil is present.' But we must do something with **τον νομον**, the Law, thrust in between **ευρισκω** and **τω θελοντι**. This term is, in Romans 7:7, 14, 16,

undoubtedly equivalent to ‘the Law of God’ in Romans 7:22, 25: and this is the ordinary meaning throughout Paul’s epistles. It is the meaning at once suggested by the same term in Romans 7:21. On the other hand, we read in Romans 7:23 of ‘another law’ and of ‘the law of sin:’ but here the new meaning is plainly stated. In Romans 7:21, we must retain the ordinary meaning unless we have strong reason to the contrary. Dr. Sanday renders, “I find therefore this law-if it may be so called-this stern necessity laid upon me from without, that much as I wish to do what is good, the evil lies at my door.” But he gives no example of any such use of this common term. An easier exposition is to retain its common use, and to take the accusative **τον νομον** as governed, not by **ευρισκω** foregoing, but by **τω θελοντι** following, and **ποιειν το καλον** as epexegetic giving the purpose for which Paul desires the Law. Thus interpreted, the accusative is put before the governing verb for emphasis, just as for emphasis **τω θελονοντι εμοι** is pushed forward. This exposition gives to the term the Law its ordinary meaning; and explains its conspicuous insertion here, viz. in order to reassert Paul’s desire to obey the Law even while actually breaking it, recalling a similar assertion in Romans 7:16 and preparing a way for a stronger assertion in Romans 7:22. Elsewhere in N.T. the word **θελω** is almost always followed by an infinitive. But an accusative follows it in Romans 7:15, 16, 19, 20: and this conspicuous construction prepares a way for the same in Romans 7:21. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:12: **των θελοντων αφορμην**.]

I find: by daily experience.

Who wish-for the Law: whose desires go after God’s commands. So Romans 7:16, “I agree with the Law:” contrast Isaiah 5:24, LXX., “they did not ‘wish-for the Law’ of the Lord.”

To do the good: purpose of Paul’s wish for the Law.

To me... to me: emphatic repetition, calling attention to Paul’s own sad case.

The evil is present: he commits sin.

**Ver. 22-23.** Summary of the proofs of the inference compactly stated in Romans 7:21.

Take-pleasure-with: recalling, but rather stronger than, “I-agree-with” in Romans 7:16. It personifies

the Law of God as taking delight in that which is good, and asserts that Paul shares that delight.

The inward man: the inner and higher element in man which is farthest from the world around. Same words in 2 Corinthians 4:16, for the inner self which in contrast to the perishing body is being renewed day by day; and in Ephesians 3:16, where it is the recipient of the inworking power of God. Compare 1 Peter 3:4, “the hidden man of the heart,” and Plato, ‘Republic’ p. 589a, “when the inner man shall have most control over the man.” To this inward side of his being, Paul limits the foregoing assertion: ‘I take pleasure... according to the inward man.’ Just so he limited the assertion in Romans 7:18 to his outward and material side.

**Ver. 23.** Terrible descriptive exposition of “to me the evil is present” in Romans 7:21.

I see: result of Paul’s self-contemplation, parallel to “I find in” Romans 7:21.

Another law: another authority prescribing conduct, and having its seat in the members of my body. As in Romans 7:5, and Romans 6:12, sin is here said to have its seat of authority in the body.

Carrying-on-war-against: vivid picture of inward conflict.

The law of my mind: the Law of God as apprehended and approved by Paul’s own intelligence. Sin puts forth its utmost power in order to overturn in Paul an authority which has gained his highest respect.

Taking me captive: result of the war which sin is waging within Paul.

‘Me’: without limitation. Paul’s entire personality is captured: his body, through which thought passes into action, is occupied by the enemy; and his mind is prevented from working out its will.

The law of sin: fuller description of the other law. It is justified by the antagonism of this other law to the law of Paul’s mind.



Which is in my members: emphatic repetition of the locality of this alien law which is taking Paul captive.

Such, as he contemplates it, is Paul's awful position. He sees a foe not only in his country and his home but in his own body. The struggle with the invader continues: but resistance is vain. By force the stranger imposes his own laws: and Paul finds himself a prisoner in his own body. He is a slave: his master is his greatest enemy: and his enemy dwells in his own breast.

**Ver. 24.** A cry for deliverance, evoked by Paul's view of his awful position.

Calamity-stricken: as in Revelation 3:17, cognate word in Romans 3:16; James 5:1; frequent in Greek tragedy. It describes not a man's state of mind, but his circumstances.

Body: recalling my members twice in Romans 7:23, and in Romans 7:5.

Death: of body and soul, the awful punishment of sin, as in Romans 7:5, 10, 13; Romans 6:16, 21, 23. The sinner's own body is to him (Romans 6:6) a body of sin and a body of death. For through its appetites, which control him, it drags him along a path of sin leading to death. Paul cries for deliverance; not from a foe before his eyes, not from a prison of granite or bars of iron, but from his own body, by means of which his enemy compels him to sin and holds him in bondage. But we need not conceive him to desire death: for this would not save him. From the tyranny of his own body, from a life of obedience to (Romans 6:12) its desires, he cries to be set free. This cry of helpless anguish, even more than the picture of his captivity, reveals his terrible position.

**Ver. 25.** The cry is heard. In the moment of deepest darkness, a light shines forth, and sorrow is turned into joy. The cry of anguish is lost in a triumphant and grateful shout of

thanks to God through Jesus Christ: so Romans 1:8. This implies deliverance, of which we shall hear more in Romans 8:2.

Therefore, etc.: a recapitulating inference from Romans 7:14-24.

I myself: very emphatic, recalling conspicuously Paul's own personality which has been before us from Romans 7:7. Looked at in himself, Paul's allegiance is divided. In his 'mind,' which acknowledges the claims and goodness of the Law, Paul bows before the rule of God: in his 'flesh,' the medium through which actions are performed, he does the bidding of God's enemy.

With the mind: recalling Paul's mental agreement with the Law, in Romans 7:16, 21, 22.

With the flesh: Paul's hands and feet, which actually do the bidding of sin.

## REVIEW

Paul asked in Romans 7:13 whether, so far as he is concerned, the gift of the Law had been a fatal failure. It would be so, if Romans 7:7-12 were the whole case. But Paul answers his own question with an emphatic negative; and says that his death by means of the Law was itself a divinely-chosen means to reveal the nature of sin. In Romans 7:14-25, we see this purpose accomplished. As we watch Paul struggling helplessly against his foe, and see the foe planting himself in his body and making it a prison, as we hear his cry for deliverance from bondage to his own body, we learn as we never learnt before what sin is. We learn this, not as in Romans 7:7-11 from Paul's sad death by means of the Law, but from the abiding state of bondage which followed his death, i.e. from the continuous working of sin in one whom it has already slain.

This revelation of sin was made by means of the Law. Had there been no Law, whatever men did would have been attributed to their ignorance and folly. It would have been thought that nothing more was needed than divine teaching supported by the thunders of Sinai. This illusion has been dispelled. The thunders of Sinai have uttered their voice; but in vain. Yet not in vain. By evoking the approbation of that in Paul which is noblest, and by prompting vain efforts after obedience, the Law has proved that Paul is a captive in the hands of an enemy against whom there is no rising up. By means of the Law, Paul has learnt that he needs, not merely a guide to show him the way, but a Savior to rescue him from the grasp of one stronger than himself.

This lesson is all that can come from the gift of (Romans 7:14) a law dictated by the Spirit of God to a born slave of sin. We therefore infer that in order to teach this lesson the Law was given and sin was permitted to use it as a weapon of death. Thus Paul has virtually proved his statement in Romans 7:13. Compare carefully Galatians 3:22-24. Under Romans 8:4, I shall review briefly the purpose and working of the Law.

Paul has now justified, by an experimental proof of its working, the description of the Law given in Romans 7:12. He has proved that it is 'good,' not merely in (Romans 7:10) its purpose, but in its actual result:

for it has evoked from him ‘thanks to God through Christ.’ It has been admitted to be ‘righteous,’ even by the conscience of a man who breaks it: and it is ‘holy;’ for we have seen it working out the purposes of God.

We now ask, do Romans 7:14-25 describe a JUSTIFIED man, or one STILL UNFORGIVEN? The latter view was held by Origen, the earliest Christian commentator, and by the Greek fathers generally: the former, by Augustine and the Latin fathers generally. It was received in the West during the middle ages, and by the Reformers; and has been held in our day by most who have accepted Calvin’s teaching on predestination. Among those who reject this teaching, the view of the Greek fathers prevails. It is worthy of note that this is the earlier opinion, and was accepted by nearly all who spoke as their mother-tongue the language in which this epistle was written.

That in Romans 7:14-25 Paul describes his own experience before justification, I hold for the following reasons.

In Romans 7:9-11 we saw a great and sad change take place in Paul, a change from life to death. This change is described in order to explain the condition described in Romans 7:5. But in Romans 7:6, as in Romans 6:22; 8:2; Ephesians 2:5, 6, and elsewhere, we read of a subsequent change, as glorious as the earlier one was sad, wrought in Paul and his readers by the power of God, a transition from bondage to liberty, from death to life. Paul is now dead to sin, set free from its service, and dead to the Law which formerly bound him to a cruel master. The second change must be located between Romans 7:13, which gives the purpose of the first change, and Romans 8:1, 2, which describes the state of those who enjoy the second. And, since Romans 7:14-25 deal evidently with one subject, we must put the second change either between Romans 7:13 and 14 or between Romans 7:25 and Romans 8:1. Now between Romans 7:13 and 14 we have no hint of a change: indeed, Romans 7:14 explains Romans 7:13, and therefore cannot be separated from it by an event which completely changed Paul’s position. But in Romans 8:1 the change takes place before our eyes, and is written in characters which no one can misunderstand. The words “made me free from the law of sin” proclaim in clearest language that the bondage of Romans 7:23, 25 has passed away.

Again, Romans 7:14-25 absolutely contradict all that Paul and the N.T. writers say about themselves and the Christian life. He here calls himself a slave of sin, and groans beneath its bondage, a calamity-stricken man. Contrast this with Galatians 2:20, "I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me;" and with 1 John 3:14, "we know that we are passed out of death into life." If the words before us refer to a justified man, they stand absolutely alone in the entire New Testament.

It has been objected that the language of Romans 7:14-25 is inapplicable to men not yet justified. But we find similar language in the lips of Greek and Roman pagans. Compare Seneca's 'Letters' no. 52: "what is it that draws us in one direction while striving to go in another, and impels us towards that which we wish to avoid?" So Euripides, 'Hippolytus' l. 379, "we understand and know the good things, but we do not work them out;" and 'Medea' l. 1078, "I know what sort of evil things I am going to do, but passion is stronger than my purposes: as it is to mortals a cause of very great evils." Also Xenophon, 'Cyropaedia' bk. vi. l. 41: "I have evidently two souls... for if I had only one, it would not be at the same time good and bad; nor would it desire at the same time both honorable and dishonorable works, nor would it at the same time both wish and not wish to do the same things. But it is evident that there are two souls; and that when the good one is in power the honorable things are practiced; but, when the bad, the dishonorable things are attempted." So Ovid, 'Metamorphoses' xvii. 17: "I desire one thing; the mind persuades another: I see and approve better things; I follow worse things." These passages do not mention the Law of God, and therefore differ greatly from the verses before us. But they prove that, apart from the historic revelations to Israel and in Christ, men were sometimes carried along, against their better judgment, to do bad things; and thus prove that, apart from the pardon of sins announced by Christ, there is in man an inward man which approves that which the Law commands.

What Paul says elsewhere about his religious state before his conversion confirms the description of himself here given. He was a man of blameless morality, zealous for God, a Pharisee of the strictest sect, in ignorance persecuting the Church: Philippians 3:6; Acts 22:3; 26:5; 1 Timothy 1:13. Of such a man we have a picture here. Paul's conscience approves the Law: he makes every effort to keep it; but his efforts only prove his moral

powerlessness, and reveal the presence of an enemy in whose firm grasp he lies: he seeks to conquer inward failure by strict outward observance, and perhaps by bloody loyalty to what he considers to be the honor of God. In the conscientious Pharisee, we have a man who desires to do right but actually does wrong. And the more earnestly a man strives to obtain the favor of God by doing right, the more painfully conscious will he be of his failure. Thus the harmony of this passage with the character of Paul is no small mark of the genuineness of this epistle. At the same time it describes more or less correctly all sinners, except perhaps some in whom long bondage to sin has almost destroyed the better principle.

That these verses describe the experience of many justified persons is no proof or presumption that they describe Paul's experience while writing this letter. If our present state corresponds with that portrayed here, this only proves that in us, as in the men referred to in 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, the change is not complete. On the other hand, there are thousands who with deep gratitude recognise that Romans 7:14-25, while describing their past, by no means describe their present, state. Day by day they are more than conquerors through Him that loved them. And, though their experience be of little weight to others, it is to themselves an absolute proof that these words do not refer to Paul's state while writing the epistle. For they are quite sure that what they enjoy the great apostle enjoyed in far higher degree.

Then why did Paul puzzle plain people by using a present tense to describe a past experience? This question may be answered by attempting to rewrite this paragraph in the past tense: "I was a man of flesh, sold under sin. I did not know what I was doing. I hated my own actions. I saw another law in the members of my body carrying on war against the law of my mind. I cried, Calamity-stricken one, who shall rescue me? "The life and strength of the paragraph are gone. To realise past calamity, we must leave out of sight our deliverance from it. The language of Romans 7:9, 11 made this easy. Paul's description of his murder by the hand of sin was so real and sad that he forgot for the moment the life which followed it. When therefore he came to describe the state in which that murder placed him, it was easy to use the present tense. Hence the transition from the past tense in Romans 7:11 describing the event of death to the present in Romans 7:14 describing the abiding state of the murdered one. Similarly, in Romans

3:7 Paul throws himself into the position of one guilty of falsehood, and sets up for himself an excuse. In Romans 4:24, he stands by the writer of Genesis and looks forward to the justification of himself and his readers as still future. In Romans 5:1, he urges them to claim peace with God through justification. In Romans 7:14, after contemplating the reign of death from Adam to Moses, he looks forward to the future incarnation of Christ. In Romans 6:5, he speaks in the same way of the resurrection life in Christ. We shall also find him, in Romans 8:30, throwing himself into the far future and looking back upon the nearer future as already past.

The past and present tenses are distinguished, not only in time, but as different modes of viewing an action. The past tense looks upon it as already complete; the present, as going on before our eyes. Consequently, when the time is otherwise determined, the tenses may be used without reference to time. In the case before us, the entire context, foregoing and following, tells plainly to what time Paul refers. He is therefore at liberty to use that tense which enables him to paint most vividly the picture before him. This mode of speech, common to all languages, is a conspicuous feature of the language in which this epistle was written. So Kuehner, 'Greek Grammar' 382. 2: "In the narration of past events the present is frequently used, especially in principal sentences, but not unfrequently in subordinate sentences, while in the vividness of the representation the past is looked upon as present. This use of the present is also common to all languages. But in the Greek language it is specially frequent; and in the language of poetry appears not merely in narration but also in vivid questions and otherwise, frequently in a startling manner."

It has been suggested that we have here a description of one who has only partly appropriated by faith the salvation offered by Christ. Every defective experience (and whose experience is not defective?) has elements in common with that of those without Christ. Consequently the language of Romans 7:14-25 is appropriate to many who have a measure of saving faith. But we have here no hint of any salvation received by faith in Christ. It is therefore better to understand it as referring to a man yet justified.

If the above exposition be correct, we have here the fullest description in the Bible of man unsaved. Even in the immoral there is an inner man which in some measure approves the good and hates the bad. But this inner man

is powerless against the enemy who is master of his body, and who thus dictates his conduct. In spite of his better self, the man is carried along a path of sin. This is not contradicted, nor is its force lessened, by Paul's admission in Romans 2:26, 27 that even pagans do sometimes what the Law commands. For their obedience is only occasional and imperfect; whereas the Law requires constant and complete obedience. A man who breaks the laws of his country is not saved from punishment by occasional performance of noble actions. Although men unforgiven sometimes do that which deserves approbation, they are utterly powerless to rescue themselves from the power of sin and to obtain by good works the favor of God.

Chapter 7 reconciles the teaching of Romans 6, with the divine authority of the Law. Romans 7:1-6 prove that our complete deliverance from sin asserted in Romans 6:22, is in harmony with the essence of law: for the death of Christ puts us beyond the limits affixed by the Law to its own domain. Romans 7:7-12 prove that, though salvation is possible only through deliverance from the Law, yet the Law is not bad: for it is only a passive instrument through which sin slays its victims. And from Romans 7:13-25 we have now learnt that, although its immediate effect was death, yet the Law has not failed in its purpose of life: for our death by its means has made known to us the power of our adversary, and has driven us to One who is able to save.

Man's relation to the Law is now sufficiently expounded, and the Law sufficiently vindicated. It remains only to describe the new life with which, in Christ Jesus, the Spirit of life makes free the adopted children of God.



## SECTION 23

### THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH

#### CHAPTER 8:1-11

*Therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and of death. For, what the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, by sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; in order that the decree of the Law may be fulfilled in us who walk not according to flesh but according to Spirit.*

*For they that are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death: but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. Because the mind of the flesh is enmity towards God. For to the Law of God it does not submit: for neither can it. Moreover, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit; if, as I assume, the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone has not the Spirit of Christ, that man is not His. But if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. "But if the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised Christ Jesus from the dead will make alive also your mortal bodies because of His Spirit dwelling in you.*

**Ver. 1.** Inference from the summary just given of Romans 8:14-25.

Now: changed circumstances, involving a change of time: so Romans 6:22; 7:6.

No condemnation: no adverse sentence of God, like that in Romans 3:9.

Those in Christ Jesus: they to whom the personality of Christ is the environment of life and action; a conception ever present to the thought of

Paul: see under Romans 6:11; cp. Romans 16:7; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:17. In former days, although Paul's mind paid allegiance to the Law of God, his hands and feet did the bidding of sin. From this he now draws the unexpected inference that they who are in Christ are no longer condemned by God for their sins. This general inference implies that the foregoing experience is, though doubtless in different degrees, common to all Christians.

**Ver. 2.** Explanation and proof of Romans 8:1.

The Spirit: new and conspicuous feature of Romans 8. The close argument following implies that 'the Spirit' of life here is the same as the Spirit of God and of Christ in Romans 8:9, 11, 14: and this can be no other than the Holy Spirit in Romans 5:5. He is the Spirit 'of life:' for all life springs from Him.

The law of 'the Spirit': the Holy Spirit, looked upon as prescribing conduct. This phrase is another mark of Paul's legal mode of thought: cp. Romans 3:27, "a law of faith."

The law of sin: the principle of evil looked upon as prescribing action: so Romans 7:23, 25.

'Sin' and death are partners of one throne, and issue one 'law:' to obey sin, is to walk in a path marked out by death.

Made-free: as in Romans 6:18, 22. The Holy Spirit, by prescribing a new course of action, liberates us from the bondage involved in the former compulsory obedience to the dictates of evil leading to death. Just so a conqueror, by setting up his own laws in a conquered country, makes the former laws invalid. That the country obeys the new law, is a proof of conquest. The presence and guidance of the Spirit have made Paul free from the rule of sin. This is not change of bondage, but freedom from all bondage. For the law of the Spirit is the will of our Maker, and therefore the law of our being. To obey it, is the only true freedom.

In Christ Jesus: as in Romans 8:1, giving the point of the argument. If 'in Christ' Paul has been made free from the dominion of sin, there is 'no condemnation to those in Christ.' For their liberation proves that they are forgiven. Cp. Romans 3:24: "redemption in Christ Jesus."

Instead of 'made' me 'free' in the Alex. and Ephraim and Clermont MSS. and some early versions, the Sinai and Vatican MSS. and the Peshito Syriac version read 'made' thee 'free.' This latter reading is given by Tischendorf, in the text of Westcott, and in the margins of Lachmann and Tregelles, who however give the other reading in their texts, as does Westcott in his margin. It should have been noted by the Revisers. But the difference, merely one letter, is unimportant. Either reading may easily be explained as an error. Paul's references to himself throughout Romans 7:7-25 might prompt a copyist to change 'thee' into 'me.' And the same letters at the end of the foregoing word [ $\eta\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\theta\epsilon\rho\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu\ \sigma\epsilon$ ] would account easily for the opposite change. The difference in meaning is small. Paul supports the general statement in Romans 8:1 by personal experience; in the one case of himself, in the other of his reader, whom as in Romans 2:1 he singles out and appeals to as an individual. The former seems more natural, and this may perhaps outweigh the authority of our two best copies.

Notice here a definite experience of inward liberation. Paul remembers the time when, in spite of his better judgment, he did the bidding of sin: he now does the bidding of the Spirit of God, but is free only while following His guidance. He therefore infers that the guidance of the Spirit has made him free. His liberation came through Christ's death; and he enjoys it today by resting on Christ. It is therefore God's gift, and a proof of His forgiveness. Just so a prisoner, whose doors have been opened by the king's command, has in his past imprisonment and present freedom a proof of pardon; whereas the freedom of a law-breaker who has never been arrested is no such proof. There are thousands today to whom every doubt about their present salvation is banished by a remembrance of their former bondage to sin and fruitless efforts to do right. Since Paul's liberation took place in Christ, he has a right to infer that all who are in Christ have been set free and are therefore no longer condemned. Thus the Law, by making us conscious of our bondage, not only drives us to Christ, but furnishes, to those who believe, an abiding proof of God's favor.

This verse is complete proof that Romans 7:14-25 does not describe Paul's experience while writing. For no man can be at the same time 'made free from the law of sin and' (Romans 7:23) taken 'captive to the law of sin.'

**Ver. 3-4.** Explanation of the foregoing liberation.

What the Law... through the flesh: comment on the statement following.

‘The Law’: of Moses as always when not otherwise defined.

Weak: powerless to save; because, ‘through’ our ‘flesh’ being controlled by a hostile power, we were unable to obey it. Just so a rope is powerless to save a drowning man who has not strength to grasp it; whereas even such might be saved by the living arms of a strong man. If the flesh could do what the mind approves, the Law would be able, by revealing the badness of the rule of sin, to dethrone it, and thus save us. But the flesh cannot drive out its dread inhabitant. Consequently, ‘the Law,’ which cannot breathe new strength into the flesh, but only knowledge into the mind, is too ‘weak’ to save us. To save under such circumstances is the inability ‘of the Law’, i.e. something it ‘cannot’ do.

His own Son: similar phrase in Romans 8:32: see under Romans 1:3.

Flesh of sin: the material of our bodies, in which sin has set up its throne and which in this sense belongs to sin: so “body of sin” in Romans 6:6.

Likeness: as in Romans 1:23; 5:14; 6:5. The material of Christ’s body was ‘like’ that of our bodies which are controlled by sin. This proves that the word sending refers to Christ’s birth.

God ‘sent His own Son,’ though sinless, clothed ‘in flesh’ like that in which sin dwells. This implies His existence before His birth as, even then, God’s own Son: cp. Philippians 2:7; 1 John 4:9.

For sin: purpose of the mission of the Son: cp. Galatians 1:4; 1 John 2:2. It had reference to sin. The same words are used in reference to sacrifices in Leviticus 4:3, 14; Hebrews 10:8, 18, 26: but they are so general that we need not infer any such reference here.

Condemned sin: proclaimed its doom. Since sin has been represented as a ruler, its doom must be dethronement.

In the flesh: locality of this proclamation.

‘By sending His own Son’ in a body like that in which sin had set up its throne, and with special reference to sin, God proclaimed in the midst of the empire of sin that that empire will be overthrown. When we see the king’s son enter the revolted province without opposition, and know that he has come because of the revolt, we are sure that the king is both able and determined to put down the revolt. The presence of the king’s son proclaims the usurper’s coming dethronement.

**Ver. 4.** Definite moral purpose of the coming of Christ.

The decree of the Law: its various prescriptions of conduct, looked at as one whole: cp. Romans 2:26; 1:32.

Fulfilled: as in Romans 13:8; cp. Romans 2:27. Since the Law was designed to mould our conduct, its purpose is accomplished when it is obeyed.

‘Fulfilled’ in us: better than “that we may fulfil.” For every act of obedience is God’s work in us, and gift to us; and is an accomplishment of the divine purpose for which Christ became Man.

Who walk, etc.: those in whom, and the condition on which, the Law will be fulfilled.

According to flesh: allowing the indolence or appetites of the body to mark out our path. To do this, is to obey sin which dwells in the flesh.

According to Spirit: following the guidance of the Spirit of God. This exposition is clearly implied in Romans 8:9, and in Romans 8:13, 14. God sent His Son to dwell in human flesh in order that the Spirit of God, and no longer the flesh, may direct our steps; and that thus the purpose of the Law may be achieved in us. And, that its purpose is thus accomplished in us, is a proof that we have been set free from the rule of sin, and therefore are no longer condemned.

Paul’s exposition of the purpose and working of the Law is now complete: see Romans 3:19; 5:20; 7:13. To men guilty of actual sin, and held fast by sin, God gave a righteous law. Because it was the will of our Maker, it commended itself to our moral judgment, and evoked efforts after obedience. These efforts failed utterly: and their failure proved that we are powerless to accomplish our own moral purposes, that we are in the grasp of an evil and hostile power. This inevitable result of the gift of such a law

to such persons must have been its purpose. We infer therefore that the Law was given in order to reveal our hopeless bondage. Again, believers now actually fulfil the Law which they once vainly tried to obey. This proves that they have been set free from their mighty adversary, and that a mightier has taken up His abode within them. For they have been set free, not from without, but from within. That their deliverer prompts and enables them to fulfil the Law, proves Him to be the Spirit of God. He is God's gift to them; and His presence is therefore a proof of pardon. Thus in them is attained the life-giving purpose of the ancient Law. For, by revealing the uselessness of their own efforts, it has led them to Christ, and taught them the worth of His salvation: and, by revealing the presence and power of their foe, it also reveals the presence and greater power of the Spirit of God, and thus affords constant proof that their condemnation removed.

That the Holy Spirit, given to those who believe the words of Christ, prompts and enables them to obey the words of Moses and the prophets, is another harmony of the Old and New; and therefore confirms the divine origin of both. Moreover, that Christ came in order that the Law may be fulfilled in us in a life guided by the Spirit, attests the importance and eternal validity of the Law.

That the new life which Christ came to impart is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, is the **FIFTH** and last **FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE** of this epistle. We find it in Romans 5:5: it is developed in Romans 8:2-16, 23, 26, 27; 9:1; 14:17; 15:13, 16, 19. It is assumed again and again by Paul throughout his epistles: e.g. 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 12:3, 7; 2 Corinthians 3:8; Galatians 3:14; 4:6; 5:16-18; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; cp. 1 Peter 1:2; 4:14. The same doctrine is taught in 1 John 3:24; 4:13; and is attributed to Christ in John 7:39; 14:16; Matthew 10:20; Mark 13:11; Luke 11:13; 12:12. We therefore cannot doubt that it was actually taught by Him. Notice also that the universal gift of the Spirit was foretold in Joel 2:28, 29; that Ezekiel (Ezekiel 36:27) announced that He will lead those in whom He dwells to obey the Law; and that Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:33) foretold that God will write His Law in His people's hearts.

Doctrine 5, Sanctification through the Spirit greatly helps us to exercise the faith required in Doctrine 4, Sanctification through Faith. When God bids

us reckon ourselves dead to sin and henceforth living only for Him, we remember our moral weakness and say, How can these things be? But when we learn that henceforth the Spirit of God will dwell within us in order that by His power He may save us from all sin and by His holiness direct towards God our every purpose and effort, our doubt gives place to confident expectation and adoring gratitude. For we are sure that the Spirit is able to accomplish, even in us, God's purpose of holiness.

**Ver. 5-8.** Further exposition of the two courses just described, affording abundant reason for the divine purpose just stated.

They that are according to flesh: they whose moral nature is controlled by the needs and desires of the body.

The things of the flesh: objects which the body desires or turns from. These, they mind, i.e. make them objects of thought and effort: same word in Matthew 16:23; Philippians 3:19; Romans 11:20; 12:3, 16; 14:6; 15:5. They whose moral nature is determined by the flesh think about and pursue what the flesh (cp. Romans 6:12) desires. Conversely, they according to the Spirit.

**Ver. 6.** Contrasted results of following the two paths now before us.

The flesh is personified as one whose mind, i.e. purpose and effort, is to kill. In the body of the unsaved, sin erects (Romans 6:12) its throne; and through its needs and desires, these arising from 'the flesh,' the bodily constitution common to all men, rules the whole man. The inevitable result of this rule is death, i.e. (as in Romans 6:21, 23) utter ruin of body and spirit. This inevitable result, Paul here represents as the purpose of the flesh. They whose thought is dominated by their bodily life are working out their own destruction. So Galatians 6:8: "he that sows for his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption."

Life: as in Romans 6:23.

Peace: as in Romans 1:7. 'Life and peace' are objects at which the Spirit ever aims: for He is (Romans 8:2) the 'Spirit of Life.' God sent His Son into the world in order that we might no longer follow a path leading inevitably to death, but pursue another path leading to life and peace.

Similar contrast in Matthew 7:13, 14: “the way leading to destruction... to life.”

**Ver. 7.** Reason why the mind of the flesh is death, viz. because it is essentially hostility towards God. This strong statement is at once explained.

The Law of God: as in Romans 7:22. This full title reminds us that the Law is supported by divine authority.

To this authority, the flesh does not submit: and this statement is explained and strengthened by another, for neither can it. The bodily constitution common to all men, and in great part to animals, desires objects without considering whether God permits them. Our appetites distinguish pleasant and unpleasant, but not right and wrong. They therefore often prompt us to break the Law: and to do so is to declare war against the King. Consequently the flesh is necessarily hostile to God: to let the body rule, is to do what God forbids. The reason of this is given in Romans 7:23. The flesh is, in the unsaved, ruled by sin. Consequently, to obey the flesh, is to obey its awful Lord, sin; and is therefore essential hostility to God. But this animating principle of the flesh is left out of sight here, to remind us that they who, perhaps without thought of sin, follow the guidance of the body are working out the will of one whose only purpose is to fight against God. Such war must, as stated in Romans 8:6, end in death.

**Ver. 8.** An additional statement completing the proof of Romans 8:6a.

In flesh: as in Romans 7:5. To the unsaved, bodily life not only, as in Romans 8:4, marks out their path but is the moral element in which they are and move. They see and hear only through the eyes and ears of the body, and all they have and are depends on the body. They are therefore at its mercy; at the mercy of that which we have seen to be hostile to God. Such men

cannot please God. They can neither obtain nor retain His favor This does not contradict the important statement in Romans 2:26, 27 For occasional obedience cannot save from punishment for the sins of which (cp. Romans 3:9, 23) all are guilty. Indeed, by raising their moral tone, it rather reveals how far even the best fall short of what God requires.



This verse asserts (cp. Ephesians 2:3) the universal moral helplessness of men. For, in order to please God, we need to be rescued from the dominion of our own bodies.

**Ver. 9-11.** After describing in Romans 8:7, 8 “the mind of the flesh,” Paul now turns round suddenly to describe the lot of those who follow the Spirit:

but ye are not in flesh but in Spirit. Your moral environment is not ‘flesh’ with its needs and desires, but ‘Spirit,’ viz. the

Spirit of God. If, as I assume: εἰπερ: a condition which Paul takes for granted.

Dwells in you: a blessed contrast to Romans 7:17, 18, 20. ‘If’ the ‘Spirit of God’ makes His home ‘in you,’ then ‘are ye in’ the ‘Spirit.’ For His presence in us reveals to us, and lifts us into, a new world.

But if anyone, etc.: solemn statement of another possibility. It expounds what is involved in the particle rendered ‘if, as I assume.’ Evidently the ‘Spirit of God’ is also

the Spirit of Christ. This implies that the one Spirit is an essential relation to both the Father and the Son. It also implies that the Holy Spirit is the only medium of union with Christ. For Paul here asserts that they only are Christ’s in whom dwells the Spirit of Christ. And this implies that all the justified have the Holy Spirit; as was assumed in Romans 5:5. Yet we do not become Christ’s by receiving the Spirit, but (Romans 3:22) by faith. We are then (Galatians 3:26) sons of God; and, because of this, the Spirit of the Son (Galatians 4:6) is sent into our hearts.

**Ver. 10.** Further description of the happy lot of those in whom the Spirit of God dwells, in contrast to the case just stated.

Christ in you: evidently equivalent to the “Spirit of God dwells in you” in Romans 8:9: see Romans 8:11. For the Spirit of Christ and of God is the Bearer of the presence of Christ and God. Cp. Galatians 2:20, “Christ lives in me.”

The body dead: as being already doomed to the grave, and its actual death being only a question of time.

Because of sin: viz. of Adam: see Romans 5:12.

The spirit: the human spirit, as in Romans 1:9, the highest side of man's nature, in contrast to 'the body' in which it dwells. This contrast differs from that in Romans 8:4-6, 9, where the "flesh" common to all men is set over against the one "Spirit" of God given to all who believe in Christ.

Life: stronger than "alive."

Because of righteousness: received by faith: cp. Romans 5:21, "that grace may reign through righteousness for life eternal." "Because of" Adam's 'sin, the body' of those in whom Christ dwells is 'dead,' i.e. a prey of worms and corruption; 'but, because of' the 'righteousness' which is through Christ and through faith, 'the spirit' which animates that mortal body possesses undying 'life.'

**Ver. 11.** Still further description of their happy lot. Even the body will be rescued.

Of Him that raised Jesus: a close parallel to Romans 4:24. Paul remembers that the Spirit who

dwells in all who put faith in Christ is the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus, and therefore a bearer of His infinite power. Notice the emphatic repetition of this important point. That God raised Christ, is a pledge that He will raise us.

Make-alive: as in Romans 4:17.

Your mortal bodies: as in Romans 6:12, but with a different reference, there to the immoral influence of a side of our nature not yet rescued, here to the final rescue even of this lower side of us.

Between the readings by means of His Spirit and because of 'His Spirit,' the oldest and best documents are almost equally divided, as are modern editors. The former is found in the Sinai, Alexandrian, and Ephraim MSS., and in four very ancient versions; and was read by Clement of Alexandria, by Hippolytus probably, and by many fathers: the latter is in the Vatican and Clermont MSS., and in the Latin and Peshito Syriac versions; and was read probably by Irenaeus and Tertullian, and almost certainly by Origen. Athanasius gives us to understand that in his day the reading 'by means of

His Spirit' was found "in all the ancient copies," but that it was nevertheless disputed.

In cases like this, where the best documents are equally divided, critics usually decide according as one or other reading seems most agreeable to the mind of Paul and at the same time most likely to be altered by a copyist. But here even these internal reasons afford no safe ground for decision. The former reading would teach that the Holy Spirit is the Agent of the resurrection of the body. This is not elsewhere taught in the New Testament; but is in harmony with the nature and work of the Spirit. The other reading teaches that, because the body of the dead was a dwelling-place of the Spirit of God and therefore sacred, God will raise it from the corruption of the grave: a thought in full harmony with the teaching of Paul.

This evenly-balanced evidence, external and internal, leaves the true reading quite uncertain. This uncertainty is reflected in the judgment of the Critical Editors. The reading 'by means of' is given in Tischendorf's latest edition and in the texts of Westcott and the Revisers: the reading 'because of,' in that of Tregelles, in the 7th edition of Tischendorf, and in the margins of Westcott and the Revisers.

**Ver. 11** completes the triumph of those rescued from the dominion of sin. Even the bodies in which the Spirit dwelt are sacred, and will be (see Romans 8:23) redeemed from corruption. It is true that lips which have spoken His words will be silent in death, that hands which He moved to works of mercy will moulder into dust. They will die because our father sinned. But the triumph of death will be short. Even the mortal clay which has been the organ of the Spirit will live for ever. For the Hand which raised Christ will raise them.

This verse implies that the risen bodies of the saved will bear a definite relation to the bodies laid in the grave. But that they are by no means identical, is taught plainly in 1 Corinthians 15:43, 44, 50; Philippians 3:21. This warns us not to infer, or to charge Paul with teaching, that our future and present bodies will consist of the same particles. And such collecting of dispersed atoms would be utterly meaningless. But Paul asserts clearly that the victory gained by death will, in the servants of Christ, be

triumphantly reversed by the power which raised Christ from the grave and raised Him to heaven.

The new feature in Romans 8:1-11 is the Spirit of God. In Romans 7:14-25, the conflict was between the Law, approved by the mind, and sin dwelling in the body; and the result was disastrous defeat and hopeless captivity. But now the Spirit has taken the field; and, by setting up His own rule, has made Paul free from the rule of sin and the tyranny of his own body. His spirit is already made alive by contact with the Spirit of life: and the liberation of his dying body, already rescued from the control of sin, is only a question of time.

**FLESH.** The immoral influence attributed by Paul to the body gives to this word in his writings special significance.

‘Flesh’ is the soft solid material of living or once-living bodies. So “flesh and bones” in Luke 24:39; “flesh and blood” in Matthew 16:17; John 6:51-56; 1 Corinthians 15:50; Galatians 1:16; Ephesians 6:12; Hebrews 2:14. Since bones and blood are out of sight, the word ‘flesh’ denotes frequently the entire material of the body. The flesh is the living matter common to all men: the body is the one organized portion of it belonging to each individual and consisting of mutually-essential members. Since all life is robed in flesh, to be alive on earth is to “live in the flesh:” Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:22, 24. The flesh is contrasted with the mind, the heart, and more frequently with the spirit: Romans 7:25; 2:28; 1:4; Matthew 26:41; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Colossians 2:5. Since a similar bodily material, though in a different outward form, is possessed by animals, the word ‘flesh’ is also applied to them: 1 Corinthians 15:39; Revelation 19:18; Isaiah 31:3.

Since human and animal life are never found except robed in corresponding flesh, this word denotes frequently, especially in O.T., the entire man and the entire race: so Psalm 56:4; 65:2; 78:39; Isaiah 31:3; 40:5; 49:26, etc.; Matthew 16:17; Luke 3:6; Acts 2:17; Romans 3:20; 11:14; Galatians 1:16; 1 Peter 1:24. This use of the word is the more appropriate because the sensations and state of the spirit within are determined, and the power of the spirit is limited, by its material clothing. Where the body is, the man is: what the man does, he does through the body: whatever is done to the

body, is done to the man. All that we see of the man, is flesh. We therefore speak of him as flesh.

Paul teaches frequently that the body exerts on the spirit an all-important and immoral influence. It has desires and actions: Romans 6:12; 8:13. In it sin dwells and reigns; and to obey its desires is to submit to the rule of sin: Romans 6:12. In our body the emotions of sin were once at work; and there sin promulgates its law and fights against the mind: Romans 7:5, 23. Hence the body of the unsaved is a body of sin; and from the tyranny of this body Paul cries to be set free: Romans 6:6; 7:24. Through the death of Christ, our body of sin is practically dead: Romans 6:6.

This teaching prepares us for the moral significance of the flesh. The influence of the body arises from its needs and desires and dislikes, which ever prompt us to pursue the objects needful for the existence and comfort of the body and to avoid their opposites. Now these needs, etc. are common, in different degrees, to all men, and to some extent to animals. We therefore cannot but think of them as inherent to flesh, as “desires of the flesh:” Galatians 5:16, 24. And these desires, found wherever we find a similar material organization, give unity to the idea of flesh.

That Paul speaks, e.g. Romans 6:12; 7:5, 23; Galatians 5:16-19, of the body as a dwelling-place of sin and of the desires and works of the flesh as bad, implies that all men are by nature fallen. Through these desires, evil rules all except those whom God has rescued. We cannot distinguish the influence of the flesh from the influence exerted through the flesh by the principle of sin. Hence sin may be looked upon as the animating principle of the flesh. This one spirit of evil in the many bodies of the unsaved gives additional unity to the idea of flesh. And since the influence of the flesh is always in the same direction, we may look upon it as cherishing always the one purpose of death: Romans 8:6.

Many of the objects desired or disliked by the flesh can be obtained or avoided only by first obtaining other objects. Frequently all our mental and bodily powers are at work to get that which will preserve or indulge the body: e.g. intelligent efforts to make money, prompted by desire for bodily gratification. Probably all sin has a similar ultimate origin. Hence, in Galatians 5:19, “the works of the flesh” include every kind of sin. Since the body desires objects merely for its own preservation and gratification,

the desires of the body are essentially selfish. Consequently, indulgence of them puts us in opposition to our fellows; and “jealousy and strife” are (1 Corinthians 3:1-4) constant results of a life according to flesh.

Those in Christ are, by the death of Christ, set free from the rule of the body. To them therefore, crucified with Christ, the body of sin has lost its power: Romans 6:6. They are no longer “in the flesh:” Romans 7:5, 8:9. In other words, they stand now in a new relation to their own bodies. Formerly the body was the world in which they lived. Beyond the range of its vision they saw nothing: upon its life and welfare their happiness depended. But now the Spirit of God dwelling within them has made them citizens of a world independent of the body. They no longer see only through eyes of flesh, or lean upon an arm of flesh. Therefore, although physically (Galatians 2:20) they are still in the flesh, morally they are no longer so.

We have seen the contrast of flesh and spirit. But when the word ‘flesh’ denotes the one living material common to all men and includes the one animating principle of evil, it requires a nobler contrast. This is found in the one Spirit of God, who dwells in the heart, enlightens the mind, and strengthens the spirit of all believers, who is the one soul of their many souls, and who stands in absolute antagonism to the flesh. So Romans 8:4-13; Galatians 5:16-25. Through the body sin seeks to enslave and corrupt our spirit. The Spirit of God rescues us from this slavery, becomes the soul of our soul, and, acting upon us through our spirit which He enlightens and strengthens, makes our body to be a living temple in which our freed spirit offers ceaseless sacrifice to God.

The immoral influence of the flesh underlies John 3:6; 1 John 2:16. Otherwise it is peculiar to Paul.

We therefore understand the flesh to be that material clothing of the spirit which is common to all men, in which alone the human spirit dwells on earth, which in the unsaved is under the control of sin, and which exerts or tends to exert upon the spirits of all men an influence always opposed to God. The moral use of the word flesh is not so much a new meaning as a result of a deeper view of the nature, position, and influence, of that which the word commonly denotes.

## SECTION 24

### *THE GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT IS A PROOF OF COMING GLORY*

#### CHAPTER 8:12-17

*Therefore, brethren, we are debtors-not to the flesh, to live according to flesh. For if ye are living according to flesh, ye will die: but if by the Spirit ye are putting to death the actions of the body ye will live. For, so many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye did not receive a spirit of bondage, again for fear; but ye received a Spirit of adoption, in which we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bears joint-witness with our spirit that we are children of God. But if children, also heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ; if, as I assume, we suffer together, in order that we may also be glorified together.*

By a practical application in Romans 8:12 and a proof in Romans 8:13-17 of the statement in Romans 8:10, 11, Paul will now complete his comparison of a life according to flesh with one according to Spirit. We are bound to the latter because it is a pledge of coming glory.

**Ver. 12.** Practical inference from Romans 8:10, 11. "If Christ's presence in us be a proof that our spirit is alive, and if God will raise the bodies of those in whom His Spirit dwells, then are we bound, etc."

Debtors: as in Romans 1:14; 13:7, 8; 15:27, and especially Galatians 5:3. Compare the words 'owe' and 'ought.'

Not to the flesh: opposite course, to which we are under no obligation whatever. The contrast adds force to the exhortation: cp. Romans 6:17.

To live according to flesh: to mind the things of the flesh, to walk according to flesh, to do the actions of the body, in Romans 8:5, 4, 13. This is the debt which the flesh claims but which we are not bound to pay.

**Ver.** 13. Instead of saying what we are bound to do, Paul breaks off the sentence to give a reason why we must not live according to flesh. Similarly, in Romans 5:12, 7:12. The reason given is a summary of Romans 8:6-8.

Ye will die: as in Romans 8:6; 7:24, 13, 9; 6:21, 23.

But if by the Spirit, etc.: the course we are bound to pursue. It takes the place of the contrast broken off in Romans 8:12.

‘By’ the ‘Spirit’: by the help of the Holy Spirit: so Galatians 5:5, 16, 18, 25.

Actions: not separate acts, but courses of action: only in Romans 12:4; Colossians 3:9; Matthew 16:27; Luke 23:51; Acts 19:18. For a list, see Colossians 3:5-8.

‘Actions’ of the body: such as supply the need, or gratify the desires, of the body, or have this as their ultimate aim.

‘Body’: rather than “flesh:” for the actions were performed by our individual body. They are different in different men.

Are-putting-to-death: a bold personification: a close parallel in Colossians 3:5. Experience proves that our past actions, especially often-repeated actions, are a living power in us today, urging us on in the path we trod yesterday. This present power of bygone thoughts, words, actions, we call habit. To destroy it, is to ‘put to death the actions of the body.’ The present tense implies that the destruction is going on day by day; and therefore implies that the evil influence of their past conduct continues even in the justified. It is gradually destroyed, as it was gradually formed, by single acts. Every act of an opposite kind weakens, and so far tends to kill, the influence of our past life.

We have here Paul’s first reference to a gradual development of the new life: cp. Colossians 3:10. Hitherto he has spoken only of changes which have, or ought to have, already taken place. But the destruction of habits is gradual. Our body is already dead, in the sense that through the death of Christ its subjection to sin, and its rule over us, have ceased. But the actions of the body, i.e. the habits of our former life, still strive to regain



for the body which begot them its lost dominion. The increasing weakness of these habits is a measure of spiritual growth.

Notice the double contrast. A life according to flesh is the way to death: to put to death the actions of the body is a pledge of life.

Ye-will-live: the eternal life awaiting the servants of Christ. So Romans 5:21; 6:22, 23; 8:6, 10, 11.

**Ver. 14-17.** Proof that they “will live.”

By-the-Spirit: expounding same word in Romans 8:13.

Led ‘by’ the ‘Spirit’: their thoughts, words, actions, guided by Him. That He prompts and enables us to put to death the actions of the body, proves Him to be the ‘Spirit’ of God. He leads us by opening our eyes to recognise sin and see its hurtfulness, and by giving us moral strength to conquer it; by revealing the will of God and its excellence, and by giving us power to do it.

Sons of God: further explained in Romans 8:15-17, and made the basis of an important argument.

**Ver. 15.** Proof that they “are sons of God.”

Ye: assuming that the readers are among the persons just described.

Did not receive: as usual, the negative side first: cp. 2 Timothy 1:7.

A spirit of bondage: such as animates slaves. This does not imply that any spirit of bondage actually exists, but merely denies that we have received such. For the characterizing genitive, compare Romans 1:4; 8:2; 11:8; Galatians 6:1; Isaiah 11:2.

For fear: tendency of the spirit which animates slaves. If God gave us such, He would lead us back again to our former state.

But ye received: solemn repetition, stating the actual case.

Adoption: **υιοθεσια**: Greek equivalent for a Roman legal process by which one man took another’s son to be his own son. The adopted son took the name and rank of the adopting father, and with certain limitations stood in the same relation to him as a born son. So Aulus Gellius, bk. v.

19: "Into another man's family, and into the position of children, strangers are received." This Roman legal term is found in N.T. only here and in Romans 8:23; Romans 9:4; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5; used only by Paul, a Roman citizen. It is specially suitable to describe a change made in accordance with the principles of law.

Spirit of 'adoption': the Holy Spirit, given to those whom God adopts as sons. [The anarthrous term looks upon Him qualitatively as 'a Spirit of adoption.']

In whom: under whose influence, we cry. Cp. 1 Corinthians 12:3; Matthew 22:43.

Abba: Aramaic word for Father: so Galatians 4:6; Mark 14:36. Christ spoke frequently to God and of God as Father; and taught us to do the same. Hence the Aramaic word with which He approached God became sacred to His disciples, and passed into the lips even of those who spoke other languages. Similarly, 'Amen' and 'Hallelujah,' Hebrew words. The word 'Father' is a Greek equivalent for the Aramaic word: as if we said, "Amen, so be it."

With this verse compare Galatians 4:6. By moving us to cry, the Spirit Himself cries in our hearts: for our cry expresses His thought. He moves us to cry by revealing, through the Gospel, the fatherly love of God: Romans 5:5. We recognise that love, and cry, My Father God. By prompting this cry, the Spirit makes Himself known as 'a Spirit of adoption.' The change from 'ye received' to we cry puts Paul Himself among the adopted sons.

**Ver. 16.** Argument of Romans 8:15 in a compact form, showing how it proves the statement in Romans 8:14.

The Spirit itself: A.V. reproducing the Greek neuter, here used. The R.V. reads into Paul's Greek a correct inference from Romans 8:27; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:13; John 16:13; Matthew 28:19. So to render, is not translation, but exposition.

Bears-joint-witness-with: same word in Romans 2:15; 9:1, (cp. Hebrews 2:4,) denoting a confirmation of what another witness has said.

Our spirit cried (Romans 8:15) ‘Abba, Father:’ and, just as a similar cry from a child is a testimony-though possibly a mistaken one-that he is a son of the man whom he calls Father, so the cry to God of ‘our spirit,’ the highest part of our being, ‘bears-witness’ that we are children of God. That this cry was prompted by the Spirit of God, adds His infallible testimony to the testimony of our own spirit, and assures us that our confidence is no delusion. Thus ‘the Spirit Himself’ confirms the testimony of ‘our spirit.’ In the order of cause and effect, the witness of God’s Spirit precedes that of our own spirit; for He reveals to us the fatherly love of God, and thus moves us to call Him ‘Father.’ But, in the order of our thought, our own cry comes first. We are first conscious of our own filial confidence, and then observe that it is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit.

The word ‘witness’ is a favorite in Greek for whatever affords proof. Compare carefully John 5:36; 10:25; Acts 14:3, 17; 15:8; Hebrews 2:4. It is specially used in reference to the Holy Spirit; and is very appropriate here because it is by a voice put into our lips that the Holy Spirit gives proof that we are sons of God.

**Ver. 17.** Completion of Paul’s proof that (Romans 8:13) “if by the Spirit ye put to death the actions of the body, ye will live.”

If children, also heirs: inheriting their father’s wealth. This last word, Paul expounds in two directions, in reference to God and to Christ. That by adoption God makes us His sons, implies that we shall be enriched by His wealth, that we shall share the infinite inheritance which belongs to Christ as the Son of God. The words ‘heirs’ and joint-heirs recall Romans 4:13, 14. By adoption we are, not only sons and ‘heirs of God,’ but brothers ‘of Christ’ and ‘joint-heirs’ of His glorious inheritance.

The proof of the assertion in Romans 8:13, “ye will live,” is now complete. In virtue of His relation to the Father, Christ will live for ever: cp. John 5:26, 6:57. Therefore, if we are sharers of His inheritance, we too “shall live” for ever. And if so, as stated in Romans 8:12, our hope of eternal life binds us to follow the guidance of the Spirit. For to Him we owe our confidence that we are children of God. See a similar argument in Ephesians 4:30; also Ephesians 1:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 1:22.

If, as I assume, etc.: condition on which we 'are heirs together with Christ.' All who suffer because they obey God suffer-together with Christ. For their sufferings, like His arise from the world's hatred to God, and are endured willingly to advance the purposes for which Christ died. Cp. 2 Corinthians 1:5; Colossians 1:24; 2 Timothy 2:12; Mark 10:39. These words remind us, as does Romans 5:3, of the persecutions of the early Christians. But in some measure they are true of all servants of Christ: for His service always involves sacrifice.

In order that we may, etc.: purpose for which God lays suffering upon us, and a hope which helps us cheerfully to endure it. We gladly accept the cross, that we may wear the crown: so Matthew 5:12; Acts 5:41.

Glorified: with the splendor, exciting admiration, with which God will crown His servants: so Romans 8:18, 21, 30; 5:2; 1 Corinthians 15:43; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Colossians 1:27. These words complete the picture of our partnership with Christ. [Notice the group of words beginning with **συν**:- Romans 6:4, 5, 6, 8; 8:17, 22, 26, 28, 29; Ephesians 2:5, 6; Colossians 2:11-13; 3:1.] We are sharers of His crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection. We must share His sufferings; but we share His sonship, and shall share His heritage of glory.

The ARGUMENT of Romans 8:12-17, we will now rebuild from the premises assumed. Paul assumes that his readers are day by day trampling upon, and thus destroying, their former habits of sin; and that they confidently call God their Father. Their former bondage proves that this victory is from a Helper higher than themselves. That this Helper is within them, and gives victory over sin, proves Him to be the Spirit of God: cp. Matthew 12:24-29. Again, we look up to God as our Father, lean upon His strong arm, and in His protection find rest amid the uncertainties and storms of life. This was not always so. In days gone by, although we knew that God loved us, His love had no practical effect on our thoughts, emotions, or life: it now fills us (Romans 5:5) with exultant hope and joy. This contrast of past and present proves that God has put a new spirit within us. Moreover, we find by experience that power over sin and filial confidence in God go together. From this we infer that these have one source, i.e. that both are produced by the Spirit of God. And, if He prompts us to call God our Father, we cannot doubt that we are actually

His children. If so, our expectation must be measured by the inheritance of the Firstborn Son, whose brethren we are. We therefore infer with certainty that we shall share Christ's immortal life. And, if so, we have the strongest reason for surrendering ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, whose presence in us is the source and confirmation of a hope so glorious.

Notice here an argument based upon inward religious experience, To others, such evidence, except so far as it is confirmed by outward conduct, is invalid. But to the man himself it is decisive. For it is matter of direct inward observation. That Paul appeals to it In argument, reveals his confidence that his own experience was shared by his readers. Notice also that his teaching is carefully guarded from perversion. He appeals, not to a mere assurance that we are children of God, but to an assurance accompanied by power over sin. Moreover, the voice of the Spirit within us is but an echo of teaching which we can trace by abundant documentary evidence to the lips of Christ. Thus the testimony of the Spirit is one which we can intelligently weigh and estimate, and for our acceptance of which we can give a reason.

That a life beyond the grave implies resurrection of the body, is assumed in 1 Corinthians 15:18, 19, 29-32; Luke 20:37: see my 'Corinthians' p. 287. Assuming this, the argument in Romans 8:12-17 proves the statement in Romans 8:10, 11 that God will raise even the bodies of His servants. Paul thus completes the contrast of a life according to flesh and according to the Spirit.

In Romans 8:14, 16, they who follow the guidance of the Spirit are called 'sons' and 'children of God.' As created by God in His own image, and therefore sharers of His nature, all men indiscriminately may be so called. But we notice that throughout the N.T. these terms are reserved for the righteous, whose sonship is spoken of as an acquired relation to God: so Galatians 3:26; 4:5; John 1:12; 1 John 3:10; John 8:42, 44. That not all men are sons of God, is implied in Paul's use of the term 'adoption:' for no Roman adopted his own son. The explanation is that by sin we lost our rights as sons, and can regain them only by the adopting mercy of God. A conspicuous and beautiful exception to the above reservation is found in

Luke 15:11, 24: cp. also Acts 17:28, 29. See my 'New Life in Christ' pp. 57-60.

DIVISION 3 may from this point be suitably reviewed. In Romans 6, we have the new life in reference to its aim and purpose, viz. God; in Romans 7, in reference to the Law, i.e. the principle that God will treat us according to our deserts; in Romans 8, in reference to its immediate source and motive power, viz. the Spirit of God. In Romans 6, the new life is deliverance from the rule of sin which tends to death, and subjection to the rule of God which tends to life: in Romans 8, it is deliverance from the rule of our own flesh which also tends to death, and submission to the guidance of the Holy Spirit who gives life of spirit and body. The difference results from the teaching of Romans 7. The Law reveals sin as an inward power compelling us, in spite of better desires, to serve sin; and thus proves that in order to live for God we must receive a Spirit stronger than our own spirit, to set us free from the inward rule of sin and to become by His own presence in us the source of a life of which God is the only aim. We are thus prepared to hear (Romans 8:3) that God sent Christ in order that the Holy Spirit may become the guiding principle of our life SPIRIT. The word thus rendered denotes 'breath' in Genesis 6:17; 7:15, 22; Job 27:3; Psalm 33:6; etc.; cp. 2 Thessalonians 2:8. It is also used, by a familiar association of thought, for 'wind:' Isaiah 40:7; Psalm 18:15; Genesis 8:1; Numbers 11:31; Hosea 13:15. This explains John 3:8.

Since breath is an invariable mark of life, which began with our first breath and will end with our last, the word 'spirit' often denotes the principle of life. So Revelation 13:15; 11:11; Luke 8:55; John 19:30; Acts 7:59; James 2:26; Ecclesiastes 12:7. Animals, since they breathe and live, have a 'spirit:' Genesis 7:15, 22; Ecclesiastes 3:19, 21. Since life is a condition of intelligence, power, and activity, the word 'spirit' denotes the seat of knowledge, emotion, purpose, and the source of action: 1 Corinthians 2:11; Mark 2:8; Luke 1:47; Acts 17:16; 19:21; Romans 1:9. The spirit is the unseen and immaterial animating principle which gives to the visible and material flesh animated by it life, intelligence, power, and activity.

We frequently read in O.T. of the Spirit of God, of Jehovah, and in N.T. of the Spirit of God and of Christ, the Holy Spirit. Except in a few places

noted above, these terms denote the source of a divine influence acting on man from within, and giving him strength, skill, voice, and wisdom altogether beyond his own natural capacity: Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14; 16:20; Exodus 31:3; Numbers 24:2; 1 Samuel 10:6; 2 Samuel 23:2; Isaiah 11:2, 3. Men thus became the arm, hand, and voice of God. Since this influence always tends to inspire loyalty to God, its source is called in Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 63:10, 11, the Spirit of Holiness; and in Romans 5:5; 9:1; 15:16, 19, etc. the Holy Spirit. We find also in 1 Samuel 16:14-23; Judges 9:23, an evil spirit of God, i.e. one who works out in men God's purpose of anger: cp. 1 Kings 22:21. Throughout the O.T. the Spirit of God is the source of an inward influence from God, a bearer of the presence, and of all the attributes, of God.

In Romans 5:5, the Holy Spirit reveals to men the love of God manifested in the death of Christ; and in Romans 8:15 puts into their lips a new voice. He gives them moral strength to conquer sin, and is their guide in life: Romans 8:13, 14. He makes them to be in heart the people of God, and becomes to them the mainspring of a new life: Romans 2:29, 7:6. He is thus a source of holiness, hope, and joy: Romans 15:16, 13; 14:17. He is called the Spirit of Christ, and is a bearer in us of the presence of Christ; and His presence in us is a pledge of immortal life: Romans 8:10, 11.

In 1 Corinthians 2:11, the Spirit of God is compared to man's own spirit. This analogy will help us to understand the term before us. Just as the spirit (Luke 8:55) given back to Jairus' daughter restored to her lifeless form life, consciousness, activity, and development, so the Spirit of God breathed into those who put faith in Christ (Galatians 3:14) gives them a deathless life, makes them conscious of the eternal realities, imparts a new spiritual power and activity, and puts into their lips a new song of praise. And, just as our own spirit is altogether different from, and in essential dignity greater than, our body, yet united to it by an all-pervading and mysterious fellowship, so the Spirit of God is in essential dignity infinitely greater than our spirit, yet pervading it by a still more mysterious fellowship.

Notice the connection between the Spirit and the Gospel and Christ. In the historic Christ, God has made Himself manifest before our eyes. The Gospel is the divine light which bears to our mind the image of Christ. The

Holy Spirit is the life which enables our mental eye to see the glorious object, moves our lips to praise, and our bodies to bow in worship. Thus the Spirit gives to us a life, intelligence, and power, which are not human but divine.

The Spirit always acts upon us from the inmost chamber of our being, i.e. with the full consent and approbation of whatever is noblest and best within us; in marked contrast to sin, which never secures our highest approbation, and thus betrays its foreign and inferior and hostile origin.

In Romans 8:27, we read that the Spirit intercedes on behalf of saints: see note. This suggests that the Spirit is a person distinct from God, with whom the Spirit intercedes. For without two distinct persons there can be no intercession. This is confirmed by 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 11; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Matthew 28:19; Revelation 1:4, 5 and still more clearly in John 16:13, 14. See my 'New Life in Christ' pp. 306, 308. If we accept the clear and abundant teaching of the N.T. that the Son of God is a divine person distinct from the Father, the above passages and the whole tenor of O.T. and N.T. will compel us to believe that with the Father and the Son is a Third divine Person, the mysterious and blessed Spirit of God.

The word 'Spirit' is used (e.g. Romans 8:26) to distinguish this divine Person from the Father and the Son, who are also (cp. John 4:24) essentially spirit, because, in virtue of His essential nature as compared with that of the Father and the Son, He comes into immediate contact with our spirit as the inward source of a higher life and as the moving principle of our thoughts, words, and acts. Moreover, the title 'holy,' which belongs in the highest sense to the Father and the Son, is applied with special frequency to this Third divine Person; because conspicuously, in contrast to every other inward influence, God is the one aim of the influence He constantly exerts. Every moment He comes forth from the Father, in order that He may lead us back to Him: and only so far as we are moved by the Spirit is God the one aim of our purposes and efforts. Hence all human holiness is the mind of the Spirit realized in those to whom He is the soul of their soul and the life of their life.

God's work in man preparatory to justification is not, in the Bible, attributed to the Holy Spirit. Yet we cannot doubt that He is the Agent by whom God leads men (Romans 2:4) to repentance and (John 6:44, 65) to



Christ. The explanation probably is that the word ‘Spirit’ is reserved for this divine Person when acting as ‘spirit,’ i.e. as a life-giving influence acting upon us from within. On those not justified He acts only from without. The Hand of God is upon them: but His life-giving Breath is not yet within them.

**ASSURANCE OF JUSTIFICATION.** Paul assumes that his readers know that they are justified. In Romans 5:2, he asserts that they have been brought into God’s favor and stand therein, and look forward with joy to future glory. In Romans 5:9-11, he bases an argument on the fact that they have been justified and reconciled and now exult in God. They have experienced a total change in life: Romans 6:17-23; 7:5, 6. They are, as led by the Spirit of God, sons of God: Romans 8:13. They have already been saved, and are looking forward to a glory compared with which present afflictions are of no account: Romans 8:24, 18. Although many of them are Gentiles, by faith they have obtained righteousness, and have been grafted into the good olive tree: Romans 9:30; 11:17-20. The Holy Spirit, given to them, has made them conscious of God’s love, and taught them to call Him Father: Romans 5:5; 8:15.

The Galatian Christians were, amid many imperfections, sons and heirs of God through faith, the Spirit of the Son crying in their hearts “Father:” Galatians 3:26; 4:6. The Ephesian Christians had the forgiveness of their trespasses, had been saved through faith and made alive, brought near to God and built into the rising walls of the living temple: Ephesians 1:7; 2:5, 8, 13, 20. When they believed, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit, a pledge of blessings to come: Ephesians 1:13; 4:30. In his many prayers Paul never asks that his readers’ sins may be forgiven, nor does he hold out to them a promise of forgiveness. He always assumes that they know that they are forgiven. Contrast the addresses recorded in Acts 13:38; 26:18; 2:38, where salvation is offered to the unsaved.

Similarly in 1 John 2:12 even the children of the family of God are forgiven. The readers are children of God, in a sense distinguishing them from others: 1 John 3:2, 10. They know that they have passed out of death into life, that they are of God, and that they abide in Christ, because God has given them the Spirit: 1 John 3:14; 5:19; 3:24; 4:13: cp. 1 John 5:13. Similarly 1 Peter 1:3-8.

This teaching suggests that conscious forgiveness was an ordinary experience in the apostolic Churches: it certainly implies that it is a blessing designed by God for every member of the Church.

How was this assurance obtained? Since it is assumed in Romans 5:2-11, we must seek an answer in Paul's foregoing teaching. Assurance is involved in the nature of justifying faith. For, as we saw in the note under Romans 4:25, this last is an assurance resting upon the promise and power and faithfulness of God that He receives into His favor, in spite of their past sins, all who put faith in Christ. For assurance is matter of immediate consciousness. Consequently, if God receives all who believe, we know that He receives us. Our assurance is derived from and rests upon the promise and character of God, a promise which we have traced by strict historic method to the lips of Him who claimed to be the Son of God and who in proof of this claim was raised from the dead. This firm ground of faith and hope is greatly strengthened by the manifestation, in the death of the Son of God, of the infinite love of God to man. This ground of confidence in God and of assurance of salvation is rational and capable of rational statement. Accordingly, in order to confirm our hope of glory, Paul proves in Romans 5:5-8, by correct human reasoning, from historic fact, how great is God's love. In other words, the assurance of forgiveness assumed by Paul rests upon the love of God manifested in the death of Him who by resurrection from the dead made good His claim to be the Son of God, this love being apprehended by correct human reasoning. It rests on ground external to us, ground which our best judgment pronounces to be absolutely firm.

Again, Paul teaches in Romans 5:5 that our assurance of God's love, although resting on well-attested historic fact, is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit; and in Romans 8:15 that the filial cry with which we give utterance to our assurance is the echo of His voice. Similarly, our consciousness of objects around us, while evoked in us by those objects, is conditioned by our life and intelligence. For the inanimate and the irrational are wholly or in great part unconscious of them. Just so, our assurance of future life is evoked in us by facts placed by history before our eyes and by words spoken in our ears, facts and words manifesting the eternal Nature and Purpose of God; and by the Holy Spirit who enables us to understand, and feel the force of the facts and the words. It has thus an

historic and logical ground, and a spiritual source. Hence Paul is careful on the one hand to expound the meaning of the facts and the words, and on the other hand to pay homage to the Spirit who through the facts and the words gives us an assurance of future glory.

We can direct for a time our exclusive attention either to the historic and visible ground, or to the spiritual source, of our assurance. When we wish to prove how firm is the foundation on which our hope rests, we go to the cross and the empty grave and the promises. At other times, while resting in peace on this firm ground of hope, we acknowledge that whatever assurance we have of God's present favor and of future blessedness is wrought in us by the indwelling Spirit. Thus in the Gospel by which God saves us and assures us of salvation we have that mysterious inter-penetration of spirit and form which is co-extensive with life, and especially with human life, as known to us. The spoken and written word is the outward form: the Holy Spirit is the inward and animating principle which pervades the word and gives to it life and power. For He is "the Spirit of the Truth:" John 14:17.

The process of assurance may be thus described. The Gospel proclaims that through the death of Christ God receives into His favor and family all who believe this good news. We have proof (see Diss. i.) that this proclamation is the voice of God. We therefore accept it as true; and venture to believe that God accepts into His favor all who believe it, and therefore ourselves. We thus come consciously into the number of those whose acquittal the Gospel proclaims. In the moment of our faith, God accepts us as righteous, adopts us as sons, and sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. The Spirit opens our mind to understand the meaning of the death of Christ, and thus makes known to us God's love: and this revealed love assures us that the hope evoked by the promises will not deceive us. We now look up to God as our Father; and we find by happy experience that while we do so we have power to conquer our inveterate habits of sin. This victory we accept as further confirmation of the promise of life eternal.

## SECTION 25

### OUR HOPE IS CONFIRMED BY THE PRESENT STATE OF NATURE AND OF OURSELVES

#### CHAPTER 8:18-27

*For I reckon that the sufferings of the present season are of no worth in view of the glory which will be revealed for us. For the expectation of the Creation waits for the revelation of the sons of God. For to vanity was the Creation made subject, not willingly, but because of Him who made it subject, in hope that also the Creation itself will be made free from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole Creation groans together and is in travail together until now.*

*And not only they but also ourselves who have the firstfruit of the Spirit, we also groan, ourselves within ourselves waiting for adoption, the redemption of our body. For in hope were we saved. But a hope seen is not hope. For that which one sees, why does he hope for? But if; what we do not see we hope for, with perseverance we wait for it.*

*In the same way also the Spirit helps with our weakness. For what we are to pray for, according to what is needful, we know not. But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with unspeakable groanings. But He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, that according to the will of God He intercedes on behalf of saints.*

**Ver. 18.** In Romans 8:17, Paul introduced two new thoughts, “suffer-together” and “glorified-together.” These he now expounds, and thus supports the implied exhortation to suffer with Christ.

I reckon: a deliberate calculation, as in Romans 2:3.

The present season: as in Romans 3:26.

Revealed: see under Romans 1:17.

Glory ‘revealed’: so 1 Peter 4:13; 5:1; cp. Colossians 3:4. The splendor awaiting the sons of God is now hidden from the eyes of themselves and of those around. But Christ will soon appear in splendor; and with His own splendor, before men and angels, He will clothe His brethren. Thus He and they will “be glorified together.” In the light of that glory, present afflictions are of no worth.

For us: purpose of this revelation, viz. to cover us with splendor.

**Ver.** 19. Further account of this glory.

Creation: same word as ‘creature’ in Romans 8:39; Romans 1:25; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Hebrews 4:13. It denotes both the act of creating and the whole or any part of that which is created: so Romans 1:20; Mark 10:6; 13:19; Colossians 1:15, 23; 1 Peter 2:13; cp. 2 Corinthians 5:17. In each case, the precise meaning is determined by the context. Here, ‘the Creation’ is distinguished from ‘the sons of God;’ and therefore does not include them. The words ‘made subject to vanity’ and ‘groan’ in Romans 8:20 exclude happy spirits of other worlds. The liberation foretold in Romans 8:21 excludes bad angels and those who finally reject the Gospel: for Paul teaches constantly, e.g. Romans 2:12; Philippians 3:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:9, that their end is destruction. It therefore remains that ‘the Creation’ here denotes the entire world around us, living and lifeless, man alone excepted; what we call Nature, this looked upon as a work of God. The same word is used in the same sense in Wisdom v. 17; xvi. 24; xix. 6. This interpretation has been adopted, with slight modifications, by a majority of writers of all ages.

Revelation: recalling the word revealed in Romans 8:18.

The sons of God: recalling Romans 8:14. They are now in disguise; and Christ is hidden from their sight. When He appears, their glory and therefore their true character and position will be made known to themselves, to men, and to angels. For that revelation of their glory, they wait with eager expectation: literally, waiting with outstretched head, as though listening for the footstep of the Revealer. This expectant attitude of

Nature is here personified, as a witness to the glory awaiting the sons of God.

**Ver. 20-21.** These verses justify the hope implied in Romans 8:19.

Vanity: producing no worthy result: cp. Romans 1:21.

Made-subject to ‘vanity’: condemned to useless toil. Nature brings forth thorns and thistles: and, although with these are mingled objects of use and beauty, on all is the doom of decay. So Romans 8:21: ‘the bondage of corruption.’ This fruitless effort was not Nature’s original destiny, but was a result of man’s sin: Genesis 3:17, 18. It was thus in some sense forced upon Nature. And this Paul expresses, keeping up his personification, by saying that Nature submits to it not willingly. Because of Him who subjected: in obedience to the decree of Him who said (Genesis 3:18) “thorns and thistles, etc.”

In hope that: a prospect of deliverance involved in this sad decree.

Bondage of corruption: by the necessary decay of its products, Nature is prevented from putting forth its powers, from manifesting its real grandeur, and from attaining its original destiny. All that Nature brings forth is doomed to die. And it is compelled to slay its own offspring. The lightning-flash destroys the stately oak: the winter’s cold kills the songsters of the summer: and animals devour other animals to maintain life. This universal destruction limits the achievements of Nature. Instead of sustained growth, its beauty and strength fade away. The powers of the material Creation are bound in fetters of decay. That this bondage was not Nature’s original destiny, but was laid upon it by God because of man’s sin, suggests to Paul a ‘hope that’ Nature itself will be made free, that it will share the freedom awaiting the children of God. This liberation from everything which would hinder their full development belongs to the glory (see Romans 8:17, 18) which will be revealed for them.

**Ver. 22.** A well-known ground for Paul’s hope that Nature will be made free: for we know, etc.

Groans-together and is-in-travail-together: one united cry of sorrow and one great anguish. Every voice in Nature which reminds us of its bondage to corruption, Paul conceives to be a cry of sorrow. The storm which

wreaks destruction, and the roar of the hungry lion, tell that the original purpose of the Creator has been perverted, and that Nature is not what He designed it to be.

The whole Creation... until now: a cry universal and unceasing. Since Nature's disorganization is a result of man's sin, Paul infers that it will not last for ever, and that the confusion and destruction around, so inconsistent with the character and purpose of the Creator, will give way to order and liberty. In other words, he can account for the present anomalous state of Nature only by supposing it to be temporary, to be preparatory to something more consistent with its original destiny. He therefore speaks of Nature's agony as 'travail,' as pangs soon and suddenly to cease at the birth of a new earth and heaven. Cp. John 16:21.

Notice that Paul, when speaking of future glory, adopts the thoughts and words of the old prophets: cp. Psalm 98:8; Isaiah 55:12, 13.

We have here another proof (cp. Romans 1:20) of Paul's careful contemplation of the material world. For important coincidences, see Acts 14:17; 17:24. The argument also involves the teaching in Romans 5:12-14 that death is a consequence of sin.

If the above exposition be correct, Romans 8:19-22 suggest very clearly that the earth beneath our feet, rescued from the curse of sin, will be our eternal home: cp. Acts 3:21; Revelation 21:1. This implies the permanence of matter. Just as the sin of man's spirit brought a curse on his body, so it brought a curse also upon the greater dwelling-place of the entire race. And, just as the body will some day share the liberation which the spirit already enjoys, so will also the world around. Thus, in the teaching of Paul, are the fortunes of the material world indissolubly joined to those of its chief inhabitant, man.

The above teaching of Paul, if I have correctly understood it, lies open to objection even more serious than that referred to under Romans 5:12: for it implies that even animals die because Adam sinned. This conflicts with assured results of Natural Science. But possibly this apparent discrepancy arises from a deeper truth beyond the ken of Natural Science, viz. that the entire visible universe was designed for man and his moral education, and is therefore subservient to his destiny. This would explain many marks of

imperfection in the world around. And it could be apprehended in Paul's day only in some such form as lies before us in these verses.

**Ver. 23.** Another confirmatory fact. Not only does the whole Creation groan, waiting for liberation, but also 'ourselves groan, waiting for adoption' and 'redemption.'

Firstfruit: same word in Romans 11:16; 16:5; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23; 16:15; James 1:18; Revelation 14:4. In Deuteronomy 26:2, 10; Numbers 18:12, 13, etc., it denotes first-ripe fruit or grain, of which a part was to be given to God.

The Holy Spirit received by Paul and his readers was a 'firstfruit' in a double sense, in reference to the greater number who will afterwards receive the same, as in the passages quoted above, and in reference to the greater blessings in the future of which the present gift of the Spirit is a pledge. The usage of the N.T. favors the former reference here. The truth embodied in the latter reference finds expression in "the earnest of the Spirit" in 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:14, and may possibly be in Paul's thought here. The words before us remind the readers of their happy lot in being among the first to receive salvation.

We groan: a close parallel in 2 Corinthians 5:2, 4, where again we have 'the Spirit' as an "earnest" of better things. It recalls the groaning of Nature in Romans 8:22.

Ourselves within ourselves: conspicuously asserting the inwardness and the felt intensity of this groaning.

Waiting-for: as in Romans 8:19. Our groaning is a yearning for something to come, prompted not merely by present burden but by the contrast of present and future.

Adoption: the legal ceremony by which a child passed formally into the family of the adopting father. See under Romans 8:15. Virtually we are already sons of God, and already with filial confidence we call Him Father: but we wait for the time when we shall be formally and publicly brought into our Father's house, clothed in the raiment of sons, and made to sit down beside the Firstborn Son.



Redemption: a setting free on payment of a price, as in Romans 3:24. But there the emphasis was on the price, viz. the blood (Romans 3:25) of Christ: here it is on the liberation, as in Luke 21:28; Ephesians 1:14; 4:30.

Of our body: its rescue from death and the grave. Not only Nature but even the bodies in which the Holy Spirit dwells, making them His temple, are held fast by fetters of decay. But they have been purchased by the death of Christ and therefore will be rescued from the grave. Since the body is an integral part of us, not till it is rescued will our redemption be complete. Therefore, under the burdens of the present life arising from the needs and weakness of the body, knowing that we can enter our full glory only by rescue of our body, our groaning assumes the form of a yearning for its rescue.

**Ver.** 24-25. Explains the contrast between the present hardships and the future glory of the sons of God. Our position is one of 'hope,' not possession.

We were saved: cp. Ephesians 2:5, 8: already rescued from the punishment and the present power of our past sins. This salvation has been described in Romans 6:22. Until the conflict of life is over, and until the body is rescued from the grave, it is incomplete: and therefore in this sense salvation is in Romans 5:9, 10; 13:11 spoken of as still future. In 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 2:15, it is spoken of as a process now going on. These are three modes of looking at the same deliverance.

In hope, or 'by hope': our rescue holds before us a prospect of better things to come. Cp. 1 Peter 1:3. Now the very nature of hope involves absence of things hoped for:

a hope seen is not hope. This last statement is sufficiently proved by asking a question: that which a man sees, why does he hope for? The alternative reading given in R.V. and by Westcott (texts) does not affect the sense.

'Seen... sees... we see': as in 2 Corinthians 4:18. After showing the incompatibility of hope and sight, Paul states, in Romans 8:25, the believer's actual attitude.

Perseverance: as in Romans 2:7; 5:4.

We-wait-for it: recalling Romans 8:19, 23, and a dominant thought of Romans 8:18-25. A brave holding up and going forward in spite of hardship and enemies, in prospect of blessing to come, is the normal attitude of men whose position is one, not of possession, but of hope.

**Ver. 26.** Another confirmation. In the same way as Nature groans for deliverance, and as we inwardly groan for adoption and redemption, also the Spirit groans in us and for us and so ‘helps’ us in ‘our weakness.’

Helps-with: shares our toil and conflict: same word in Luke 10:40.

Our weakness: us who are weak, the abstract for the concrete, as in Romans 2:26, 27. The rest of the verse states the special help which we need and the Spirit gives.

We do not know what we are to pray for so as to pray according as we must needs pray. We are conscious of ‘need;’ and we groan. But such is the ‘weakness’ (cp. Romans 6:19) of our spiritual insight that we do not know how to ask so that our prayers may correspond with our real need.

But the Spirit, who prompts us (Romans 8:15) to call God our Father, inspires yearnings which words cannot express, and thus helps us by directing our desires to proper objects. These inspired yearnings express the mind of the Holy Spirit, and therefore appeal to God for us. Thus He intercedes for us and in us by moving us to pray. And God will not refuse to satisfy yearnings which ‘the Spirit’ Itself (as in Romans 8:16) by His own presence puts within us. Since these yearnings are too deep for words, they are described as unspeakable groanings.

**Ver. 27.** That these groanings are unspeakable, does not lessen their efficacy. For they appeal to one who

searches the hearts (Revelation 2:23; Jeremiah 17:10; 1 Samuel 16:7) and thus hears this silent intercession.

The mind of the Spirit: the aim of the yearnings prompted by the Spirit. Same words, referring to the general guidance of the Spirit, in Romans 8:6. The mind of the Spirit is that, according to the will of God, He intercedes on behalf of saints: in other words, God, who sees all that takes place in the hearts of men, recognises that our yearnings for final and complete deliverance are prompted by the Holy Spirit, in harmony with the will of

God, and are therefore an intercession of the Spirit pleading for men whom God has claimed to be specially His own.

In Romans 5:5, the Holy Spirit given to believers reveals to them the love of God manifested in the death of Christ. In Romans 8:15, 16, He prompts them to cry Abba, Father: and He now moves them to groan for complete deliverance from whatever fetters their full development. The inward cry in Romans 8:15, Paul accepts as a divine testimony that they are children of God: the unspeakable groanings in Romans 8:26, he accepts as an intercession with God on their behalf; an intercession which cannot be ineffectual, and which is therefore a pledge that these yearnings will be satisfied.

That the Spirit intercedes with God for the final rescue and glory of His servants, suggests that He is a person distinct from the Father. The strongly figurative color of Romans 8:19-27 forbids us to accept this as in itself decisive proof that Paul held the distinct personality of the Spirit. But it is an important confirmation of other passages, e.g. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Matthew 28:19, where the name of the Spirit is placed beside those of the Father and the Son, and of still more definite teaching in John 16:13, 14.

## **REVIEW OF ROMANS 8:18-27**

In Romans 5:2, Paul showed that justification through faith gives an exultant hope of glory. While showing this, he could not pass in silence over the hardships which were so conspicuous a part of the lot of the Christians of his day. He asserts that even these hardships indirectly confirm this glorious hope. In Romans 8:13-17, he shows that the Holy Spirit in their hearts, moving them to call God their Father, is Himself a proof that they are children of God and heirs of the glorious heritage of Christ. And again, present hardships, apparently so inconsistent with this blessed relation to Christ, demand consideration. This they receive in Romans 8:18-39.

Paul declares that present hardships are not worthy to be compared with the glory awaiting us. So great is this glory that it will transform even the material universe. An indication of this, Paul finds in the decay which reigns over all things around us, so inconsistent with the original destiny of a good creature of God, a doom inflicted on Nature because of man's sin. This doom of decay, Paul represents as a groaning for deliverance and accepts as a pledge that deliverance will come. This groaning is shared by us who, as Paul expounded in Romans 8:4-17, have received the Holy Spirit as the animating principle of a new life. It is indeed prompted by the Spirit who makes us conscious of the contrast between our present condition and the glory awaiting us. And if so, these divinely-implanted yearnings plead with God, silently but effectively, for us. They are in harmony with the will of God; and are therefore a pledge of their own fulfilment.

## SECTION 26

### IN ALL THINGS WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS

#### CHAPTER 8:28-39

*Moreover, we know that with those that love God all things work together for good, with those that are called according to purpose. Because, us whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He may be firstborn among many brethren. But, whom He foreordained, these He also called: and, whom He called, these He also justified: but, whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

*What then shall we say to these things? If God be on our side, who is against us? He that did not spare His own Son but on behalf of us all gave Him up, how shall He not also with him give us all things by His grace? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God that justifies: who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died but rather that was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes on our behalf. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall affliction, or helplessness, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? According as it is written, "On account of Thee we are put to death all the day: we have been reckoned as sheep for slaughter." Nay, in all these things we more than conquer, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things coming, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

In Romans 8:12-17, the Holy Spirit, by enabling us to conquer sin and call God our Father, gave proof that we are children of God and heirs of the glory of Christ. In Romans 8:18-27, the hope thus inspired was confirmed by our present sufferings; inasmuch as they force us to yearn with a

divinely taught yearning, which in some sense even Nature itself shares, for the consummation of our sonship. We shall now learn that these sufferings are working out our good, and are powerless to injure us.

**Ver. 28.** Another important point in our favor. Not only does the Spirit help us by prompting our groanings, but ‘all things’ help us.

All things work together: harmonious co-operation, under apparent discord. The Vat. and Alex. MSS. read ‘God works all things.’ But the weight of evidence is against the insertion, the context suggests that things around are here regarded as active rather than passive, and the insertion is easily explained by failure to appreciate Paul’s personification of Nature.

For good: to do us good, as in Romans 13:4. Contrast Genesis 42:36: “all these things are against me.”

Those that love God: the normal relation of sons to their father, and of intelligent creatures to God. It is therefore a condition and limitation of this helpful co-operation of Nature: cp. 1 Corinthians 8:3.

With ‘them’ or for ‘them’: the dative governed by **οὖν**- or the dative of advantage. Probably the former. We work, and all things help us in our work.

Those that are ‘called according to purpose’: further description of those who love God. These unexpected words prove, as we shall see, that ‘all things work together’ with us.

Called: persons who have received a summons; in this case, as we read in Romans 8:30, from God. Same word in Romans 1:1, 6, 7; 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2, 24; Matthew 22:14; Jude 1; Revelation 17:14. The Gospel is a divine call summoning men to the service of Christ: 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 1 Corinthians 7:1 8-22. The apostles had received a special call: Galatians 1:15; Matthew 4:21; 9:9. That the word ‘called’ is (e.g. 1 Corinthians 1:24) a distinctive title of believers, does not prove or even suggest that they have received a call not given to those who reject the Gospel. For the term is sufficiently accounted for by the infinite importance of the Gospel summons as the instrument of salvation. Paul never forgot that he was a ‘called’ apostle, remembering the voice which arrested him on the way to Damascus. But doubtless Judas was called to the same office. Of any

special call to repentance and faith given to some who hear the Gospel and not to all, and always effectual, we never read in the New Testament. In Matthew 22:3-14, we read of some who were called and yet finally rejected; and in 2 Thessalonians 1:8 of their destruction.

According to purpose: 2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 1:11; 3:11. The Gospel corresponds with, and makes known, a 'purpose' of God touching those to whom it is preached. In this purpose lies its real worth. Just so, when a king resolves to honor a man, and carrying out his resolve calls him into his presence, the importance of the royal summons depends on the royal purpose. So the real significance of the Gospel is measured by the divine purpose which prompted it. This purpose is universal: 1 Timothy 2:4. Consequently, all who hear the Gospel are 'called according to purpose.' That God has thought fit that His purpose shall be accomplished only in those who believe and persevere, does not make the purpose less real and important, or less than universal.

On the importance of these last words of Romans 8:28, see under Romans 8:30.

**Ver.** 29-30. Facts explaining the 'purpose' just mentioned, and proving the assertion that 'all things work together for good.'

Foreknew: same word in Romans 11:2; Acts 2:23; 26:5; 1 Peter 1:2, 20; 2 Peter 3:17; Wisdom 6:13; 8:8; 18:6: simply, to know beforehand. There is nothing here to suggest any other than this simple meaning. In the everlasting past, we, our circumstances, disposition, and conduct, stood before the mind of God.

'Us': added merely to make a complete English sentence. The rendering (R.V.) 'whom He foreknew' may suggest that God foreordained to the image of Christ all whom He foreknew. But Paul merely asserts that those whom God foreordained were then present to His thought. So 1 Peter 1:2. Nor does he say that God foreknew them in any sense other than that in which He foreknew all men. The reason for the insertion of these words will soon appear.

Foreordained or 'predestined': marked out beforehand, especially in one's mind: found in N.T. only in Ephesians 1:5, 11; Acts 4:28; 1 Corinthians 2:7. The simpler form 'ordained' οριζω is found in Romans 1:4; Luke

22:22; Acts 2:23; 10:42; 11:29; 17:26, 31; Hebrews 4:7; and means to mark off some object by drawing a boundary-line around it. A parent who, before his child is old enough for a trade, chooses one for him predestines the boy. He marks out beforehand a path in which he would have him go. This purpose, whether accomplished or not, is predestination.

To be conformed, etc.: God's purpose for the persons here referred to.

Image: as in Romans 1:23; 1 Corinthians 11:7; 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 10:1; Matthew 22:20; Revelation 13:14, 15: any mode in which an object presents itself to us, whether in essential relation to the object or a mere imitation of it. In the eternal past, before the eye of God stood His Son. That glorious 'image,' His essential nature as contemplated by the Father, God resolved to make the pattern to which should be 'conformed' those who in later days should put faith in Christ.

'Conformed': sharing the same 'form,' or mode of self-presentation. Same word in Philippians 3:21, cognate words in Philippians 3:10; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18. God's eternal purpose was that His created sons should share, in created and finite form, the mode in which the eternal Son ever presents Himself to God: 'conformed to the image of His Son.' The context suggests that Paul refers specially to the glory of Christ. But this involves moral likeness.

That He may be, etc.: the ultimate aim of the purpose just mentioned.

Firstborn: Colossians 1:15, 18; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 1:5; Luke 2:7; Hebrews 11:28; 12:23. God resolved to surround His eternal and only-begotten Son by many created sons whom He would not be ashamed to call brethren. These words suggest that the glorification of the sons of God will add glory to the eternal Son. And this is an additional assurance that this purpose will be accomplished.

**Ver. 30.** Accomplishment of this purpose already begun.

He also called: by means of the Gospel: 2 Thessalonians 2:14.

He also justified: through faith, as in Romans 3:30; 4:5.

He also glorified: as in Romans 8:17. So certain to Paul is the glory awaiting the sons of God that he speaks of it as already theirs. So



Ephesians 2:6. While he ponders the eternal purpose of God, he forgets distinctions of time, and looks back upon it as actually accomplished. The tense reveals the fulness of his confidence. These words do not imply or suggest that the predestination, call, justification, and glorification are co-extensive. Paul thinks only of his readers, of God's eternal purpose to make them sharers of the glory of Christ, and of the steps by which He is accomplishing this purpose. All else is irrelevant to the matter in hand, which is not to teach further about the way of salvation, but to give additional proof of the glory awaiting the sons of God.

We see now the importance of the words 'whom He foreknew.' If the accomplishment of a man's purpose depends on the action of another, he is uncertain about it. With us, contingency and certainty cannot go together: with God, they can. For God 'foreknew' from eternity what every man will do. When the world was but a thought in the Creator's mind, every man in all his circumstances and inward and outward conduct stood before His eye. He saw man in sin, and resolved to save (1 Peter 1:20) through the blood of Christ and through the Gospel all whom He foresaw putting faith in Christ and walking perseveringly in His steps. He also resolved to change them into the moral likeness of Christ and to make them sharers of His eternal glory.

We must carefully avoid the error of supposing that our foreseen faith moved God to predestine us to salvation. He was moved to save us simply by our foreseen misery and His own mercy: 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5. Having resolved to save, He was moved by His infinite wisdom and undeserved favor to select persevering faith as the condition of salvation. And, having chosen this condition, He now uses means to lead men to repentance and faith. So far from our faith being a ground, it is a result, of God's predestination. But although salvation is altogether a result of God's eternal purpose, and in no way whatever a result of anything we have done or can do, God nevertheless permits man to resist effectually the influences which lead to salvation. He thus makes the salvation of each individual dependent on his self-surrender to these divine influences. But since this self-surrender or rejection was foreseen, God knew from the beginning the exact result of the death of Christ.

On Paul's doctrine of Predestination, see further in the note at end of Romans 9.

Such is God's purpose. It is complete proof that He (Romans 8:31) is on our side. Now this purpose is earlier than the universe around us, earlier than the social and natural forces which sometimes press so heavily upon us, And even these social and natural forces sprang ultimately from Him who formed for us this eternal purpose of blessing and glory. They therefore cannot frustrate this purpose. Nay, more. God would not, without sufficient motive, permit suffering to fall on those whom from eternity He has resolved to bless. The only explanation of the hardships which now press so heavily on some servants of Christ is that they are the mysterious means by which God is working out His purpose of mercy for them. Thus the purpose which prompted the Gospel call assures us (see Romans 8:28) that all things are working together for our good.

**Ver.** 31-39. A song of triumph, evoked by the statement in Romans 8:28 and the proof of it in Romans 8:29, 30. In it culminates the exposition of the gospel given in Romans 3:21 — 8:30.

**Ver.** 31. What then shall we say? what inference shall we draw? as in Romans 3:5; 4:1.

To these things: triumphant reference to Romans 8:29, 30. An answer is implied in the next question. We shall infer that God is on our side, or acting 'on our behalf:' and this will make needless the question who is against us? For all things and persons are under God's control, and therefore cannot hinder the accomplishment of His eternal purpose: and this, we have just seen, is to make us sharers of the glory of Christ. The word 'who' suggests that the hardships Paul has in view were in part caused by persons.

**Ver.** 32. Another question, suggesting a proof, from the costliness of our salvation, how earnestly God is on our side.

He did not spare: so 2 Peter 2:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 7:28: did not shield from suffering.

His own Son: the point of the argument. Cp. Romans 5:10.

Gave Him up: to suffering and death: as in Romans 4:25.

On behalf of us all: supporting the words ‘on our behalf’ in Romans 8:31. In the words ‘us all,’ Paul thinks probably only of himself and his readers; although his words here are true in a wider sense. His question here assumes, and uses as a ground for confident hope, the important teaching in Romans 3:25; 5:6-10.

How shall he not, etc.? practical inference from the foregoing words, put into the form of a question. If He has done the one, it is impossible to doubt that He will do the other.

With Him: the gift of Christ to die for us, and all other gifts, here placed in closest connection.

Give-by-His-grace: cognate to the word in Romans 1:11; 5:15, 16; 6:23.

All things: i.e. all things good for us. The undeserved favor of God, which for our sake has already given up to death ‘His own Son,’ will not hold back from us any good thing. For, compared with that supreme gift, all else is nothing.

**Ver.** 33-34. The gift of Christ recalls our sins which made needful His death. The doubt thus suggested, Paul meets by reminding his readers that they are God’s chosen (or ‘elect’) ones. So Romans 9:11; 11:5, and note under Romans 9:11.

To bring a charge against such, is to dispute the justice of God’s choice. For it is God who justifies. The second question,

Who is he that condemns? supports ‘who shall bring a charge?’ just as ‘God that justifies’ supports ‘God’s chosen ones.’ To ‘bring a charge’ against believers, is to ‘condemn’ those whom God has ‘justified’ and ‘chosen’ to be His own. Thus God’s decree of justification silences all doubt, even that suggested by memory of our past sin.

Christ who died: recalling the argument in Romans 8:32.

But rather: throwing into conspicuous prominence the fact that the crucified was also raised. The words ‘from the dead’ (R.V.) found in some good MSS. are doubtful and do not add to the sense.

Who is at the right hand of God: following the risen One to His present place of glory: so Colossians 3:1-4.

Intercedes (same word in Romans 8:26, 27) on our behalf: same phrase and thought in Hebrews 7:25. Notice the stately gradation: ‘died... was raised... at’ the ‘right hand of God... intercedes for us.’ These great facts are abundant proof that (Romans 8:31) God is on our side and that therefore no one can injure us.

**Ver. 35-36.** Two final and triumphant questions.

The love of Christ: His love to us: cp. Romans 8:37; Galatians 2:20.

Who? as in Romans 8:31.

‘Who’ shall separate? put us beyond reach of Christ and thus deprive us of the practical effect of His love. The various hardships of the present life are paraded as powerless captives.

Affliction, helplessness: as in Romans 2:9. At the word sword, Paul breaks off his question to quote Psalm 44:22, which reminds us that the death of God’s people by the sword is no new thing. The Psalm refers to men who, though faithful to God, suffered military disaster. Their enemies reckoned them as sheep ready for slaughter: and the work of death went on all the day. This destruction was a result of loyalty to God: on account of Thee. Although we do not know the facts referred to, we learn that there were men in that day who died because they served God, and were thus forerunners of the Christian martyrs. This is another harmony of the old and new.

**Ver. 37.** We-more-than-conquer: for all things, including our enemies and hardships, are (Romans 8:28) working together with us for good.

Through Him that loved us: Christ: see Romans 8:35; 1 Corinthians 15:57: cp. Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:25. The victory is from God, through Christ, and through the death which reveals His love to us,

**Ver. 38-39.** A confident answer to the question in Romans 8:35.

Persuaded: deliberate conviction: same word in Romans 15:14; 2 Timothy 1:5, 12.

Death: put first, because, to the early Christians, ever imminent. Yet life also has its perils.

Principalities: those who among angels hold superior rank, as angel-princes or archangels: as in Ephesians 1:21; 3:10, Colossians 1:16; 2:10, of good angels; and in 1 Corinthians 15:24; Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:15, of bad ones. Doubtless they were “the chief princes” of Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1. It is not easy to decide whether Paul refers to good or bad angels, or angels without thought of moral character. Galatians 1:8 makes even the first supposition possible. But since Paul uses the word for ‘angels’ good or bad, leaving the context to determine which, he probably refers here simply to angelic power (cp. ‘will be able’) of whatever kind. Not even angels are strong enough to tear us from God.

Things present: be they what they may.

Things coming: the uncertain possibilities of the future.

Powers: kings, magistrates, etc.

Height: to which we look up with helpless fear.

Depth: the chasm which opens ready to engulf us: cp. Ephesians 3:18.

Able to separate us: stronger than ‘will separate’ in Romans 8:35.

Love of God... in Christ Jesus: the love of God to man manifested in the historic human personality of Christ and apprehended by inward contact with our risen Lord. “Neither the hand of death nor the events of a prolonged life, nor angels of ordinary or extraordinary rank, neither the hardships of the present nor the uncertainties of the future, nor powers of any kind, neither exaltation or any exalted being nor deepest abasement, nor anything else which God has made, can put us beyond reach of that love of God which shone upon us in the person and from the cross of Christ and is with us now by vital union with Him.” And, since our enemies cannot separate us from Him, they are powerless to hurt us. We are more than conquerors. That they are permitted by our Father in heaven to approach us, is proof that they are working out for us those purposes of mercy and glory which He formed for us before the world was, and for which He made the world. Thus, to us who love God, underneath apparent discord is profound harmony, a harmony of blessing.

We have in Romans 8:31-39 the first prolonged outburst of Christian emotion. It is evoked by contemplation of the hardships and perils of the

present life. As Paul surveys his enemies, numerous and various, passing before him in long procession but unable to injure, he realises the completeness of the victory which God has given. So in all ages the loudest songs of triumph have been sung in the face of the fiercest foes by men who, while the powers of darkness were doing their worst, found themselves more than conquerors. But we have here much more than emotion. Each verse is full of argument: for Paul's exultation rests on solid objective grounds. He looks, not at himself, but at God and Christ; he remembers the purpose which God formed before the world was, and the price He paid to accomplish it; and from this infers that God is on his side and will withhold from him no good thing. The accusations of enemies and of conscience are silenced by the Gospel in which God proclaims our justification and by Paul's assured conviction that to save us from punishment Christ died, and now intercedes. Thus the historic facts of Christ's death and resurrection attest the love of Christ and of God. And from that love no foe, human or superhuman, can tear us.

The relation between this confidence of final victory and Paul's solemn warning that unless his readers continue in faith they will fall and finally perish, will be discussed under Romans 11:24.

DIVISION III., and with it Paul's exposition of the Gospel, are now complete. In DIV. 1, he proved that all men are exposed to punishment. In DIV. 2, he asserted justification through faith, and through the death of Christ; and proved that justification through faith, which overthrows all Jewish boasting, is in harmony with God's recorded treatment of Abraham, and that justification through the death of Christ gives us a hope of glory based on God's love, and is a counterpart, and the only conceivable explanation, of the entrance of death through Adam's sin. DIV. 3 is introduced by an objection that the teaching of DIV. 2 leads to immorality. This objection, Paul meets, not by guarding or qualifying the doctrine of justification, but by putting beside it the doctrine that God wills us to live, by inward union with Christ, a life like His life of devotion to God. This new life, we obtain by reckoning it to be ours. Paul justifies the gift of it to men condemned by the Law, by showing that in Christ we are set free from the dominion of the Law; and justifies the Law which condemns us by asserting that our own best intelligence approves its

judgment. He goes on to say that of this new life the Spirit of God is the guiding principle; and proves that the Spirit within us is a sure pledge of the glory awaiting us. This is not disproved by our afflictions: for our present state is one, not of possession, but of hope. And our hope is confirmed by the state of the natural world around us, and by our divinely-taught yearnings for the accomplishment of the promises. God is on our side: therefore the hardships of life cannot hurt us, but are working out our good (DIVISIONS 2: and 3:) are a logical development of five great doctrines, viz.

- (1) that God accepts as righteous all who believe the Gospel, stated in Romans 3:21, 22;
- (2) by means of the death of the Son of God, in Romans 3:24-26;
- (3) that God designs us to be, by union with Christ, sharers of the life of Christ, a life devoted to God, in Romans 6:3-10;
- (4) that this life becomes ours by the reckoning of faith, in Romans 6:11;
- (5) through the inward presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, in Romans 8:2-16.

As thus stated, Doct. 1 implies a personal God who pardons sin; Doct. 2 implies that in a unique sense Christ is the Son of God, and Doct. 3 implies His unreserved devotion to God; Doctrines 1 and 4 assert comprehensively salvation through faith; and Doct. 5 assumes an inward consciousness of the presence of the Spirit of God. In other words, we have here Justification through Faith, and through the Death of Christ, Sanctification in Christ, through Faith, and in the Holy Spirit. We have also found abundant proof that each of these doctrines, or doctrine equivalent, was actually taught by Christ. And evidently they were accepted by Paul, and asserted without proof but with perfect confidence, because he believed that they had been previously taught by Christ. If we accept these doctrines, the reasoning in DIVISIONS 2 and 3: will compel us to accept the teaching of the whole epistle.

Only one subject remains: the bearing of these doctrines on the Old Covenant, and on the condition and prospects of the Jews, its living representatives.

## DIVISION IV

### HARMONY OF THE OLD AND NEW

#### CHAPTERS 9-11

#### SECTION 27

#### PAUL'S SORROW FOR THE JEWS

#### CHAPTER 9:1-5

*I speak truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscience bearing joint-witness with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow, and my heart has ceaseless pain. For I could wish to be my own self Anathema from Christ on behalf of my brethren, my kinsmen according to flesh; who are Israelites, whose is the Adoption and the Glory and the Covenants, and the Lawgiving and the Service and the Promises; whose are the Fathers, and from whom came the Christ according to flesh. God who is over all be blessed for ever. Amen.*

**Ver.** 1. The sudden change of tone and subject takes us by surprise, and introduces a new DIVISION of the epistle Truth: see under Romans 1:18. Speak in Christ: so 2 Corinthians 2:17; 12:19. Paul's words were prompted by inward union with Christ.

My conscience: as in Romans 2:15.

In the Holy Spirit: as in Romans 8:15; 1 Corinthians 12:3. Paul appeals to that faculty by which he contemplates his own inner self; and claims that in the testimony it now bears it is guided by the Holy Spirit. They who knew Paul could not resist this appeal to Christ, in union with whom they knew that he lived and spoke, and to the Spirit who evidently permeated



his entire life and thought. This solemn appeal prepares us for a statement important and unlikely.

**Ver. 2.** Great sorrow to me and ceaseless pain to my heart. In Romans 8:35-39, Paul's enemies marched, conquered and powerless, in stately procession before our eyes. At sight of them, the conqueror burst into a song of triumph, and of praise to Him who gave the victory. Suddenly the song ceases, and the minstrel, whose lips spoke forth a moment ago the exultation of his heart, now tells us that he has great and constant sadness. So unexpected is this statement that Paul appeals in proof of it to Christ, whose life and nature he shares, and to the Spirit who directs his words and actions.

**Ver. 3.** A vain sacrifice to which Paul's sorrow prompts him, revealing its intensity; and the persons for whom he is sad.

I could wish, or 'was wishing' or 'praying:' same verb in 2 Corinthians 13:7, 9; Acts 26:29; 27:29.

Anathema: Galatians 1:8, 9; 1 Corinthians 12:3, 16:22; Acts 23:14. So (LXX.) Deuteronomy 7:26; 13:15, 17; Joshua 6:17, 21; 7:1, 11, 15, and frequently; denoting objects irrevocably devoted to God, and if living to be put to death. Paul's heart would prompt him to be separated from Christ and thus 'accursed,' if this would save Israel.

My brethren: the ties of blood still binding Paul's heart, even though he is a Jew and the Jews as a nation have rejected Christ.

According to flesh: distinguishing the persons referred to from brethren in Christ.

Paul weeps for his countrymen. He who is unmoved by hunger and imminent death is so deeply moved by their position that, to save them, he would almost expose himself to the anger of God. A similar case of self-devotion in Exodus 32:32. Perhaps in these moments Paul and Moses shared most fully the mind of Him who actually did (Galatians 3:13; Matthew 27:46) what their hearts vainly prompted them to do. The greatness of Paul's sorrow for the Jews and the sacrifice to which it prompts him attest how terrible was their position. What was it in them which caused him such sorrow? No temporal calamity. This would not

suggest such sacrifice to a man before whose eyes the world itself was passing away. Nor can he refer to believing Jews who were brethren in Christ and heirs of the coming glory, but only to the mass of the nation who had rejected Christ. Since Paul does not speak of any special calamity about to befall them, we must seek, and we shall find, an explanation of his sorrow in his foregoing teaching.

Paul has taught in Romans 3:9, 19 that all men of all nations are, apart from Christ, exposed to punishment; and in Romans 1:16, etc. that the salvation announced by Christ is for those who believe. The mass of the Jews utterly rejected this offered salvation. Therefore, if Paul's teaching be correct, they are under the anger of God and on the way to destruction. This is due, not to rejection by God, but to their own unbelief: Romans 11:1; 9:32. Nor is their case hopeless: Romans 10:1; 11:23. But most of them show no signs whatever of turning to Christ. Therefore Paul was sad for them, just as many today, who themselves rejoice amid the trials of life in the smile of God, are sad because some whom they love are away from Christ and are treading the path of sin and ruin. It is in moments when our joy in Christ is brightest and when we feel ourselves to be completely victorious over life with its uncertainties and death with its terrors that this sadness comes to us with greatest bitterness. Paul's sudden sorrow in the midst of Christian exultation is true to the deepest and noblest instincts of our renewed nature.

**Ver. 4.** As Paul ponders the position of his brethren, their many and great advantages pass in review before him.

Israelites: a favorite name of honor: Romans 11:1; 2 Corinthians 11:22; Philippians 3:5; John 1:47; Deuteronomy 5:1; 6:3, 4.

Adoption: same word in Romans 8:15, 23. Cp. Exodus 4:22f, "Israel is My firstborn son... let My son go;" and Deuteronomy 14:1, "ye are sons to Jehovah your God." Out of all nations, God chose Israel to occupy this special relation to Himself.

The Glory: the supernatural brightness in which God manifested His presence: Exodus 19:16; 24:10, 16, 17; 40:34-38. It was proof of 'the adoption.' The adoption and the glory' recall the two Covenants made in the wilderness: Exodus 19:5; 24:7, 8; 34:27; and Deuteronomy 29:1. And

these recall the earlier covenant with Abraham, on which they rested: Genesis 15:18; 17:2-14; Exodus 2:24; 6:4; Deuteronomy 6:10. The plural 'covenants' marks off a triplet, which is followed by a second and corresponding triplet.

The Lawgiving: cognate verb in Hebrews 7:11; 8:6. By giving a law, God acted as father to His adopted children.

The Service: same word in Romans 12:1; Hebrews 9:1, 6; John 16:2: a cognate verb in Romans 1:9, 25; Matthew 4:10; Acts 7:7, 42; 24:14; 26:7; 27:23. It denotes the ritual in which Israel showed reverence to God who manifested Himself in visible 'glory.'

The Promises: Romans 15:8; 4:13, 14, 16, 20; Galatians 3:14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 29. They were a great feature of the covenants: so Ephesians 2:12, "covenants of promise." These promises had been the solace and strength of Israel during ages of disaster.

**Ver. 5.** Whose, etc.: stately repetition, introducing another class of advantages.

The Fathers: chiefly Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who received the promises for themselves and their children: John 7:22; Acts 7:32; Exodus 3:13: cp. Romans 4:13.

From whom, or 'from among whom.' Paul cannot say, 'Whose' is 'Christ.'

The Christ: 'the anointed' and thus designated Monarch of the eternal kingdom of God.

According to flesh: as in Romans 9:3, limiting the foregoing assertion to the bodily origin of Christ. This limitation suggests another element in Him which did not spring from Israel. Yet even this outward nearness to the Light of the world was the greatest of the many privileges of Israel.

Such were the spiritual advantages of those for whom Paul mourns. They belonged to the people whom God had adopted to be specially His own, in whose midst He had manifested Himself in visible splendor, and to whom He had bound Himself by covenant. They possessed the will of God in written form. Before their eyes, from childhood, the ritual set forth in outline the great truths now fully revealed. To them the coming of the

Deliverer had been announced; and they were heirs of the promises made to the father of the faithful. And, more than all, in their midst the Anointed One had appeared, had presented the credentials of His royalty, and laid the foundation of His kingdom.

God, who is over all: solemn assertion of the existence of One who rules over and disposes all things according to His will: Ephesians 1:11; 4:6.

Blessed for ever (or 'for the ages').

Amen. Same words in Romans 1:25: see under Romans 11:36; 16:27.

At the mention of the name and birth of Christ, Paul cannot refrain from an outburst of praise to the great Ruler of the world who chose Israel, and gave Christ to be born in Paul's own day and nation. His sorrow for the Jews implies that their religious advantages, which were designed to lead them to Christ, and the birth of Christ in their midst had utterly failed to profit them. Therefore, had the sentence ended here, it might have appeared that these advantages were of little worth. But they were infinitely the greatest advantages ever bestowed on any nation. And to Paul and the Jewish Christians they had actually been the means of infinite blessing. Had God chosen Britain instead of Judaea to be the birthplace of His Son, Paul might have been, not writing this epistle, but offering a human sacrifice to the God of the forest. Therefore, while he weeps for the Jews, he defends the worth of their slighted privileges by giving praise for them to the supreme Disposer of events, from whom these privileges came. He thus guards, as throughout the epistle he is so ready to do, against the error of underrating religious privileges as well as against that of trusting to them for salvation. And, that Paul was compelled to praise God, even in a moment of deepest sadness, for advantages which the Jews had trampled under foot, proves how great he felt those advantages to be. Thus his outburst of praise increases the sadness of these verses.

Notice how readily and frequently, and sometimes unexpectedly, Paul turns to God in prayer or praise, even sometimes from matters in which God is not expressly mentioned: so Romans 1:25; 15:5, 13; 16:20, 25; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:20; 2 Corinthians 11:31; Galatians 1:5; also 1 Peter 4:11. To do so, was natural to him because he looked upon everything in its relation to God. Observe also how constantly Paul

attributes to God whatever Christ has done: so Romans 3:25; 5:8; 8:3, 32. Hence the mention of Christ calls forth praise to God. In 1 Timothy 1:17, we have a similar outburst of praise for his own conversion.

Two RENDERINGS of Romans 9:5b are grammatically admissible and worthy of consideration.

(1) **ο ων επι παντων θεος** may be in apposition to **ο χριστος**, asserting that He who sprang from Israel ‘is over all God blessed forever:’ cp. 2 Corinthians 11:31; John 1:18; 3:13. So Irenaeus (quoted on p. 6) and Origen, (both preserved in Latin translations only,) Tertullian, Cyprian, very many early Christian writers, and a large majority of the writers of all ages.

(2) **ο ων επι παντων θεος** may be the subject, and **ευλογητος εις τους αιωνας** the predicate, of a new sentence. This exposition is not found in any early Christian writer; but is adopted in the Alex., Ephraim, and Clermont MSS., where we find stops marking off the words in question as a doxology to the Father and spaces proving that the stops are from the first hand. In the Vat. MS. is a stop apparently from a later hand.

Of modern Critical Editors, Tregelles adopts the former, and Lachmann and Tischendorf the latter, exposition. Westcott and Hort here part company, preferring respectively the former and latter expositions. The Revisers place the former in their text, and the latter in their margin. A similar evenly-balanced divergence is found among modern grammarians and expositors.

The general and uncontradicted agreement of early Christian writers has much less weight in reference to exposition than to doctrine; and against it, as supporting exposition (1), must be set the punctuation of some early manuscripts. Certainly this agreement cannot be accepted as decisive. The correct interpretation of the passage before us can be determined only by the methods of modern exegesis.

I shall endeavor to show that (2) is in thorough accord with the structure of the passage, with the context, and with the thought of Paul; and that (1), though grammatically correct and making good sense, is made unlikely by the very ambiguity of the passage.

It is objected that *ευλογητος*, in the four other doxologies of the N.T. in which it is found, and in many doxologies in the O.T., is always (except Psalm 68:19) put before the name of God. So Luke 1:68; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3; Genesis 9:26; 1 Samuel 25:32, 33, 39, etc. But no one can say that grammar requires the predicate, even where the copula is suppressed, to stand first. For the contrary, see Romans 11:16; 12:9; Hebrews 13:4; Luke 10:2. Of all languages, the Greek would be the last to forbid a man to say 'God be blessed' in deviation from the common order 'blessed be God.' The objection is simply an appeal to the usage of Paul and of the Bible. What this is, we will consider.

As noticed above, Paul frequently turns suddenly away from the matter in hand to ascribe praise to God. In these cases, whenever the doxology takes the form of an exclamation, it begins with the name of God, and often with a solemn declaration of the divine attribute which prompted it. In this way the writer puts prominently before us the Great Being to whom our attention is suddenly directed. When a doxology occurs at the beginning of a subject, the word of praise comes first, making prominent the idea of praise. So Luke 1:68, etc. Just so, in Luke 2:14, when the angels take up their song, they put the word 'glory' first: but when they turn from God on high to men on earth, they give emphasis to the transition by putting the words 'upon earth' before the word 'peace.' They thus deviate, in the latter case from the universal, in the former from the almost universal, usage of the New Testament: cp. Luke 10:5; John 20:19, 21, 26. But they deviate for a sufficient reason.

The peculiarity of the case before us is, not the position, but the presence, of the word 'blessed.' Elsewhere it is found in the N.T. only in doxologies which begin a subject. All others, and they are frequent with Paul, take the form "to God be glory." But surely the use here of the word 'blessed' need not surprise us. And, if used, it must follow 'God over all.' Otherwise Paul would deviate from his own unvarying use in doxologies at the end of a subject, which are so frequent with him, a use flowing naturally from the order of thought; and would direct our chief attention to the act of praise instead of the Object of praise.

On the other hand, although *ευλογημενος* is used of Christ in Matthew 21:9; 23:39, etc., *ευλογητος* never is. (For the distinction, see Genesis

14:19, 20, LXX.) And elsewhere Paul uses the word ‘God,’ never of the Son, but as a distinctive title of the Father, even to distinguish Him from the Son. So Romans 16:27; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6. But these objections to (1) are not decisive. For, as I hope to show in Diss. i., Paul looked upon Christ as sharing to the full the divine nature of the Father. There is therefore no reason why he should not deviate from his custom and speak of Christ, though it be only once, as **ευλογητος** and **θεος**, terms elsewhere reserved for the Father. Cp. John 20:28; 1:1, and probably John 1:18. Interpret it as we may, this passage differs from the usage of Paul. Consequently, no argument can be based on the unusual order of the words.

According to exposition (1), the word **ων** is an emphatic assertion that Christ is ‘over all, God,’ and ‘blessed for ever.’ In (2) it asserts that ‘over all’ there exists one who bears the title ‘God’ and is ‘blessed for ever.’ The words **ων επι παντων** are, as in Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 3:7, put for emphasis between the article and its substantive, according to constant Greek usage. The words ‘over all’ recall Ephesians 4:6, where they refer to the Father.

The words **ο ων ευλογητος εις τους αιωνας** in 2 Corinthians 11:31 give no support to (1). For they cannot by themselves form a complete sentence; and must therefore be in apposition to the foregoing nominative. And the context shows plainly to whom the words refer. Of this we should have been uncertain had Paul written **ος εστιν** as in Romans 1:25. But the clause before us has in itself all the elements of a complete sentence; and therefore we cannot join it to the previous sentence, and thus change its meaning altogether, without a good reason. Had Paul wished to teach here that Christ is God, he might have done so, and put his meaning beyond doubt, by writing **ος εστιν** as in Romans 1:25.

The words ‘according to flesh’ suggest another side of Christ’s nature which did not descend from Israel. But this suggestion is so clear that it does not need express assertion. And there is nothing in the form of the words following, as there was in Romans 1:4, which calls attention to it. Nor can it be said that these words were inserted only to provoke the contrast. For the insertion of them is otherwise sufficiently accounted for. Even when narrating the privileges of Israel, Paul cannot go beyond the

truth: and the truth requires this limitation. His sorrow for his brethren will not let him forget that Christ belongs to them only by outward bodily descent. But even this outward nearness to Him was the greatest of their many advantages.

How fully exposition (2) accords with the whole context and with the usage and thought of Paul, I have already attempted to show. To say that an outburst of praise would be out of place in a passage so full of sadness, is to overlook the pathos of these words. That the slighted privileges of Israel call forth a song from a heart smitten with deepest sorrow on their account, reveals their greatness and the terrible position of those who trample them under foot. As little inappropriate is this song of praise as will be the Hallelujahs of the Day of Judgment: Revelation 19:1-7. And that Paul rises unexpectedly from mention of Christ to praise to God, is in complete harmony with his constant mode of thought, e.g. 1 Corinthians 15:28; 11:3; 3:23.

So far then we have seen that the exposition I have adopted is not open to objection on the ground of grammar, the context, or the usage and thought of Paul. I shall now bring reasons for believing, with a confidence approaching certainty, that it conveys the actual thought and purpose of Paul.

Had Paul intended to deviate from his otherwise unvarying custom and to speak of Christ as 'God,' he must have done so with a set and serious purpose of asserting the divinity of Christ. And, if so, he would have used words which no one could misunderstand. In a similar case, John 1:1, we find language which excludes all doubt. In the passage before us, the words **ὅς ἐστιν**, as in Romans 1:25, would have given equal certainty. But Paul did not use them. Again, in the passages which set forth expressly the nature of the Son, e.g. Romans 1:4; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 1:15, Paul does not call Him 'God:' and in each of them the subordination of the Son to the Father is very conspicuous. But here, if we adopt the traditional exposition, there is no mention whatever of the Father, and without such mention there is given to the Son the loftiest title found in the Bible; in other words, we should have here the divinity of Christ, asserted with a definiteness not found elsewhere in the writings or addresses of Paul, and



not correlated to the unique supremacy of the Father. This is altogether inconsistent with the whole thought of Paul.

Moreover, Paul is not discussing here the dignity of Christ, but mentions Him casually in an exposition of the present position of the Jews. In such a passage, it is much more likely that he would deviate from his common mode of expression, and write once 'God' be 'blessed' instead of "To God be glory," than that in a passage not referring specially to the nature of Christ he would assert, what he nowhere else explicitly asserts, that Christ is God, and assert it in language which may mean either this or something quite different.

In any case, the passage before us cannot be appealed to in proof of the divinity of Christ. For even those who so interpret it admit that their interpretation is open to doubt: and it is very unsafe to build important doctrine on an uncertain foundation. On the other hand, as I interpret them, these words reveal, by making them matter of praise to God, the greatness of the privileges which the Jews had trampled under foot.

## SECTION 28

### YET GOD IS NOT UNFAITHFUL

#### CHAPTER 9:6-13

*But not as though the word of God has fallen through. For not all they who are from Israel are these Israel. Neither because they are seed of Abraham are all children; “but in Isaac will a seed be called for thee.” That is, not the children of the flesh, not these are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed. For a word of promise this word is, “At this season I will come; and for Sarah there shall be a son.”*

*And not only so, but also Rebecca, having conceived from one, Isaac our father:- “for they not yet having been born, nor having done anything good or bad, in order that the purpose of God according to election might continue, not from works but from Him that calls, it was said to her that “The greater will be servant to the less;” according as it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”*

**Ver. 6.** The word of God: His promises to Abraham, e.g. Genesis 12:2, 3; 13:16; 22:17, 18. Cp. Romans 4:13-17. Paul's sorrow and the present sad position of the unbelieving Jews do 'not' involve anything 'like' a failure of 'the word of God' to Abraham. He thus challenges an objection to the Gospel, viz. that if it be true God has broken the great promises on which rest the hopes of Israel. The Gospel promises infinite blessing to all who believe in Christ, and threatens destruction to those who reject Him. But with Abraham's seed God made an eternal covenant, and promised to be their God for ever: Genesis 17:7. It might be objected that, by limiting salvation to those that believe, the Gospel implies the partial failure of the ancient promises. Paul does not hesitate to admit that these promises on which the Jews base their claims are 'the word of God.' But he now declares, and in Romans 9:7-13 will prove, that the sad position of the Jews does not involve failure of the promises; that so long as they

continue in their present unbelief, they are outside the number of those for whom the promises were given.

For not all, etc.: commencement of this proof.

They from Israel: Jacob's descendants. So Romans 1:3: "'from' David's 'seed.'"

Are Israel: sharers with their father Israel of the blessings promised to the seed of Abraham.

**Ver. 7-9.** An unexpected transition from the sons of Israel to those of 'Abraham,' an assertion touching the latter similar to that made in Romans 9:6 touching the former. We shall find, in Romans 9:7-9, that the assertion about Abraham proves that about Israel.

**Ver. 7.** Seed of Abraham: natural descendants, corresponding to 'they of Israel' in Romans 9:6.

Children: heirs of Abraham's rights: cp. Romans 8:17. It corresponds with 'are Israel:' cp. John 8:39.

But in Isaac, etc.: quotation of Genesis 21:12, proving the foregoing assertion: same quotation in Hebrews 11:18. When God bid Abraham send away Ishmael, He promised that from 'Isaac' should arise a posterity who would be called by Abraham's name and inherit the promises made to his 'seed.' The quoted text evidently limits the promises to Isaac and his children: cp. Genesis 17:19-21. It therefore proves that not all the natural offspring are Abraham's children and heirs.

**Ver. 8.** Exposition of the foregoing quotation, and of the principle involved in it.

Not the children of the flesh: descendants born according to the natural laws of the human body.

Children of God: recalling Romans 8:16. Since Paul is deducing a general principle applicable to the Jews of his own day, he expresses it in N.T. form. He here asserts that natural descent from Abraham does not place a man in a new relation to 'God.' This explains the exclusion of Ishmael.

Children of the promise: born, as Isaac was, in fulfilment of a promise of God and therefore by supernatural power.

Reckoned: as in Romans 2:3; 4:3-6.

**Ver. 9.** Proof that Isaac is a child 'of promise.' It therefore supports, from his case, the general principle asserted in Romans 9:8. Paul quotes from Genesis 18:10 a definite promise of a son for Sarah.

The objection challenged in Romans 9:6 assumes that the Jews claim the blessings promised to Abraham on the ground that they are descendants of Israel and that if these blessings be denied them the promises of God have failed. Paul reminds us that this claim is not admitted in the case of Abraham's children: for no Jew asserts that both his sons were included in God's covenant with their father. Nay more. The claim of the unbelieving Jews is precisely the same as that of Ishmael; whereas they who believe in Christ hold a position analogous to that of Isaac. For they, like him, have been born, not by natural generation, but in fulfilment of a special promise of God. If the Gospel be true, even though some Israelites be excluded from the blessings promised to their nation, God is only acting in reference to Israel's sons as He acted of old to the sons of Abraham.

**Ver. 10.** Another proof of the same, from the family of Isaac.

Not only was a distinction made between the sons of Sarah and Hagar, but between the sons of Rebecca and 'Isaac,' both parents being the same. Paul thus evades a possible objection that Ishmael was a bondwoman's child.

**Ver. 11-12.** Further exposition of this second case.

Not yet having been born, etc.: excluding all possibility of human merit as influencing God's selection. This is emphasised by the words not having done anything good or bad.

The purpose of God: the eternal purpose revealed in God's action in the families of Abraham and Isaac.

Election: cognate to 'elect' in Romans 8:33: the selection of a smaller out of a larger number. God acted on this principle, i.e.

according to 'election,' when, instead of receiving into this covenant both Isaac and Ishmael, he took Isaac only. He acted on the same principle

when he took Jacob and left Esau. Inasmuch as whatever God does in time He purposed from eternity, Paul speaks of God's action as resulting from a 'purpose according to election.' And, inasmuch as, in both patriarchal families, He acted on the same principle of selection, Paul says that He did so in the second case in order that 'the purpose according to election' might continue, i.e. in order to act in the family of Isaac as He had already acted in the family of Abraham. The word 'continue' calls attention to a permanent element in the divine action.

Not from works, but from Him that calls: source of this elective purpose. It was not prompted by any 'works' of man, past or foreseen, but had its origin simply in God, who 'calls' to Himself whom He will: cp. 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5.

It was said to her: as recorded in Genesis 25:23.

Greater... less: perhaps equivalent to older and younger; cp. Genesis 29:16; 10:21: probably designed to be an enigma to Rebecca, to be explained only by fulfilment. It evidently means that the one least likely should have the pre-eminence. So important in Paul's thought, as a permanent element in divine administration, was the principle of selection as contrasted with indiscriminate blessing that he represents the maintenance of this principle as a purpose of the famous words spoken to Rebecca before her children were born. Subsequent history proves that these words were a limitation of the covenant to Jacob and his children. Had God bestowed the promised blessings on both sons of Isaac, He would have cast aside the elective purpose adopted in His dealings with the family of Abraham.

**Ver. 13.** That Paul stated correctly in Romans 9:12 God's purpose in speaking to Rebecca, he now proves by quoting Malachi 1:2.

The words Esau I hated are expounded by those following, "they shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them Border of wickedness, and The people with whom God is angry for ever." Cp. Psalm 5:5, 6: "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity." Human passions are attributed to God in order to teach that He acts as men do when influenced by such passions: and only thus can men understand God. So Genesis 6:6; 1 Samuel 15:11, where God acts as a man does who has changed his mind. similarly Proverbs 13:24: "he that spares his rod hates his son," i.e. he is

practically his son's enemy. God acted as a friend to Jacob's descendants and as an adversary to those of Esau: and His words in Malachi 1:2 imply that His different treatment of the two nations was due not to anything they or their respective fathers had done but simply to His undeserved favor to Israel. This is also confirmed by the history of Israel and of Edom. Therefore, looking back on God's words to Rebecca, Paul may justly say that they were spoken in order to declare the great principle that the promised blessings were given apart from human merit.

Notice that in Genesis 25:23; Malachi 1:2, and in the O.T. frequently, the fathers and their descendants are identified. In the children the fathers seem to live on: and blessings or curses pronounced on the fathers go down to the children. And the sins of one generation are punished in another: Exodus 17:16; 1 Samuel 15:2.

God's treatment of the sons of Isaac, as of those of Abraham, supports Paul's assertion in Romans 9:6 that not all the descendants of Israel are heirs of the promises. By acting on the principle of selection, first in the family of Abraham and then in that of Isaac, God affords a strong presumption that He will do so in the third patriarchal family, that He will accept not all, but a part of, the descendants of Israel. The Gospel proclaims that He does so, that He gives the inheritance only to those who believe in Christ. This seemed to some a failure of the ancient promises. But Paul has now shown that the unbelieving Jews have no better claim than have the descendants of Ishmael, whose claim no Jew would admit.

Again, Paul uses the early date of the prophecy about Isaac's sons, in connection with God's comment in Malachi 1:2 on His treatment of them, to meet another objection to the Gospel. He asserts, in Romans 3:27, that justification through faith shuts out all boasting on the ground of works, by bringing down all men, Jews or Gentiles, moral or immoral, to the level of sinners. He now points to a similar disregard of works, as a ground of God's favor, in His treatment of the family of Isaac. If today God receives into His family, on the same terms of repentance and faith, the Pharisee and the publican, and rejects all unbelievers, moral or immoral, He only acts as He did when He chose Jacob and rejected Esau before they had done anything good or bad.

This argument however suggests an objection to the Gospel as serious as that which it removes, viz. that if God receive men without reference to previous morality, He is, if not unfaithful, yet unjust. This objection will be stated and answered in Romans 9:14-18. To provoke it, Paul quotes the mysterious words of Malachi 1:2. They teach that even the children of Abraham may be objects of God's fiercest wrath.

The above argument is simply a reply to an objection. Paul shows that this objection to the divine origin of the Gospel tells with equal force against that which all admit to be a revelation from God. As a positive argument, this only raises a presumption, based on the similarity of God's previous action, that He will do what the Gospel announces. But as a reply to the objection that the threatenings of the Gospel are inconsistent with the promises of God, the argument is irresistible.

On the doctrine of Election, see further in the note at the end of this chapter.

## SECTION 29

### NOR IS GOD UNJUST

#### CHAPTER 9:14-18

*What then shall we say? Is there unrighteousness with God? Be it not so. For to Moses He says, "I will have mercy on whomsoever I have mercy, and will have compassion on whomsoever I have compassion." Therefore it is not of him that desires nor of him that runs, but of God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very end I raised thee up, in order that I may show forth in thee My power, and in order that My name may be announced in all the earth." Therefore on whom He will He has mercy; and whom He will He hardens.*

**Ver. 14.** What then, etc.? what shall we infer? as in Romans 4:1, etc. The objection is based, not on God's hatred to Esau, but on the words 'not of works.' For no Jew would say that God's treatment of Esau was unjust.

Unrighteousness: as in Romans 1:18, deviation from the standard of right. In a ruler, we call it 'injustice.' While overturning an objection that the Gospel is contrary to the faithfulness of God, Paul has suggested another based on His justice. The unbelieving Jew may say that his own case differs altogether from that of Esau, that, whereas God's words to Rebecca determined only the temporal lot of her sons and left them and their children to be judged at the great day according to their works, the Gospel announces eternal life for those who a few days ago were publicans and harlots, and shuts out from the promises of God some who have lived strictly moral lives. The teaching of Christ put Saul of Tarsus on the same level in reference to salvation as the outcasts around; and offers salvation to all on the same terms. Such teaching seemed to slap in the face morality itself. The Pharisee declares that the justice of God makes inconceivable that such teaching is divine. If the moral unbeliever cannot appeal to the ancient promises, he will appeal to something older than they, to the



eternal justice of God. This objection, Paul meets with a direct denial: Be it not so.

**Ver. 15-16.** In proof of this denial, Paul appeals to words spoken to Moses at one of the most solemn moments of his life: Exodus 33:19.

Mercy: kindness to the unfortunate and helpless: so Romans 11:30-32.

Compassion: a stronger form of the same: so Romans 12:1.

I-shall-have-‘mercy’ refers to practical manifestation of mercy; I-have-mercy, to the inward disposition. While granting Moses’ prayer to see His glory, God asserts the great principle that His gifts are acts of mercy; and that therefore the objects of them are chosen not because of their merit but because of their helplessness and God’s pity. God revealed His glory to Moses, not because he deserved it, but because God had compassion on him. Verse 16 is Paul’s inference from God’s words.

Runs: intense effort like that of a racer: so 1 Corinthians 9:24. The blessings of the Gospel cannot be obtained by man’s desire or effort, however intense, but are gifts of God’s mercy. Therefore no work of man gives a claim to them.

A ruler is unjust if in administration he deviates from the proclaimed principles of his government; or if he makes laws contrary to the eternal principles of right and wrong. By proclaiming in the Gospel that He will bestow His favor on believers without consideration of previous morality, God acts on a principle of government announced at Sinai, at the foundation of the Jewish state, a principle which none can call unjust. Its justice is evident from the case of Moses. He had certainly no claim to a revelation of God’s glory. God might justly have refused it; and therefore might justly give it to whom He would. Now in the Gospel God proclaims to all believers, of whatever previous character, a still grander revelation of His glory. He thus exercises the prerogative asserted at Sinai. He might justly have delayed for a century the manifestation of Himself in Christ. If so, Paul and his compeers would never have seen it. Was it then unjust in God to choose, apart from all thought of merit, the objects of this revelation? Was it unjust to refuse it to Saul of Tarsus who had desired it so long and sought it so earnestly, and to grant it to Zacchaeus and Mary of Magdala?

This quotation is the more suitable because of the argument lying in the word ‘mercy.’ Mercy is not matter of justice, but is better than justice. It is evoked, not by merit, but by helplessness. If God’s kindness to a man like Moses, in the noblest moment of his life, was an act of mercy, prompted, not by what Moses had done, but by divine compassion, then the most moral man has no claim whatever to any gift from God: and God may justly bestow His gifts without reference to human conduct.

**Ver. 17.** Proof of the above inference. From the case of Pharaoh, Paul will prove that God ‘hardens’ whom He will, and thus put beyond doubt that He has ‘mercy’ on whom He will.

The Scripture says: as in Romans 4:3. For the solemn and express words of God, Paul claims no higher authority than that they are the voice of ‘the Scripture:’ so Romans 11:2; Galatians 4:30; cp. Galatians 3:8, 22. See Diss. III. The quoted passage is Exodus 9:15, 16: “For now had I stretched out My hand and smitten thee and thy people with the pestilence, then hadst thou been cut off from the earth. And indeed for this end I have made thee to continue, to the end that I may show thee My power, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.” Instead of destroying the king at once, God permitted him to continue his resistance; and thus reserved him for a more conspicuous overthrow, which would spread to all nations the name and fame of the God of Israel. This purpose was attained: see Joshua 2:10. Instead of ‘made to continue,’ Paul writes I raised thee up. A cognate but less strong word in Acts 13:22, 23. Those whom God lifts out of the mass of mankind and puts into a conspicuous position, He is said to ‘raise-up.’ This alteration embodies a correct inference. They who occupy thrones are placed on them by God, to work out His purposes: Daniel 4:25; Isaiah 37:26. God here says that He had formed a purpose that through Pharaoh His name should be made known. Therefore we cannot doubt that for this end He not only spared his life but placed on the throne of Egypt at that time a man of Pharaoh’s character. In later days, to accomplish a different purpose, He put on the throne of Persia (Ezra 1:2) a man of different character. God’s perfect foreknowledge (Romans 8:29) enabled Him to do all this without interfering with human freedom. He knew beforehand the men to whom He gave the scepter, and knew that their character would serve His purpose. We therefore infer from Exodus 9:16 that God placed Pharaoh on the throne in order that his

obstinacy and overthrow might be a means of making known to nations around the greatness of God.

**Ver. 18.** Inference from God's words to Pharaoh, including, and supplementing, and supporting, the inference in Romans 9:16.

Hardens: so Exodus 4:21, "I will harden his heart;" also Romans 7:3. Same or cognate word in Hebrews 3:8; 4:7; Acts 19:9; Romans 2:5. The heart is 'hard' when it is incapable of receiving divine impressions. To 'harden,' is to make less susceptible of such impressions. We may well believe that each refusal made Pharaoh less open to divine influences. Moreover, this progressive hardening was a part of the order of human life, and therefore a divinely-ordained consequence of his refusal to obey, a divinely-ordained punishment of his disobedience. In this real and awful sense it was an act of God. For He ordained that they who reject His influences leading men towards obedience shall by their rejection become less susceptible to such influences. It is also the sinner's own act. For, had he not resisted God, his heart would not have been hardened. This hardening is no more inconsistent with the character of God than is any other kind of punishment. This verse asserts God's right to inflict this punishment on whomever He will. In Exodus 4:21; 7:3, God announced that He would inflict it on Pharaoh: and no Jew would deny the justice of the punishment.

Pharaoh was an exact parallel to Paul's opponents: for what he did, they are doing. The only bad thing recorded of him is a repeated rejection of an embassy from God: and they have rejected a more solemn embassy: 2 Corinthians 5:20; Hebrews 2:3. Therefore, it God make them, in spite of their morality, a monument of wrath, He will only treat them as He treated Pharaoh. By condemning him, the Jews admitted the justice of their own condemnation.

That God bestows blessing on grounds, not of merit, but of mercy, and that He selects, from men equally guilty, objects of special and conspicuous punishment, does not make in the least uncertain who are the objects of the blessing and the curse. For God's purposes flow from His moral character, and are therefore in harmony with His love and wisdom. Moreover, while reserving to Himself the right to choose the objects of His favor and His anger, He has made known to us His choice. In the Gospel

He proclaims mercy for all who believe, of whatever previous character; and destruction for all who reject the offered mercy. We never read of a purpose of God still kept secret. In Christ, the purpose once hidden is now made manifest: Romans 16:26; Ephesians 3:5.

**Verses 15-18** are full of comfort. When we ask blessing from God, we look, not at our efforts to obtain it or at our merit, but at our helplessness and God's compassion. For His gifts are acts of pure mercy: and He has promised them to all who ask in faith. We therefore ask for them in humble and joyful confidence that God will fulfil His promise.

These verses are also a solemn warning to some who think that because of their morality God cannot justly condemn them to final destruction. He will harden and punish and raise into a monument of anger whom He will. And we read in 2 Thessalonians 1:8 that He will destroy those who obey not the Gospel. The justice of this punishment will appear in the great day: Romans 2:5.

Nearly all the difficulties of these verses vanish when we remember that they are a reply to one who objects that it would be unjust for God to destroy those who reject the Gospel. To such objectors, the case of Pharaoh, whose only recorded sin is a rejection of an embassy from God, is a triumphant answer.

## SECTION 30

### YET GOD HAS REASON TO FIND FAULT

#### CHAPTER 9:19-23

*Thou wilt say to me then, Why does He still find fault? For who is resisting His will? O man, at any rate, who art thou that answerest again to God? Shall the molded vessel say to him that molded it, Why didst thou make me thus? Or has not the potter authority over the clay, out of the same lump to make one part a vessel for honor, and another for dishonor? Moreover, if God, desiring to show forth His anger and to make known His power, has born, in much longsuffering, vessels of anger made ready for destruction, in order that He may also make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy which He before-prepared for glory:*

**Ver. 19.** A last objection, suggested by Romans 9:18. The mention of Pharaoh implies that his case is parallel to that of the unbelieving Jews; and suggests that God will harden them and through their hardness accomplish His purposes. The Jew replies,

Why then does God, after hardening me, still (cp. Romans 3:7; 6:2) find fault, i.e. continue to blame me for sins resulting from hardness inflicted by God? The force of this objection lies in the second question, which suggests that no one is resisting His will. If this suggestion can be made good, if it can be proved that sinners are altogether passive in the hands of God, it will be difficult to understand how He can blame or punish them.

**Ver. 20.** Paul indignantly cuts off both questions by reminding the objector that in asking them he sets himself up against God, and by bidding him look at himself and consider who it is that does this. For God has declared that He does find fault with and will punish, for their sins, all unbelievers: and Paul will show that the man before us ought to be the last in the world to call in question God's right to do this.

Shall the molded vessel say to him that molded it? word for word from Isaiah 29:16, LXX. In Romans 9:19, the ‘molded’ vessel of clay is calling the potter to account.

**Ver. 21.** Further development of the argument underlying this last question.

The potter: same word in Jeremiah 18:2, 3, 6, LXX.: in Hebrew it is cognate to the word rendered ‘molded’ in Romans 9:20.

The clay: same metaphor in Isaiah 64:8. The potter is under no obligation to the clay; and therefore may justly make, even out of the same lump, vessels for honor and for dishonor.

Vessel: same word in 2 Timothy 2:20, 21; John 19:29; Revelation 2:27; 18:12; Acts 9:15; 2 Corinthians 4:7. In the Gospel, God declares that from the common mass of mankind He will, by sovereign election, take a part, viz. believers, and cover them with glory: and this verse implies that He will use another part, viz. those who reject the Gospel, to advance by their deep debasement His sovereign purposes. To object to this, is to deny the potter’s right over his own clay.

Paul has shown that we have no right to ask the questions in Romans 9:19; but he has not answered them. He has not explained why God ‘still finds fault;’ nor disproved the implied assertion that no one ‘resists His will.’ But he has suggested a complete explanation and disproof. For Romans 9:21 recalls at once Jeremiah 18:6, 7: “cannot I do with you as this potter does... as the clay in the potter’s hand, so are ye in My hand.” Just as Moses and Pharaoh were parallels to men in Paul’s day, so were the men of Jeremiah’s day. Because of old God resolved to bless Israel, they thought it impossible for Him to punish them. God asks, Do you deny Me the right of doing what this potter does? He changed his purpose when the clay resisted; cannot I do the same? Now evidently, although the potter’s second and lower purpose has been accomplished in the clay, He can still find fault: for the clay has resisted his original purpose. God’s primary purpose for Israel was that they should be saved through Christ. This purpose they resisted. And God formed a second purpose, viz. that through their unbelief and destruction His name may be glorified. The accomplishment of the secondary purpose does not free them from blame

for resisting His primary purpose of mercy. Again, in Jeremiah 18:8, 11 God says that even now He will revert to His first purpose of blessing, if Israel will repent. And, as we read in Romans 11:23, God is ready to pardon and bless the Jews of Paul's day. Consequently, it is not only their fault, and a result of their resistance to God's purpose, that He formed the purpose of dishonor, but it will be their own further fault if this second purpose is accomplished.

Notice that to Jeremiah God speaks of the clay as a whole: for He refers to the destiny of the nation as a whole. But Paul refers to the salvation of individuals; and therefore speaks of different kinds of vessels from the same lump.

We see now that, while apparently cutting off the objection as one which we have no right to make and one to which he will not condescend to reply, Paul has really, by pointing to the potter and his clay, suggested a complete reply. The parallel is so exact and the reply so complete that we cannot doubt that Paul intended to suggest them. He holds up a mirror in which the Jews may see with their own eyes that they are resisting God's purposes, and are justly exposed to blame and punishment.

God's words to Jeremiah prove that the accomplishment of purposes which are entirely God's may yet in God's sovereign wisdom depend entirely on the conduct of man. They also justify us in thinking of His purposes as successive; although in themselves they are eternal and therefore simultaneous. Only by looking on them as successive can we in any measure comprehend the primary and secondary purposes of God.

**Ver. 22.** Further description of the man who replies to God, making still more evident the folly of his reply.

To show-forth: recalling the same word in Romans 9:17.

Desiring, etc.: a definite purpose of God. For His anger is an essential element of His nature; and its manifestation is for the good of His creatures. And, along with 'His anger' against sin, punishment makes-known His power to crush all opposition.

Has born: as men bear a burden, i.e. refrained from at once destroying something unpleasant to Him.

In much longsuffering: recalling Romans 2:4. God not only delays punishment but takes active means to lead sinners to repentance.

Vessels: as in Romans 9:21.

Of anger... of mercy: whom God views with anger or mercy: so Ephesians 2:3, “children of anger.”

Made-ready: elsewhere, e.g. 1 Corinthians 1:10, in a good sense. Their preparation for their destiny was complete. By whom they were made ready, Paul leaves us to infer. Since they were hardened by God, they were by Him ‘made ready for destruction:’ and since their hardening was a punishment of their own resistance, they had, by rejecting the Gospel, made themselves ready. Every act of sin makes the sinner more fit for perdition.

Destruction: see note on p. 87. {Romans 2:24}

We have here a second answer to the question in Romans 9:20, ‘Who art thou?’ The objectors are not only “clay marred in the hand of the potter” but are already objects of God’s anger, made ready, by their own sins and by the hardness which follows sin, for destruction. If Romans 9:21 recalls Jeremiah 18:1-12; Romans 9:22 recalls Jeremiah 19:1-13. Now God’s nature moves Him to punish all sin and to crush all resistance, and thus to make known His anger and power. But He holds back His righteous anger, in order that the wicked may repent and live. Yet while refusing to repent, they complain that He finds fault with them.

**Ver. 23.** Another purpose of God’s forbearance.

Riches: recalling Romans 2:4.

Of His glory: as in Ephesians 1:18; 3:16. It is the valuable abundance of the manifested splendor which belongs to God. His forbearance is prompted by a desire to show ‘mercy’ to men, to prepare them in the present life for a splendor to be bestowed in the life to come, and thus to make known the infinite resources and the grandeur of His own nature.

Before-prepared: so Ephesians 2:10: in contrast to ‘made ready for destruction.’ Throughout life everyone is preparing for destruction or for



glory. The preparation for glory, being entirely a work of God, is expressly attributed to Him: 'whom He before-prepared.'

The sentence occupying Romans 9:22, 23 is broken off at the word 'glory,' to make way for a further account of God's treatment of the vessels of mercy: cp. Romans 5:12; 7:12. We may supply from the foregoing, "Shall the objects of such forbearance call Him to account?"

The men who ask why God finds fault with them are men justly condemned, as Paul proved in Romans 1:18; 3:20, for their own sins, whom God might justly destroy at once. To do so, would manifest His righteous anger and great power. But so great is His longsuffering that He permits them to live, and uses means for their salvation. He spares them because He has purposes of mercy, because He wishes to prepare men whom He will cover with His own abundant glory. Therefore He prolongs the world's probation. Can men whose life is spared only because God forbears to act on principles of mere justice, and forbears because of His purpose of mercy to mankind at large, can such men reply to God when He declares what He will do with them? With more justice might a prisoner who but for the king's respite had been put to death complain of prison fare.

How appropriate was Paul's reference to Pharaoh and to the men of Jeremiah's day will appear when we remember the fearful storm which, as Paul wrote these words, was already gathering, soon to burst in overwhelming fury on the house of Israel.

## SECTION 31

### **THE PRESENT POSITION OF GENTILES AND JEWS ACCORDS WITH PROPHECY**

#### CHAPTER 9:24-29

*Vessels of mercy which He before-prepared for glory, whom He also called, even us, not only from among Jews, but also from among Gentiles. As also in Hosea He says, "I will call Not My people, My people; and Not beloved, Beloved. And it shall be in the place where it was said to them, No people of Mine are ye, there they shall be called sons of the living God." Moreover, Isaiah cries on behalf of Israel, "If the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant shall be saved: for, accomplishing and cutting short His word, the Lord will perform it on the earth." And according as Isaiah has said before, "Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had become as Sodom, and we had been made like as Gomorrah."*

Chapter 9 began with an expression of sorrow that many of the Jews were, if the teaching of Romans 1-8. be correct, outside the family of God. In reply to the objection that, if so, God's promise has failed, Paul pointed to the cases of Ishmael and Esau. But it was further objected that it would be, if not unfaithful, yet unjust, for God to receive on the same terms, as the Gospel says He will, men good and bad. To this, Paul replied that God's gifts are acts not of justice but of mercy; and that He not only bestows them on whom He will, but also inflicts on whom He will, for His own purposes, special punishment. To the objection that, if so, God has no reason to find fault, he refused to give a reply, and reminded the objector that he was but a vessel of clay, a vessel spared only by the longsuffering of its maker. Paul will now show that the present position of Gentiles and Jews agrees with prophecy.

**Ver. 24.** Called: the Gospel summons, as in Romans 9:12; 8:30; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 7:15-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:14, etc.; cognate to the word

‘called’ in Romans 1:1, 6, 7. That God has spoken to us, and called us to Himself, is the ground of all our hopes.

Jews... Gentiles: whose respective relation to the Kingdom of God is a chief matter of this chapter.

**Ver. 25-26.** Quotations from Hosea 2:23, 1; respectively.

Call: to give a name; not to summon as in Romans 9:24. The two meanings embody one idea, to cry out a person’s name. The word is not found in the text quoted: but it expresses fairly the prophet’s meaning. It was probably prompted by the same word, in another sense, in Romans 9:24. God bid Hosea, in Hosea 1:6, 9, give to two of his children the names ‘No-mercy’ and ‘No-people-of-mine,’ in token that the ten tribes were no longer God’s people or objects of His mercy; and made this more conspicuous by saying that He will have mercy upon and save the house of Judah. Afterwards, in Hosea 2:23, He says, “I will have mercy on No-mercy, and I will say to No-people-of-mine, My-people thou art.” Still earlier, in Hosea 1:10, God says, “in the place where it shall be said to them, No-people-of-mine are ye, it shall be said to them, Sons of the living God are ye.” Paul reverses the order of the quotations in order to give concluding prominence to the remarkable phrase sons of the living God, so wonderfully anticipating the Gospel of Christ.

Not-beloved: the LXX. rendering of ‘No-mercy.’

In the place where: either Palestine or the land of bondage. The very hills and plains which were witnesses of the one declaration will be witnesses of the other.

Paul quotes these words, which refer primarily to the ten tribes, in proof that God, when He called men from the midst of the Gentiles to be vessels of mercy, acted on principles announced by the prophet Hosea. Gentiles could not be more completely aliens than those whom God declared to be neither His people nor objects of His mercy. But Hosea foretold that in days to come God will speak again to the outcasts and call them His sons. In the Gospel, this prophecy finds unexpected and marvelous fulfilment, a fulfilment wider than the promise but in full agreement with its spirit. The glad tidings of salvation and of reception into the family of God, even for

outcasts, which through Hosea God promised to announce in days then future, He had actually announced in the Gospel preached by Paul.

**Ver.** 27-28. Another prophecy, from Isaiah: Isaiah 10:22. His words are, “If thy people Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, a remnant among them shall return. Consumption is determined, overflowing with righteousness. For consumption and a determined purpose the Lord Jehovah of armies is working out in the midst of all the earth.” The variations in the quotation do not touch the sense.

The number of the sons of Israel: not found in Isaiah 10:22 but taken from Hosea 1:10.

As the sand of the sea: found in both passages.

Will be saved: implied in Isaiah’s words “shall return.” Why only a remnant ‘will be saved,’ Romans 9:28 explains.

Accomplishing His word: achieving its purpose: cp. Romans 2:27.

Cutting-short: a sudden and complete accomplishment.

His ‘word’: God’s many threatenings to Israel. Amid the terror inspired by Assyria, the prophet foretells Assyria’s coming fall; and looks forward to the day of Israel’s deliverance. He sees fulfilled the promise recorded in Genesis 22:17, and Israel numerous as the sand of the sea. But he declares emphatically and repeatedly that only a part of the nation will experience the great salvation, and that this part will return to and trust in God. Upon the rest of the nation, God has determined to inflict punishment. He has resolved that a wave of justice shall overflow the land: and, what He has determined, He will do.

The Lord: see under Romans 9:29.

The force of these quotations is evident. If the Gospel be true, many Gentiles are members of the family of God, and many Jews are, and apparently for ever will be, shut out from that family and from the salvation announced by the Messiah. This latter thought gave Paul deep sorrow. But he has shown that it involves neither unfaithfulness nor injustice in God. And the quotations from Hosea and Isaiah prove that the

reception of Gentiles and the limitation of salvation to a part of Israel accord with prophecy.

**Ver. 29.** Another quotation from Isaiah: Isaiah 1:9. Things are now according as he ‘foretold.’

Said-before: either in an earlier part of his prophecy, or before it took place. Probably the latter: for the mere order of Isaiah’s prophecies is unimportant. Same word in 2 Corinthians 7:3; 13:2; Galatians 1:9; Hebrews 4:7; Matthew 24:25. Paul says that Isaiah’s description of things around him was a prophecy of the days of Christ. God treated the covenant people on definite principles. Consequently, His dealings with them at one time were prophetic of times to come.

The Lord: constant rendering in LXX. for the Hebrew word JEHOVAH, the distinctive name of the God of Israel, never given to others as the name God frequently is. Cp. 1 Kings 18:39, “Jehovah, He is the God.” So sacred was this name that in reading the Jews replaced it by the secular title Lord: same word in Genesis 18:12; 42:30, 33, etc. And it is so rendered in the Greek, Latin, and some other versions. This rendering causes great confusion in the N.T.: for the same word is both a secular title, as in Acts 16:16, 19, 30, and the distinctive title of Christ, as in 1 Corinthians 8:6, and a rendering of the distinctive O.T. name of God. Sometimes, e.g. Romans 10:12, it is difficult to determine whether the word refers to the Son or the Father.

Sabaoth: a Hebrew word for ‘armies.’ Same transliteration is very common in (LXX.) the Book of Isaiah, e.g. Isaiah 5:7, 9, 16, 24. The bidding of ‘Jehovah of armies’ is done by the powers of heaven and earth: cp. Daniel 4:35; Psalm 103:20, 21; 148:2.

Seed: from the LXX., instead of ‘remnant.’ The remnant of Judah in the days of Isaiah was a ‘seed’ in which the life of the sacred people was preserved for future generations.

It might be objected to the Gospel that, by making faith the condition of salvation, it practically reduced the covenant people to a small remnant, viz. the believing Jews. But Paul reminds us that in Isaiah’s day, by death and captivity, the nation was reduced to a small remnant; and that, but for the help of God, it would then have been as completely destroyed as were

Sodom and Gomorrah. Consequently, God is doing now only what Isaiah says He did then.

## SECTION 32

### **THROUGH UNBELIEF, THE JEWS HAVE FAILED TO OBTAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS**

#### CHAPTER 9:30-33

*What then shall we say? That Gentiles, the men not pursuing righteousness, have laid hold of righteousness, the righteousness which is from faith. But Israel, while pursuing a law of righteousness, to such law has not attained. Why? Because they sought it not from faith but from works. They stumbled at the stone of stumbling; according as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of a snare: and he that believes on Him will not be put to shame."*

**Ver. 30.** Righteousness from faith: recalling Romans 1:17; 3:21, 22, 27-30, which contain the main thesis of the epistle. Since the quotations do not mention either 'righteousness' or 'faith,' Paul's inference must be drawn from this main thesis. It marks the conclusion of his argument, which is designed to remove objections to this thesis on the ground of the present condition of the Jews.

Gentiles: not 'the Gentiles:' for only a part of them believed.

Pursue: as in a race: cp. Romans 14:19; Philippians 3:12, 14; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22, etc.

Laid-hold-of: as does a racer: 1 Corinthians 9:24; Philippians 3:12, 13.

Righteousness: as in Romans 1:17: the state of him who has the approval of the great Judge. The Gospel proclaims the favor of God to all who believe. Many Gentiles who formerly lived in sin have believed; and, if the Gospel be true, are now accounted righteous by God. They have obtained 'the righteousness' which is 'from faith.'

**Ver. 31.** The contrasted lot of Israel, i.e. of the mass of the Jews in contrast to the believing Gentiles.

A law of righteousness: a standard of conduct, from which they seek the favor of God. This ideal standard some Jews set before themselves; and strove by morality, austerity, or ritual, to attain or 'come up to' it, i.e. to realise it in themselves and thus attain 'righteousness.' But in this effort they failed. Their failure illustrates Romans 9:16: cp. Matthew 21:31.

**Ver. 32.** Reason why the Jews have not obtained righteousness, viz. because they sought it not in God's way from faith, i.e. on the condition of faith, but in a way of their own, as though it might be derived from works.

They stumbled, etc.: comment on their failure.

Stumbling: same word in Romans 14:13, 20; 1 Corinthians 8:9; and 1 Peter 2:6, referring, as here, to Christ.

Stone 'of stumbling': one against which men strike their foot. The Jews rejected the Gospel because Christ was not what they expected. He thus became a stone against which the men of Israel, as they ran after righteousness, stumbled. Cp. 1 Corinthians 1:23; Matthew 13:57.

**Ver. 33.** According as, etc.: that Christ is a stone of stumbling, agrees with prophecy.

Snare: 'skandalon,' the Greek original of our word 'scandal:' so Romans 11:9; 14:13; 16:17; 1 Corinthians 1:23, etc. Cognate verb in Romans 14:21, in some copies; 1 Corinthians 8:13 twice, etc. It denotes a trap in which anyone is caught.

Rock 'of a snare': one on which when men step they fall and are entrapped. See under same word in Romans 11:9. Paul weaves together Isaiah 8:14; 28:16. The one reads, "He shall be for a sanctuary; and for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of falling, to the two houses of Israel; for a snare and for a trap to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." Something to be said or done by God will be an occasion of deception and destruction to the Jews. Such were the lowly appearance of Christ and the simplicity of the Gospel. These were a stone against which most of the Jews struck their foot, and a rock on which they slipped and fell: Matthew 11:6. Isaiah 28:16 is, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone, a stone of proof, the precious corner-stone of a laid foundation. He that believes will not make haste." In days to come, God will lay in Zion, the seat of the kingdom of David, the



foundation-stone of a temple or palace. It will be the corner-stone of a firmly-laid foundation, a stone tested and valuable. He that builds on it by faith will not be put to the hurry of flight.

Believes: in Hebrew, to make firm or sure: he that makes himself firm by resting on the firm foundation-stone.

Not put to shame: as he would be if, in spite of his trust in Christ, he perished. Same word and sense in Romans 5:5.

The apparent carelessness of this quotation does not lessen its value to men familiar with the Old Testament. The quoted passages prove clearly that the foretold salvation is for those who believe; and that it is consistent with the character of God to do that which to some men will become an occasion of falling. In Romans 9:24-29, we saw that the reception of the Gentiles and the limitation of salvation to a part of the Jews are in harmony with prophecy. We now see that faith as the condition of salvation, and the unfortunate effect of the Gospel on some of the Jews, are also in harmony with it.

A comparison of Romans 9:25-33 with 1 Peter 2:6-10 suggests that these O.T. quotations were often used by the early Christian teachers.

**Ver.** 32 implies that the reason why one man is unsaved while others are saved is not in God but in himself. So in Romans 10:3; 11:22, 23; Matthew 23:37. This by no means contradicts Romans 9:18, but looks at the same subject from another point. The reason why any one criminal is put to death is, if justice be done, entirely in himself. But the question whether any criminals are to be put to death rests entirely with the legislature. Those who oppose capital punishment may leave out of sight the conduct of the criminal, and speak only of what it is expedient for the government to do. And the moralist may leave out of sight the expediency of capital punishment, and speak only of the consequences of sin. Or again, the motion of the withered leaves of autumn is due altogether to the wind. They do not in the least degree even co-operate to produce their own motion. But the stones on the wayside remain unmoved. The difference arises, not from a difference in the influences brought to bear on the stones and the leaves, but simply from this, that while the leaves yield to, the stones resist, the influences which both alike experience. So with us. That

believers are justified at all, springs entirely from the undeserved mercy of God: and every step towards salvation is entirely God's work in them. But the reason why, when some are justified, others are not, is that they put themselves by unbelief outside the number of those whom God has determined to save. When Paul replied to the objection that the Gospel is inconsistent with the justice of God, he said that salvation is not a matter of justice, and that God bestows it on whom He will. But when explaining why the Jews have not obtained salvation, he says that the reason is in themselves. Notice also that their position is here attributed, not to their sin, but to their unbelief.

**Verses 30-33** help us to understand Chapter 9, of which it is a summing up. Paul does not introduce his new matter by laying down, as in Romans 1:16; 3:21, 22; 6:3, 4; 8:3, 4, a foundation-stone of explicit doctrinal statement. Therefore, only from the argument can we learn the exact purpose of the chapter. Paul's aim, as I understand it, is to defend the Gospel expounded in Romans 1-8. against Jewish objections, and especially against the great objection that if the Gospel be true the mass of the Jewish nation are outside the blessings promised to their fathers, or in other words to defend the Gospel in view of the fact that many Jews have rejected and many Gentiles have accepted it. In Romans 9:1-5, Paul expresses his sorrow for this fact. But, in Romans 9:6-13, he shows that, painful as it is to himself, it is not inconsistent with the promises of God; nor (Romans 9:14-18) with the declared principles of His government. The reply to Objection 1 is put in a form which provokes Objection 2: the reply to this last suggests Objection 3, viz. that such principles of government destroy human accountability. This objection, Romans 9:19-23 meet. Paul then states in Romans 9:24, from the point of view of the Gospel call, what he afterwards, in Romans 9:30, 31, states from the point of view of actual results. In Romans 9:25-29, the statement of Romans 9:24 is shown to be in harmony with O.T. prophecy. This is followed in Romans 9:30, 31 by a plain assertion of the fact which in Romans 9:1-5 caused Paul so much sorrow and which throughout Romans 9, he has been harmonizing with the character of God. This fact is in Romans 9:32 traced to its cause; and even this cause is in Romans 9:33 found to be in harmony with the Old Testament. Thus the whole chapter

is a proof that the Gospel expounded in this epistle is in harmony with the earlier revelation.

**ELECTION, PREDESTINATION:** associated in Ephesians 1:4, 5.

In Romans 8:33; 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28, we find the words 'elect,' ELECTION; and in 1 Corinthians 1:27, 28; Ephesians 1:4; James 2:5; Mark 13:20; Luke 6:13; 9:35; 10:42; 14:7; John 6:70; Acts 1:24; 15:22, we have the cognate verb 'choose, chosen.' They denote a mental act by which we take for ourselves a smaller out of a larger number of objects. Choice implies freedom in him who makes it, but is generally determined by the difference between the objects chosen and rejected.

A divine election is prominent in Deuteronomy 7:6, 7; Psalm 33:12; Isaiah 41:8, 9; 43:20; 44:1; 65:9, 22. Out of all nations, God chose Israel to be specially His own. From this divine choice resulted all the religious advantages of the Jews. Hence the nation could never forget that it was the chosen people of God. Since the foretold glory was destined only for the faithful ones in Israel, the word was sometimes used specially for them: so Isaiah 65:9, 15, 22, a stepping-stone to its N.T. use. We have a connecting link, amid O.T. phraseology, in 1 Peter 2:9: "a 'chosen' race:" so Romans 1:1. Our Lord, in Matthew 22:14; 24:22, 31; Luke 18:7, and Paul in Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; 2 Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:1, speak of believers as 'elect:' so Revelation 17:14. In Romans 11:5; Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul says that his readers were 'chosen' by God, before the world was, for a salvation to be realized in holiness and faith; and that God's choice arose, not from their works, but altogether from God's favor.

The N.T. doctrine of election may be thus stated: From eternity, moved only by pity for our lost state and not at all by any foreseen good in us, and as irresponsible sovereign of the world, God resolved to save, not all men promiscuously, but only those who should believe the Gospel. This doctrine is a restatement of the fundamental doctrine of salvation through faith, from the point of view of the eternal forethought of God. Whatever God does in time, He purposed from eternity: and, whatever He does, He does unmoved by any good external to Himself. For apart from Him no good exists. God proclaimed that He will save all who believe the good news, and destroy those who reject it. We infer then that from eternity He

resolved so to do. He saw man in sin and misery, and resolved to save. He was moved to save, by His love to the entire race: John 3:16, 17; 1 Timothy 2:4; Titus 2:11. To reconcile the salvation of sinners with divine justice, God gave His Son to die: Romans 3:25, 26. He chose the Gospel to be the instrument, and faith the condition, of salvation to each individual: Romans 1:16, 17; 3:22, 28, 30. He exerts on all men influences leading towards repentance, influences without which none can come to Christ: Romans 2:4; John 6:44. God thought fit, in infinite wisdom and universal love, to permit men either to yield to, or resist, these influences; and made the effect of the Gospel contingent on man's surrender to them. From the beginning, He foresaw who would believe and how many would continue in faith. But He was moved to save, not by their foreseen faith and perseverance, but only by His love and by man's misery and helplessness. Our faith is God's work in us and gift to us: and the good works which follow faith are not its necessary result, but are attached to it by the grace of God and wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. Our faith and good works, so far from being the motive, are results, of God's eternal purpose.

This doctrine, thus stated, contains all that Paul says about election. The resolution to save, not all men indiscriminately, but only believers, is a 'purpose according to election.' For, by fixing, of His own free-will, and without reference to man's conduct, the condition of salvation, He chose the objects of salvation. We thus owe His favor today entirely to the sovereign election of God.

Closely related to this doctrine of Election, is Paul's teaching about PREDESTINATION, already in some measure expounded under Romans 8:29, 30. It is the eternal purpose in which before the world was God marked out the path along which, and the goal towards which, He would lead His chosen ones, viz. to adoption into His family and to likeness to the glory of His Firstborn. It is a logical development of Doctrine 3, viz. that we are to be dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus, just as Election is a development of Doctrine 1, Justification through Faith, each of these fundamental doctrines being viewed in the light of the eternal forethought of God.

Like election, predestination is simply a purpose; and by no means implies its inevitable accomplishment. Hence in Romans 11:21, 22 Paul solemnly

warns his readers that, unless they continue in faith, they will, although predestined to glory, be cut off and perish.

This chapter has frequently been appealed to in support of Calvin's teaching that God brings to bear, in pursuance of an eternal purpose, upon some of those who hear the Gospel and not on others, influences which necessarily and always lead to repentance, faith, justification, and eternal life; and that the reason why these influences, without which none can be saved, are not exerted on some men while they are on others is entirely in God and not at all in man. See my 'New Life in Christ' pp. 270-276. And it must be admitted that some serious objections brought against this teaching of Calvin are in Romans 9, brought against the teaching of Paul. But very different doctrines may lie open to the same objection. And Paul's replies, which are irresistible against those who object to the doctrine of Justification through Faith, are powerless to meet the same objections when brought against the teaching of Calvin. It is true that, if Calvin's teaching were that of Paul, a Jew might object that it was inconsistent with the promise of God: and, if so, the objection would, I admit, be fairly met in Romans 9:6-13. Again, on the ground of justice, objection has frequently been made to Calvin's teaching. But was anyone who brought this objection ever convinced, by reading Romans 9:14-18, that this teaching is in harmony with God's justice? Certainly the story of Pharaoh does nothing whatever to harmonize it with the character of God. But we have seen how decisively the case of Pharaoh overturns objections to the teaching of Romans 3:22; 9:31 based on the justice of God. To the teaching of Calvin we might fairly bring the objection in Romans 9:19. But how irrelevant would then be Paul's answer! We should reply back that it was not our fault that we were born in sin; and that being born in sin we could not, apart from justifying grace, avoid resisting God. Therefore God would have no more reason to find fault with us than with a lion tearing its prey. The mention of the potter's clay puts to silence the man who objects to Romans 3:22; 9:31: but, as a defense of Calvin's scheme, it provokes bitterest reply. We cannot accept doctrines never explicitly asserted in the Bible simply because objections now brought against them were also brought against other teaching of Paul. See further in my 'New Life in Christ' pp. 263-277.

## SECTION 33

### THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS IS A RESULT OF IGNORANCE

#### CHAPTER 10:1-13

*Brethren, the good pleasure of my heart and my petition to God on their behalf is for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have zeal for God, but not according to understanding. For, ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to set up their own righteousness, to the righteousness of God they have not submitted. For Christ is an end of law for righteousness to everyone that believes. For Moses writes that "the man who has done" the righteousness which is from law "shall live in" it. But the righteousness which is from faith says thus, "Say not in thy heart, Who will go up into heaven?" that is, to bring down Christ: Or, "Who will go down into the abyss?" that is, to bring up Christ from the dead. But what says it? "Near thee is the word, in thy mouth and in thy heart:" that is, the word of Jesus which we proclaim, that if thou confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart men believe for righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made for salvation. For the Scripture says, Everyone "that believes on Him shall not be put to shame." "For there is no difference of Jew and Greek. For the same is Lord of all, being rich towards all that call on Him. For "everyone whoever may call upon the name of the Lord will be saved."*

**Ver. 1.** Brethren: to Christians. The Jews are spoken of in the third person: on their behalf. Cp. Romans 9:31-33.

For salvation: aim of Paul's prayer for Israel. This prayer proves that the case of those for whom (in Romans 9:3) Paul mourns is not hopeless. So Romans 11:23.

**Ver. 2.** Proof that they need salvation. But before proving this, and thus finding fault, Paul gives them credit for all the good in them.

Zeal 'for God': literally, of God: same phrase in Acts 22:3, an interesting coincidence.

Not according to understanding: earnestness in God's cause not guided by an intelligent view of His revealed purpose. Consequently, while seeking salvation, they are still unsaved. None need our sympathy and prayers more than those who are earnest for God but know not how to serve Him.

**Ver. 3.** Explains their want of understanding.

Righteousness of God: as in Romans 1:17; 3:21: cp. "righteousness from God" in Philippians 3:9. So also in Romans 10:5, 6, righteousness 'from law' and 'from faith.' It is in conspicuous contrast to their own righteousness; and is something which the Jews do 'not know' and to which they have not submitted. They sought the Judge's approval by obedience to law. Had they succeeded, they would have had a righteousness of 'their own,' i.e. resulting from their own effort, and derived 'from law.' But God accepts as righteous all who believe, and these only. Of this 'righteousness,' a gift 'of God,' the Jews were ignorant. Consequently, 'they did not submit' to it, i.e. to God's way of bestowing righteousness, by laying aside their own efforts to make themselves righteous. Consequently, they still need salvation: and therefore Paul prays for them.

**Ver. 4.** Proof of their ignorance and need of salvation.

End: see under Romans 6:21. It involves here the idea of cessation as in Luke 1:33. For Paul is exposing the ignorance of those who seek to set up a righteousness of their own which can come only from 'law.'

Christ an 'end' of law: the principle. Do this and live, being replaced, for those who believe, by the Gospel, which says, Live and do this. Cp. Romans 6:14; 7:4; Galatians 2:19; 3:25.

For righteousness: purpose for which in Christ we have been removed from the domain of law, viz. that righteousness may be given to everyone that believes. Cp. Romans 1:5, "for obedience of faith;" Romans 1:16, "for salvation to everyone that believes." If Christ by His own appearance has

put an 'end' to law as a means of salvation or as a hindrance to it, in order that all who believe may obtain righteousness, then to endeavor to set up our own righteousness, which can rest only on the basis of law, is to display ignorance of the righteousness which God gives.

**Ver. 5-11.** Proof that 'Christ' is 'an end of law.'

Moses writes: nearly word for word from Leviticus 18:5, and embodying a principle running through the Mosaic Law. If then the Law be historically due to 'Moses,' these words may be fairly quoted as his, whether or not the Book of Leviticus as we have it came actually from his pen: see Diss. III. The Vat. MS. and the Syriac and Old Latin versions read 'Moses describes the righteousness, etc.... that.' The practical difference is slight: and the Revisers' reading is somewhat better attested.

Shall live: primarily natural life: the reward promised in the Mosaic Law; e.g. Deuteronomy 30:20. But, since all life, here and hereafter, is from God, the difference does not weaken Paul's inference.

In it: in the righteousness which is from law: cp. Ezekiel 18:22, 24; Leviticus 18:5 reads 'in them,' viz. in the ordinances. The change is immaterial and suits Paul's argument. In Leviticus 18:5, God solemnly announces the great principle that only by obedience to His commands can men obtain the blessings promised in the Law. This is the essential principle of all law.

**Ver. 6-7.** Further proof that Christ is an end of law.

Which is from faith: as in Romans 1:17; 3:22.

Says thus: righteousness being personified: cp. Proverbs 8:1, 2. In Deuteronomy 30:12-14, at the close of his farewell address, Moses asserts a universal principle which applies to righteousness by faith. Therefore in his words 'the righteousness from faith' speaks and describes itself. He reminds Israel that God has spoken. There is therefore no need for effort on their part to find out the will of God. Others might inquire whether there is one God, or many gods, and whether God desires the obedience and worship of men. To Israel all such inquiry was shut out by God's revelation of Himself. They had no need to ask for someone to mount the sky to find out God, or to cross the sea to learn from other nations. God's



own word was already in their midst, spoken by human lips, pondered in human hearts. Moses asserts the great principle that a revelation from God makes needless, and therefore ought to put an end to, all human effort for that which He reveals. Such effort implies either ignorance or rejection of God's revelation.

This principle was applied by Moses to the Law just repeated in the ears of the people. But, like all other great principles, it has an application far beyond the thought of the original speaker. It applies with great force to the fuller revelation in Christ. In the Law God gave a knowledge of His will: in the Gospel He gives conformity to His will. Therefore, as the former revelation put aside as needless all effort to obtain knowledge of His will, so the later revelation puts aside all effort to attain righteousness. Such efforts are as much a mark of ignorance and obstinacy as would have been in the days of Moses efforts to obtain by human wisdom a knowledge of God's will. Paul is therefore justified in calling these words of Moses a voice of the righteousness of faith proclaiming the end of law. For law implies doing: and the Gospel, even according to a principle asserted by Moses, puts an end to doing as a means of righteousness. This appeal to Moses is a remarkable example of skilful and correct exegesis.

In thy heart: where unbelief speaks before it dares to speak in the lips.

That is: Paul's exposition of Moses, words. To seek justification from works, is to act as though Christ had not come down from heaven. This suggests His pre-existence.

Abyss: literally 'without bottom': same word in Luke 8:31, Revelation 9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3. Hence it is used for the unfathomable sea; and for the place of the dead. Moses refers to the former, Paul to the latter. Paul modifies the words of Moses to suit the facts of the Gospel. This he has a right to do because his modification leaves the principle untouched. To seek a righteousness of our own is to act as though Christ had never risen.

**Ver. 8.** The quotation from Deuteronomy 30:12-14 continued, and still further expounded.

In thy mouth: to be publicly spoken.

In thy heart: to be silently pondered.

That is: Paul's exposition, as in Romans 10:6, 7.

Word of faith: announcement of salvation through faith.

Proclaim: as in Romans 10:14, 15; 2:21; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 15:11, 12, etc.: cognate to the word 'herald' in 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11.

**Ver. 9.** Contents of 'the word of faith.' It is a promise suspended on two conditions.

If thou confess: cp. Matthew 10:32. By making confession a condition of salvation, God put the Gospel into the mouth as well as the heart of those that believe.

In thy heart: the inner chamber, far removed from human sight, in which men believe.

That God raised Him, etc.: historic object-matter of saving faith. But belief of the historic fact will not save unless it include belief of the great promise stated in this verse: thou shalt be saved. It was needless to add this further matter of faith: for all promises are fulfilled only in those who by faith expect their fulfilment. The man who is sure 'that God raised' Christ from the dead, and is sure, because Christ said so, that all who believe this, and therefore himself, 'will be saved,' will, according to the plain statement of this verse, be saved. Now our conscience tells us with the authority of God that sin excludes the sinner from heaven. Consequently we cannot believe that we shall be saved unless we are prepared to forsake sin: and our faith becomes a reliance upon the power of Him who is able to save from all sin.

Notice here the importance of the resurrection of Christ: cp. Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:4, 5; 7:4; 8:34. Compare also 1 John 5:1. The difference of the object-matter of faith is immaterial. We cannot believe that Christ rose from the dead without admitting His claim to be the Son of God.

**Ver. 10.** Further explanation and support of the foregoing statement. The order is changed from 'mouth' and 'heart' in Romans 10:9 as in Deuteronomy 30:14 to the order of time, which is heart and mouth. Since the 'heart' (see Romans 1:21) is the seat of the intelligence and the will,

and since all belief of the words of God or man is an act of the will accepting the judgment of the intelligence, it is with the 'heart' that men believe. And we believe the Gospel in order to obtain righteousness, i.e. to be justified.

For salvation: final salvation, as in Romans 5:9, 10; 13:11. The moment we believe the promise, we receive the gift of 'righteousness.' But we cannot retain it to final 'salvation' unless we confess our faith. And, if we know that God requires confession, we cannot believe His promise of salvation without a purpose to confess. For our conscience will not allow us to believe that God smiles on us while we refuse to obey Him.

**Ver. 11.** Proof, from Isaiah 28:16, already quoted in Romans 9:33, that salvation is by faith.

Everyone: not in the text quoted, but justified in Romans 10:12, 13. All who are not saved will be put "to shame, to eternal abhorrence:" Daniel 12:2.

The assertion in Romans 10:4 is now proved. Paul's application to the Gospel of Moses' words touching the Law has been justified by the words of Isaiah. For this last taught that in days to come they who believe will be saved; thus implying a new revelation from God to man: and, if so, Moses' words will apply to this new revelation. God's word will put aside all self-effort to obtain salvation, as His word through Moses had already put aside all self-effort to obtain a knowledge of His will. And, if so, according to Moses' own description of the Law as something to be done, the new revelation will put aside the Law; and will do this in order to bestow salvation on those who believe. Hence the prophecy in Isaiah 28:16, read in the light of its fulfilment in Christ and of the principle asserted by Moses, affords complete proof of the assertion in Romans 10:4. And, if so, the Jews are ignorantly resisting God; and therefore in spite of their zeal are in need of salvation, and are fit objects for (Romans 10:1) Paul's prayer.

**Ver. 12.** Paul now justifies the word 'everyone' inserted by him in the above quotation, by asserting a principle which breaks down all national distinctions.

No difference: as in Romans 3:23.

Jew and Greek: as in Romans 1:16; 2:9, 10; 3:9. The recurring phrases in Romans 10:3, 5, 6, 12 indicate that Paul has now returned to his main thesis in Romans 1:16, 17; 3:21-30.

Lord of all: probably Christ, to whom the word 'Lord' was distinctively applied: cp. Romans 14:9; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Philippians 2:11.

Rich towards all, etc.: so Ephesians 3:8.

Call-upon: to appeal to for help, or as a witness: cp. 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:23; 2 Timothy 2:22; Acts 25:11, 12, 21, 25. In the presence of the one Master, all national distinctions fade.

**Ver. 13.** Quotation from Joel 2:32, asserting that everyone who appeals to God will be saved, and thus justifying the word 'everyone' inserted by Paul in the quotation in Romans 10:11. Same quotation in Acts 2:21. Joel refers evidently to the Day of Christ. He foretells that salvation will be obtained by calling upon God. And, although he speaks of a deliverance in Jerusalem and in Zion, his words forbid a limitation of this salvation to the Jews. The words quoted announce clearly a salvation for all.

The Lord: in Joel, 'Jehovah,' the proper name of the God of Israel. But it is easy to apply it to Christ our Lord. The difference is immaterial. Salvation is from the Father through the Son: and we pray through the Son and to the Son.

This section expounds, in the light of principles asserted by Moses, the words quoted in Romans 9:33. Hence the quotation is repeated in Romans 10:11, and then further expounded by comparison with another quotation. In Romans 9:25, Paul began to prove that the Gospel and its results accord with ancient prophecy. Hosea foretold that aliens will become children of God: and Isaiah taught that only a part of Israel will be saved. Before Paul's eye, these prophecies were being fulfilled. The mass of the Jews were unsaved, because of their unbelief, and because the Gospel had become to them a stone of stumbling. Even this was foretold. For it had been clearly announced that God Himself would be a stumbling-block to Israel, and that believers would be saved. The plainness of the prophecy forces upon Paul the thought that Israel's unbelief arises from inexcusable ignorance. His intense conviction of this evokes a prayer for their salvation. He opens a way for his charge of ignorance by acknowledging

the earnestness of the Jews; and proves it by showing that what they were earnestly seeking to set up Christ came to put an end to, and that this is clearly taught in the words of Isaiah just quoted, read in the light of the teaching of Moses.

The principle asserted in Deuteronomy 30:12-14 is valid for all blessings promised on the condition of faith. For instance, to seek to obtain by our own moral effort full deliverance from the stain and power of sin, is as useless and needless as to seek for someone to fetch Christ from heaven. For God has promised this salvation as a free and present gift to all who believe. Therefore Christ is an end of law for purity as for righteousness. We believe the word of God, and both are ours.

## SECTION 34

### ***THE PREACHED GOSPEL AND ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF WERE FORETOLD***

#### **CHAPTER 10:14-21**

*How then are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? But how are they to believe one whom they have not heard? But how are they to hear without a herald proclaiming? But how are heralds to proclaim unless they be sent? According as it is written, "How beautiful the feet of those that announce, as glad tidings, good things." But not all have obeyed the glad tidings. For Isaiah says, Lord, "who has believed what we have heard?" Therefore faith comes from something heard; and that which is heard comes through the word of Christ.*

But I say, Have they not heard? Certainly they have. "Into all the earth went forth the sound of them, and their words into the ends of the world. But I say, Has Israel not known? First, Moses says, "I will provoke you to jealousy for that which is no nation; for a nation without understanding, I will move you to anger." But Isaiah is very bold, and says, "I was found by those not seeking me: I became manifest to those not asking after me." But touching Israel he says, "All the day I stretched out my hands towards a people disobedient and contradicting."

**Ver.** 14-15a. Four questions suggested by the foregoing quotation. None can call on God unless they believe in Him: cp. Hebrews 11:6. Hence the teaching of Joel 2:32 implies that of Isaiah 28:16.

Nor can we believe one whose words we have not heard. This implies that the faith which saves is produced by spoken words. Again, we cannot hear the words of the Great King unless a 'herald' proclaim them. Nor can this be unless such herald be sent from God to men.

Herald-proclaiming: same word as in Romans 10:8.

**Ver. 15b.** Quotation from Isaiah 52:7 in harmony with the teaching underlying the foregoing questions and the quotation from Joel. The prophet foresees the arrival of messengers ‘announcing-as-glad-tidings good-things.’ He thought probably of the return from Babylon. But his words, especially in Isaiah. 53, found no worthy fulfilment then; and therefore point forward to blessings still future. In the Gospel of Christ, we find both the good news and the smitten deliverer. The ‘news’ was so ‘good’ that in the eyes of those who heard it the weary and way-worn feet which had born the messengers were beautiful. Contrast Romans 3:15; Acts 5:9.

Announce-as-glad-tidings: same word in Romans 1:15. Cognate to the word ‘Gospel’ in Romans 10:16. The object-matter of this glad announcement is added: good-things.

**Ver. 16.** Although the ‘news’ was so ‘good,’ not all who heard it gave to it the submission it demanded and obeyed the Gospel: cp. Romans 10:3; Romans 1:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:8.

‘Not all’: stating much less than the whole truth: so Romans 3:3. In proof of that which no one can deny, Paul quotes an ancient prophecy, to show that the Jews’ unbelief was foretold, and is therefore no proof or presumption that the Gospel they rejected is not divine. The prophet throws himself forward into the days of the good tidings. He and his compeers hear the news. But he sadly asks,

Who has believed what we have heard? This question, asked in prophetic vision, implies that not many believed; and is therefore a prophecy of the unbelief of the mass of the Jews in Paul’s day.

**Ver. 17.** A general inference from Romans 10:14-16, including the quotations from Isaiah 52:7; 53:1.

Faith... something heard... a spoken word: rising from effect to cause: so Romans 10:14.

‘Word’: an articulate sound, as in Romans 10:8, 18; but different from the word used in Romans 9:6, 9, 28, which signifies intelligent discourse. Since Paul quotes the Book of Isaiah for the light it sheds on the Gospel, he speaks of the herald’s proclamation, without which there can be nothing

heard and no faith, as a ‘word of Christ:’ probably a word spoken by Christ. Contrast “the word of faith” in Romans 10:8. The genitive case, of Christ, leaves the precise relation to be determined by the context.

**Ver. 18.** Throughout Romans 10, by showing that the Gospel and its rejection were foretold, Paul makes good against the Jews his charge of inexcusable ignorance. He now takes up a possible excuse. Since faith comes only from hearing, those who have not heard cannot be blamed for unbelief. Paul therefore asks, Can Israel plead this excuse? He clothes his emphatic denial in the words of Psalm 19:4. He does not in any sense appeal for proof to the Psalm, nor does he expound, as in Psalm 19:6-8, its underlying principle, but simply makes use of the psalmist’s words to express his own thoughts. Psalm 19 describes the voice of Nature, especially the heavenly bodies, as proclaiming the glory of their Maker. Paul says, referring to the limited circle in which he moved, that the sound of them, i.e. the voice of the heralds of salvation, is co-extensive with the light of the sun: cp. Romans 1:8; Colossians 1:6, 23. His use of these words suggests that the universal revelation of God in Nature is a pledge that in every land the glory of God manifested in Christ will some day be proclaimed.

**Ver. 19.** Further proof that the Jews are without excuse.

Did Israel not know? viz. that the sound of the Gospel would go to all lands. The quotations following prove that they ought to have known it. Of several proofs, Paul quotes first the words of Moses, as recorded in Deuteronomy 32:15-21. He foretold that Israel would worship that which is no God and thus provoke God to jealousy and anger, and that in return God would move them to jealousy and anger by bestowing His favor on that which is no nation: a clear prophecy that God will bestow His favor upon Gentiles, and by so doing displease Israel.

Provoke-to-jealousy: or ‘emulation’ good or bad: same word in a good sense in Romans 11:11, 14; cognate to ‘zeal’ in Romans 10:2; 13:13.

No nation: cp. Romans 9:25, 26. In none except the chosen people was the true idea of a nation realized.

Without-understanding: same word in Romans 1:21, as a characteristic of the Gentiles.



**Ver. 20-21.** Another proof, from Isaiah 65:1, 2, that the Gospel will be accepted by Gentiles and rejected by Israel.

Is-very-bold: spoke at great personal peril. The present tense gives a vivid picture of the fearless prophet. He says in God's name, "I gave audience to men who asked not, I was found by men who sought Me not. I said, Here I am, here I am, to a nation not called by My name. I stretched out My hands all the day to a nation in rebellion, the men who walk in a way not good, after their own reasonings." He was looking forward to a day (Isaiah 64:11) when the temple and Jerusalem lie desolate; and (Isaiah 64:7) the people are forgetful of God and (Isaiah 65:3, 4) practically heathen, yet (Isaiah 65:5) boasting peculiar holiness. He cries to God, and God answers him. Speaking from the distant future, God declares that He has revealed Himself to this practically heathen nation. Salvation is at hand, salvation most glorious and complete; but only for the chosen seed, for the servants of God. Upon the rest will fall (Isaiah 65:12-15) sorrow and death. These words had no worthy fulfilment except in the salvation announced by Christ: and they foretell that it will find Israel godless and rebellious. They found remarkable fulfilment in the state of Israel in Paul's day. The emphatic words, but touching Israel, seem to imply that Romans 10:20 does not refer to Israel but to the Gentiles. The words 'no nation' in Romans 10:19 refer evidently to Gentiles; and suggest that Romans 10:20 has the same reference. But Isaiah 65:1, 2 refer apparently to the same persons, viz. Israel. Perhaps Paul, quoting from memory, may have overlooked this identical reference, In any case, God's longsuffering to Israel when it was practically heathen was a prophecy of mercy for the Gentiles.

All the day: an unceasing appeal.

Disobedient and contradicting: refusing by acts and words.

This verse, as applied by Paul to the Jews of his own day, is utterly inconsistent with Calvin's teaching that the grace of God is irresistible. Had God, following a hidden purpose, withheld from these disobedient Jews influences without which they could not come to Him, these solemn words would have been meaningless. So Romans 2:4.

In Romans 10:1-13, Paul expounded words quoted in Romans 9:33 from Isaiah 8:14; 28:16, in the light of Leviticus 18:5; Deuteronomy 30:12-14; and supported his exposition by a quotation from Joel. He has now proved that this latter quotation implies salvation through faith, a preached word, and divinely-sent preachers; that Isaiah foretold the announcement of good news and the persistent disobedience of the mass of the nation; and that Moses foretold that God would move Israel to anger by bestowing His favor on others. The Jews had heard the Gospel, and they knew what Moses and Isaiah had said. They were therefore not only ignorant but inexcusably ignorant.

Paul thus completes his proof, begun in Romans 9:25, that the Gospel and its results accord with O.T. prophecy. Good tidings (Isaiah 52:7) have been announced, viz. a proclamation of (Isaiah 53:1; 28:16) salvation through faith, for all (Joel 2:32) who cry to God. This salvation has been accepted by only a small part of the nation: Isaiah 10:22; 1:9. The good news has been disbelieved by many in Israel; and God's continued offers of mercy have been rudely rejected: Isaiah 53:1; 65:2. He who was designed to be a foundation has become a stone of stumbling: Isaiah 8:14; 28:16. At the same time, aliens have become not only the people, but the sons, of God: Hosea 2:23; 1:10.

The argument of Romans 9:25-10:21 has less weight for us, who from childhood have received the O.T. and N.T. with the same authority, than for Paul's readers, many of whom had read the O.T. as the word of God long before they heard the Gospel. To such men, the discovery that the Gospel, a thing of yesterday, was in its essence, in many details, and in its reception and results, foretold in the sacred books which for centuries their fathers had revered, must have come with a force we cannot estimate. No wonder that the O.T. was a chief means of leading many Jews to believe the Gospel: cp. Romans 16:26; 2 Timothy 3:15; and as coincidences, Acts 13:27; 17:11, 12; 18:28; 26:27; 28:23.

But notice carefully that Paul deduces the doctrines of the Gospel, not from the O.T. as we do from the N.T., but from a few fundamental truths, e.g. Romans 3:21-26; 6:3, 11; 8:3, 4, which he asserts and assumes without proof. These rest, as a new and final revelation from God, on the authority of Christ. And the authority of Christ rested in His lifetime (John 5:36;

10:25) on His miracles; and now rests (Romans 1:4; 4:24) on the greater miracle of His resurrection. Only after he asserted and expounded these great doctrines, does Paul appeal to the prophets. And he appeals to them not so much in proof of particular doctrines as in proof of the harmony of the Old and New. Hence his favorite form, 'According as it is written.' This harmony, amid so great differences, is a wonderful confirmation of the truth of the Gospel and of the divine mission of Him who proclaimed it. The prophets promised beforehand, and thus now bear witness to, the Gospel: Romans 1:2; 3:22. By doing so, they bear witness to Christ: Acts 10:43.

## SECTION 35

### YET GOD HAS NOT CAST OFF HIS PEOPLE

#### CHAPTER 11:1-10

*I say then, has God “cast off His people?” Be it not so. For I also am an Israelite, from Abraham’s seed, the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast off His people, whom He foreknew. Or, know ye not what in Elijah’s case the Scripture says? how he intercedes to God against Israel, Lord “Thy prophets they have killed, Thy altars they have pulled down, and I have been left alone, and they seek my life.” But what says the response to him? “I have left for Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed knee to Baal.” In this way then also in the present season there has come to be a remnant according to an election of grace. But if by grace, it is no longer from works: else grace is no longer grace.*

*What then? That which Israel seeks for, this he has not obtained: but the election obtained it; and the rest were hardened: according as it is written, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they may not see, and ears that they may not hear, until this day.” And David says, “Let their table become trap and a capture and a snare and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and their back bend Thou down always.”*

**Ver. 1.** A possible inference from the foregoing, at once repudiated. To suggest it, Paul put last in Romans 10, the terrible words from Isaiah 65:1, 2. It might be thought that because of their disobedience God had resolved to shut out Israel from the salvation. By putting his question in words borrowed from Psalm 94:14, Paul suggests the answer.

The Greek aorists in Romans 11:1-4 do not refer to any definite time in the past, as would the English preterite, but cover the whole past time. I have therefore rendered them by the English perfect: has God cast off, etc.?

Be it not so: a denial, of which all Rom 11, is a proof.

For I, etc.: not so much a proof of the denial as a reason for its earnestness. For a single exception proves nothing; and Paul's denial needs complete proof. "Far be it from me, who am myself an Israelite, to say that God has cast off His people."

Abraham's seed: recalling the promises to Abraham.

Tribe of Benjamin: giving definiteness to I am an Israelite. Paul knew even the name of his tribe: so Philippians 3:5. Benjamin was one of the two tribes which returned from captivity: Ezra 4:1; 10:9.

**Ver.** 2a. Solemn repetition of the denial.

Whom He foreknew: recalling the same word in Romans 8:29. It develops the proof already suggested by the words His people. To cast off one whom we promised to favor, because of his bad conduct, implies ignorance at the time of the promise, of what his conduct would be. Jehovah promised, without any mention of conduct, to be a God to Abraham's seed for ever: and, when He gave the promise, He foresaw all that Abraham's seed would do. God's perfect foreknowledge makes inconceivable that He will change His purpose or leave His promise unfulfilled.

**Ver.** 2b-4. Confirmation, from an incident in the life of Elijah, of the foregoing denial: see 1 Kings 19:10, 18.

Or, know ye not, etc.: cp. Romans 6:3; 7:1.

Intercedes: his words are a complaint against Israel.

Thy prophets they have killed: so 1 Kings 18:4.

Thy altars, etc.: so 1 Kings 18:30. This suggests that Leviticus 17:8; Deuteronomy 12:5, 13, 14 had become obsolete. Or these may have been memorial altars, as in Joshua 22:10-34.

Left alone: a solitary surviving servant of God: for the reply of God speaks not of prophets but of faithful men.

The response: an oracular voice of God, as in 2 Macc. ii. 4; a cognate verb in same sense in Matthew 2:12: cp. 2 Macc. xi. 17. When God took away, by the sword of Jezebel, most of His servants, He says, I have left behind

for Myself, i.e. to be His witnesses to the nation, seven thousand faithful men. This suggests that all others in the kingdom of Israel had worshipped Baal.

**Ver. 5.** In this way then: what happened in Elijah's day has happened again. Although we must add to the seven thousand in Israel a number probably much larger in the kingdom of Judah, it is still certain that, owing to the apostasy of the mass of the nation, the true people of God were reduced to a small remnant. Yet God continued to be the God of Israel, and fulfilled the promises made to Abraham and David. He preserved for Himself a faithful remnant, and in them preserved the sacred race. So in Paul's day the true worshippers were few. That they were more numerous than some thought, is suggested by Paul's quotation of Elijah's complaint. The incident proves that the reduction of the true Israel to a small remnant, and the punishment to be inflicted on the unbelievers, do not imply that 'God has cast off His people.' This incident is also a reply to the covert objection that the Gospel cannot be true, because, if true, the ancient people of God would be reduced to a mere handful. For it shows that this happened once, and may therefore happen again. Consequently, the fewness of the Jewish followers of Jesus is no disproof that they only are the heirs of Abraham's promises.

Election: as in Romans 9:11: to take, not the whole, but a part. See note on p. 279. {Romans 9:33}

Of grace: a selection made on the ground, not of merit, but of undeserved favor. Such is God's purpose, revealed in Christ, to save all who put faith in Christ. Same word in Romans 1:5, 7; 3:24; 4:4, 16; 5:2, 15, 17, 20, 21; 6:1, 14.

**Ver. 6.** Inference from the foregoing words.

Grace... works: recalling Romans 4:4, 5. These are mutually exclusive.

Else grace, etc.: proof of the foregoing inference.

No longer: twice: the continuity of logical necessity: so Romans 7:17, 20. Unless 'grace' and 'works' are mutually exclusive, grace loses its essential character and is no longer grace.

Is: literally ‘becomes,’ i.e. continuously manifests itself in its true character.

**Ver. 7.** Summary of the argument, introduced by the question

What then? as in Romans 3:9.

What Israel seeks for: viz. righteousness, as in Romans 9:31; 10:3; cp. Acts 26:7.

Obtained: had the good ‘fortune’ to get: same word in Hebrews 6:15; 11:33; James 4:2.

The election: the elected ones, abstract for concrete as in Romans 2:26, 27.

And the rest, etc.: the only alternative for those who did not attain that for which they sought.

Hardened: same word in same sense in 2 Corinthians 3:14; Mark 6:52; 8:17, John 12:40; cognate word in Ephesians 4:18; Mark 3:5. It denotes a weakening or destruction of capacity for discerning spiritual things. Same idea, but other word, in Romans 9:18. The sum of all is that Israel has failed to get that for which the nation sought, and by that failure has suffered loss of spiritual susceptibility; but those whom God in undeserved favor selected, i.e. those who believed the Gospel, have-obtained it.

**Ver. 8.** A quotation combining two passages, in proof that this hardening is in harmony with O.T. teaching. In Isaiah 29:10, we read, “Jehovah has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has bound up your eyes.”

Spirit of stupor: cp. Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:17: either the Holy Spirit producing as a punishment spiritual insensibility; or an evil spirit as in 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2. Since God thinks fit to impose such punishment, to inflict it is not unworthy of the Spirit of God. Or, if Satan be the agent, he is such because God uses an enemy to work out His purpose of justice: cp. 2 Samuel 24:1 with 1 Chronicles 21:1. The words “Jehovah poured out,” rendered by Paul God gave them, assert that spiritual insensibility fell upon them because God willed it: so Romans 9:18. The quotation therefore proves that to harden the hearts even of Jews is consistent with God’s character and covenant. It also recalls

Deuteronomy 29:4, where Moses teaches that power to understand spiritual things is God's gift; and that the Israelites had not received it during their long wanderings in the wilderness: another proof that the spiritual blindness of Israel was not new.

**Ver.** 9-10. Another quotation in support of the above: Psalm 69:22.

David: as in Romans 4:6.

A trap: to catch birds: same word in 1 Timothy 3:7; 6:9; 2 Timothy 2:26.

Capture: cognate to the common word for wild beast, e.g. Mark 1:13; Acts 11:6. It suggests the ways in which they are caught while securely feeding.

A snare: same word in Romans 9:33; 14:13: literally the part of the trap on which the bait is put.

Recompense: cognate word in Romans 11:35; 12:19; cp. Luke 14:12, 14. The Psalmist prays, "May the abundance of the good things of the wicked be like a bait which decoys a bird into a trap, and like the grass which the wild deer securely eats while the huntsman draws his bow; and may they thus receive in their own pleasures a recompense for their sin."

Eyes darkened, etc.: means by which the former prayer is to be answered: cp. Romans 1:21; Ephesians 4:18.

Bend down their back: by laying on them a heavy burden. They will thus become blind slaves. This prayer has often been answered. The good things of this life have made men blind to their spiritual needs and peril; and have thus become the bait with which they have been caught and destroyed.

The vindictive tone of Psalms 69, especially Psalm 69:22-28, falls far below the teaching of Christ, e.g. Matthew 5:44, 45, and of the entire New Testament. Yet it is quoted by Paul. But we notice that it is quoted only to prove that a man's sins are his destruction and that sin is followed by inward blindness. For this purpose, the proof is decisive. All else probably lay outside his thought. See further in Diss. III.

This section began with words of hope: it ends in deepest gloom. It is true that amid the general apostasy God has reserved for Himself a small band of men whose faithfulness is made the more conspicuous by the



faithlessness around. But among these Paul's opponents, in spite of their possible morality, have no place. And they have been smitten with spiritual blindness.

The teaching of Romans 11:8-10 is the only explanation of the indifference to eternal interests manifested by many around us who constantly hear and reject the Gospel. And, if so, this spiritual indifference has an awful significance. It is a mark of God's anger and a foretaste of more terrible punishment. It is the shadow of eternal death. Moreover, what God has inflicted, only God can remove. Hence our own efforts to arouse ourselves will be in vain. The eyes which God has closed, He only can open.

## SECTION 36

### ISRAEL'S FALL HAS BROUGHT SALVATION TO THE GENTILES, AND IS NOT FINAL

#### CHAPTER 11:11-24

*I say then, Did they stumble in order that they might fall? Be it not so: but that by their trespass the salvation may come to the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy. "But if their trespass be the world's wealth, and their damage the Gentiles' wealth, how much more their fulness? But to you I speak, the Gentiles. Inasmuch as then I am an apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry, if in any way I may move to jealousy my own flesh, and save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the world's reconciliation, what will be the receiving of them except life from the dead?"*

*Moreover, if the firstfruit be holy, so also the lump: and if the root be holy, so also the twigs. But if some of the twigs were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wert ingrafted among them, and becamest a sharer of the root of the fatness of the olive tree, exult not over the twigs. But if thou dost exult, not thou bearest the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, Twigs were broken off, in order that I might be ingrafted. Very well: by want of faith they were broken off; and thou standest by faith. Think not high things, but fear. For, if God spared not those that were by nature twigs, neither will He spare thee. See then God's kindness and severity. On them that fell, there is severity; but on thee is God's kindness, if thou continue in His kindness; otherwise also thou shalt be cut off. Moreover, also they, if they do not continue in their want of faith, shall be ingrafted: for God is able again to ingraft them. For, if thou wert cut out from that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and against nature wert ingrafted into a good olive tree, how much more will these which are by nature twigs be ingrafted to their own olive tree?*

**Ver. 11.** A question suggested by Romans 11:8-10.

**Stumble:** when they rejected Christ, they struck their foot against the rock on which they might have stood securely.

**Fall:** as in 1 Corinthians 10:12: the moral sinking which followed their rejection of Christ. It was not necessarily final: see Romans 11:22, 23. The purpose here is evidently that of God, not of the Jews. He presented Christ in a form which led many of the Jews, as God foresaw, to reject Him; and He resolved that rejection of Christ should be followed (Romans 11:8-10) by moral degradation. He thus put a stumbling-block before the Jews: Romans 9:33. In this sense, the stumbling of the Jews was God's doing. Paul asks, Was it in order to produce this moral degradation that God presented Christ in a form which He foresaw would be a stumbling-block to the Jews. This, he denies; and supports his denial by stating God's real purpose.

**Trespass:** as in Romans 4:25: the moral fall of Romans 11:11, 22. This fall was not the end God had in view, but was a means to a further end, viz. that salvation might come to the Gentiles, and thus eventually to Israel. Had the Gospel been accepted by the Jews as a nation, the result would have been, to all appearance, fatal to Christianity. For not only would it, as the religion of one hated nation, have been less acceptable to the Gentiles, but it would, in all probability, have sunk into a form of Judaism. The nature and greatness of this danger are seen in Galatians 2:5; 4:11; 5:1-4. Had the nation as a whole accepted the Gospel, this element would have become irresistible, and would have strangled Christianity in its cradle. Its rejection by the Jews averted this peril, and in this sense helped forward the triumph of the Gospel. We therefore infer that all this was by the design of God, that in order to guard against this peril and to give to the world a Gospel fitted to the needs of all men. He presented salvation to the Jews in a form which He knew they would reject. His foreknowledge enabled Him to do this without infringing human freedom: and Paul has already, in Romans 9:17, shown it to be no infringement of divine justice.

To provoke, etc.: further purpose of this salvation for the Gentiles brought about by the fall of Israel, viz. the ultimate salvation of Israel.

‘Provoke’-to-jealousy, or ‘emulation’: same word as in Romans 10:19, used now in a good sense. We have here a principle of God’s government which flows from His inmost nature, and is therefore universal. Except in the case of final punishment, (see Romans 2:12,) the penalty is designed for the sufferer’s good, viz. to show him the evil of sin and thus lead him to repentance; and is so inflicted as best to attain this end: and in all cases punishment of individuals is designed for the general good. But it is none the less punishment. For, although the Jews’ rejection of Christ was used by God to avert a peril, it would have been much better for them had they at once accepted Him. God would then have averted the peril by other means.

**Ver. 12.** Further argument based on Romans 11:11.

Damage: same word in 1 Corinthians 6:7; cognate word in 2 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Peter 2:19: literally ‘worsening,’ i.e. the spiritual weakening and injury which followed their moral fall, exact opposite of the wealth received by the believing Gentiles. Notice a double climax:

trespass... ‘damage,’ world... ‘Gentiles’: this last a term of contempt. The fall of the Jews brought damage to them, but enrichment to many whom they despised.

Fulness: that with which something is made full, or is brought to completeness: same word in Romans 11:25; 15:29; 13:10; Matthew 9:16; Mark 2:21; 8:20; John 1:16; 1 Corinthians 10:26; Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 3:19; 4:13.

Their ‘fulness’: the spiritual enrichment awaiting Israel.

How much more, etc.: if Israel stands in so close relation to the world’s salvation that, in order to enrich mankind, it must needs stumble and thus suffer spiritual weakening and loss, how great is the wealth which will come to the world when Israel is made full!

**Ver. 13-15.** Development of the new thought just suggested. Paul turns suddenly to the Gentiles and says that for their great good he seeks to save his own nation.

Apostle of Gentiles: cp. Romans 15:16; Galatians 2:7-9; Ephesians 3:8; Acts 22:21.

Ministry, or 'office': see under Romans 12:7.

Glorify: as in Romans 1:21. He so fills his office that others may see the greatness of the work committed to him. And in so doing he is seeking to rouse the Jews to emulation (as in Romans 11:11) and thus to save some of them. These last words suggest difficulty, as does the word in-any-way.

My flesh: noting closest relationship: cp. Genesis 37:27; Judges 9:2; 2 Samuel 5:1. It reveals Paul's true patriotism. By a universal usage of language, the agents of salvation as said to 'save:' so 1 Corinthians 7:16; 9:22; 1 Timothy 4:16; James 5:20. Only by speaking thus can we realise the grandeur of the work of those who turn a sinner from the error of his ways.

**Ver. 15.** A reason why as 'apostle of Gentiles' Paul seeks to save his countrymen, viz. the great blessings which will thus come to the Gentiles.

The casting away of them: not as a people but as individual unbelievers, so long as they continue in unbelief: cp. Romans 11:2, 23. God has shut them out of His family, but is using means to bring them in.

Reconciliation of the world: cp. Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:19. It will be explained by the future triumphs of the Gospel.

Reception: into the favor of God: parallel to 'their fulness' in Romans 11:12.

Life from the dead: something as much better than 'reconciliation of' the 'world' as Israel's 'reception' is better than 'their rejection.' It can therefore be nothing less than the glorious 'life' which will follow the resurrection of the 'dead.' Paul thus puts in stronger and more complete form the argument of Romans 11:12, to show how deep an interest the Gentiles have in the salvation of the Jews. If Israel's relation to the Kingdom of God be such that their rejection was a means of bringing back to God a revolted world, what less can we expect from Israel's return than the bringing in of the everlasting glory?

Notice here another universal principle. So closely interwoven are the spiritual interests of nations that the salvation of one brings life to others. While we seek to save strangers, we thereby do something to save our own friends.

**Ver. 16-24.** Proof that salvation awaits Israel, already implied in Romans 11:12, 15. This is the chief matter of Romans 11.

**Ver. 16.** Firstfruit: as in Romans 8:23: the portion of dough reserved and made into a cake for the priests, as prescribed in Numbers 15:17-21, where twice the LXX. reads 'firstfruit' of a 'lump.' By requiring this, the Law taught that the whole lump belongs to God, and is therefore holy: and by presenting the 'firstfruit' the Jews acknowledged this claim. Just so, by taking the fathers of the Jews to be specially His own, God claimed the entire nation to be 'holy,' i.e. devoted to His service: so Exodus 19:5, 6; Leviticus 20:26. In this indelible objective holiness (see note on p. 39: {Romans 1:7}) Paul saw a pledge of the nation's ultimate salvation.

And if the root, etc.: same argument in another form, a form of which Paul makes further use.

'Root': parallel to 'firstfruit,' viz. the fathers. Whoever claims the root claims all that afterwards grows from it.

Twigs: the green shoots of this year's growth; a beautiful emblem of the present generation of men: same word in Matthew 24:32; 13:32; 21:8; another word in John 15:2-6. This last metaphor is further developed in Romans 11:17-24 as a warning to the Gentiles, and a ground of hope for Israel.

**Ver. 17-18.** Some: as in Romans 3:3.

Broken-off: as fresh twigs are broken by hand.

And thou: personal appeal, as in Romans 2:3; 9:20.

Wild-olive: a natural growth, without grafting, fit emblem of the Gentiles whom (Acts 14:16) God allowed for ages to grow wild.

Among them: among the twigs, of which some had been broken off.

Fatness: same word in same sense in Judges 9:9, LXX. The wild twigs were ingrafted, and thus drew from the root a share of the 'fatness' of the cultivated olive-tree.

Do not exult: cp. Romans 3:27.

Over the twigs: the Jews, of whom many had been broken off. Verse 18 is a reason why they should not exult. The root owes nothing to the twigs, the twigs everything to the root. All the best spiritual life of the world was developed in Israel: cp. Romans 15:27. To exult over Israel, is to exult over the nation to which they owed all their real good.

**Ver. 19.** A boast prompted by the overthrow of the preceding boast. The Gentile might say, So important in God's sight was my salvation that to save me God caused the mass of the Jews to stumble.

**Ver. 20.** Very-well: Paul admits the truth of this reply. He has himself said that God deliberately purposed that through the moral fall of Israel salvation should come to the Gentiles: and, if so, the twigs were broken off in order that the wild olive twigs might be grafted in.

By want-of-faith: so Romans 9:32; same word in Romans 3:3; 4:20; Mark 9:24.

Thou: sudden and personal appeal to the Gentiles.

Standest: Romans 5:2; 14:4; 1 Corinthians 10:12: continuance in God's favor.

By faith: almost equal to 'by thy faith.'

Think high-things: as when one boasts (1 Corinthians 10:17) at the inferiority of another: same phrase in Romans 12:16.

But fear: lest thou be broken off as they were. This is not an emotional fear which makes us unhappy, but a practical fear which keeps us in our ark of safety.

**Ver. 21-22.** Reason for this fear.

By nature: literally 'according to nature:' cp. Romans 2:14. The Jews (Matthew 8:12) were "the sons of the kingdom," and (Acts 3:25) of "the prophets and the Covenant"; i.e. natural descendants of those to whom the promises were made.

If God did not spare the born children of Abraham when they disbelieved the Gospel, He will not spare Gentiles who do the same. Thus the fact

boastfully asserted by Gentiles in Romans 11:19, admitted by Paul in Romans 11:20, becomes to them a solemn warning.

See then, etc.: inference from God's treatment of Jews and Gentiles.

Kindness: as in Romans 2:4.

Severity: literally 'cutting-off:' cognate word in 2 Corinthians 13:10; Titus 1:13.

Fell: like the broken twigs on the ground in contrast to the ingrafted wild olive shoots which stand erect on the tree. Same word in same sense in Romans 11:11.

If thou continue: noting that God's continued kindness is conditional. Cp. John 15:6. The condition has been already stated in Romans 11:20, and need not be repeated here.

Else also thou, etc.: emphatic statement of the alternative. The emphasis is increased by neither in Romans 11:21 and also in Romans 11:22, which place side by side the believing Gentiles and the fallen Jews.

All exultation of Gentiles over Jews is now shut out. Not only has the spiritual life of the Gentiles come through the Jews, but the present state of the Jews tells what will become of the Gentiles if they cease to believe.

**Ver. 23.** Hope for the fallen Jews, whom Paul now places beside the believing Gentiles: also they.

If they do not, etc.: implying that it depends upon themselves whether or not they continue in their unbelief.

Will-be-ingrafted: union with their own olive tree being now possible only in the way in which the Gentiles were united to it. This reveals the completeness of the separation.

Is able: cp. Romans 14:4. Salvation is by the power of God, and is therefore possible even for the worst.

Again: suggesting the argument in Romans 11:24. Their salvation will be a return to the God of their fathers.



**Ver. 24.** Ground of the hope implied in Romans 11:23; which is the chief matter of Romans 11. Just as the case of the Jews reveals the ‘severity of God,’ and is therefore a warning to the Gentiles, so the case of the Gentiles is a mark of His ‘kindness’ and a ground of hope for the Jews.

Against Nature: same words in Romans 1:26. All grafting is artificial, and is therefore an interruption of the ordinary course of Nature. Paul does not say that to graft a wild scion into a cultivated olive stem is specially ‘against Nature.’ It has been suggested that he refers to the result of the grafting as being against Nature; on the ground that in actual grafting the nature of the scion, not that of the root, determines what the branch will be. But Paul speaks here not of the result but of the act of grafting. We need not try to reconcile this spiritual grafting with that of the olive-yard. There is no argument in the comparison. It is used merely to help us to grasp the relation of Jews and Gentiles to the Kingdom of God. If those who by birth were aliens were brought by faith into His family, we cannot doubt that they who belong by birth to the chosen nation will also be received if they believe.

Notice here another universal principle. God’s treatment of one man is a ground of hope or fear to others: for He treats all on the same principles.

Paul has now led us out from the darkness which shrouded Romans 11:7-10 into the light of hope. We have seen that the spiritual blindness inflicted on the Jews was designed to lead to salvation of both Gentiles and Jews; that these two divisions of our race are so closely bound together that while Paul pursues the salvation of the one he is also seeking to save the other; that the Jews as children of the Patriarchs are God’s by a tie which the unbelief of individuals cannot sunder; that those who have been torn from the parent stem were torn off through unbelief, and will remain separated only so long as their unbelief continues; and that God’s reception of Gentiles proves His readiness to welcome again the children of Abraham. And from the fall of the unbelieving Jews we have learnt that the ultimate salvation of the believing Gentiles depends on their continuance in faith.

This parable of the olive tree sets before us the Kingdom of God under the two covenants as essentially one. The old tree entered upon a new stage of growth, to which the earlier stages were preparatory. In the Gospel, God

gave new and better promises, and in some sense annulled the foregoing reign of law. He also shut out of the Kingdom the Jews who disbelieved them, and brought in the Gentiles who accepted them. Consequently, the outward appearance of the Kingdom of God on earth was changed: and a new and different (Hebrews 8:6, 9) covenant was made. But these changes were but developments of the one Kingdom of God.

**FINAL PERSEVERANCE.** Verses 20-22 involve clearly an emphatic contradiction of the teaching, by Calvin and others, that all who have been justified will ultimately be saved. For Paul assumes throughout that his readers are already justified, are adopted as sons and heirs of God, and possess the Spirit of God as a firstfruit of their inheritance: see Romans 5:9-11, 6:18, 22; 8:2, 15, 16, 23. Yet he solemnly and emphatically warns them that unless they continue in the kindness of God they will be 'cut off.' This last can be no less than the punishment already inflicted on the unbelieving Jews who have been 'broken off,' and who are held up in Romans 11:20, 21 as a warning to the believing Gentiles. For Paul's deep sorrow for the unbelieving Jews proves clearly that in his view they are on the way to the destruction (Romans 2:12) awaiting unrepentant sinners. His warning to Gentiles who now stand by faith implies clearly that unless they continue in faith they will experience a similar fate.

It cannot be replied that Paul writes, not about individuals, but about communities in their relation to the Church. For as yet he has not mentioned the Church, but has dealt only with individuals in their relation to Christ and to God. On the other hand, the words 'some of them, some of the twigs, they that fell,' in Romans 11:14, 17, 22, point to individuals. It is inconceivable that Paul would support this urgent and personal appeal by warning the Roman Christians that, if they do not continue in faith, although they themselves will be brought back and finally saved, the Roman Church will perish.

It has been suggested that Paul speaks of something possible in the abstract but which will never actually take place. But could a mere abstract possibility call forth the earnest tones of Romans 11:20-22? The warning would have no force to men who believed that God had irrevocably resolved to save them. Paul bids his readers to 'fear.' But an intelligent man cannot fear that which he knows will not happen. That certain lines of

conduct lead to a certain goal will not move us if we are sure that the goal cannot be reached. We may be moved by consequences which lie on the way to the goal, but only by such as lie within range of possibility. There are many serious considerations which, even if Calvin's doctrine were true, would prompt us to cling to faith. But to seek to deter his readers from unbelief by speaking of what both he and they knew could never come, would be unworthy of an apostle.

Nor can Paul refer to a personal and possible, but only temporary, separation from Christ. Such separation would, I admit, be very hurtful, though not fatal; and would be worthy of Paul's warning, and of his readers' 'fear.' But the infinite contrast between this temporary fall, which on this supposition is all that could happen to the Gentiles, and that which happened to the Jews would destroy the parallel upon which the warning rests, and would increase rather than lessen the high-mindedness of the Gentiles.

We now ask, Has Paul or any other N.T. writer said anything elsewhere which compels us to set aside what all would admit to be the plain meaning of his words if they stood alone?

If such contrary teaching is to be found in this epistle, we must look for it in Romans 8, and especially in the shout of triumph in Romans 8:31-39. We are here told that no creature can separate us from the love of Christ and of God. But in the two lists (Romans 8:35 and 38, 39) of powerless adversaries neither sin nor unbelief are mentioned: and we remember that these are not creatures. God has placed us in an impregnable fortress: but we are never taught that we cannot leave it. Certainly there is nothing in Romans 8, to contradict the plain teaching of Romans 11:20-22. Nor do I know of anything in other epistles of Paul.

On the other hand, there is nothing in Romans 11, to modify the joyful assurance of Romans 8. The joy of human friendship, when friendship rests on mutual and merited esteem, is not lessened by a knowledge that friendship sometimes cools. Still less is the joy of Christian hope lessened by our knowledge that, if we cease to believe the promises, they will not be fulfilled to us. God has given a firm foundation for our faith: and on this foundation we rest. So long as we rest there, we are kept in safety by the power of God.

Appeal has often been made to John 10:28, 29: “They will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.” This assurance Christ supports by an appeal to the power of God: “no one can snatch out of the Father’s hand.” But he does not say that all who are now His sheep will always remain such: and, if they cease to be His, the promise no longer refers to them. For an assertion about a class applies to an individual only so long as he belongs to the class. Unless we have independent proof that he will never cease to belong to the class, we cannot say that what will always be true of the class will always be true of him. For example, we cannot say, relying on Revelation 21:8, that, because a man is now a liar, he will inevitably have his part in the lake of fire. If he cease to be a liar, he will pass from under this terrible threat against liars. The above verses do not touch the question whether or not those who are today Christ’s sheep will always remain such. They therefore do not invalidate the plain inference we have drawn from Romans 11:20-22. But they say most solemnly that those who remain in the flock will never perish.

A close parallel to these verses is found in John 15:1-6. The ‘branches’ are no mere professors. For such are never said to be in Christ: “every branch in Me not bearing fruit, He takes it away.” Moreover, their salvation depends on continuance in Christ: “if anyone abide not in Me, he has been cast forth.” Mere professors will perish whether they retain their profession or not. In John 15:6, the separation from Christ is expressly said to be final: “they gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burning.”

The teaching of this note is confirmed by Romans 14:15; 1 Corinthians 9:24;-10:12; and by Hebrews 2:3; 4:1, 11; 6:4-6; 10:26, 29, and indeed by the argument of the entire epistle.

We therefore accept the words before us in their simple and full meaning. Although salvation, from the earliest good desire to final victory, is entirely a work of God, a gift of His undeserved favor, and a realisation of His eternal purpose, it is nevertheless, both in its commencement and in its continuance, altogether conditional on man’s faith. So long as we believe, we are kept by the strong hand of God. But God has thought fit to permit us to resist the influences drawing us to Himself, to permit the fall even of His servants who yield to temptation and the final destruction of those

who, after such fall, refuse to repent. This is frequently and plainly taught and implied in Holy Scripture. Against this teaching we cannot argue on the ground of the character of God. For His ways are past finding out: “He has mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardens.” And against it we cannot set any other equally plain and abundant teaching of Holy Scripture.

## SECTION 37

### ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED. PRAISE TO GOD

#### CHAPTER 11:25-36

*For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, that ye be not prudent in your own sight, that hardening in part has happened to Israel, until when the fulness of the Gentiles have come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved; according as it is written, "There will come out of Zion the deliverer; He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. "And this is the covenant from Me to them, when I have taken away their sins." According to the Gospel, they are enemies, because of you: but according to the election, they are beloved, because of the fathers. For without regret are the gifts of grace and the calling of God. For just as ye were once disobedient to God, but now have obtained mercy by the disobedience of these, in this way also these have now disobeyed, in order that by the mercy shown to you also they may obtain mercy. For God has shut up all into disobedience, in order that upon all He may have mercy.*

*O depth of riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For "who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counsellor?" Or who has first given to Him, and it shall be given back to him? Because from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory, for ever. Amen.*

**Ver. 25.** Further proof, based on a divine revelation and on an ancient prophecy, that salvation awaits Israel.

I do not wish, etc.: as in Romans 1:13.

Mystery: a secret known only by divine revelation. Same important word in Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:3, 4; Matthew 13:11: see note under 1 Corinthians 3:4.

Prudent in your own sight: so Romans 12:16. It keeps up the warning.

Hardening: recalling Romans 11:8.

In part: only a part, though a large part, of the nation had rejected Christ: cp. Romans 11:5, 7, 17.

Until when, etc.: emphatic part of the sentence. All knew that the Jews were hardened: the great secret was that this was only for a time.

Fulness: as in Romans 11:12: the spiritual wealth with which God will make the Gentiles full.

Have-come-in: into actual existence. Israel's 'hardening' will continue till the spiritual wealth designed for the Gentiles has been brought out of the treasury of the divine purpose and poured into their lap. I have no other example of this use of the word 'come-in:' but the similar use of the word come in Galatians 3:23, 25; 4:4 and the frequency of the word 'fulness' in the sense here adopted justify, in default of a better, the above exposition. Paul here asserts, as a divine revelation, what in Romans 11:11-16 he inferred, viz. that salvation awaits Israel.

**Ver.** 26-27. Further description of Israel's future.

In this way: after the enrichment of the Gentiles.

All Israel: same words (LXX.) in 1 Kings 12:1; 1 Samuel 12:1: cp. Matthew 2:3; 3:5. The contrast with 'in part' in Romans 11:25 suggests that Paul refers to all Israelites then living, with exceptions so few as to be of no account.

Will be saved: in what sense? This question can be answered only by the fulfilment. In Romans 11:14; 10:1, 9, 10, the same word denotes a personal salvation which begins in justification and ends in glory.

Paul now quotes, as in agreement with Romans 11:25, 26a; Isaiah 59:20: "There shall come for Zion a deliverer, and for those who turn away from iniquity in Jacob, says Jehovah. As for Me, this is My covenant with them, Jehovah has said, My Spirit which is upon thee and My words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart from thy mouth, and from the mouth of thy seed, and from the mouth of thy seed's seed, Jehovah has said, from this time and for ever." After a time of general apostasy, the

prophet sees a deliverer coming for Zion. He sees Israel turning from sin. For those who do so, the deliverer comes, and with them God makes a covenant. The next chapter describes the glory of the salvation which the deliverer will bring. The prophet evidently refers to the last days, and foretells that at the end of the world there will be a turning to God in Israel and a salvation wrought by a coming deliverer. Paul quotes, almost word for word, the LXX.; which differs, though not essentially, from the original; but he varies from both original and LXX. in writing, instead of “for Zion,” out of Zion, words suggested perhaps by Psalm 14:7; 53:6; 110:2.

The deliverer: a definite Savior, for whom Israel was waiting. When Paul wrote, He had already come ‘out of Zion.’

Turn away ungodliness: from the LXX., which here varies from the Hebrew original, but correctly describes the salvation brought by Christ. The Greek plural denotes various kinds of ‘ungodliness.’

And this is the covenant from Me to them: word for word (LXX.) from Isaiah 59:21. With the rescued ones, God will make a covenant. At this point Paul leaves Isaiah 59:21, and finishes the sentence by quoting, almost word for word, Isaiah 27:9. He thus calls attention to another prophecy of salvation awaiting Israel. A similar mingling of quotations in Romans 11:8. It is natural to one who assumes that his readers, like himself, are thoroughly familiar with the book quoted.

Taken-away: cp. John 1:29. It includes removal of the punishment, power, and stain, of sin.

In what sense Paul expected that ‘all Israel would be saved,’ his writings do not enable us accurately to determine. But evidently his expectation moved him to strive hopefully for the salvation of all Jews within his reach: so Romans 11:14, 24; cp. Acts 13:47. This is the practical use of all the unfulfilled prophecies of Holy Scripture, viz. as an encouragement for hope and effort along the lines of the revealed purposes of God.

**Ver. 28.** A comment on the position of the unbelieving Jews, prompted by the foregoing prophecies.



Enemies: objects of God's anger and hostility, in contrast to beloved, i.e. objects of His love: so Romans 5:10; see under Romans 5:1.

According to the Gospel: measured by the word "he that believes shall be saved," they are under the anger of God.

Because of you: explained in Romans 11:11, 12, 15, 30. In order that salvation might come to the Gentiles, God sent the Gospel to the Jews in a form which He knew would increase the guilt of most of them.

Election: as in Romans 11:7.

According to the 'election': when Paul looks at the believing Jews, he sees in them a proof (cp. Romans 11:1) that God has not forgotten His ancient covenant, but that for the sake of the fathers He still cherishes purposes of mercy for their children: cp. Exodus 2:24; Deuteronomy 4:37; 7:8. How different the case would have been had all the Jews rejected Christ! Then it would have seemed that the whole nation had been rejected by God.

Notice that the same men are 'enemies' and 'beloved.' God is angry with all who disobey Him, and will be, if their disobedience continue, their eternal foe: but His love to them prompted Him to give Christ to die, and now prompts Him to use means to draw them to repentance.

**Ver. 29.** A great truth supporting the foregoing words.

Without-regret: same word in 2 Corinthians 7:10; cognate word in 2 Corinthians 7:8; Hebrews 7:21; Matthew 21:29, 32; 27:3. It differs from 'repentance' in Romans 2:4; Acts 20:21, etc., by denoting mere regret without change of purpose.

Gifts-of-grace: as in Romans 1:11.

Calling: as in Romans 8:28. In Mesopotamia and at Sinai, God called Abraham and Israel to be specially His own, and gave them precious promises. These promises He cannot revoke: for He is unchangeable. He cannot change: because He knows all things from the beginning. Similar argument in Romans 11:2.

This verse does not contradict Genesis 6:6; Jeremiah 18:10. For, though God cannot change, many of His gifts are conditional on man's conduct. Therefore change in man is followed by a corresponding change in God's

treatment of him. This change in God's action is practically the same to us as though God changed His purpose, and therefore is so described. But in reality God's varying treatment of men is a result of an eternal purpose of Him who knows beforehand what every man will do. The apparent contradiction is due to imperfection of human thought and language. God's character is pledged to fulfil His promises: but each man's share in the fulfilment depends on himself. Hence the prophets announce an almost universal apostasy; and, in spite of it, paint in glowing colors the coming glory.

**Ver. 30-31.** A compact summary of the teaching of Romans 11, thus illustrating the above principle. The Gentiles once disobeyed the law of God written in their hearts: but they had obtained mercy; and this had been brought about, as explained in Romans 11:11, 12, 15, 28, by the disobedience of the Jews.

In this way also: making prominent the similarity of God's conduct in the two cases.

Now disobeyed: by rejecting Christ.

In order that by the mercy, etc.: the salvation of the Gentiles being designed, as taught in Romans 11:14, to lead to that of Israel.

**Ver. 32.** The facts and purposes stated in Romans 11:30, 31 are now attributed to God.

Shut-up: He made temporary disobedience inevitable by closing every door by which man might escape from it. Same word in Galatians 3:22, 23 and (LXX.) Psalm 31:8. To men born under the curse of Adam's sin, God gave a holy law: the only possible result, and therefore the designed result, was disobedience. So Romans 5:20, a close parallel: cp. Romans 1:24, "God gave them up."

All: Jews and Gentiles.

In order that upon all He may have mercy: a statement wider and more definite than that in Romans 11:31. The 'mercy' is traced to God and is designed for 'all.' A similar purpose in Romans 5:21; Galatians 3:22, 23. Paul closes his exposition of the Gospel in its relation to Israel by leading us up to a great purpose of mercy embracing all mankind.

In Romans 5:18, at the close of DIV. 2, Paul asserted the universality of God's purpose of salvation. So here at the end of DIV. 4 we have a reassertion of the same, with express reference to the great DIVISION of mankind into Jews and Gentiles which Paul has been discussing. We have not the words 'all men;' because Paul speaks here, not of men as such, but of the two theological divisions of the race. But the first 'all' certainly includes the unbelieving Jews of Paul's day, whose 'disobedience' to the Gospel has led to salvation of the Gentiles to whom Paul writes: and, if so, they must be included in the second 'all' as objects of God's purpose of mercy. And if that purpose includes all Jews, it includes all men. That elsewhere, e.g. Philippians 3:19, Paul asserts or implies that not all men will ultimately be saved, is no reason for setting aside the plain meaning of plain words asserting that all are objects of God's purpose of mercy

**Ver. 33.** An exclamation of wonder prompted by the unexpected means by which God is accomplishing His purpose.

Depth: as in Romans 8:39.

Riches: as in Romans 2:4; 9:23; cp. Romans 10:12. It suggests the resources at God's disposal.

Wisdom: such profound acquaintance with things as enables us to choose the best ends and means: see note under 1 Corinthians 2:5.

Knowledge: a lower word.

Judgments: decisions and utterances of a judge, as in Romans 2:2. It refers here to God's hardening of unbelievers and His shutting up of all mankind into disobedience.

Unsearchable: beyond human ability to 'find' out the meaning and purpose of His ways: the path along which He reaches the end in view.

Untraceable: same word in Ephesians 3:8: footsteps which cannot be traced. The path He chose, which no man could trace but which led to the goal, revealed a wonderful knowledge of past, present, and future: and the sentences pronounced on the children of Abraham and of Adam had purposes disclosing a wisdom which none can fathom.

**Ver. 34-35.** Questions justifying Paul's exclamation. Verse 34 is nearly word for word (LXX.) from Isaiah 40:13. God's thoughts have never been grasped by man: and His wisdom needs no human counsellor. Verse 35 is from Job 41:11. No one can say that God's gifts are a return for earlier gifts received. This question shuts out all human merit, and reminds us that the actions rewarded are God's gift to us. They therefore make us debtors to God, not God to us.

**Ver. 36.** A universal statement involving an answer to the foregoing question.

From Him: as their ultimate source: so 1 Corinthians 8:6.

Through Him: as the channel through which possibility passes into actuality. He needs no helper, but Himself works out His own purposes.

For Him: to accomplish His pleasure. God is the beginning, means, and end of all things. These last words cannot include sin. But in a real sense they may include suffering. For God has so constituted the universe that sin brings suffering to the sinner and to others. This need for limitation warns us to interpret with utmost caution the universal statements of the Bible. Each must be limited, as in all human speech, by the writer's mental horizon.

To Him the glory: may He be viewed by men with the admiration which His work and nature demand, i.e. may He be recognised as the Source, Agent, and End of all good.

For ever. Amen: 'to the' successive 'ages' of the future: so Romans 1:25; 16:27.

Well may Paul utter this shout of wonder and praise. He sees the spiritual blindness of his people; and knows that it has been inflicted by God in punishment of inexcusable ignorance and rebellion. It is therefore a mark of God's anger against Israel. But as Paul contemplates the punishment, he finds in it a purpose of mercy. The blindness of Israel has led, by the grace and purpose of God, to enlightenment of the Gentiles: and God designs the light which has fallen upon the Gentiles to be reflected back upon Israel. Thus beneath God's frown Paul finds unchanging love to the children of Abraham. While pronouncing sentence on the guilty, He is pursuing a

purpose of universal mercy. This discovery of mercy where he expected wrath, the unlikeliness and yet the suitability of the means, fill him with wonder at the resources of God, at the wisdom with which He uses them, and at the knowledge underlying His wisdom. So shall we wonder when, in the light of eternity, we fully understand for the first time the purpose and method of God's treatment of us.

Notice that Paul's wonder follows a brilliant and successful effort of the highest human intelligence to set forth God's treatment of Israel. To find out that His ways are unsearchable, is the sublime reward of careful endeavor to trace out, in the material or spiritual universe, the footsteps of God.

Chapter 11 is throughout a proof of the denial given in Romans 11:1. Paul reminds us that the almost universal unfaithfulness is but a repetition of the days of Elijah. Now as then there is a faithful remnant. The punishment inflicted on the unfaithful has a purpose of mercy for the Gentiles, and for Israel. Even the cutting off of the unbelieving Jews and the reception of the believing Gentiles open a door of hope that if the Jews believe they will be received by God. As foretold in ancient prophecy, salvation awaits Israel. Chapter 10 ended in the gloom of Israel's rebellion: Romans 11 has brought us out into the light of a glorious hope, and leaves us with the notes of an eternal song ringing in our ears.

DIVISION IV., comprising Romans 9-11, is throughout a proof that the Gospel is in harmony with God's earlier revelations. Paul was moved to undertake it by the presence around him of many who cling to these earlier revelations but reject the new revelation brought by Christ, and who do so because to them the new seems to contradict the old. He therefore approaches their case with sympathy: Romans 9:1-5. But he shows that the Gospel, though it limits the heritage of Israel to a part of his offspring and condemns the rest, is in harmony with the government of God as revealed in the O.T., that is, with (Romans 9:6-13) His faithfulness, with (Romans 9:14-18) His justice, and with (Romans 9:19-23) His condemnation of those who resist Him; and that (Romans 9:24-10:21) the Gospel itself, its condition of faith, its announcement by messengers, and its reception among Jews and Gentiles, accord with prophecy. He thus

confirms from the O.T. the condemnation pronounced by the Gospel on those who reject it. But God has not cast off His people. He will receive those who turn to Him, and will yet become the Savior of Israel.

Chapters 9-11 are a reply to the objection that the Gospel cannot be true, because it is inconsistent with God's earlier covenant with Israel. But it is more than a reply. To those who from childhood accepted the O.T., the far-reaching harmonies set forth in DIV. 4 must have been no small proof of the common origin of the Old and New. That Paul has a key which unlocks the casket of O.T. truth, proves his commission from Him who gave the casket. Nay more. To all men, the deep, underlying harmonies of the two covenants, taken in connection with their many and broad differences and apparent opposition, bear witness, not only that their author is the same, but that their author is divine.

Chapters. 9-11 bear a relation to the Gospel as developed in Romans 5-8 analogous to that of Rom 4, to the doctrine of Justification through Faith asserted in Romans 3:21, 22; and to that of Romans 3:10-20 in relation to Romans 2. The teaching of Romans 2, is so important to guard from perversion the teaching which follows that Paul hastens to confirm it from the Old Testament. And faith as the condition of salvation is a point so vital and yet so apparently new that Paul, as soon as he asserts it, proceeds to show its harmony with God's treatment of Abraham. Then, after expounding the Gospel as a whole, he looks at it, in Romans 9-11, in its bearing on the position and prospects of the Jews; and shows that, even looked at from this point, it accords with earlier revelation.

We now stand at the end of the doctrinal part of this epistle. The object for which Paul began to write has been to a great extent attained. After an introduction (Romans 1:18-3:20) needful to guard from mistake and perversion the new doctrines, he asserted them in Romans 3:21-26; 6:2-11; 8:1-4, and developed them in Romans 5-8: and in Romans 9-11. he has shown that they accord with God's declarations and conduct as recorded in the Old Testament. It now remains for him to apply them to sundry matters of practical life.

## DIVISION V

### PRACTICAL LESSONS

#### CHAPTERS 12-15:13

### SECTION 38

#### *A CONSECRATED BODY AND RENEWED MIND*

#### CHAPTER 12:1, 2

*I exhort you then, brethren, by the compassions of God, to present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, well-pleasing to God: your rational service. And be not fashioned like this age; but be transformed by the renewal of the mind, in order that ye may prove what is the will of God, the good, and well-pleasing, and mature.*

**Ver.** 1. Practical application of the foregoing exposition, and especially of its last words.

Then, or ‘therefore:’ since God is the Source, Agent, and Object of all we have and are.

Exhort: to speak words prompting action or endurance: so Romans 12:8; Romans 15:30; 16:17. Exhortation amid difficulty or sorrow assumes the forms of encouragement or comfort: same Greek word in this sense in Romans 1:12; 2 Corinthians 1:4, 6; 7:6, 7, 13.

Compassions: cognate word in Romans 9:15: the various manifestations of God’s pity for mankind, including specially the mercy of Romans 11:32.

Present: see under Romans 6:13.

Your bodies: including hands, feet, lips: parallel to “your members” in Romans 6:13. We ‘present’ our ‘bodies’ when we resolve henceforth to

use our bodily powers only to work out the purposes of God. This is practically the same as presenting ourselves to God: for only through our bodies does the world act upon us and we upon the world. But the mode of thought is different. This verse looks upon the man within as the priest who lays upon the altar, not the body of a dead sheep, but his own 'living' body.

Sacrifice: so Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:15; 1 Peter 2:5. Our bodies have now the sacredness associated in the mind of a Jew with the animals laid on the brazen altar.

Living: in contrast to the dead animal sacrifices. While our feet and lips can run and speak, we give them to God that they may run and speak for Him. This presentation makes our 'bodies' holy, as it did the sacrificial animals: Exodus 29:37. Henceforth they exist only to work out His purposes: a close parallel in Romans 6:19.

Well-pleasing to God: so Romans 14:18; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Ephesians 5:10; Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:16, 21. Although their bodies had been defiled by sin, yet when laid upon the altar they were acceptable to God, acceptable because a man's own body is the noblest sacrifice he has to offer.

Service: as in Romans 1:9, 25; 9:4; Hebrews 9:1, 6. It keeps up the reference to Jewish ritual. To present our bodies, is the worship prescribed for us.

Rational: a service rendered by the reasoning spirit within. The temple sacrifices might be merely outward and mechanical. These words are a comment on the foregoing exhortation.

**Ver. 2.** Another general exhortation in addition to that in Romans 12:1:

and be not, etc. Fashioned-like, or 'along-with': to share the same outward appearance: same word in 1 Peter 1:14, a close parallel. Simpler cognate form in 1 Corinthians 7:31, Philippians 2:8.

This age: the whole current of life and influence around us, except so far as it is controlled by Christ: same words in 1 Corinthians 1:20; 2:6, 8; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:21; 2:2, etc. Cp. the word 'ages' in Romans 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 16:27. This current, unless we pull



against it, will carry us along in its own direction, a direction always wrong: and will thus gradually fill us with its own spirit, and ‘fashion’ us ‘like’ itself, i.e. give to us an outward guise like its own. The following words show that Paul refers to a conformity of thought and purpose. The change required will affect the details of outward life only so far as these express the mind within. All attempts to distinguish the servants of God by external trifles have utterly failed. We must and ought to do, to a large extent, as those around us do. But God requires in us a total change of purpose; and of outward life only so far as it is a natural outworking of the inward change.

Transformed: same word in Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18: an altered outward appearance resulting usually from inward change. On the word ‘form,’ see under Romans 2:20.

‘Be transformed’: a change progressing day by day.

Renewal: same or cognate word in Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Colossians 3:10; Hebrews 6:6. God gives up to blindness

the mind of those who forget Him, so that moral objects no longer appear in their true colors. Depravity of the whole man is the result. Cp. Romans 1:24, 28. But to those who believe God gradually gives back the power of correct moral vision. And, since a man’s character is formed by his estimate of what is good or bad, the restoration of moral vision gradually changes the whole man. Thus ‘by the renewal of the mind,’ we are ourselves day by day ‘transformed.’ The two present imperatives denote gradual and opposite changes.

In order that, etc.: purpose to be attained by the renewal and transformation, viz. that they may day by day (infinitive present) so test the actions possible to them as to find out

the will of God concerning them. This we are better able to do as we grow in spiritual life: and this ability to discriminate is one of God’s best gifts. The will of God is good (Romans 7:12) in its effect upon us and others, and well-pleasing to God.

Mature: worthy of full-grown men in Christ: see under 1 Corinthians 2:6. This is more accurate than the rendering ‘perfect,’ which is very liable to

be misunderstood. Paul desires that God may give to his readers clear moral insight; because only thus can they rightly estimate conduct and find out what God wills them to do, i.e. what is really for their good, pleasing to God, and worthy of Christian manhood. Thus the moral change resulting from mental renewal reacts on the mind and increases its power of discerning right and wrong. Notice here the first mention, except Romans 8:13, of the gradual development of the Christian life.

These verses describe the effect of the Gospel on the entire man. The 'body' is to be laid on the altar of God, the 'mind' to be restored to primal clearness of vision, and the whole man to be 'transformed:' in spite of influences tending to 'fashion' him like the current of things around.

We have now entered the school of Christian morals. Its portal is a doctrine already taught in Romans 6:13. Thus the Gospel leads to morality, this last beginning with spiritual worship.

## SECTION 39

### VARIETY OF GIFTS

#### CHAPTER 12:3-8

*For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone there is among you, not to think extravagantly, beyond what one must needs think, but so to think as to think soberly, as to each one God has divided a measure of faith. For, just as in one body we have many members but the members have not all the same action, so we, the many, are one body in Christ; but individually members one of another. Moreover, having gifts of grace different according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let it be according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry, let us be found in our ministry; or he that teaches, in his teaching; or he that exhorts, in his exhortation; he that gives away, let him do it with singleness of heart; he that takes the lead, with earnestness; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

**Ver. 3.** A reason for seeking to know “the will of God,” viz. that we may thus obtain a correct and humble estimate of ourselves.

The grace given to me: Romans 12:6; 15:15; Ephesians 3:2, 7, 8: cp. Romans 1:5; 1 Corinthians 15:10. All good in Paul is through God’s undeserved favor: consequently His ‘grace’ is the channel through which he speaks to his readers.

I say... to everyone: an emphatic warning, needed by all.

Think: same word as ‘mind’ in Romans 8:5-7.

‘Think’-extravagantly: cp. Romans 12:16; 11:20.

One must needs think: not surpassing the estimate which facts compel us to make. All beyond this is extravagant thought.

So as to think-soberly: our aim being to form a reasonable estimate of what we are and can do. Notice the word ‘think,’ denoting mental activity, and its compounds, four times in this verse.

As to each one, etc.: a standard of self-measurement.

Faith: assurance that God’s words will come true: see note under Romans 4:25. A man’s ‘faith’ determines his spiritual rank. Paul reminds his readers that ‘each’ one has a measure of ‘faith.’ That God has divided it to each, implies that faith in its various degrees is His gift. It is so because evoked in us by His promise and by influences leading us to accept it. Yet faith is none the less man’s own free surrender to these influences. It is therefore both our own mental act and God’s gift. The ‘measure of faith’ includes both the strength of our assurance and the amount of truth embraced by it. Paul thinks here, as Romans 12:4-8 prove, of faith as producing various capacities for Christian service, in part supernatural capacities. Probably God first revealed to a man His purpose to give him some special endowment, and made the endowment conditional on his belief of this special revelation. By these special revelations and influences leading men to believe them God allotted to each a degree of faith. This special belief was but a particular development of the faith by which each one accepted the general Gospel preached to all. Any self-conceit prompted by special capacity for usefulness is destroyed by remembrance that our spiritual stature is measured simply by the degree of our faith; and that this faith is God’s gift to us, a gift possessed in some degree by all Christians.

**Ver. 4-5.** Further exposition of the foregoing words, as a reason against high thoughts, and especially of the emphasis word ‘to-each-one.’

In one body: an all-important metaphor, peculiar in the Bible to Paul: see note under 1 Corinthians 12:30.

Members: as in Romans 6:13, a passage already recalled by Romans 12:1.

The same action: the eye, ear, hand, work in totally different ways.

The many: as in Romans 5:15, 19.

In Christ: in consequence of our inward union with Christ, we stand in a relation to each other similar to that of the various members of a human

body. All high thoughts of self imply under-estimate of others: but we shall not under-estimate those bound to us by a tie of common interest similar to that of the various members of a living body. Same argument in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.

Members one of another: same word and similar argument in Ephesians 4:25.

**Ver.** 6-8. Practical application of the foregoing metaphor.

Gifts-of-grace: same word in Romans 1:11; 5:15, 16; 6:23; 11:29. It is used here and in 1 Corinthians 1:7; 7:7; 12:4-31; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6; 1 Peter 4:10 as a technical term for capacities for various kinds of Christian work analogous to the various capacities of the different parts of the human body, viewing these as given to us by the undeserved favor of God.

Grace given: as in Romans 12:3.

Different: cp. 1 Corinthians 12:4. That I have one faculty and my neighbor has another, is a gift to him and to me of the undeserved favor and infinite wisdom of God. Therefore, to boast over the less brilliant faculties of others, is to question the wisdom of Him who chose for, and gave to, each the powers he possesses.

**Ver.** 6b-8. Practical and detailed application of the foregoing general statement.

Prophecy: an extraordinary gift which made a man the mouthpiece of God: so Exodus 4:16; 7:1. See note under 1 Corinthians 14:40.

Proportion: literally 'analogy,' one thing answering to another: cognate verb in Hebrews 12:3. The prophet must make his words to the people correspond to God's word to him, so far as by faith he comprehends it. He must say no more and no less than he believes that God has said to him. If he speak thus, the strength and compass of the prophet's 'faith' will be the measure of his 'prophecy.'

Ministry: honorable service by one man for another, like that of the Prime Minister and ministers of religion. Same word in Romans 11:13; 15:31; Luke 10:40; Acts 1:17, 25; 6:1, 4; 1 Corinthians 12:5; 16:15, etc. Cognate

noun in Romans 13:4; 15:8; 16:1; Matthew 20:26; 22:13; 23:11; John 2:5, 9; cognate verb in Romans 15:25; Matthew 4:11; 8:15; 20:28; 25:44; John 12:26. The same word is also a technical term for the lower of the two kinds of regular church-officers mentioned in the New Testament: Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8, 13. As thus used, we transliterate it 'deacon.' It is unfortunate that the same Greek word requires the two English renderings 'minister' and 'deacon.' In Romans 12:7, the mention of other kinds of work suggests that the word denotes the regular office of a 'deacon,' i.e. apparently one who attended to the material interests of the Church. A close parallel in 1 Peter 4:11.

He that teaches: see under 1 Corinthians 12:28.

Exhorts: same word in Romans 12:1; see note. It is distinct from 'teaching;' so 1 Timothy 6:2; 4:13. Many can rouse to action and endurance those to whom they cannot impart knowledge.

Money to give away is a gift of God's grace, and a capacity for usefulness. Paul warns us against the great danger in all generosity, a mixed motive.

He that takes the lead: either as a regular church-officer or in some special Christian enterprise. The success of any combined effort depends so much on the energy of its leaders that a special obligation to earnestness rests upon them.

Mercy: any kind of help to those in distress: so Romans 9:15, 16, 18; 11:30-32.

With cheerfulness: making the objects of our kindness feel that it is a pleasure to us to help them.

## SECTION 40

### GENERAL MAXIMS

#### CHAPTER 12:9-21

*Love, let it be without hypocrisy; detesting the bad, joining yourselves to the good. In brotherly love, affectionate one towards another; in giving honor, one leading the other on; in earnestness, not backward; in spirit, fervent; serving the Lord: rejoicing in hope; enduring affliction; continually devoting yourselves to prayer: sharing the needs of the saints; pursuing hospitality. Bless them that persecute you: bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice: weep with them that weep. Having the same mind, one toward another; not minding the high things, but being led along with the humble things. Become not prudent in your own eyes. To no one giving back evil in return for evil; taking forethought to do things excellent before all men. If possible, so far as in you lies, with all men keeping peace; not inflicting justice for yourselves, but give place for the anger. For it is written, "To inflict justice is Mine, I will pay back again," says the Lord. But, "If thy enemy is hungry, give him food; if he is thirsty, give him drink: for, in doing this, coals of fire thou will heap upon his head." Be not conquered by the evil; but conquer the evil with the good.*

After exhortations to men specially endowed, we have now exhortations for all.

**Ver.** 9-11. Love: to fellow-men. For the whole section deals with our treatment of those around: cp. Romans 13:10; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Without-hypocrisy: same word in 2 Corinthians 6:6; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:5; James 3:17. The prominence given in the Bible (e.g. Romans 13:8-10) to love toward our neighbor creates a danger of hollow profession of such love: and, than this, nothing is more hurtful.

Bad: hurtful. This word is neuter, as is probably the good. The masculine form is found in Matthew 13:19; 1 Corinthians 5:13; 1 John 2:13, 14.

To detest that which is 'bad,' is an essential element of genuine 'love' to our neighbor.

Joining-yourselves: same word in Matthew 19:5; Luke 15:15; Acts 5:13; 10:28: to make common cause with, and put oneself on the side of, 'the good.' Without this, detestation of the bad becomes mere censoriousness.

Brotherly-love: 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22: to brethren in Christ.

Affectionate: as members of one family. To our fellow-Christians, we owe special affection. Let one set the other an example in showing honor where it is due.

Earnestness: as in Romans 12:8: in reference here both to Christian enterprise and to our daily work: cp. Ecclesiastes 9:10.

Spirit: our own spirit, the animating principle in man: as in Romans 1:9; 8:16; John 11:33; 1 Corinthians 14:14-16.

Fervent: boiling, a frequent metaphor for earnestness: a close parallel in Acts 18:25.

Instead of the Lord: some Greek-Latin copies read 'the opportunity.' It is more likely that a copyist would change this last, which perhaps he did not understand, into 'the Lord,' than the converse. But this reading is found in so large a majority of MSS., versions, and fathers, in east and west, that we may accept it with confidence. The more intense our earnestness, the more need we remember that we act at the bidding of Christ and are doing His work. Our earnestness must be under His direction.

**Ver.** 12-13. Rejoicing in hope: Romans 5:2.

Enduring affliction: Romans 5:3, 4. When the burden is heavy, we must pursue our path in spite of it.

Continually-devoting: same word in Acts 1:14; Colossians 4:2, close parallels; also Romans 13:6. Continuance in prayer and in expectation of



an answer is a true test of our confidence in the value of prayer: Matthew 15:21-28.

Sharing, etc.: see under Romans 15:26: by helping them in their necessities, we take these in some measure on ourselves and thus become partners with those who suffer.

Pursuing: same word in Romans 9:30, 31; 14:19: eager for opportunities for Christian hospitality. Cp. 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9; 1 John 3:17; Matthew 10:42.

**Ver.** 14-16. The construction now changes from a series of unconnected participial clauses, each beginning with a conspicuous substantive, to a direct imperative.

Bless: see under Romans 1:25.

Persecute: same word as pursue in Romans 12:13. Same word in same sense in 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13, 23. The persecutor pursues his victim.

To rejoice, etc.: the infinitive mood states tersely the disposition which Paul desires. Our joy in the success and joy of others is a very accurate measure of our spiritual stature. To rejoice at their joy, is more difficult than to pity them in sorrow.

The same mind: same word as in Romans 12:3: cp. 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 2:2; 4:2. "Let there be, in the breast of each, one thought and purpose touching all the others." The context implies that this must be according to Christ: cp. Romans 15:5. This oneness of purpose is the true and only source of real Christian harmony.

Not minding: suggested by the same word foregoing. Do not make it your aim to have to do with great matters; but be led along (or 'carried away') with the humble things, allowing them to have influence over you.

Prudent in your own eyes: same words in Romans 11:25: they recall Proverbs 3:7, LXX. To take to ourselves credit for prudence. i.e. mental alertness in common affairs, is to betray ignorance: for we are wise only so long as we are guided by the wisdom of God.

**Ver.** 17-21. Evil in return for evil: cp. Matthew 5:39-45.

Taking forethought, etc.: from Proverbs 3:4, LXX. Be careful so to act as to have the respect of all.

If possible, so far as, etc.: admitting that cases may arise in which we cannot be at peace with all men. But this must be our constant aim.

Not inflicting-justice-for yourselves: not taking the law into your own hands and inflicting what seems to you just punishment and thus defending yourselves. Same verb in 2 Corinthians 10:6; Luke 18:3, 5; Revelation 6:10; 19:2: cognate nouns in Romans 12:19; Luke 18:7, 8; 21:22; Acts 7:24; 2 Corinthians 7:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 10:30; 1 Peter 2:14; and in Romans 13:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:6. Its root-idea is justice, and especially just punishment: a simpler form of the same word in 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Jude 7; Acts 28:4. The rendering 'avenge' and 'vengeance' (A.V. and R.V.) brings in associations of thought unworthy of a ruler.

Give place (cp. Luke 14:9; Ephesians 4:27) for the anger: leave the case to God, who is angry with and will punish, all sin, especially in His servants.

To-inflict-justice, is Mine: from Deuteronomy 32:35; quoted also in the same form as here, a form differing from both Hebrews. and LXX., in Hebrews 10:30. To injure others because they have injured us, is to put ourselves in the place of the great Judge.

But if, etc.: instead of punishing those who injure us, we must give place for God's anger, and treat them with kindness. This whole verse (Romans 12:20) is taken word for word (LXX.) from Proverbs 25:21.

Coals of fire: an Eastern metaphor for severe and overwhelming punishment. We cannot punish a man who is doing us harm more severely than by trying to do him good: and this kind of punishment is the most likely to lead him to repentance and salvation: cp. 1 Samuel 24:17.

Be not conquered, etc.: a concluding epigrammatical precept. If we retaliate we do wrong; and thus evil gains a victory over us. But, if the injury be met with kindness it develops our moral character, and thus does us good. In this way, by doing good, we gain a victory over evil. And, if our kindness lead the adversary to repentance, goodness gains a double

victory. The alternative here mentioned is the only one. If a man do us wrong, we must always either conquer, or be conquered by, the evil.

Notice that in this section, which treats of Christian morals, Paul refers three times to the Book of Proverbs: another example of his respect, in every point, for the Old Testament.

Each verse of this section will repay most careful study. Observe the easy and natural flow, and the intense reality, of the whole. There are no formal divisions, and no natural order. But each thought suggests some other suitable thought: and the whole sets before us, with wonderful completeness, the principles which ought to regulate our dealings one with another.

## SECTION 41

### OBEY THE RULERS OF THE STATE

#### CHAPTER 13:1-7

*Let every soul submit to the superior authorities. For there is no authority except ordained by God: and those that exist have been ordained by God. So that he who sets himself against the authority withstands the ordinance of God. But they who withstand will receive for themselves judgment. For the rulers are not a fear to the good work but to the evil. But dost thou wish not to fear the authority? Do the good; and thou wilt have praise from it. For he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou dost the evil, be afraid: for not in vain he bears the sword: for he is a minister of God, a minister of justice for anger to him who does the evil. For which cause it is necessary to submit, not only because of his anger but also because of conscience. For it is because of this that ye pay tribute. For they are public ministers of God, to this very thing: continually devoting themselves. Repay to all what ye owe; tribute, to whom ye owe tribute; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honor, to whom honor.*

**Ver. 1.** Every soul: the submission must be inward, reaching down to the seat of life: cp. Romans 2:9; Acts 2:43; Ephesians 6:6; Matthew 22:37.

Superior authorities: another topic, the Christian's duty to the civil power, specially important at Rome, the seat of empire. We must submit because civil rule is ordained by God, who has so constituted society that men are compelled to appoint rulers and thus create authority.

And those that exist, etc.: a more definite statement. Not only is civil authority in the abstract a work of God, but 'the existing' rulers have been put by God in their place of power. These unproved assertions will be discussed below.

**Ver. 2-4.** Practical consequence of the foregoing.

Sets-himself-against: cognate to 'ordained' and ordinance.

The authority has been 'set up' by God: consequently he who 'sets himself against' it withstands that which God has 'set up.'

They who do this will receive judgment: sentence will be passed upon them, evidently a sentence of condemnation: same words in James 3:1.

For themselves: emphatic, as in Romans 2:5. A reason for this judgment is stated in Romans 13:3, viz. because the rulers are on the side of right and opposed to wrong.

A fear: an object inspiring fear, as in all languages: cp. Genesis 31:53; 1 Timothy 1:1.

To the good work: action personified as if capable of fear.

Minister: see under Romans 12:7. In his office of civil ruler, he is doing the work of God.

To thee: set up by God to do thee good: cp. Romans 8:28.

Dost the evil: other side of the alternative in Romans 13:3a.

Not in vain: the sword which he bears is no mere ornament.

For he is a minister of God: emphatic repetition word for word. Because the ruler is an officer appointed by God, as asserted in Romans 13:1, they who do right may expect from him 'praise' and they who do wrong have reason for 'fear.'

A minister-of justice: one who will inflict due punishment: cognate to words in Romans 12:19; see note.

For anger: in contrast to 'for good.'

**Ver. 5.** Practical result of the truth just stated. It is necessary to submit not only for fear of punishment but because of conscience: i.e. in order to have an inward assurance that we are doing right: cp. 1 Corinthians 10:25, 29; 1 Peter 2:19.

**Ver. 6.** Proof that our conscience binds us to submission. We actually pay tribute. Paul assumes, and all will admit, that we are under moral obligation to do so; and asserts that this admitted obligation involves submission.

‘Tribute’: a tax on persons or subject states: same word in Luke 20:22; 23:2; 1 Macc. viii. 4, 7.

Public minister: different from, and stronger than, ‘minister’ in Romans 13:4, and denoting a public and sacred officer: e.g. in Exodus 28:35, 43, etc. for Aaron’s ministry at the altar. Same word in Romans 15:16, 27; 2 Corinthians 9:12; Philippians 2:17, 25, 30; Hebrews 1:7, 14; 8:2, 6; 9:21; 10:11; Luke 1:23; Acts 13:2. Whether they know it or not, civil rulers, in proportion as they rule well, are performing and continually-devoting-themselves (same word in Romans 12:12) to a sacred ministration laid upon them by God. Paul argues that this admitted moral obligation proves that civil rulers are ordained by God.

**Ver. 7.** Practical application of the foregoing.

Custom: a tax on goods: same word in Matthew 17:25; 1 Macc. x. 31; xi. 35.

Fear: the reverence due to a ruler: cp. Ephesians 6:5; 1 Peter 2:18.

Honor: outward recognition of worth of any kind: as in Romans 12:10; 1 Timothy 6:1; 1 Peter 2:17; 3:7. Appreciation of the dignity of office is independent of our estimate of the man who holds the office.

A very close parallel to Romans 13:1-7 is found in 1 Peter 2:13-17.

We will now examine the unproved assertions on which the above argument rests, viz. that the abstract principle of government is from God and that the existing rulers have been put by God in their place of power.

Human society is so constituted that the instinct of self-preservation compels men to set up a form of government, i.e. to commit to some men power over the rest. Everyone knows that a bad government is almost always better than no government: and this proves that God wills men to live under rule. But God has not prescribed a definite form of rule: consequently the universal principle of government assumes an infinite variety of forms. We also notice that, nearly always, opposition to the

men actually in power tends to weaken and destroy the principle of government and leads towards anarchy. How frequently the murder even of a bad ruler has been followed by utter lawlessness and by infinite injury to the nation! Consequently, opposition to the individuals in power is practically in most cases opposition to the divine principle of government. Observing this, and remembering that nothing takes place without the foresight and permission of God, we may say, as Paul does, that the existing rulers, by whatever steps they mounted the throne, have been put on it by God. For God created the felt necessity for government which was their real stepping-stone to power: and He did so in full view of the persons into whose hands, throughout all ages, the power would fall. Cp. Daniel 2:37, 38; 2 Samuel 12:8; Isaiah 37:26; 45:1-5. We notice further that all bad conduct tends to weaken, and good conduct to strengthen, a government. Consequently, rulers are compelled, for the maintenance of their position, to favor the good and oppose the bad. This necessity must be from the Ruler of the world. We infer therefore that God, who has laid on men the necessity of appointing rulers, has laid on rulers the necessity of rewarding the good and punishing the bad; and has done this in order to make rulers instruments to accomplish His own purpose of kindness to the good and of punishment to the wicked. Thus rulers are, perhaps unconsciously, ministers of God.

These considerations are abundant reason for loyal obedience to civil authority. Since rulers are compelled by their position to favor the good and punish the bad, resistance to them generally proves that we are in the wrong; and will be followed by the punishment which they cannot but inflict on evil-doers. Hence the motive of fear should prompt obedience. And, since resistance to existing rulers tends to weaken and destroy that principle of government which God has set up for the good of the race, we ought to submit to them for conscience' sake. That we feel ourselves morally bound to pay taxes imposed without our consent or in opposition to our judgment, and that all admit the right of the ruler to enforce payment, confirms further the divine origin of his authority.

The only case in which resistance to a ruler does not weaken the divine ordinance of government is that in which overthrow of one government is quickly followed by establishment of a better. The teaching of Romans 13:1-7 will make us very cautious in joining an attempt to effect such

change, lest in overturning a bad ruler we overturn all rule. But where a government so far forgets its mission as to be no longer a praise to the good and a terror to the bad, and where its subjects are able to replace it by a better, Paul's words do not forbid them to do so, even by force of arms. By so doing, they do not overthrow, but defend from desecration, the ordinance of God. Such rulers cannot appeal to Paul's teaching: for they have put themselves outside the class he describes.

A similar exception occurs sometimes in the obligation (Colossians 3:20) of children to obey their parents. A child is sometimes bound to disobey and even resist a parent; but only when he fails to act a parent's part. Such exceptions do not lessen the universal obligation to obedience. Nor does the occasional necessity to resist a government lessen our obligation to obey in all ordinary cases.

This section must have been written before the civil power began deliberately to oppose Christianity, as it did in the later years of Nero and at intervals afterwards. For, although the opposition of the State to Christianity did not altogether destroy the obligation to obedience, it introduced into the question difficulties which no writer on the subject could pass over in silence. This section is therefore a mark of the early date of the epistle, and thus confirms its genuineness.

This reference to the civil power may have been suggested to Paul by his readers' nearness to the seat of imperial rule. But the immense importance of the subject sufficiently explains its mention in a letter which deals generally with the Gospel of Christ and the Christian life. It was needful to state clearly that loyalty to Christ involves loyalty to social order.



## SECTION 42

### LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

#### CHAPTER 13:8-10

*Owe nothing to anyone; except to love one another. For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled law. For this, “Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not murder, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not desire,” and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up again in this word, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Love works no ill to his neighbor. Love therefore is a fulfillment of law.*

**Ver. 8.** Owe nothing, etc.: negative repetition of “repay to all what ye ‘owe,’” in Romans 13:7. Free yourselves from all debts by paying them.

Except to love one another: a debt from which we can never release ourselves by payment. However much we have done for our neighbor, we are still bound to love him. The debt due to the officers of the State suggests another debt due to all our fellow-citizens: cp. Romans 1:14.

For he who loves, etc.: reason for paying our debt of universal love.

Law: the general principle of “do this and live,” which took historic form in the Law of Moses.

Fulfilled: filled up by action what the abstract principle of ‘law’ delineates in outline. [The Greek perfect calls attention to the abiding result of such fulfilment of law.]

**Ver. 9-10.** Proof of Romans 13:8b, concluding with a restatement of it.

Thou shalt not desire: as in Romans 7:7. The various precepts in Lev. 19, are summed up again in Leviticus 19:18 in this one general precept.

Love: not an emotional affection, but, like God’s love, a principle of active benevolence. It is therefore consistent with detestation of whatever is bad in our neighbor: cp. Romans 12:9.

Love works: the principle personified, as in 1 Cor. 13. It moves us to beneficent activity, and thus keeps us from doing harm. But this is the purpose of the above commands.

Therefore love is a fulfilment of law. It 'fills-up' in action the outline of conduct sketched by the principle of law. Same word as 'fulness' in Romans 11:12, 25; 15:29.

**Ver. 9** is in very close agreement with Matthew 22:39, 40; Mark 12:31; and confirms these Gospels as correct embodiments of the actual teaching of Christ. See under Galatians 5:14: cp. 1 Timothy 1:5.

These verses imply that, even to believers, the Law is still valid as an abiding rule of conduct: cp. Romans 8:4. But, since this great commandment is altogether beyond our power to obey, it is virtually a promise that God will Himself breathe into us the love He requires: a promise fulfilled in those who believe it. Consequently this commandment, which at once secures the homage of our moral sense, is to us no longer law but a part of the Gospel. It has been buried in the grave of Christ, and with Him has risen into new life.

## SECTION 43

### *PUT OFF THE WORKS OF DARKNESS*

#### CHAPTER 13:11-14

*And this, knowing the season, that the hour has come for you at once to arise from sleep. For now is salvation nearer to us than when we believed. The night has advanced; and the day is come near. Let us put off then the works of the darkness, and let us put on the weapons of the light. As in the day, let us walk becomingly; not with revelling and drunkenness, not with debauchery and wantonness, not with strife and emulation; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the flesh take no forethought, to gratify desires.*

**Ver.** 11-12a. And do this, viz “love your neighbor.”

Season: as Romans 3:26, etc.: it is defined by the

hour to arise from sleep. Cp. Ephesians 5:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:6.

For now, etc.: reason for rising from sleep, viz. because the time already elapsed since we put faith in Christ has brought us so much nearer to the day of complete deliverance.

Salvation: final deliverance from the conflict of life; as in Romans 5:10; 10:10.

Believed: the mental act by which we received as true the testimony of Jesus, as in 1 Corinthians 3:5; Acts 4:4, etc.; as distinguished from the abiding state of those who “believe,” e.g. Romans 1:16; 3:22.

The night: the present obscurity, in contrast to the eternal day. These words emphasise the foregoing metaphor.

**Ver.** 12b. Practical application of the metaphor.

Put-off: as nightclothes are laid aside in the morning: same word in Acts 7:58; Ephesians 4:22, 25; Colossians 3:8; Hebrews 12:1; James 1:21; 1 Peter 2:1.

The works of the darkness: our past acts, in harmony with the darkness in which we walked, not knowing where we were going or what we were doing: a list given below.

Put-on: constantly used of clothes and weapons, e.g. Matthew 6:25; 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:24; 6:11, 14; Colossians 3:10, 12; 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

Weapons of the light: cp. Romans 6:13; 2 Corinthians 6:7. Since the night is almost over and the day is dawning, Paul bids us wake up from sleep and throw aside the sinful acts which belong to the darkness now passing away: and, since the dawning light can overspread the land only by conflict and victory, in which we are called to share, he bids us gird on our sword as soldiers of the light.

**Ver.** 13-14. Expansion, positive and negative, of the foregoing exhortation.

As in day: in the light of the dawning day, which even before the sun has risen is sufficient to guide our steps. It keeps up the metaphor of Romans 13:12.

Becomingly: with good appearance suitable to the daylight in which we walk. Same word in 1 Thessalonians 4:12; 1 Corinthians 14:40.

Revelling, etc.: sins belonging specially to the night. They are 'the works of the darkness' in Romans 13:12.

But put on, etc.: parallel to 'put on the weapons of the light.'

'Put on' the Lord Jesus Christ: as men put on clothing, which, though distinct from them, yet when put on becomes almost a part of them. Paul bids us enter into union with Christ so close that He will become the close environment in which we live and move. Same phrase in Galatians 3:27: cp. Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10, a somewhat different conception. Since union with Christ enables us to do God's work even in face of enemies, to 'put on Christ' is (Romans 13:12) to put on the weapons of the light: cp. 1 Peter 4:1.

No forethought: as in Romans 12:17.

The flesh: the material and constitution common to all human bodies and characterized by various desires: cp. Romans 6:12, Galatians 5:16, 24. The prohibition to take forethought for the flesh is limited to one improper aim of such forethought, viz. to gratify its 'desires.'

The metaphor of Romans 13:12 deserves careful study. The present life is compared to a night spent in rioting and sleep. The coming of Christ will bring the eternal day. Already it is dawning; and in the light of that day-dawn His servants walk. The light is in conflict with darkness; and it is our privilege to join in the battle and hasten the victory. Paul announces that morning has come; that the time for revelry has gone. He bids the sleepers to awake, to cast aside the character in which they have wrapped themselves and lain so long, unconscious of the realities of the coming day, and to grasp their sword to do battle for the light. He bids them put on, as their complete defense and their resistless weapon, the character and living presence of their anointed Master, Jesus; and urges them, since the night is past, to think no more of indulgence or revelry.

On the spiritual significance of light and darkness, compare carefully 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Ephesians 5:7-16.

## SECTION 44

### DO NOT JUDGE THY BROTHER

#### CHAPTER 14:1-12

*Him that is weak in faith, receive; so as not to pass judgment on reasonings. One man has faith to eat all things; but the weak one eats herbs. He that eats, let him not despise him that eats not; and he that eats not, let him not judge him that eats: for God has received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's domestic servant? to his own Lord, he stands or falls. And he shall be made to stand: for the Lord is able to make him stand. For one man esteems day above day: but another esteems every day. Let each one, in his own mind, be fully assured. He who regards the day, regards it for the Lord. And he that eats, eats for the Lord: for he gives thanks to God. So he that eats not, for the Lord he eats not; and gives thanks to God. For not one of us lives for himself; and not one of us dies for himself: For both if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. If then we live, and if we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that both of dead and living He may be Lord. And thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? Or also thou, why dost thou despise thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God. For it is written, "I live," says the Lord: "to Me shall bow every knee, and every tongue shall make acknowledgment to God." "Therefore each of us, concerning himself, will give account to God."*

**Ver. 1.** A new topic, viz. our duty to certain of our fellow-Christians. The repetition of this exhortation in Romans 15:7, marks the completion of the discussion.

Weak in faith: one whose grasp of the teaching of Jesus is not so full and firm as to break down the barriers erected by training and circumstances: contrast Romans 4:19. Cp. 1 Corinthians 8:7-12.

Receive: as a brother in Christ: same word in Romans 14:3; Philemon 17; Acts 18:26; 28:2; 17:5.

So as not, etc.: in order to avoid pronouncing judgment on matters open to discussion, i.e. on conflicting reasonings. To reject a man because he cannot grasp the Gospel in its fulness, is to pronounce judgment on the thoughts and doubts of his heart. This we have no right to do; and therefore are bound to receive him.

**Ver. 2.** Statement of the special case which called forth the above general exhortation.

Has faith, etc.: he so fully believes the words of Christ, e.g. Mark 7:15, that he can eat anything without fear of defilement.

Herbs, or 'vegetables': i.e. as his only food: practical result of the weakness of his faith. This abstinence from all meat and (Romans 14:21) from wine is not explained by the Mosaic distinction of clean and unclean animals. But all is explained if we suppose that Paul refers to the matter discussed in 1 Cor. 8, where see my notes. The weak brother looks upon everything offered to an idol as forbidden and polluting. This is implied in Deuteronomy 7:25, 26; and is confirmed by Acts 15:29. So careful is he to avoid eating in pagan cities such as Rome or Corinth that which, unknown to him, has been consecrated to a false God, that, like Daniel, he abstains from all meat and all wine. And he believes that those men sin who eat all kinds of meat without asking (1 Corinthians 10:27) where it came from. But he has not grasped the teaching of Christ in Mark 7:18: "nothing that enters into a man can defile him." Else he would know (Titus 1:15) that "to the clean all things are clean." We are not surprised that the man of strong faith, who knows that an idol is but an empty name, is in danger of looking with contempt (cp. Romans 14:3, 10) on this needlessly scrupulous brother. Notice that Paul leaves the right or wrong of the matter an open question, but counsels concession in practice. Neither of these could he do if the continued obligation of the Mosaic distinction of meats were in question: contrast Galatians 2:5; 5:1-12. But, if he refers to idol sacrifices, his teaching here accords with 1 Cor. 8-10. And the prohibition to touch that which belongs to an idol, though temporary, rested on deeper grounds than did the Mosaic regulations about food. This explanation is confirmed by the contrast of Jews and Gentiles in Romans

15:8, 9; and by the discussion of the same matter at Corinth, where Paul probably wrote this epistle. The absence of any specific mention of idol sacrifices is a very uncertain ground of objection to this view: for Paul's readers knew to what he referred. The express mention of the matter in 1 Corinthians 8:1 arose probably (cp. 1 Corinthians 7:1) from its having been a matter of special inquiry.

**Ver. 3a.** An exhortation for each of the above classes.

Despise: because he cannot fully grasp the teaching of Christ. This passing exhortation, repeated in Romans 14:10, will be supported by strong arguments in Romans 14:13-23.

Let him not judge: appeal to the weak in faith.

**Ver. 3b-4.** First argument against judging.

God has received him: into His favor and service: same word and argument in Romans 15:7. Paul assumes, as we ought to do unless we have proof to the contrary, that all church-members are true servants of Christ; and therefore assumes that God has accepted this man against whom the only objection is that he eats meat. A solemn consideration for all who condemn their fellow-Christians. It may be that God has accepted them.

Who art thou, etc.? a personal appeal supporting the foregoing argument.

Domestic-servant: same word in Acts 10:7; Luke 16:13; 1 Peter 2:18. We serve Christ under His own eye, as members of His household.

Lord: see under Romans 1:4.

His own 'Lord': developing an idea in another-man's 'servant.'

He-will-be-made-to-stand: although he eats meat.

The Lord: Christ, as almost always in N.T., except (cp. Romans 14:11) in quotations from O.T.: cp. 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:5. The proof that this man 'will be made to stand' is that his continuance in the Christian ranks is wrought by the power, and therefore depends on the will, of Christ. This being so, He only has a right to pronounce judgment on him.



**Ver. 5.** It is uncertain whether the word *for* is genuine, i.e. whether this verse is given as a reason for the foregoing or merely added without note of connection. The external evidence is almost equally divided. But the insertion of the word '*for*' gives, as I understand the argument, the true connection of the verses, a connection however not evident at first sight, and therefore easily overlooked by a copyist. This easy explanation of the omission favors the genuineness of the word; and seems to me to outweigh a slight preponderance possibly of the external evidence. The editors are divided. Tischendorf inserts the word '*for*,' as do Lachmann and Westcott, who however put it in brackets and thus mark it as doubtful. Tregelles and R.V. omit it without note. The latter ought at least to have given it a place in their margin.

Esteems: same word as '*judge*' in Romans 14:3, 4, 10, 13.

Day above day: he judges one day to be above another. The other man pronounces a like sentence on every day. To which of the two classes in Romans 14:2, these two classes belong, Paul does not say. The order of clauses decides nothing: for it varies in Romans 14:3 and 10, as in Romans 10:9 and 10. Moreover, Galatians 4:10; Colossians 2:16 suggest irresistibly that Paul did not set day above day. We cannot suppose that he set one day above the others in opposition to some who gave undue sanctity to every day of the week: and of any such we have in the N.T. no hint. To count every moment absolutely devoted to God, and therefore holy in the highest sense, is the very essence of the new life in Christ and is clearly taught in Romans 14:8. Undoubtedly the man to whom all days were sacred would look upon all food as clean. We shall see that this view gives to Paul's argument the force of a personal appeal. Its bearing on the divine institution of the Lord's Day, I have discussed in a special note under Galatians 4:11.

Let each, etc.: let him form an opinion of his own, so that his action may spring from his own conviction, not from that of others. To do something merely because others think it right, is always humiliating and demoralising. Notice that Paul leaves the matter of days an open question.

**Ver. 6.** A comment on the observance of the sacred day, to which is joined a similar comment on the action both of him that '*eats*' and of him that '*eats not*.'

Regards: same word as 'mind' in Romans 8:5; 12:3, 16. He makes 'the day' which he 'judges' (Romans 14:5) to be 'above' other days a special object of thought. But he does this for the Lord, i.e. in order to please his Master, Christ. The words which follow in the A.V. are certainly spurious, and mar the argument. They give undue importance to the matter of days; which is introduced here only to support the argument about eating meat.

And he that eats, like the man who regards the day, eats for the Lord: he believes that his Master has given him this food, and is pleased to see him eat and enjoy it.

For he gives thanks: proof of this.

To God: the Giver of all good. No man 'thanks God' for that which he believes that God has forbidden. Therefore this man's thanks proves that he believes his eating to be pleasing to God.

And he that eats not, etc.: the weak and strong put side by side as alike loyal to the great Master; their loyalty being in each case attested by their thanks to God. One man eats meat and thanks God for it: the other abstains in order, as he thinks, to please Christ; and eats his plainer food with equal gratitude.

The argument is this. Evidently the man who pays special honor to one day does so in order to please Christ: his mode of spending the sacred day proves this. He therefore claims our respect for his loyalty to Christ, even if we differ from him about the right way of showing it. His loyalty forbids us to doubt that his Master will support His faithful, though perhaps mistaken, servant. Just so, the man who eats all kinds of meat and thanks God for it may claim that his thanks prove that he believes that by eating he is pleasing God. This argument would have the more weight with the men of weak faith because it describes, in reference to another matter, their own conduct and motive.

If this exposition be correct, the matter of sacred days is introduced merely to illustrate and enforce what Paul has to say about abstinence from meat, the matter he has now in hand. He merely asks the man who eats no meat to credit the man who eats it with a motive as good as that which prompts some to keep a sacred day.

**Ver. 7-8.** A broader statement supporting the chief point of Romans 14:6. Not only does the man before us 'eat for' the 'Lord,' but

not one of us lives or dies for himself, i.e. to please himself. We both eat and drink and use all the powers which life gives us to work out Christ's purposes: and, when we die, we pass into another world, in order, in a nobler sphere, to continue the same work. Similar teaching in Romans 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:15.

We are the Lord's: cp. 1 Corinthians 3:13: inference from the foregoing. If the purpose of our life and death be to do Christ's work, then we belong to Him and are His servants. And, if so, none but our Master has a right to judge us.

**Ver. 9.** Confirmation of the foregoing description of the aim of our life and death, from the purpose of the death and resurrection of Christ. We were created (Colossians 1:16) for Christ, in order that we may find in His service our highest joy: but sin separated us from Him. To make it just (Romans 3:26) to pardon our sin and to reinstate us in the position for which we were created, God gave Christ to die; and (Romans 4:25) raised Him from the dead in order that His resurrection might be the sure ground of justifying faith: to this end Christ died and lived again.

Dead and living: cp. Luke 20:38. Notice the solemnity of our position as servants of Christ. By judging our brethren, we usurp the place of Him who died and rose from the dead in order that they may be His servants and He their Master.

**Ver. 10.** An appeal to both parties, to him who judges and to him who despises. Notice the emphatic repetition of thy brother, one who claims a brother's affection.

For we all, etc.: Paul's answer to his own questions.

'We all': including Paul and those who judge and those who despise their brethren.

Judgment-seat: same word in 2 Corinthians 5:10; Acts 25:6, 10, 17.

Of God: “who (Romans 2:16) Will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ.” cp. Romans 3:6. That we shall ourselves stand before the bar of God, warns us neither to judge nor despise others.

**Ver. 11.** Proof of the foregoing, from Isaiah 45:23.

Every knee... every tongue: visible and audible homage: a close parallel in Philippians 2:11.

Make-acknowledgment: either (Matthew 3:6, etc.) of sins against God; or (Romans 15:9) of the greatness and goodness of God. The latter use is so frequent in the O.T. (e.g. Psalm 105:1; 106:1; 107:1, LXX.) that we must accept it here. These great words describe evidently a voluntary and universal submission. This, we have no reason to expect until the final consummation described in 1 Corinthians 15:28. But Paul quotes words from God asserting solemnly, through the lips of a prophet, that a time will come when universal homage will be paid to Him.

This quotation, which looks forward to a world in which all shall bow to God, must be read in connection with Paul’s solemn words in Philippians 3:19: “many walk... enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction.” The complete solution of this paradox lies hidden in the purpose of God. It does not imply that all who now live will ultimately bow to Christ.

**Ver. 12.** Inference from the quotation.

Each of us about himself: a solitary responsibility.

Account: same word and sense in Matthew 12:36; 1 Peter 4:5; Philippians 4:15, 17. God’s solemn announcement that a time will come when universal homage will be paid to Him implies clearly that He claims this homage: and, if so, He will require an account from everyone who resists this claim. If we walk in the light of that day, we shall see our own littleness and be thus saved from contempt of our brethren; we shall feel our responsibility and thus be kept back from judging them.

In 44, Paul speaks chiefly to the men who condemn others for eating all kinds of meat. He tells us incidentally that these scruples arise from weakness of faith. But, instead of dismissing the matter by apostolic authority, he discusses it from the weak brother’s own standpoint. He

thus sets us an example of not despising our brethren; and gives us principles valid for various matters in actual life in which we have no express command to guide us. He says, Beware lest you condemn a man for that which Christ accepts as a mark, though perhaps a mistaken one, of loyalty to Himself; and remember how soon you will render an account of your service.

Paul refers here to conduct not inconsistent with loyalty to Christ, and therefore not absolutely sinful. In other cases, e.g. Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:3, he himself condemns the guilty person, and requires the Church to punish, and the members to withdraw from, him.

## SECTION 45

### *BE CAREFUL NOT TO INJURE THY BROTHER*

#### CHAPTER 14:13-23

*Let us not then any longer judge one another: but judge this rather, not to set a stumbling-block for thy brother, or a snare. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is common of itself; except that, to him who reckons anything to be common, to that man it is common. For, if because of food thy brother is made sorrowful, no longer dost thou walk according to love. Do not, by thy food, destroy him on whose behalf Christ died. Let not then your good thing be evil spoken of: For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who in this serves Christ is well-pleasing to God and approved by men. Let us therefore pursue the things of peace and the things of mutual edification. Do not because of food pull down the work of God. All things are clean: but it is evil to the man who eats with stumbling. It is good not to eat meat, nor drink wine, nor anything in which thy brother stumbles. What faith thou hast, have with thyself before God. Happy is he that judges not himself in that which he approves. "But he that doubts, if he eats, stands condemned: because it is not from faith. And all that is not from faith is sin."*

**Ver. 13.** A practical exhortation summing up Paul's teaching to the more scrupulous brethren, followed by another to the stronger brethren supporting the exhortation already given to them in Romans 14:1, 3, 10. Paul thus returns to the first matter of this chapter.

Judge this: make no decision about your brother's character, but make this decision about your own future conduct: same word in Romans 14:5; 1 Corinthians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 2:1.

Stumbling-block: against which one may strike his foot: Romans 9:33; Leviticus 19:14.

Set a snare: same words in Judith v. 1: see under Romans 11:9. Resolve to do nothing by which your brother may be hindered or thrown down, or entrapped by the enemy.

**Ver. 14.** Am-persuaded: as in Romans 8:38; 15:14.

In the Lord: cp. Romans 9:1. Paul's assurance comes from his inward union with Christ. Formerly, he was of another opinion.

Common: opposite to 'clean:' cp. Romans 14:20; Acts 10:14, 15, 28. It denotes something forbidden to the sacred people.

Of itself: limitation to the assertion that nothing is 'common.' It is further expounded in the words following, except, etc. In spite of the above universal truth, if anyone eats what he believes to be defiling, he is defiled by it: for he has done what he believes to be wrong: cp. 1 Corinthians 8:7.

Paul here asserts plainly the absolute abrogation of the ceremonial law, of which distinction of food was a conspicuous feature and which forbade to touch things offered to idols: Lev. 11, Deuteronomy 7:25, 26. He thus re-echoes Mark 7:1-23; Acts 10:15.

**Ver. 15.** For, if, etc.: reason for the above exception, viz. because disregard of our brother's liability to be defiled by that which is in itself clean is inconsistent with 'love,' which is the essence of the new life in Christ.

Because of food: the meat eaten by the man of strong faith.

Sorrowful: through spiritual injury. It is the forerunner of destruction.

Walk: life looked upon as movement forward, as in Romans 6:4.

According to love: love to our brethren guiding our steps. This guiding principle is rejected by those who, rather than give up a certain kind of 'food,' i.e. meat offered to idols, so act as to injure their brethren.

Do not, etc.: a direct exhortation, based on the foregoing.

By thy food: emphatic repetition: a contemptuous description of the price of our brother's destruction.

Destroy: the ultimate result of making him 'sorrowful' by causing him spiritual injury. All such injury tends to, and may end in, final ruin. See

note on p. 87. {Romans 2:24} Paul charges the man who eats without taking into account the possible injurious effect of his eating, with spiritual murder of the man of weak faith. That spiritual injury may lead to destruction, is a very strong reason for avoiding whatever may cause injury.

On whose behalf Christ died: an absolute contrast to him who, rather than refrain from certain kinds of meat, so acts as to ruin a brother in Christ.

This verse implies clearly the possibility of the ultimate ruin of those for whom Christ died, of those who are now, as Paul assumes throughout, servants of Christ. If we were sure that God would not permit the injury occasioned by our conduct to go to the length of final ruin, we could not be kept back from it by fear of destroying him for whom Christ died. See note on Final Perseverance on p. 304. {Romans 11:24}

**Ver. 16-19.** Great general principles bearing on the case before us.

Your good thing: citizenship in ‘the Kingdom of God,’ including the strong man’s faith. It is therefore fuller than “my liberty” in 1 Corinthians 10:29.

Evil-spoken-of: literally ‘blasphemed,’ as in Romans 2:24; 3:8. Another reason for the above exhortation. If you cling, even at the risk of injury to your brother, to your undoubted right to eat what you like, you will lead the heathen to speak evil of that religion which is the common ‘good’ of weak and strong. They will think that what you value most in the Gospel is that it breaks down the restrictions of Judaism and allows men to eat anything.

**Ver. 17.** Further exposition of ‘your good thing.’

The Kingdom of God: the eternal kingdom to be set up at the return of Christ, of which we are already citizens: so 1 Corinthians 4:20; 6:9, 10; 15:50; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 1:13; 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:5; 2 Timothy 4:1, 18. It is a link connecting the teaching of Paul with the Gospels.

Righteousness: doing what God approves, as in Romans 6:16, 20.

Peace: harmony with our brethren.



Joy in the Holy Spirit: a joy wrought by the Spirit in those to whom He is the element of life and thought, by revealing, through the Gospel of the cross of Christ, God's love towards them and His purposes of mercy for them: cp. Romans 5:2, 11; 1 Thessalonians 1:6. It is contrasted with the pleasure of eating and drinking as a distinctive mark of the Kingdom of God.

**Ver. 18.** Another general principle supporting that in Romans 14:17.

In this: righteousness, peace, and joy, as inseparable elements of the one Christian character: cp. Galatians 5:22.

Serves Christ: the essence of the new life: Romans 14:4, 6-9. They who obey Christ by doing right, keeping peace with others, and rejoicing in the Holy Spirit are well-pleasing to God, and therefore citizens of His Kingdom. If so, we can waive our right to eat and drink what we like without losing the full privilege of citizens.

Approved: a good appearance after trial: cognate words in Romans 1:28; 2:18; 12:2; 5:4.

'Approved' by men: in contrast to 'evil-spoken-of.' If you do right, you will have the intelligent respect of the heathen around: but if you claim to the full your right in the matter of food, without considering the effect on your weaker brethren, you will bring an evil report on that religion which is your chief good.

**Ver. 19.** Practical inference from Romans 14:17, 18.

The things of peace: all that tends to harmony.

Pursue: as in Romans 12:13: cp. Hebrews 12:14; 1 Corinthians 14:1.

Edification: literally 'building-up:' so Romans 15:2; 1 Corinthians 14:3, 5, 12, 26; Ephesians 4:12, 16, 29. This common metaphor represents the Church and the spiritual life as a building in process of erection: cp. Romans 15:20; 1 Corinthians 3:9-12; Ephesians 2:21, 22. The building makes most progress in those who are at peace with each other. Consequently they who pursue mutual edification will pursue peace.

**Ver. 20-21.** Paul now returns to the specific matter in hand, after stating great principles which ought to rule our whole conduct.

Because of food: conspicuous repetition of the chief point in hand.

Pull-down: same word in 2 Corinthians 5:1; Galatians 2:18: it keeps before us the metaphor of a building.

Do not, for a piece of 'food, put down' what God has built: cp. 1 Corinthians 3:17. This implies that God sometimes permits men, not only to hinder, but to undo, His spiritual work.

All things clean: parallel to Romans 14:14.

But it is evil, etc.: an exception to the foregoing universal assertion.

Eats with stumbling: whose eating occasions, and is thus accompanied by, the spiritual fall of another or of himself. Such eating is a stone against which he or others strike their foot; and is therefore 'evil.' On the other hand, it is good even to go so far as not to eat meat, nor to drink wine, nor to take anything else, if they hinder or ensnare our brother or weaken his spiritual life.

'Wine': offered to idols: cp. Deuteronomy 32:38; Isaiah 57:6. The danger referred to arises from the force of example; as explained in 1 Corinthians 8:10. What we do, others will do, even though they believe it to be wrong, because they see us do it. Thus our conduct, in itself right, will lead to what in their case is wrong. Our love to our brethren binds us to refrain from such action.

On the bearing of this principle on total abstinence from intoxicants, see my note under 1 Corinthians 8:13.

The evidence for and against the words 'or is ensnared or is weak' is equally balanced. Tischendorf and Westcott omit them; as do the Revisers. But these last note them in the margin as added by "many ancient authorities." Tregelles inserts them, but expresses doubt in his margin. They add nothing to the sense.

**Ver. 22-23.** An appeal to the man who has faith, in support of the foregoing principle.

Have with thyself: do not announce it by claiming all the privileges it confers. For faith is in itself so good that we can afford to forgo some

points of its outward manifestation and be satisfied to enjoy it in our own hearts before God.

Happy is he, etc.: proof how good faith is. A man of weak faith, even when he has decided that an action is right, is uncertain in his decision; and is ever sitting in judgment on himself and asking whether he is doing right. Consequently he is full of moral doubt and weakness. But the man who has obtained by faith a firm hold of God's revealed will forms a steadfast decision and dismisses all doubt. He does what he approves without judging himself.

But he that doubts, etc.: further proof of the value of faith by description of the man weak in faith.

If he eats, he is condemned by God to suffer spiritual loss, because his conduct does not spring from faith, i.e. from an assurance that he is doing right.

And all, etc.: a universal truth explaining why he that does that about which he stands in doubt is condemned. Such action does not flow from loyalty to Christ, and therefore partakes of the nature of sin. This verse is a warning to the man of weak faith that so long as he doubts he is bound to abstain.

From this section we learn that we may, without design and without knowing it, not only injure but destroy those who are now servants of Christ; and may do this by actions in themselves lawful, and even by claiming the rights which the Gospel has given us. Paul's argument is a development, in view of these solemn truths, of the great commandment quoted in Romans 13:9. A link of connection is found in Romans 14:15, "not according to love." If any act of ours is likely to injure a brother, we are bound, by the law of love, to refrain from it. This obligation, Paul strengthens, by reminding us that Christ died for this weak brother; that men are watching our conduct, and will judge us accordingly; that, to surrender our right to do as we like, by no means implies a surrender of our rights as citizens of the Kingdom; and that our faith gives us inward advantages over the weak brother so great that we can afford to make this minor sacrifice for his good. For these reasons we are bound to consider in all we do, not merely whether our actions are right in themselves, but what

will be their effect upon others. This great principle has a wide and various bearing on the details of everyday life.

This principle admits of what seems to be an exception but is really a further development. It often happens that an action is an occasion of harm to one man and a means of good to another. For example, in the case before us, Paul would have to consider whether abstinence from meat would lessen his bodily strength, and thus inflict on those for whom he lived and worked an injury greater than that occasioned to the weaker brother by the example of Paul eating meat. We must ask whether on the whole an action is likely to do more good or harm; and act accordingly. And thus, though we shall sometimes do that which may occasion injury to some of our brethren, we shall always act from the same divine principle of universal love. Under 1 Corinthians 11:1, I have given a summary of a similar argument on the same subject.

Some MSS., versions, and fathers, put after Romans 14:23 the words of Romans 16:25-27: see my note.

## SECTION 46

### *THE STRONG OUGHT TO HELP THE WEAK*

#### CHAPTER 15:1-6

*Moreover, we owe it as a debt, we the strong ones, to bear the weaknesses of those not strong, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor, for his good, for edification. For also Christ did not please Himself, but it was with Him according as it is written, "The reproaches of those reproaching Thee fell upon Me." For so many things as were before written were written for our teaching, in order that through the endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we may have the hope. And may the God of the endurance and of the encouragement give to you to have the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus, in order that with one accord, with one mouth, ye may glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Ver.** 1-2. Another reason for abstaining from food which injures others, suggested by the above contrast of those who have much and those who have little faith; followed by a general exhortation.

The strong: cp. Romans 4:20, "made strong by faith."

Not-strong: cp. 1 Corinthians 8:9, 11. The man weak in faith is altogether weak.

Bear (or 'carry') the weaknesses, etc.: put a restraint upon ourselves because of their various kinds of weakness, thus bearing a burden, light to us who are made strong by faith, but dangerously heavy to them: cp. Galatians 6:1, 2. Where mutual love is, weakness gives a claim to help from the strong. Thus strength of faith, so far from being a ground of boasting, lays upon us an obligation to help the weak. And if, as is often the case, our stronger faith is a result of more favorable circumstances, our obligation is still greater.

Not to please ourselves: selfishness, the true source of refusal to bear the burdens of the weak.

Please his neighbor: exact opposite of pleasing self.

For his good: our aim in pleasing him. This makes the difference between a right and wrong pleasing of men: Galatians 1:10; Ephesians 6:6; 1 Corinthians 10:33, 34.

For edification: see under Romans 14:19: the kind of 'good' we are to have in view

**Ver. 3.** Supreme example of pleasing, not self, but others. It recalls the argument in Romans 14:15.

As it is written: what Christ did, stated in the words of Psalm 69:9. This reminds us that they who follow

Christ walk also in the steps of the ancient worthies. In this quotation lies an argument from greater to less. If Christ, instead of gratifying self, submitted to sufferings caused by His countrymen's inexcusable hostility to God, in order to save them from the well-merited consequence of their hostility, can we refuse to save a brother-servant of Christ from the terrible danger to which his weakness exposes him, by submitting to a restraint not otherwise needful?

**Ver. 4.** Reason for the above quotation, viz. that the O.T. was written to teach us who live in later days, and thus to encourage us to persevere.

Written for our teaching, i.e. to teach us. This purpose, so far above the thought of the human writer, reveals a hand divine in the Jewish Scriptures: so Romans 3:19; 4:24.

In order that, etc.: all divine teaching has a further moral and spiritual purpose.

Endurance, or 'perseverance': as in Romans 2:7; 5:3.

Encouragement, or 'exhortation': see under Romans 12:1; 1:12.

Of the Scriptures: source of 'endurance' under hardship and of 'encouragement' to endure.

The hope: described in Romans 5:2, 4.

May have or 'hold the hope': ultimate purpose of the teaching in 'the Scriptures,' and of the 'encouragement' and 'endurance' derived from them.

**Ver. 5.** Sudden transition from the means, to the ultimate Source, of our 'endurance' and 'encouragement:' so Romans 15:13; 9:5; 16:25; Ephesians 3:20. Our 'perseverance' is His gift; and the 'encouragement' derived from the Scriptures is His voice. He thus reveals Himself in a special character as the God of our endurance and encouragement: cp. Romans 15:13; 16:20.

The same mind: as in Romans 12:16. Paul prays that the Author of perseverance may also give them harmony. This mutual harmony must accord with the mind of Christ. Paul prays that each of them may have towards his brethren a disposition like that which moved Christ to suffer reproach in order to save from the punishment of their sins those who reproached God. This prayer is practically an exhortation.

The use of the word 'endurance,' which always implies difficulty, to describe our treatment of weaker brethren, and the example of Christ under the raillery of the enemies of God, remind us how difficult it sometimes is to act towards weaker brethren in a spirit of love. Our Christian character is seldom so severely tried as when we are put to inconvenience by the spiritual childishness of members of the Church.

**Ver. 6.** Further purpose to be gained by 'the same mind,' and consequently a further motive for harmony.

With one accord: else the one mouth is hypocrisy. But it is also needful that inward harmony find suitable outward expression.

Glorify: as in Romans 1:21. We 'glorify God with' our 'mouth' when, by telling His greatness and goodness, we express our own admiration and call forth admiration of God in those who hear us. Our oneness of heart and voice, being evidently God's work, itself shows forth His glory: so John 17:21.

God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: a distinctive N.T. name of God: 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3; 2 Corinthians 11:31; Ephesians 1:17. To the Jews, He was the God of

Abraham: for through Abraham He revealed Himself as their God. He has revealed Himself to us as 'God and' as the 'Father' who gave for us His Son, 'our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Paul desires for the Roman Christians a harmony of spirit which will fill every mouth with one song of praise, and exalt God in the eyes of mankind. This cannot be unless the strong in faith deny themselves for the good of their weaker brethren. He urges this as their bounden duty, and points to the example of Christ. By using the word 'endurance,' he admits the difficulty of the task; but he reminds his readers that to prompt such endurance the ancient Scriptures were written. And, knowing that even the divine word is powerless without the divine Speaker, he prays that God, who enables them to maintain their Christian confidence, will also give them the spirit of harmony. He desires this in order that the weak, instead of losing the little faith they have, may join with the strong in praise to God.



## SECTION 47

### THAT ALL MAY PRAISE GOD TOGETHER

#### CHAPTER 15:7-13

*For which cause receive one another, according as also Christ received you for glory of God. For I say that Christ is become a minister of circumcision, on behalf of the truth of God, in order to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the Gentiles may glorify God for mercy, according as it is written, "Because of this I will make acknowledgment to Thee among the Gentiles; and to Thy name I will sing a psalm." And again he says, "Be glad, Gentiles, with His people." "And again, "Praise, all Gentiles, the Lord; and let all the peoples praise Him." And again Isaiah says, "There will be the root of Jesse, and He that rises up to rule Gentiles: on Him will Gentiles hope." And may the God of the hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, in order that ye may abound in the hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**Ver. 7.** For which cause: because, as implied in Romans 15:6, Christian unity brings glory to God.

Receive: as in Romans 14:1. Unless we respect the scruples of our weaker brethren, we shall drive them from us.

According as, etc.: keeping before us the example of Christ, as in Romans 15:3, 5, Romans 14:15.

Christ received you: cp. Romans 14:3.

For glory of God: purpose to be obtained by receiving one another, viz. to show forth the greatness and goodness of God, and thus to evoke admiration for Him: cp. Romans 3:7. For the same end, Christ received you.

**Ver. 8-9a.** Fuller exposition of the truth involved in 'Christ received you.'

Minister: see under Romans 12:7.

Circumcision: as in Romans 3:30. Christ made Himself a servant of the Jewish nation, in order that, by fulfilling a part of the ancient promises, He might prove that God is true and faithful. He proved this in order to make the promises still unfulfilled a firm ground on which we may rest our hopes for the future: cp. Romans 4:16; 2 Corinthians 1:20

And that the Gentiles, etc.: another purpose for which Christ became a minister of the Jews.

For ('on-behalf-of') mercy: cp. 1 Corinthians 10:30; also Romans 11:30-32. Christ was born in Judaea and labored among the Jews, not only to reveal to them the faithfulness of Him who gave the promises, but also in order that the same 'mercy' might reach 'the Gentiles' and prompt heathen lips to glorify God: cp. Romans 15:6, 7.

The distinction of Jews and Gentiles, so prominent in this epistle, but lost sight of since Romans 11:32, here meets us again. It suggests that the 'weak in faith' were chiefly Jews, and 'the strong ones' chiefly Gentiles: cp. Acts 21:20. If so, the united praise of weak and strong, which in Romans 15:6 Paul desires, would also be the united praise of Jews and Gentiles. And, if so, the quotations in Romans 15:9-12 have an evident bearing on the matter in hand, viz. our treatment of the weaker brethren. We have thus an explanation of the apparently sudden change of subject.

**Ver. 9b-12.** The foregoing purpose of Christ, viz. that both Jews and Gentiles may praise Christ, accords with ancient prophecy. In Psalm 18:49, the writer says that surrounded by Gentiles he will give acknowledgment and praise to God; implying that they will join in or approve this praise. So Deuteronomy 32:43 implies a common joy in God of Jews and Gentiles. In Psalm 117:1, the Gentiles are called on to praise God. Paul quotes Isaiah 11:10 from the LXX., which is less accurate than our versions: but the difference does not touch the subject before us. The root lives unseen in the ground after the trunk has been cut down. The prophet announces a time when from the forgotten family of Jesse a new sprout rises to be an ensign around which Gentiles will gather. The passage refers evidently to the Kingdom of Christ, and foretells that in its blessings the Gentiles will share.

**Ver. 13.** Prayer concluding Paul's treatment of the case of the weaker brethren, and the main body of the epistle. As in Romans 15:5, 6, he rises from the Scriptures to 'God.' By giving us a hope of glory, resting on His own nature, God reveals Himself to us in a new aspect as the God of the hope.

Fill: so that your entire being and thought and life be permeated.

Joy: suggested by Romans 15:10.

Peace: harmony in the Church, as in Romans 14:19.

In believing: element in which we have joy and peace: cp. Romans 5:1, 2; 1 Peter 1:8.

In order that, etc.: further purpose to be attained by our fulness of joy and peace.

Abound: as in Romans 3:7; 5:15.

In the power, etc.: parallel with 'in believing.' Faith is the human condition and channel of joy: the Holy Spirit is the inward divine Agent who by His felt 'power' working in us evokes confident hope of blessings to come: cp. Romans 14:17, "joy in the Holy Spirit." Paul prays that God, who has already given us hope, may also give us joy and harmony, in order that we may thus obtain a still firmer and richer hope: and he remembers the human channel and the divine Agent of these blessings, belief of the promises, and an inward working of the Almighty Spirit.

**Verses 7-13** support, by arguments suggested in Romans 15:5, 6, the exhortation in Romans 14:1. Paul begs us to receive the weaker brethren in order that the united praise of them and of us may show forth the grandeur of God. He reminds us that for this end Christ received us, that this united song of praise was foretold in ancient prophecy, and that peace with our brethren will increase the hope with which by God's grace we already look forward to the coming glory.

The subject discussed in Romans 14:1-15:13 has long ago passed away. We are all of Paul's opinion now. To us, idols have lost all power to pollute: we should not hesitate to eat food prepared for a heathen feast. But this rather increases than decreases the value of Paul's discussion: for

it compels us to look, not at one special case, but at a great principle bearing on the everyday life of us all.

On opening the subject, Paul announces himself an advocate of the weaker brethren. He does not hold their views; but he defends their rights. But, before pleading their cause, he warns his clients not to condemn the men against whose contempt he now defends them. He then turns to the strong, and tells them their duty to the weak. He teaches the solemn lesson that our conduct may influence the destiny of some around us. We are therefore bound to abstain from whatever may injure our brother, lest by injuring we ruin him. To act in forgetfulness of the influence of our example, is to set aside that love which is the very essence of the Christian life, to ignore the obligation laid upon us by our superior light, to set aside the example of Christ, and to hinder the purposes of blessing which were the song of the ancient seers and which Christ came to accomplish.

We now stand at the end of the main body of the epistle. DIV. V. (Romans 12:1-15:13) contains, without any formal order, a wonderful outline of Christian morality. Paul has indicated its root, viz. self-consecration to God; and its chief means of growth, an increasing knowledge of the will of God. He has set before us correct views of ourselves and our work; and has taught us the principles which ought to regulate our conduct towards our fellow-Christians, especially those whose views differ from our own, our fellow-citizens, those who injure us, and the rulers of the State. Throughout, DIV. 5: is similar, in matter and tone, to 1 Corinthians.

Paul's chief purpose in writing the epistle is now accomplished. He has asserted and developed the new doctrines, and has shown their harmony with the Jewish Scriptures; and has taught us to apply them to matters of daily life.

## CONCLUSION OF THE EPISTLE

### SECTION 48

#### PAUL'S APOSTOLIC OFFICE AND WORK

#### CHAPTER 15:14-21

*But I am persuaded, my brethren, also I myself, about you that yourselves also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. But more boldly have I written to you in part, as recalling to your mind, because of the grace given to me from God, in order that I may be a public minister of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles, announcing as a sacred work the Gospel of God, in order that the offering up of the Gentiles may be made acceptable, being sanctified in the Holy Spirit. I have then this exultation in Christ Jesus, touching the things that refer to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of the things which Christ has not worked out through me for obedience of Gentiles, by word and work, in the power signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit; so that I have, from Jerusalem and the country around as far as Illyricum, fulfilled the Gospel of Christ: making this a point of honor so to preach, not where Christ has been named, in order that I may not build upon another's foundation, but, according as it is written, "They to whom no announcement was made about Him shall see; and they who have not heard shall understand."*

The rest of the epistle contains (Romans 15:14-33) personal matters between Paul and his readers, and (Romans 16:1-27) salutations and doxology.

**Ver. 14.** Persuaded: as in Romans 8:38. Not only does universal report (Romans 1:8) proclaim your faith,

but I myself also am convinced that the report is true.

Goodness: doing good to others!

Also yourselves are, etc.: consequently the foregoing exhortations do not involve a claim to superior goodness.

To admonish others, we need both 'goodness' and knowledge.

Able also, etc.: so that the foregoing warnings might seem needless.

**Ver. 15.** But more boldly, etc.: than would seem to be consistent with their goodness and knowledge.

In part: only Romans 14:1-15:7 being in anything like a bold tone.

As recalling to your mind: admitting that they already know what Paul has told them.

Grace given to me: as in Romans 12:3.

From God: as in Romans 1:7.

Because of God's favor to Paul, he ventures to speak 'more boldly' than his readers' goodness and knowledge might seem to warrant.

**Ver. 16.** God's purpose in making Paul an object of His favor, viz. that he may be a public and sacred minister (as in Romans 13:6) of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles. Cp. Galatians 1:16. The words following describe further this sacred ministry. To announce the Gospel of God, i.e. the glad tidings of salvation which God sent into the world, was the sacred-work which God in His favor had given to be Paul's only occupation. Similarly, He separated Aaron from all secular work that he might devote himself to the ritual of the tabernacle: and similarly (Romans 12:1) He calls all believers to the sacred work of presenting their own bodies a sacrifice to God.

That the offering, etc.: definite purpose of this sacred work.

'Offering': a sacrificial term: so Acts 21:26; 24:17; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 10:10, 14, 18. Paul was sent to preach the Gospel in order that he might lead the Gentiles to a life of devotion to God, and thus lay them as a sacrifice on the altar: cp. Romans 14:7-9; 6:13; 12:1.

Acceptable: Romans 15:31; 2 Corinthians 6:2; 8:12; close parallel in 1 Peter 2:5.

Sanctified, etc.: condition of acceptability: cp. “for sanctification,” in Romans 6:19, 22. This devotion to Himself which God requires is realized in us by the inward working of the Holy Spirit: cp. Romans 15:13. The Spirit is essentially holy: i.e. His every thought, purpose, influence tends towards God: and He seeks to carry others along in His own direction. Consequently they who live, think, and act in the ‘Holy Spirit’ live only for God. Thus are they ‘sanctified,’ and become an ‘offering acceptable’ to God. To lead the Gentiles to this consecration, was Paul’s sacred work.

Notice the courtesy and modesty of Romans 15:14-16. Paul apologizes for the earnest tones which seem to betray a consciousness of superiority, and assures his readers that he knows their goodness and their ability to instruct each other. He does but recall to their mind what they already know. His boldness in so doing is prompted not so much by their need as by God’s undeserved kindness to himself, by the sacredness of the office to which God has called him, and by His purpose to make him a channel of blessing to the Gentiles, blessing wrought not by Paul but by the Spirit of God.

**Ver. 17.** Exultation: as in Romans 2:17; 5:3.

In Christ Jesus: prompted by inward contact with Him.

That refer to God: same words in Romans 4:2. As Paul contemplates God’s kindness, his own sacred office, and the grandeur of the work committed to him, his spirit rises with joy and praise, these prompted by inward union with Christ in matters pertaining to God.

**Ver. 18-19.** Reason for Paul’s exultation, viz. the work already done through his agency.

I will not dare: cp. Romans 5:7: suggesting the spiritual peril of exaggeration.

Worked-out: as in Romans 1:27; 2:9, etc.

For obedience of Gentiles: to lead them to obey: cp. Romans 1:5.

By word and work: the word preached and miracles wrought by Paul: cp. 2 Corinthians 12:12.

Signs: acts conveying a meaning deeper than that which lies on the surface: so Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 14:22; 2 Thessalonians 3:17; Revelation 12:1, 3.

Wonders: strange events calling forth astonishment: so Exodus 7:3; Daniel 6:27; 2 Corinthians 12:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Hebrews 2:4, etc. A miracle is a 'sign,' inasmuch as it teaches truth: it is a 'wonder,' in that it evokes astonishment.

In the power of the Holy Spirit: the inward agent, as the Gospel and the miracles were the outward and visible instruments, through which 'Christ wrought' out His works of power: same words in Romans 15:13. Through the inward agency of the Holy Spirit, Christ wrought miracles by the hands of Paul; and through the power thus manifested He led the heathen to believe the Gospel preached by Paul. He then produced in the hearts of those who believed, by the power of the same Spirit, the spiritual results which follow faith. As examples, see Acts 14:10; 28:6, 8.

Jerusalem: for Paul's work there, see Acts 9:28, 29.

Illyricum: probably what was called Greek Illyria, or Illyria proper, roughly corresponding to the present Turkish province of Albania. These words seem to imply that Paul preached there; possibly in the journey mentioned in Acts 20:2.

Fulfilled the Gospel: announced it fully, so that the word attained its goal by entering into and changing the hearts of men: cp. Colossians 1:25. Paul announced to all within his reach "all the counsel of God:" Acts 20:27.

**Ver.** 20-21. A further detail in Paul's mode of preaching.

Making it a point of honor: same word in 2 Corinthians 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:11. He resolved not to build on another's foundation: cp. 1 Corinthians 3:10. In so doing, he was acting in harmony with an ancient prophecy, Isaiah 52:15. The quotation is word for word from the LXX.; differing slightly from the sense of the original. But the difference is unimportant. The prophet foretold that in the days of the coming Servant of God the kings of the earth will see that which had not been told them, and will understand that which they had not heard: a clear prophecy that men who at one time knew nothing about the Gospel will experience its



benefits. Upon this declaration of God's purpose, Paul acted in preaching the Gospel. An interesting coincidence, in Acts 13:47.

Paul has now justified his bold tone in Romans 14:1-15:13, if such it be, by exulting both in (Romans 15:15, 16) the work God has given him to do and in (Romans 15:18-21) the work Christ has already done through him. A remembrance of his office and his success makes him bold to speak.

## SECTION 49

### PAUL'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE AND PRESENT BUSINESS

#### CHAPTER 15:22-33

*For which cause I was also hindered these many times from coming to you. But now no longer having room in these regions, and having for many years a longing to come to you, whenever I go to Spain-for I hope when passing through to behold you, and by you to be sent forward there, if first in part I be filled with your company.*

*But now I go to Jerusalem, ministering to the saints. For it has pleased Macedonia and Achaia to make some contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. For it has pleased them to do so: and their debtors they are. For, if in their spiritual things the Gentiles have been partners, they owe it as a debt also in the fleshly things to do public service for them. When then I have completed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on through you to Spain. And I know that when coming to you I shall come in fulness of blessing of Christ.*

*Moreover, I exhort you, brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to wrestle along with me in prayers to God on my behalf, in order that I may be rescued from the disobedient ones in Judaea, and my ministry for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints; in order that in joy I may come to you through the will of God and may along with you be refreshed. And the God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

**Ver. 22.** Paul comes now to personal matters, and to his own movements, thus returning, after expounding the Gospel, to the line of thought, and even the words, in Romans 1:8-15. The principle of action stated in Romans 15:20, 21 hindered him from going to Rome: for Christ was already preached there, and in other places nearer He was still unknown.

**Ver. 23-24.** But now: in contrast to past hindrances.

Room in these regions: places in which Christ is not yet preached. In all the great centers between Jerusalem and Italy, Paul had (Romans 15:19) preached the Gospel. Therefore, in order to carry out his maxim, he must 'now' go further from home.

Longing: as in Romans 1:11.

To come to you: cp. Romans 1:13; Acts 19:21.

Go to Spain: a Roman province where many Jews lived, and where perhaps no other Christian teacher had been. Such a journey opened to Paul a prospect, without deviating from the principle in Romans 15:20, 21, of visiting the Roman Church of which he has heard so much and in which he takes so deep an interest.

At this point the sentence is broken off, as in Romans 5:12, to explain what Paul's going 'to Spain' has to do with his desire to go to Rome.

When-passing-through: Rome being on the way to 'Spain.'

Sent forward: as in Acts 15:3; 21:5, etc.: to be helped forward, and perhaps accompanied part of the way, by Roman Christians. This was an additional reason for calling at Rome on his way to Spain.

Filled with your company: explained in Romans 1:12. The shortness of Paul's stay would permit him to receive only in part the benefit to be derived from intercourse with them.

These verses are a mark of genuineness. No forger, in a letter to the Roman Church, would make Paul's first visit to Rome subordinate to a journey to Spain.

**Ver. 25-26.** But now: in contrast to plans for the future.

To Jerusalem: as described in Acts 20:3-21:17.

Ministering: see under Romans 12:7. It frequently denotes attention to bodily wants: Matthew 8:15; 25:44; Luke 8:3.

For the saints: cp. Hebrews 6:10. By taking money for the poorer members, Paul did service for all: for he lessened a burden which fell upon all.

Macedonia: a Roman province containing Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, and Beroea: cp. Acts 16:9-12; 18:5.

Achaia: the Roman province containing Corinth and Athens: cp. Acts 18:12. The order here seems to have been the order of time in which the contributions were made: cp. 2 Corinthians 8:2 with 9:4.

Contribution, or 'partnership': same word in Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:16; 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:13; 13:13; Hebrews 13:16: cognate verb in Romans 12:13; 15:27; Philippians 4:15. It denotes a partnership with others in something good or bad. By sending this money, the Christians in Macedonia helped those at Jerusalem to bear the burden of their poverty.

The poor among the saints: consequently, the community of goods (Acts 2:45) had passed away.

**Ver. 27.** A comment on the contribution.

Debtors: cp. Romans 1:14; 8:12. Then follows proof of the debt.

Their spiritual things: cp. Romans 1:11; Ephesians 1:3: the blessings of the Gospel, given first to the Jews, and by Jews carried to the Gentiles. Thus the Gentiles became-partners (cognate to contribution in Romans 15:26) with the Jews in the blessings promised to Abraham. That the Gentiles were thus sharers of benefits wrought by the Spirit of God in the hearts of Jews, laid upon them an obligation to give to the Jewish Christians, now in want, a share of their material wealth.

Fleshly things: pertaining to the body: very suitable in the present case where money was probably needed for food and clothing. Same contrast in 1 Corinthians 9:11.

Public-service: cognate words in Romans 15:16; 13:6; 2 Corinthians 9:12, this last in the same reference. By laying upon them an obligation to help the Jewish Christians, God gave them a public and sacred work to do. On this contribution and its great spiritual importance, see 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8, 9, and my notes. By performing it, the Christians of

Macedonia and Achaia offered to God an acceptable sacrifice: Philippians 4:18; 2:17.

**Ver.** 28-29. A few concluding words about Paul's proposed visit to Rome and Spain.

Completed: same word in same reference in 2 Corinthians 8:6, 11.

Fruit: as in Romans 1:13; 6:21, 22. This contribution was a natural outworking of the spiritual life of the Gentiles, according to the laws of that life: cp. "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:22.

Sealed: a solemn attestation, as in Romans 4:11, By handing over the money to the Christians at Jerusalem, Paul solemnly and publicly declared that it had been collected for them by the Gentiles, and that it was a fruit of the Christian life of these foreign converts. The Church would thus be able to use it without hesitation, and with gratitude to God and to their benefactors.

Blessing: see under 'blessed' in Romans 1:25.

'Blessing' of Christ: the supreme good which Christ conveys by His word.

Fulness: as in Romans 11:12, 25. Paul will come with his hands 'full' of the benefits which Christ gives through the Gospel. With this assurance, compare Romans 1:11.

**Ver.** 30. A touching request for his readers' prayers, supported by an appeal to their loyalty to their Master, Jesus Christ, whose work Paul is doing, and to the love with which the Spirit fills their hearts.

'Love': to our fellow-men, as in Romans 12:9; 13:10; 14:15; 1 Cor. 13, and always when not otherwise defined.

Of the Spirit: source of this love: cp. Galatians 5:22. To refuse Paul's appeal, is therefore to resist the Spirit.

Wrestle: literally 'contend' as 'in the' public 'games:' same word in Colossians 1:29; 4:12; Luke 13:24. It suggests intense effort, like that of an athlete. In prayer we struggle with intense spiritual effort against spiritual foes. Paul begs his readers to join with him, and thus help him in this conflict.

**Ver. 31.** Specific purpose of this request for help in prayer. Verses 31, 32 thus expound ‘on my behalf’ in Romans 15:30. For interesting coincidences and marks of genuineness, see 2 Thessalonians 3:2; the only other epistle written in prospect of a visit to Jerusalem; and Acts 20:22, 23; 21:10-13, which refer to the visit Paul now has in view. Cp. 2 Corinthians 1:11. In former days Paul made many in Jerusalem tremble: and now the very thought of Jerusalem fills him with fear. How well-grounded was his fear, we learn from Acts 21:27-36.

My ministry: further described in Romans 15:25. For the success of Paul’s work, it was needful that the gift be acceptable not only (Romans 15:16) to God but also to the saints at Jerusalem. He therefore bids his readers pray both that he may be rescued from the disobedient ones in Judaea and that the service he is rendering to Jerusalem may find favor in the eyes of the Christians there.

**Ver. 32.** Further purpose of the prayers for which Paul asks.

In joy: seeing the success of my work.

Through the will of God: cp. Romans 1:10.

With you be refreshed: cp. Romans 1:12. Paul looks forward to rest in the bosom of the Roman Church after the conflict he foresees at Jerusalem, a rest resulting from the success of his work there. The earnestness of this request reveals Paul’s belief that prayer avails to rescue us even from bad men, and that therefore their violence is under God’s control: cp. 2 Corinthians 1:11; also Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:3.

**Ver. 33.** Concluding prayer: cp. Romans 15:13.

The God of peace: so Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 14:33; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23. In face of the storm ready to burst, Paul looks up to Him who dwells in perfect peace, and who gives peace to all who trust in Him.

Notice carefully the similarity in matter and phrase and tone of Romans 15:14-33 with Romans 1:8-15. These personal matters reveal to us, more than anything else in the epistle, the heart and feelings of Paul.

## SECTION 50

### SALUTATIONS TO ROME

#### CHAPTER 16:1-16

*I recommend to you Phoebe our sister, she being a deacon of the church in Cenchreae; that ye may receive her in the Lord, in a manner worthy of the saints, and may stand by her in whatever matter she may need you. For she also has been a protector of many, and of myself.*

*Salute Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who on behalf of my life laid down their own neck; to whom not only I give thanks but also all the churches of the Gentiles: and salute the church in their house. Salute Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is a firstfruit of Asia for Christ. Salute Mary who labored much for you. Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsfolk and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who were in Christ before me. Salute Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urban, our fellow-worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. Salute Apelles, the proved one in Christ. Salute those from the household of Aristobulus. Salute Herodion, my kinsman. Salute them from the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord. Salute Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute Persis the beloved, who labored much in the Lord. Salute Rufus, the chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobus, Hermas, and the brethren with them. Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints with them. Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ salute you.*

**Ver.** 1-2. Phoebe: not mentioned elsewhere. These words suggest that she was the bearer of this epistle.

Deacon: see under Romans 12:7. She held an office in the church, probably to care for the bodily wants of the poor and sick.

Cenchrea: Acts 18:18: the eastern port of Corinth, five miles away.

In the Lord: cp. Philippians 2:29. Their inward union with their Master should prompt them to welcome Phoebe.

Worthy-of 'the saints': same word in Ephesians 4:1; Philippians 1:27; Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 3 John 6: as those who belong to God ought to receive a fellow-servant.

Saints: as in Romans 1:7.

Protector of many: probably by caring for their wants, in her office of 'deacon.' That 'Phoebe' was a 'sister,' and still more an office-bearer, gave her a claim on the kindness of the Roman Christians: that she had herself been a helper of many, and of Paul himself, gave her a special claim: and she would probably need their assistance.

**Ver.** 3-5a. Prisca: or 'Priscilla,' Acts 18:2: named before her husband also in Acts 18:18, 26; 2 Timothy 4:19.

Fellow-workers: probably at Ephesus, where they were living a year ago: cp. 1 Corinthians 16:19. This implies that they had only recently taken up their abode at Rome. Perhaps after Claudius died the edict which compelled them to leave Rome was no longer enforced.

Their own neck: at the risk of the executioner's axe, they had saved Paul's life. This reminds us how much of his history is unknown to us. By saving Paul, they had earned the thanks of all the churches of the Gentiles. These words suggest that this service was known and acknowledged.

Church in their house: so at Ephesus, 1 Corinthians 16:19: cp. Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2. Probably it was their custom, wherever they lived, to gather together their fellow Christians in their house for mutual edification. Notice that this small part of the Roman Church is called a 'church.'

**Ver.** 5b-16. Firstfruit: cp. Romans 8:23.

Asia: the Roman province: so Acts 2:9; 16:6; Revelation 1:4, 11.



Labored much for you: understood by the readers, but not by us.

Junias: a man, or 'Junia' a woman.

Kinsfolk: 'blood-relations:' so Mark 6:4; Acts 10:24. Paul would not state in this special and emphatic, yet ambiguous, way the mere fact that they were Jews: contrast Romans 9:3.

Fellow-prisoners: cp. Colossians 4:10; Philemon 23.

Among the apostles: in the apostolic circle they were honorably known. It is utterly unsafe to infer from this easily-explained phrase that they were themselves apostles.

Before me: consequently, while persecuting the Church, Paul had Christian relatives.

Our fellow-worker: i.e. with Paul and his colleagues: cp. 2 Corinthians 2:14-17.

The proved-one: his faith had been put to some special test.

Rufus: possibly the same as in Mark 15:21.

And mine: a recognition of special maternal kindness to himself.

The brethren with them: implying some connection, local or in joint Christian enterprise, altogether unknown to us. Another company in Romans 16:15.

Holy kiss: 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14.

All the churches: to all whom he met, Paul said that he was writing to the Christians at Rome; and all sent greeting.

Of the above names, 'Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis,' are women: 'Junias' or 'Junia' and 'Julias' or 'Julia' are doubtful: the rest are men.

That Paul knew so many persons in a city he had never visited, need not surprise us: for all sorts of people went to live at Rome. Two-thirds of the names are Greek. And even Roman names might, as in the case of Paul, be

names of Jews and Greeks. The case of Aquila suggests how some others may have become known to Paul.

## SECTION 51

### A WARNING AGAINST DIVISION

#### CHAPTER 16:17-20

*But I exhort you, brethren, to mark those who make the divisions and the snares contrary to the teaching, which ye learnt. For such men do not serve the Lord Christ, but their own belly: and through their smooth talking and fine talking they deceive the hearts of the guileless. For your obedience has reached to all men. In you then I rejoice. But I desire you to be wise for that which is good, and pure for that which is evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet quickly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

**Ver.** 17-19. Divisions: so 1 Corinthians 3:3; Galatians 5:20.

Snares: so Romans 14:13. They who set Christian against Christian are setting a trap into which both themselves and others are likely to fall.

Contrary to, etc.: explained in Romans 16:18. Paul taught men to

serve Christ: these men serve their lower appetites. Men ‘serve’ their own belly when they make its gratification the aim of their life: cp. Romans 6:12; Philippians 3:19. Paul here uncovers the real source and tendency of all party spirit, viz. self-gratification; in this case, of a gross kind.

The guileless: lacking, as the context implies, not only deceit but wisdom. That innocent men are their victims, increases the guilt of the deceivers. These men are a complete contrast to those in Romans 14:6 who, while eating food which some disapprove, eat it “for the Lord.”

For your obedience and in you then: in sharp contrast to the ‘guileless’ who are led into disobedience.

Has reached to all: as good tidings: cp. 1 Thessalonians 1:8; Romans 1:8.

**Ver. 20.** From the authors of discord Paul turns to the God of peace: cp. Romans 15:33.

Satan: a Hebrew word denoting ‘adversary:’ e.g. 1 Kings 11:14, 23, 25; Numbers 22:22, 32; and used in Job 1:6-12; Zechariah 3:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1 for the great supernatural adversary of God and man: cp. Revelation 20:2; 1 Corinthians 5:5, etc. As hostile to the God of peace, he is an author of confusion.

Will crush ‘Satan’: thus fulfilling the promise in Genesis 3:15, which is in part fulfilled in each victory over evil.

Under your feet: which God will make strong enough to crush Satan.

Quickly: for in Christ the battle is already over.

The grace, etc.: may the favor of our Master be your companion.

That Paul refers to the divisions only for a moment at the end of his letter, suggests that this evil was not serious at Rome. That this reference is found in a letter written probably from Corinth where divisions were rife (1 Corinthians 1:11; 2 Corinthians 11:11-15), is a mark of genuineness.

## SECTION 52

### *SALUTATIONS FROM CORINTH: AND DOXOLOGY*

#### CHAPTER 16:21-27

*Timothy my fellow-worker salutes you; and Lucius and Jameson and Sosipater, my kinsmen. I, Tertius, who wrote the letter in the Lord, salute you. Gaius, the host of me and of the whole church, salutes you. Erastus, the steward of the city, salutes you: and the brother Quartus.*

*To Him that is able to establish you, according to my Gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to a revelation of a mystery kept in silence for eternal times but manifested now, and made known, through prophetic writings, according to a command of the eternal God, for obedience of faith, for all the nations, to the only wise God through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for the ages. Amen.*

**Ver.** 20 seemed to be the end of the letter. But, after writing it, Paul either receives or remembers the greetings from Corinth to Rome which follow. He adds them as a postscript; and then concludes again with a doxology.

**Ver.** 21-23. Timothy my fellow-worker: so Acts 16:3; 17:14, 15; 18:5. When Paul, after writing this letter, started from Corinth to Jerusalem, Timothy was with him: see Introd. iv. 4; Acts 20:4.

Lucius: same name in Acts 13:1.

Jameson: same name in Acts 17:5. Whether they were the same men, we cannot tell.

Sosipater: possibly the same as 'Sosipater' in Acts 20:4.

My kinsmen: as in Romans 16:7. In our total ignorance of Paul's family, we need not wonder that he had three relatives at Rome and three at Corinth.

Tertius, who wrote the letter, inserts a greeting in his own name. The use of a secretary is also implied in 1 Corinthians 16:21; 2 Thessalonians 3:17. But the peculiarity and close similarity of style suggest that we have dictated words of Paul.

Gaius: perhaps the same as in 1 Corinthians 1:14. If so, his name confirms our inference that this letter was written from Corinth. Same name in Acts 19:29; 20:4: it was very common.

Of the whole church: either by finding room for its meetings, or by entertaining many of its members.

Erastus: probably not the same as in Acts 19:22. The commonness of the name leaves us uncertain whether he was the same as in 2 Timothy 4:20.

Steward: in charge of the city finances. This mention of a Christian in an influential position confirms 1 Corinthians 1:26, "not many mighty."

**Ver. 24.** Certainly spurious. Of Romans 16:25-27, Origen says in his commentary, "In other copies, i.e. in those not desecrated by Marcion, we find this passage itself differently placed. For in some MSS., after the place we have mentioned above, viz. 'but all that is not of faith is sin,' joining on at once is read 'but to Him that is able to establish you.' But other MSS. have it at the end as now placed." These verses follow Romans 14:23 in one uncial and in many later copies. A few, including the Alex. MS., have it in both places; and a few in neither. But the authority of nearly all the oldest copies, of the oldest versions, and of Origen the earliest commentator, puts beyond doubt that the verses are genuine, and that their place in our Bible is the right one.

**Ver. 25.** Paul put his usual farewell in Romans 16:20; and now, instead of repeating it, concludes with a doxology: cp. 2 Peter 3:18, and especially Jude 24. In view of hostile influences around, he looks up to Him that is able to establish, i.e. to give immoveable firmness: same word in Romans 1:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:17; 3:3.

According to my Gospel: same words in Romans 2:16: an unshaken position in harmony with the tidings of salvation.

Proclamation: as in Romans 2:21: same word in 1 Corinthians 1:21; 2:4; 15:14; 2 Timothy 4:17; Titus 1:3. The good news is also an announcement made by Christ as ‘herald:’ cognate word in Romans 2:21; 10:8, 14, 15.

Revelation: as in Romans 1:17.

Mystery: as in Romans 11:25.

Eternal, or ‘age-lasting’: cognate to ‘ages’ in Romans 16:27, and ‘age’ in Romans 12:2.

‘Eternal times’: same words in 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2. Since the plural times cannot denote the uncreated pre-existence of God, this term can only denote the long ages before the appearance of Christ, during which the salvation afterwards announced in the Gospel for all that believe was kept in silence. But even then it was “promised:” Titus 1:2. A similar use of the word ‘eternal’ for a long period of past time is found (LXX.) in Psalm 24:7, 9; 77:5; Isaiah 58:12; 61:4. In the Gospel God reveals, by a proclamation brought by Christ, a purpose kept in silence during long ages and unknown now except to those to whom the Spirit of God reveals it, viz. that without respect of nationality God saves all who believe: a close parallel in Ephesians 3:2-11.

**Ver.** 26. Manifested: as in Romans 1:19: set publicly before men, viz. by the coming and preaching of Christ.

Now: in Paul’s own day.

By means of prophetic writings: viz. the Jewish Scriptures: cp. Romans 1:2; 3:22. The apostles proved that Jesus is the Christ, and thus made known the ‘mystery’ of salvation, by showing that in Him were fulfilled the O.T. descriptions of the Messiah. So Acts 18:28; 2 Timothy 3:15. Thus the O.T. held a place in their teaching it cannot have with us who received O.T. and N.T. at the same time and with like authority.

According to a command of God: so 1 Timothy 1:1; Titus 1:3. The Gospel was preached to the Gentiles at the bidding of God.

Eternal or ‘age-lasting God’: reigning throughout the ‘age-lasting times.’ The use of the same adjective in the same sentence for limited and for unlimited duration, need not surprise us. In each case, it denotes long

duration: and this is the meaning of the word. That God has neither beginning nor end, and that the long ages of silence had both, the readers knew so well that express distinction was needless.

For obedience of faith: as in Romans 1:5: purpose of the ‘command’ to preach the Gospel.

For all the nations: persons embraced in this purpose: cp. Romans 1:5.

**Ver.** 27. God alone wise: cp. 1 Timothy 1:17, “alone God;” 1 Timothy 6:16 “alone has immortality.” The Father, even as compared with the Son, is, as the fount of deity, the one ultimate source of wisdom and possessor of immortal life: cp. Romans 11:33.

Through Jesus Christ: as the channel through which the Father manifests Himself and accomplishes His purposes. At this point the sentence is broken off; and concludes with a relative clause: to whom be, etc.

The glory for the ages, or ‘for ever,’ as in Romans 11:36. It is quite uncertain whether or not Paul added ‘of the ages,’ as in Galatians 1:5; Philippians 4:20; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2 Timothy 4:18.

A close parallel in Jude 24, 25: “To Him who is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you in the presence of His glory without blemish, in gladness, to Him who is alone God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, greatness, might, and authority, before all the age and now and for all the ages. Amen.”

Paul turns from the perils around to Him whose power is able to preserve the Roman Christians unmoved amid all. He is encouraged by remembering that what he desires for them is but a realisation of that which Christ was sent forth from God to proclaim, an accomplishment of a purpose which, after lying hidden for long ages in the mind of God, had in their days been revealed. He remembers that to prepare the way for the Gospel the prophets had written, that the Gospel was preached by the command of God, in order to lead all men to obey God. A contemplation of this eternal purpose, and of the means by which God is slowly but surely advancing to its accomplishment, calls forth praise to the all-wise God. But Paul cannot ascribe praise to the Father without speaking of Him through whom alone the light of the Father’s wisdom has fallen on our race. And,



while he praises the might and wisdom of God, he knows, with heart-felt approbation, that the song of praise will go up for ever.

Thus this glorious epistle leaves us gazing into the endless succession of coming ages and listening to the song which throughout each successive age will rise with louder and sweeter note to Him who, before the ages were, formed for us, whom He foresaw in sin and ruin, His wondrous and costly purpose of salvation and life, who throughout the successive ages of the earlier covenants carried His purpose towards and to its historic completion in Jesus of Nazareth, and who now day by day carries forward the same purpose by His Spirit in the hearts of us His children until that day when we and Paul and the whole family of earth and heaven shall join in that anthem of praise whose notes from afar, as the weary pen of the apostle falls from his hand, are already ringing in His ears.

# EXPOSITION OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

## SECTION 1

### PAUL'S GREETING TO, AND GRATITUDE FOR, THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS

#### CHAPTER 1:1-9

*Paul, a called apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God which there is at Corinth, men sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place belonging to them and to us. Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*I thank my God always about you, for the grace of God given to you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you have been enriched in Him, in all utterance and all knowledge, according as the testimony of the Christ took a firm place in you; causing you not to fall short in any gift of grace, at the same time waiting for the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ; who will also make you firm until the end, unimpeachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is God, through whom you were called to partnership with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**Ver.** 1. Paul, called apostle, Christ Jesus: Romans 1:1. Paul belonged to Jesus of Nazareth, the Anointed One, as one sent by Him on a special mission to men and thus placed by Him in the first rank in His Church: Acts 26:17f; 1 Corinthians 12:28.

Through the will of God. 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1; more fully, 1 Timothy 1:1. As usual, Paul rises from the Son to the Father,

whose will is the source of whatever Christ has done, and therefore of Paul's apostleship. Cp. Galatians 1:4. In this letter Paul will be compelled to use his apostolic authority. He therefore begins by reminding his readers that he received this authority by an express summons, and by the will of God.

Sosthenes: joined with Paul as joint author of the Epistle, or rather as sanctioning its contents. So "Timothy," in 2 Corinthians., Philippians., Col.; "Timothy and Silvanus," in 1 and 2 Thessalonians.; "all the saints," in Galatians. The close connection of Timothy and Silvanus with the church addressed, moved Paul to join their names with his own. 'Sosthenes,' however, is quite unknown to us. (The same name in Acts 18:17 is small proof or presumption of identity.) But he was evidently known to the Corinthians. And, doubtless, Paul had reasons for intimating in this way that he approved the contents of the Epistle. He may have been Paul's penman. But this would be no sufficient reason for his mention here; any more than Tertius, Romans 1:1; 16:22. Nor is it proved by his mention here. For it is not likely that two penmen were needed for the Epistles to the Thessalonians: nor could that to the Galatians be written down by "all the saints with" Paul.

**Ver. 2-3.** The church: see below.

Of God. 1 Corinthians 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9. As church members they stand in a special relation to God. Cp. 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1.

Which there is, etc.: emphatic assertion that 'at Corinth' there is a 'church of God.'

Sanctified in, etc.; made objectively holy; see Romans 1:7. Subjectively, some of them were very unholy: 1 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 12:21. This reference to the objective holiness of the whole church, implies that 'in Christ Jesus' refers to what took place objectively in the historic and personal body of Christ. By giving Him to die and raising Him from the grave and to heaven, and by proclaiming the Gospel through His lips, which Gospel they had accepted, God claimed these Corinthians for His own; and thus placed them in a new and solemn position, in which, even in spite of their unfaithfulness, they now stood. Cp. Hebrews 10:10.

Called saints: Romans 1:7; 8:28. After reminding them that they were members of ‘the church of God,’ and that, in the historic facts of the death and resurrection of the Anointed Jesus, God had claimed them for His own, Paul reminds them that it was by a special summons that they had been brought into the solemn position in which God’s claim placed them. This three-fold description of their position is specially appropriate at the beginning of a letter written mainly to correct behavior altogether inconsistent with their holy calling.

With all that, etc.: To others besides the Corinthians, Paul writes. To ‘call upon Jesus’ in prayer, was to confess that He is ‘Lord’ and ‘Christ’ and was therefore a distinctive mark of a Christian. It also made prominent the Name of Him addressed. Hence the full emphatic title. Cp. Romans 10:13.

Belonging to them, i.e. to the Christians at Corinth; goes naturally with the preceding words ‘in every place,’ giving to these a definite reference. Otherwise the Epistle is addressed to all Christians everywhere; which its contents makes very unlikely. The above simple reference is supported by the equivalent “in all Achaia,” 2 Corinthians 1:1. There were probably other churches in Achaia, e.g. Cenchreae, (Romans 16:1.) some founded perhaps by Paul himself during his sojourn at Corinth, and others by the efforts of the Corinthian Christians, which looked up to the metropolis of the province as their mother, and thus belonged spiritually to the Christians at Corinth.

To us: reminds us that these daughter-churches belonged also to Paul and his colleagues, both as being within the divinely marked limits (2 Corinthians 10:13-16) of their labor and as directly or indirectly the fruit of it. The added words remind us again of Paul’s apostolic authority, which he will soon be compelled to use.

Us; may include Paul’s colleagues, Timothy, Silvanus, etc.; or, for reasons unknown to us, Sosthenes; or may be somewhat indefinite, as in Romans 1:5.

Grace and peace: Romans 1:7.

**Ver. 4.** I thank: Romans 1:8. Although this letter was written, with many tears, (2 Corinthians 2:4,) to reprove and correct, Paul’s first thought, as he begins it, is gratitude. For, in spite of the gross immorality (1

Corinthians 5:1; 2 Corinthians 12:21) of some and the spiritual childishness (1 Corinthians 3:1ff, 5:2) of the church generally, a great work had been done by God at Corinth. And this good work Paul thinks of and acknowledges before he begins to find fault.

My God: Romans 1:8.

Always: 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:3. Gratitude for the work done at Corinth and elsewhere was to Paul an abiding habit of mind. He cannot say “about you all,” as in Romans 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:2.

Grace given to you. Cp. Romans 1:5: not the general favor with which God smiles on all the justified, as in Ephesians 1:3, but His special favor shown to the Corinthians in the gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:5. So Romans 12:3; 15:15. Consequently, ‘in Christ’ is also subjective, denoting that inward spiritual contact with Christ through which we personally receive God’s favor and the various undeserved gifts it moves Him to bestow. This implies the objective sense found in 1 Corinthians 1:2; but is distinct from it. Through the death and resurrection of the historic Jesus, and through personal contact with His Spirit, God’s favor shines upon us.

**Ver. 5.** That in, etc.; specifies “grace given.” In everything 2 Corinthians 9:11: limited, like all universals, by the writer’s mental horizon; (see under Romans 5:18; ) and here expounded by ‘all utterance and all knowledge,’ which include all the spiritual capacities needed for church progress.

Enriched: Romans 2:4; 9:23; 10:12; 11:12, 33; 2 Corinthians 6:10; 8:2, 9; 9:11, etc.

In Him; repeats “in Christ Jesus;” and thus lays stress upon the truth that all real wealth comes through spiritual contact with Him.

All knowledge: mental comprehension of the truth in ‘all’ its aspects.

All utterance: ability to speak forth the truth in ‘all’ the modes needful to convey it to the various sorts of men. These gifts seldom go together in one man. But he who possesses either of them is an enrichment to his church. And the church which possesses, in its various members, these gifts in a special degree is truly rich.

Utterance is put first as the more conspicuous. [The R.V. 'were enriched' gives to the indefinite tense a definite reference which does not belong to it. See 'The Expositor,' 1st Series vol. xi. p. 296.]

**Ver. 6.** Testimony of the Christ: 2 Timothy 1:8: probably Paul's witness about the Messiah. Cp. Acts 1:8, "You shall be my witnesses." For Paul thought, probably, of Christ more frequently as the great matter than as the preacher of the Gospel. That Paul's preaching is here called a 'testimony,' agrees with the Epistle to the Romans, of which the argument rests on five unproved assertions which Paul accepted because they came from the lips of Christ. See my "Romans," dissertation i. 3.

Took-a-firm-place: same word in Romans 15:8; (cp Romans 4:16; ) there objectively, here subjectively. "'The testimony' was fully believed by you, and thus became an immovable conviction 'in you.'"

According as, etc.: Their enrichment in utterance and knowledge was a result proportionate to their firm belief of the Gospel. For, a firm grasp of the great foundation truths enables us to make progress in all Christian knowledge, and to speak out suitably, clearly, and forcefully the word we have believed.

**Ver. 7.** So that, etc.: result of their firm faith, and therefore a negative parallel to "in everything you have been enriched."

Fall-short: Romans 3:23; 1 Corinthians 8:8; 12:24; 2 Corinthians 11:5, 8; 12:11: in view either of others who have more, or of our own need. Here, probably the latter. It is the exact opposite of enrichment.

Gift-of-grace; Romans 1:11, Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 7:7; 12:4; includes all spiritual gifts wrought by the favor of God. All such are capacities for spiritual growth, and for usefulness to others; and are therefore spiritual wealth. No such capacity was lacking to the church at Corinth. And these gifts were a result of their firm faith.

Revelation of, etc.: 1 Peter 1:7, 13: the sudden uplifting, at the great day, of the veil which now hides our Master from our view. Spiritually, He is already (Galatians 1:16) unveiled to us. Since the appearance of Christ will be an outward objective fact, He is said (Colossians 3:4) to be

“manifested:” since He will be actually seen by all, His appearance is also a revelation. See under Romans 1:17, 19.

Waiting for: Romans 8:19, 23, 25. They already possessed spiritual gifts which were a proof of God’s favor: while at the same time they were eagerly looking forward to that day when Jesus will visibly appear to bring in the final glory. These added words remind us that the Christian life is essentially a looking forward to future glory. All present enrichment is but an earnest of the better things which Christ, at His coming, will bring.

**Ver. 8.** Who also, etc.: another blessing which will follow. The spiritual wealth already received can be retained, and our expectations fulfilled, only by the stability which day by day Christ will give. Cp. Romans 16:25; 2 Corinthians 1:21.

Make-you-firm: same word as in 1 Corinthians 1:6. They in whom the Gospel has a firm place, are themselves immovable. These words must be understood in harmony with Romans 11:20, etc., which teaches that continuance in the Christian life depends upon continued faith, and implies the possibility that faith may fail, even finally. But this does not prevent us from cherishing a firm confidence of the final salvation of ourselves and others. Cp. Philippians 1:6.

To the end; of the present state of probation, whether ended by death or by the coming of Christ. So 2 Corinthians 1:13; Hebrews 3:6, 14; 6:11.

Unimpeachable in the Day, etc.: so that they will then (Philippians 1:10) lie open to no charge (Romans 8:33) such as will exclude them from the Kingdom.

The Day of our Lord Jesus Christ: 1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 1:6, 10; 2:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2. To the day of Christ’s return the early Christians looked forward, as Israel did ages before to the “Day of Jehovah,” (Joel 1:15; 2:1, etc.,) i.e. to the day when Jehovah would rescue His people and punish the wicked. To stand ‘unimpeachable’ (cp. Colossians 1:22f) ‘in the Day of Christ,’ is to obtain the glory which He will bring.

**Ver. 9.** Faithful (1 Corinthians 4:17) is God: 1 Corinthians 10:13. Again, as in 1 Corinthians 1:1, Paul rises from the Son to the Father; and supports the assurance of 1 Corinthians 1:8 by an appeal to the character of God.

Partnership: 1 Corinthians 10:16, 18, 20: same word in Romans 15:26f. Already (Romans 8:16f) we are sharers of the sonship of Christ: and therefore those kept “to the end” will share the Firstborn Son’s inheritance of glory. For this, they were (Romans 8:29) predestined and called. Cp. Revelation 3:21. Notice the emphatic and repeated title in 1 Corinthians 1:7, 8, culminating in the fuller title here.

Through: Romans 1:2. The gospel ‘call’ (1 Corinthians 1:2) is not only always said to come from the Father as its source, but comes to us by His immediate activity, sending His Son to announce it and raising Him from the dead to prove that the call is divine. Cp. Galatians 1:1. “All things are from Him and through Him,” Romans 11:36. This call, given to us by the agency of God Himself, implies that His faithfulness is a pledge that Christ will give us the stability needful to obtain that to which we are called.

Approaching the Corinthian Christians, in whom he has much to blame, Paul reminds them that by an express summons, by the will of God, he has been placed in the first rank of the servants of Christ. He thinks proper to add that in what he is about to say, Sosthenes agrees with him. He remembers the dignity of his readers as members of the church of God; that, through the death and resurrection of Christ, they have been claimed by God to be His own; and that, like his own apostleship, this claim was conveyed to them by a divine summons. Nor does he forget that other churches around look up to that at Corinth as their mother; churches which belong to him as well as to them. To the mother and her daughters he sends greeting from the common Father and the common Master.

Although writing to them in tears for their unfaithfulness, it is ever in Paul’s mind that he has at Corinth cause for gratitude to his God. The church there has evident marks of the favor of God. The Gospel they have firmly believed has made its members rich in knowledge of the Will of God and in ability to declare it. In no gift needful for spiritual progress are they behind. They are looking forward to the appearance of Christ. And Paul



cherishes a hope resting on the faithfulness of God that Christ will keep them steadfast to the end.

Notice that Paul speaks first in 1 Corinthians 1:2, of the objective holiness of the Corinthian church arising from the divine call which has gathered them together and made them a church, a holiness belonging to all Christians alike; and then, in 1 Corinthians 1:4-7, of their own special subjective development in the Christian life.

The word CHURCH represents a common Greek word, 'Ecclesia,' or "calling out;" from which we have "ecclesiastic, " , etc., and the French "eglise, " , etc. The 'ecclesia' was the assembly of the free citizens of a Greek city, summoned by herald to discuss and determine matters of public interest. The word was also used for any public assembly, whether regular as in Acts 19:39 or occasional as in Acts 19:32, 41, where we have the same word. It is often used in the LXX. for the regular gatherings of Israel, in reference either to the event, or to the people gathered together. Cp. Deuteronomy 9:10, "in the day of the assembly;" also Psalm 22:23 with Hebrews 2:12; 1 Kings 8:65; Deuteronomy 23:1-3, 1 Chronicles 28:2, 8; Nehemiah 13:1, where we have the "church of the Lord," "of God;" and Judith 6:16; 14:6; Sirach 15:5; 1 Macc. 4:59. Similarly, in Acts 7:38 it denotes the nation of Israel assembled in the wilderness.

This name, familiar both to Greeks and Jews, but with different associations was chosen by the followers of Jesus for their frequent gatherings, for mutual edification and for joint-worship: cp. 1 Corinthians 11:18; 14:19, 28, 34f. It then came easily to denote a company of believers in the habit of thus meeting together. This naturally included all professed Christians living in one city. But even small assemblies, parts of larger churches, and held in private houses, were called churches; as in 1 Corinthians 16:19, etc. The totality of believers in even the largest cities is spoken of as the one church of that city; but those living in different cities of one country, as (1 Corinthians 16:1, 19) "the churches of Galatia, " , etc. The only exception is Acts 9:31, "The church throughout all Judea." This local sense is that of three-fourths of the cases in which the word is found in the New Testament.

Paul assumes always that all church-members are justified, sons of God by faith, sealed by the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 6:11; 12:13; Romans 5:9,

11; Galatians 3:26; 4:6; and never urges them to obtain these blessings. This does not imply that there were no false or weak brethren; but certainly implies that these blessings are the present privilege of all followers of Christ.

In a few sublime passages, Ephesians 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23-32; Colossians 1:18, 24; Hebrews 12:23, 'the Church' denotes all those who are savingly united to Christ; and therefore includes, we may hope, many not in outward union with the professed people of God, and excludes some who are. Some of these passages include the church triumphant.

The word refers sometimes to a particular church as representing the conception of 'the' universal 'church,' 1 Corinthians 10:32; 11:22; Acts 20:28; in 1 Corinthians 12:28, to the whole community of believers, at whose head God placed the apostles, and whom (1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13; Philippians 3:6) Paul formerly persecuted.

To sum up: The word 'church' denotes either the totality of professed followers of Christ living in one place, organized under its own officers and probably meeting together if practicable for edification and worship, or a smaller assembly included in the larger one and meeting for the same purposes, or the totality of the justified children of God, visible only to His eye, now in part on earth in part within the veil, but destined to be forever the glorified bride of Christ. In a few cases it denotes a particular church as representing the whole community of believers; and once the community as a whole.

# DIVISION I

## ABOUT THE CHURCH-PARTIES

### CHAPTERS 1:10-4:

## SECTION 2

### HE HAS HEARD OF THEIR DIVISIONS

#### CHAPTER 1:10-17a

*But I exhort you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you may all speak the same thing, and there may not be among you divisions, but you may be fully equipped in the same mind and in the same opinion. For it has been declared to me about you, my brothers, by them of Cloe, that there are strifes among you. I mean (Or, say.) this, that each of you says, I am a follower of Paul, but I, of Apollos; but I of Cephas; but I, of Christ. Christ has been divided. Was Paul crucified on your behalf? Or, for the name of Paul were you baptized? I thank God that not one of you I baptized, except Crispus and Gaius; lest any one should say that for my name you were baptized. And I baptized also the house of Stephanas. For the rest I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to announce good news.*

This Epistle is a reply to a letter from Corinth (1 Corinthians 7:1) asking advice on sundry matters. But other matters more serious than these and apparently not mentioned in the Corinthian letter, Paul has heard of, and must deal with, before he begins to answer these less important questions. Of these more serious matters, he mentions first and at great length the church-parties. This subject he introduces in 2, by an exhortation to harmony, 1 Corinthians 1:10; tells them what he has heard, 1 Corinthians

1:11, 12; shows its impropriety, 1 Corinthians 1:13; and expounds his own contrary conduct, 1 Corinthians 1:14-17a.

**Ver.** 10. Brothers: exact term used for the sons of one human father. Paul supports his earnest and affectionate appeal (Romans 15:30; 16:17) by mentioning that one great ‘Name’ (1 Corinthians 1:2, cp. Romans 1:5) which awakens in all Christians the deepest emotions of love and gratitude, which all Christians profess and seek to exalt among men, and which should be a bond of union to the universal church.

Speak the same thing: opposite of “each of you says, etc.,” 1 Corinthians 1:12.

Divisions: separations arising naturally from expressed differences of opinion.

Fully-equipped: quite ready for use or service: akin to “thoroughly furnished,” 2 Timothy 3:17. Same word in Romans 9:22, “made-ready for destruction.” It is frequently used of that which has been damaged, and thus made unfit for use: e.g. Matthew 4:21, “mending their nets;” Ezra 4:12, “set up the walls.” It was used by the Greeks for the removal of faction in the state: e.g. Herodotus, bk. v. 28.

The same mind: same mental faculty of looking through (Romans 1:20) things seen to their inward essence, naturally leading to ‘the same opinion’ (1 Corinthians 7:25, 40) in matters of detail. Only those churches and Christians who are filled with a spirit of harmony and who look at the various details of church life in the light of an earnest desire for the general good, are fully equipped for their work and conflict.

**Ver.** 11-12. Reason for the above exhortation. Paul introduces his charge by an expression of affection, ‘my brothers,’ even warmer than that of 1 Corinthians 1:10. Both Cloe and the relationship to her ‘of them of Cloe,’ are quite unknown. Paul’s mention of them implies that they were willing for it to be known that they had given this information. This was no small test of their good faith.

Strifes: natural result of “divisions.”

Each of you. The fault was universal.

Apollos: Acts 18:24-19:1. His complete personal concord with Paul, 1 Corinthians 16:12 reveals.

Cephas: an Aramaic name denoting “rock” or “stone,” given (John 1:43) by Jesus to Simon. “Petra” is its Greek equivalent, and is so used (LXX.) in Jeremiah 4:29; Job 30:6, where we have a Hebrew form of the same Aramaic word. But, since “Petra” is feminine, the less exact masculine equivalent “Petros” (Peter) is used as the Greek name of the Apostle. The meaning of this name gives force to Matthew 16:18, “Thou art Rock: and on this Rock I will build my church.” This sense is reproduced, though not accurately, in the French version “Tu es Pierre, et sur cette pierre, etc.” In Paul’s epistles the name Peter is found twice, Galatians 2:7, 8; Cephas, eight times, Galatians 1:18; 2:9, 11, 14; 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5. That a party in Corinth, a Greek city called itself by an Aramaic name, suggests that its members were chiefly Jews, and that probably they prided themselves in the name so solemnly given and expounded by Christ.

This verse refers to a matter well known to the Corinthian Christians; but known to us only by difficult and uncertain inference from 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:8, and from a few scattered and doubtful references elsewhere. As we come to each reference we will examine the evidence it affords. This evidence we will gather together at the end of DIV. 1; and try to obtain thus a view, necessarily imperfect, of these church-parties.

From this verse we learn that at Corinth there were four parties, calling themselves by four names; and that to one or other of these parties all the church members belonged. That Paul puts all the parties side by side, proves that all were to blame, even the last. That Paul is mentioned first, then Apollos, suggests that the parties arose in the order here given. That ‘Cephas’ was a party name, is no proof that Peter, any more than ‘Christ,’ had actually preached at Corinth. The Aramaic name suggests that the party was founded by Jews who appealed to the authority of Peter. Possibly something Peter had said or done (cp. Galatians 2:11) may have been misconstrued for their own purposes by unscrupulous partisans. One party had dared to inscribe on its banner, in token doubtless of assumed superiority, the name of ‘Christ.’

**Ver. 13.** Christ has been and is divided, suggesting by “of Christ” but applicable to all the parties; and showing their sad result. All the parties, even that which prided itself in His Name, had been practically tearing to pieces the Master they professed to serve; and continued to do so. Christ shows Himself, and speaks, to men, and works out His purpose of mercy, through the lives and lips of His people, who are His body, (1 Corinthians 12:27,) and His representatives. The practical influence of Christ upon the world is proportionate to their oneness of aim and effort: for this oneness is evidently not human but divine. Consequently, whatever divides Christians, lessens Christ’s influence upon the world; by presenting to men a practically mutilated, and therefore comparatively ineffective, Savior. The practical identity of Christ and His people will often meet us. Cp. 1 Corinthians 12:12, “So also is Christ.”

With good taste ‘Paul’ chooses his own name as an example of the impropriety of making men heads of church-parties. The evident surprise of this question betrays the infinite difference, in his view, between Christ’s death for men and the deadly peril to which Paul constantly exposed himself for the salvation of men. This difference can be explained only by the great Doctrine of Romans 3:24-26.

On your behalf: Romans 5:6.

Crucified, baptized: the greatest events in the history of the church, and of the individual; (cp. Romans 6:3; ) and most closely connected.

**Ver. 14.** I baptized none of you: a beautiful trait of Paul’s character. Most preachers delight to take a prominent part in the public reception of their converts. But Paul saw the danger of this, as tending to exalt the preacher in men’s eyes. He therefore purposely (1 Corinthians 1:15) and systematically placed himself on such occasions in the background. Cp. Acts 10:48. This he could well afford to do because of the greater honor, given to him, of preaching the Gospel and thus leading men to Christ. He wished men to think, not of the successful preacher, but of Him whose professed servants the baptized ones were. How different was the aim of those who wrote Paul’s name on the banner of their party! Paul thanks God for his own conduct. For every good action is prompted by God, and enriches the actor.

Crispus: Acts 18:6-8. The conversion of the ruler of the synagogue with his whole family was doubtless an era in the founding of the church at Corinth.

Gaius: Romans 16:23. That he was “host of the whole church,” suggests that he, like Crispus, was a man of importance. And, though souls are of equal worth to God, yet the accession of these men was so important in its influence upon others that Paul thought fit to make them an exception to his usual custom, and himself baptize them. For, like all wise men, he was prepared, when special circumstances made it expedient, to deviate even from a good custom.

**Ver. 15.** Purpose of Paul’s abstinence from baptizing, viz. to prevent the supposition that the baptized ones stood henceforth in some special relation to himself, i.e. to prevent what had actually happened at Corinth.

Any one: within or without the church.

Should say: in contrast to “each of you says,” 1 Corinthians 1:12. It is possible that Paul had noticed at Corinth a tendency to hero-worship, and to guard against it had been specially careful to keep himself in the background.

**Ver. 16.** Another exception in Paul’s custom.

House: Matthew 10:13; 12:25: the household, including wife, children, and servants. The family of ‘Stephenas,’ as of Crispus, (Acts 18:8) joined its head in accepting the Gospel: 1 Corinthians 16:15. Perhaps even before Paul came they were like Cornelius (Acts 10:2) who “feared God with all his house.” The importance of the conversion of this family, which was the beginning (1 Corinthians 16:15) of the church in Achaia, moved Paul to baptize it personally, and perhaps all together. ‘Stephanas’ seems to have been (1 Corinthians 16:17) one of the bearers of the letter to which this Epistle was a reply. How little we know the interesting memories awakened in Paul’s mind by the names of Crispus, Gaius, and Stephanas!

That Paul is said to have baptized the three households of Lydia and the gaoler (Acts 16:15, 33) and Stephanas, has been appealed to in proof that he baptized infants; on the ground that these three families probably contained infants, and that when Paul baptized the household he must

have baptized the infants. But that these three persons, one a woman in business of whose husband nothing is said, had infant children, is far from certain; and is a very unsafe basis for argument. Nor does the phrase, ‘baptized the house,’ make it certain that the infants, if there were any, were baptized. For we are told (John 4:54) that the courtier of Capernaum “believed, himself and his whole house:” so did (Acts 18:8) Crispus and probably (Acts 16:34) the gaoler: Cornelius (Acts 10:2) “feared God with all his house:” the house of Stephanas was (1 Corinthians 16:15) a firstfruit of Achaia. But this by no means implies that in these five homes there were no infants, or that the infants believed the Gospel or feared God; but simply that those capable of understanding the Gospel believed it. Just so in reference to baptism. Paul’s readers knew whether he was accustomed to baptize infants. If he was, they would infer that in these cases he baptized the infants, if there were any. If he was not, they would interpret his words to mean that he baptized all who were of suitable age. We are told expressly that three entire households, one (John 4:53) probably containing servants, believed the Gospel. Even now it sometimes happens that a whole family seeks admission to the church. And such cases must have been far more frequent when the Gospel was first preached. No doubt other families besides that of Cornelius were groping their way towards the light, and were ready to hail its appearance. Consequently, these passages render no aid to determine whether the apostles baptized infants.

Dr. Whedon, under Acts 16:34, supposes that all the gaoler’s household were infants (!!!), and that their faith was implied in his. Under Acts 16:15, he quotes approvingly Dr. Schaff, who asserts five cases of baptized households and in proof quotes passages of which two are seen in a moment to be actually against him. Dr. S. adds: “It is hardly conceivable that all the adult sons and daughters in these five” (he ought to have said three) “cases so quickly determined on going over with their parents to a despised and persecuted religious society.” I understand him to mean that the fact that the household was baptized makes it inconceivable that it contained adult children. But we are told that three men believed with “all” their houses: and we cannot conceive this to mean that the faith of infants was implied in their father’s faith. Schaff and



Whedon say that the baptized households are “given merely as examples:” but of this they give no proof whatever.

I do not know, etc.; implies that Paul’s practice had not been so strict as to exclude the possibility of other exceptions. His uncertainty is not inconsistent with the divine authority of the New Testament. The Holy Spirit did not think fit to quicken his memory in this matter to the point of certainty. But this uncertainty, which Paul acknowledges, does not imply uncertainty or error in matters of which he speaks with confidence.

**Ver. 17a.** Justifies Paul in not baptizing his converts, by saying that his not doing so was no failure to do the work for which Christ sent him.

Not to baptize; does not mean that Christ forbid him to baptize, but that this was not the purpose for which Christ appeared to him and sent him.

Good-news: Romans 1:1: literally, “not to baptize but to evangelize.” This agrees exactly with Acts 9:15; 22:14; 26:16. It does not imply a mission different from Matthew 28:19: for there baptism is subordinate to making disciples. This verse embodies the great truth that even the most solemn outward forms are secondary to inward spiritual life. But even a second place in the kingdom of God may be of great importance.

Paul has now stated the first of the matters which moved him to write to the Corinthians, viz. a report of a serious and universal evil in the church. He has given them his authority, told them the terrible practical consequence of their conduct, and reminded them how contrary it is to the spirit which animated his own ministry among them. To avoid the appearance of gathering disciples for himself, he abstained from baptizing his converts. This was no neglect of his apostolic mission. For, the announcement of good news, not the formal reception of church-members, was the work for which he was sent by Christ.

## SECTION 3

### *HIS OWN PREACHING AT CORINTH LAID NO CLAIM TO HUMAN WISDOM*

#### CHAPTER 1:17b-2:5

*For Christ sent me... to announce good news; not with wisdom of word, lest the cross of Christ be made an empty thing. For the word of the cross, to those indeed who are perishing, is foolishness: but to those who are being saved, to us, it is a power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise ones: and the understanding of the understanding ones I will set aside." (Isaiah 29:14.) Where is the wise man? where the scribe? where the disputant of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For, since amid the wisdom of God the world did not by means of the wisdom know God, it pleased God by means of the foolishness of the proclamation to save those who believe. since both Jews ask for signs and Greeks seek wisdom: but as for us, we proclaim Christ crucified, to Jews indeed a snare, and to Gentiles foolishness; but, to the called ones themselves, Christ, God's power and God's wisdom. Because the foolish thing of God is wiser than men. and the weak thing of God is stronger than men. For, look at your calling, brothers, that not many are wise according to flesh, not many powerful, not many well-born. But the foolish things of the world God has chosen, that He may put to shame the wise ones: and the weak things of the world God has chosen, that He may put to shame the strong things: and the low-born things of the world and the despised things God has chosen, the things which are not; that He may bring to nought (Or made of no effect.) the things which are: in order that no flesh may exult before God. And from Him you are in Christ Jesus, who has become wisdom to us from God, both righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, that, according as it is written, "He that exults, let him exult in the Lord." (Jeremiah 9:24.)*

*And for my part, when I came to you, brothers, I came not according to superiority of word or wisdom announcing to you the mystery of God. For I did not judge fit to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I, in weakness and in fear and in much trembling I was with you. And my word and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with proof of the Spirit and of power; that your faith may not be in men's wisdom but in God's power.*

At this point Paul seems to turn away from the matter of the factions, which he has touched only for a moment, to discuss the powerlessness of human wisdom and the divine power of the Gospel. But we shall soon see that throughout DIV. 1 he has the factions in view; and that he now rises from them to discuss great principles, in order to bring these principles to bear upon this detail of church life. For a similar mode of argument, but on a smaller scale, see Romans 14:13-21. He thus makes a transitory matter at Corinth a pattern for similar matters in all ages. The application of the argument of 3 to the factions at Corinth is to us partly obscured by our ignorance of their exact cause and circumstances. It will, however, become clear to us that their real cause was an overestimate of human wisdom, an error common to at least the parties of Paul and Apollos; and that by proving the powerlessness of human wisdom Paul strikes at the root of the whole evil.

In justifying himself for baptizing so few, Paul has appealed to his commission by Christ. He now makes this commission a starting point for dealing with the relation of the Gospel to human wisdom; a matter which he discusses in 3, 4. At the end of 4 he brings the results of his discussion to bear upon the matter of the factions.

**Ver. 17b.** Wisdom of word, or (same as in 1 Corinthians 1:5) 'of utterance': a skilful way of putting a matter, so as best to attain the speaker's purpose. Cp. 1 Corinthians 2:4, 13. The good news which Christ sent Paul to announce was not clothed in skilful speech.

An empty thing: barren of results. Had the Gospel been set forth with clever reasoning, its results might have been attributed to the skill of the preacher. If so, the superhuman power, which through the death of Christ

operates on men, would have been overlooked. And, if so, it would have been shorn of results: for the blood of Christ saves in proportion as its saving power is recognized. Therefore, in order that His own death might not become a mere incident in the story of the past, like that of Socrates, but might be crowned with results, Christ committed to Paul a message not clothed in skilful speech.

**Ver. 18.** Explains and justifies, in outline, the motive just given. Of this outline, 1 Corinthians 1:19-30 are a filling up.

Word of the cross: the announcement, as good news, that Christ has died.

To them that are perishing: same words in 2 Corinthians 2:15; 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:10. See note under Romans 2:24. The destruction of those who reject Christ has already begun, and daily goes on. For, in them, spiritual forces are already at work which unless arrested by God, will inevitably bring them to eternal death. Since they are now beyond human help, they are said in Matthew 10:6; Ephesians 2:1; Romans 7:9, to be “lost” and “dead.” But since they are still within reach of Christ’s salvation but daily going further from it, Paul prefers to speak of them here, not as “lost,” but as ‘losing themselves’ or ‘perishing.’

Foolishness: unfit, from an intellectual point of view, to attain any good result. Such is the Gospel, to the thoughts of, and in its practical effect upon, those whose faces are turned towards eternal ruin.

Being saved: same contrast in 2 Corinthians 2:15: experiencing day by day a present deliverance from spiritual evil, and thus daily approaching final salvation. See Romans 5:9.

Power of God: Romans 1:16. The announcement that Christ died for us is, to God’s people, the strong hand of God stretched out to save them, and daily saving them. Thus our own thoughts about the story of the cross will tell us to which of these classes we belong. Notice Paul’s love of contrast, as in Romans 8:12, 15., etc.

**Ver. 18** expounds the motive contained in “lest the cross, etc.” by telling us the fulness of which “the cross of Christ” might be “emptied” if announced with skilful speech. The death of Christ owes its results, not to anything which commends itself to human wisdom as suitable to attain its

end, but purely to God's power operating upon men through Christ's death. And the cross is effective in proportion as this power is recognized. Now whatever might seem to aid the cross would claim a share of its victory, and thus obscure the unique and divine power to which alone the whole victory is due. Therefore, acting under the direction of Him who "sent" him, Paul refuses the aid even of human eloquence.

Since the Gospel is a 'power of God,' it must needs appear 'foolishness' to those who do not experience its power. For the power of God is beyond our comprehension: and all means beyond our comprehension seem to us unfit to attain any good result; for we cannot see the connection between the means and end. Consequently, superior wisdom has often, at first sight, the appearance of folly.

**Ver. 19.** Begins a defense and proof of 1 Corinthians 1:18, by quoting almost word for word (LXX.) Isaiah 29:14, which refers probably to the invasion of Sennacherib, Isaiah 36:1. The statesmen of Judah had sought to protect their country by an alliance with Egypt. And, but for the covenant of God, which made it an act of rebellion against Him, such alliance would have been their best defense, and therefore a mark of political 'wisdom.' But God made this 'wisdom' practically worthless, and in this sense 'destroyed' it, by bringing against Judah the armies of Sennacherib and thus placing the nation in a position in which all political wisdom was powerless to save. And, as Paul's readers knew, by His own power God wrought salvation in a way most unlikely. Now, in 1 Corinthians 1:18, Paul said that the Gospel, which to many seemed utterly unfit to do any good, was nevertheless a power of God to save. It might be asked, How can this be? The story of Sennacherib tells us, and thus removes the improbability of 1 Corinthians 1:18. And the constancy of the principles of God's administration, and the fact that every divine deliverance is a pattern of the great deliverance, make the words of Isaiah a prophecy of the gospel salvation. But the chief force of this quotation lies in 1 Corinthians 1:20-24, which prove that in the Gospel this ancient prophecy has been actually fulfilled, on a far larger scale than in the days of Sennacherib.

Understanding: Romans 1:21: the faculty of putting together, and reading the meaning of, facts and phenomena around.

Wisdom: see note below: the noblest kind of knowledge, used as a guide in action.

**Ver. 20.** Where is Wise-man? where is Scribe? where is Disputant? triumphant questions (cp. 1 Corinthians 15:55, Romans 3:27) suggested in form perhaps by Isaiah 19:12; 33:18; but prompted by the complete failure of human wisdom to bring salvation.

Scribe: literally “man of letters,” “Scripture-man:” a class of Jews devoted to the study of the Scriptures, 2 Samuel 8:17; 2 Chronicles 34:13; Ezra 7:6, 11; 2 Macc. 6:18; Matthew 7:29; 17:10. Cp. Matthew 23:34, “prophets and wise men and scribes;” Matthew 13:52. Also, among the Greeks, an officer of the state Acts 19:35, “town clerk;” Thucydides, bk. vii. 10, iv. 118. It is used here probably in its common Bible sense of “student of the Jewish Scriptures.”

Disputant: refers probably to Greek men of learning, among whom discussion had a large place. If so, ‘wise-man’ includes Jewish ‘scribe’ and Gentile ‘disputant.’

This age: see Romans 12:2: the complex realm of things around us except so far as it submits to Christ, looked upon as existing in time, and for a time. The unsaved are “sons of this age,” Luke 16:8; 20:34: for all they have and are belongs to this present life. Contrast “the coming age,” Luke 18:30; Ephesians 2:7; Hebrews 6:5.

The world: see 1 Corinthians 5:10: the complex total of things around us, looked upon as now existing in space.

The wisdom of the world: the best knowledge possessed by those who belong to the world around, looked upon as a practical guide of life.

Has not God, etc.; answers, by a question recalling a matter of fact, the previous questions; and justifies their triumphant tone. It introduces 1 Corinthians 1:21, which proves that the prophecy of 1 Corinthians 1:19 has been fulfilled in the gospel and that the assertion of 1 Corinthians 1:18, to support which the prophecy was quoted, is true.

Made foolish: equivalent to “destroy the wisdom,” 1 Corinthians 1:19. How God did this, is explained in 1 Corinthians 1:21.

**Ver. 21.** Since the world knew not God: a fact which moved ‘God to save by... the proclamation.’

Amid the wisdom of God: surrounded by the works of creation, all which, from the little flowers under our feet to the great orbs of heaven, are embodiments and witnesses of ‘the wisdom of God.’ And before many of Paul’s readers (for the ‘world’ includes Jews, 1 Corinthians 1:22) lay open the pages of the Old Testament on which God had written His wisdom in still plainer characters. Paul has no need to say whether ‘by means of the wisdom’ refers to the wisdom of God or of man. For to ‘know God by means of wisdom’ is to lay hold by the human faculty of wisdom of the divine Wisdom revealed in Nature, in social life, and in the Scriptures; and thus to make wisdom the avenue of approach to God.

Did not know God: contrast Romans 1:21. They knew Him (1 Corinthians 8:2) as existing and powerful; but not “as one must needs know” in order (John 17:25, 3) to have “eternal life.” They did not know the love which is the very essence of His nature. For this is known only (Matthew 11:27; Romans 5:5; Ephesians 3:18f) by Christ’s revelation. And, not to know that God loves us, is not to ‘know God.’ Notice the marked contrast, ‘in the wisdom of God’ and ‘not by means of the wisdom.’ God’s wisdom was all around them; but was not to them a channel of knowledge of Himself.

It pleased God; suggests that the choice of the instrument was prompted only by the kindness of God.

The proclamation, of the heralds of salvation: see Romans 2:21. This, taken by itself, as a mere spoken word, is utterly unable to save. Therefore, looked upon as an instrument of salvation, it is an embodiment of foolishness. And God chose it that the very insufficiency of the instrument might show forth the might of Him who by a mere word spoken by human lips could rescue believers from the grasp of sin and death. Just so Samson’s weapon (Judges 15:15) proclaimed by its ludicrous insufficiency the infinite power of the Spirit of God. Notice the double failure of human wisdom. It was unable to read God’s name as written in Nature, and pronounced that to be foolishness which He chose as the instrument of salvation.

This verse proves the assertion implied in the question of 1 Corinthians 1:20b. By saving men after man had failed to obtain through the avenue of wisdom that knowledge of God which brings salvation, by saving them with an instrument which to man's best wisdom seemed utterly inadequate, God made man's wisdom worthless as a means of salvation; and thus "made it foolish," and "destroyed" it.

**Ver. 22-24.** Develops, and thus confirms 1 Corinthians 1:21: 1 Corinthians 1:22 develops "the world knew not God;" 1 Corinthians 1:23, "the foolishness of the proclamation;" 1 Corinthians 1:24, "to save those who believe."

Ask for, etc.: in their disputations with Christians.

For signs: agrees with John 4:48; Matthew 16:4.

Signs: evidently something different from, and yet as the same word (2 Corinthians 12:12; Romans 15:19) implies similar to, the miracles actually wrought by Paul. They probably asked for a visible appearance of Christ in glory and power, such as would dispel all doubt about His Messiahship.

Wisdom: see note below.

Seek wisdom: constant habit of their nation, and specially prominent in their treatment of the Gospel. They demanded, as proof that Christ was worthy to be their teacher, that He should expound the mysteries of being and reveal the great principles underlying the phenomena around.

Proclaim: as heralds.

Snare: see Romans 11:9. That He who claimed to be the 'Anointed One' actually died a criminal's death, was a trap in which the Jews were caught: i.e. they rejected Jesus because He was 'crucified.' Cp. Romans 9:33; Galatians 5:11; Matthew 11:6; 13:57; 1 Peter 2:8.

Foolishness: as, from the point of view of human intelligence, utterly unsuited to attain any good result. The announcement, as a means of salvation, of that which was to the Jews a reason for rejecting Jesus and to the Greeks seemed altogether unfitted to do any good, was the foolishness of the proclamation."



The called ones: they in whom the proclamation rejected by others has proved itself to be a summons from God. See under Romans 8:28. Cp. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* i. 18: "While all men have been called, they who were minded to obey received the name of 'called ones.'" 'Christ' is 'God's power' because through the objective and historic birth and death of Jesus, and through inward subjective spiritual union with Him, God stretched out and stretches out His mighty arm to rescue those who obey the divine summons. Similarly, "the word of the cross is the power of God," 1 Corinthians 1:18; Romans 1:16: for through the word the power operates. Christ is God's 'wisdom' because through Him, objectively and subjectively, God reveals the eternal realities underlying the present life and world, and His own eternal purpose in which with infinite skill the best means are chosen for the best ends. Cp. 1 Corinthians 2:7; Colossians 2:2.

The facts and teaching of 1 Corinthians 1:22-24, Paul's readers admitted. These prove the concise statement of 1 Corinthians 1:21, and justify the triumphant statement in 1 Corinthians 1:20 that the prophecy quoted in 1 Corinthians 1:19 has been fulfilled in the Gospel. Thus, from the facts of his own day, read in the light of an ancient prophecy, Paul has proved the statement of 1 Corinthians 1:18, and justified the motive given in 1 Corinthians 1:17b.

**Ver. 25.** After proving the facts of 1 Corinthians 1:18, Paul now accounts for them by comparing 'God' and 'men.'

The foolish-thing of God: that which belongs to 'God,' but which to men seems 'foolish.' Whatever comes from God is guided by infinite wisdom, and is therefore 'wiser,' i.e. better fitted to attain a good end, than are men, with all their skill, to attain their ends. Now the means chosen by one wiser than ourselves often appear to us foolish, simply because our ignorance prevents us from seeing their suitability. Therefore, if we admit God's superior wisdom we shall not be surprised that He uses means which to us seem foolish. Nor need we be surprised that His instruments seem to us, and in themselves are, 'weak.' For, in the hands of the Almighty, the weakest instruments are capable of producing results far surpassing all that man can do.

**Ver. 26-29.** Apart from proof, the assertion of 1 Corinthians 1:25 commends itself at once as indisputable. But Paul thinks fit to support it by another fact in addition to those of 1 Corinthians 1:21-24. He thus gives a second proof from matters of acknowledged fact of the chief teaching of 3, viz., that the Gospel is not an appeal to human wisdom. This he has already proved by pointing to the impression and effect of the Gospel on different kinds of men, believers and unbelievers. He will now prove it by pointing to the class of men which most readily accepts the Gospel.

Your calling: the gospel call, looked upon as actively operating. Since it comes from God, it is “His calling,” Ephesians 1:18: but, as the means of our salvation and the ground of our hope, it is “our calling,” Ephesians 4:1, 4. “Contemplate in its operation the gospel call in which you have heard the voice of God.” With characteristic good taste Paul does not say “not many of you,” which is sufficiently indicated by ‘your calling.’ These words imply that some of the early Christians were men of education and influence; an interesting coincidence with Romans 16:23; Acts 18:8; 13:12; 22:3.

Wise according to flesh; i.e. in reference to the needs and pleasures of the present life, which are determined by the constitution of the human body. See note under Romans 8:11. It is the “wisdom of the world,” 1 Corinthians 1:20; “of this age,” 1 Corinthians 2:6.

Powerful: men with influence arising from office, wealth, or natural talent.

**Ver. 27-28.** A contrast to “not many wise,” and a description of those in whom chiefly the call had been effective. The Greek neuter, ‘foolish things,’ suggested here by similar words in 1 Corinthians 1:25, looks at the object without considering whether or not they are personal. It refers frequently to what are in fact persons. So Luke 1:35, “the Holy Thing;” Galatians 3:22; John 6:37. The persons referred to here are looked upon simply as objects of God’s choice, and as coming under the general principle of 1 Corinthians 1:25.

The foolish things of the world: uneducated men, who before they believed the Gospel belonged to the world.

Chosen: see note under Romans 9:13. The reception of the Gospel chiefly by the lower classes (1 Corinthians 1:26) arose from its very nature. It is good news of a deliverer. But every kind of earthly good tends to make us unconscious of our need, and independent of divine help. Intellect, education, rank, and wealth, so precious when laid on the altar of God, yet, by promising to supply of themselves our need, tend to keep men from accepting the Gospel. Cp. Romans 11:9. On the other hand, misfortune and want have led many to cry to God for help. In full view of this, God chose an instrument of salvation which He foresaw would appeal with greatest force to men in humble positions. Now the early converts to Christianity were God's agents for spreading it through the world. Therefore, by choosing as the instrument of salvation a message which He knew would commend itself chiefly to the uneducated, the obscure, and the low-born, God chose these for Himself to be His representatives to the world and His agents for setting up His kingdom. Cp. James 2:5.

That He may put to shame, etc. That for the more part God selected as His agents unlearned men, was a stern rebuke to those who trusted in learning; and was designed to be such. 'The weak things, the strong things,' recall "not many powerful."

Chosen: three times, emphatically asserting that the social position of the early converts was by God's deliberate choice. 'Put-to-shame' (twice,) and 'bring-to-nought,' lay stress upon the further purpose of this choice.

Things which are not: a climax, things practically the same as though they had no existence.

Bring-to-nought: 1 Corinthians 2:6; 6:13; 13:8, 10f; 15:24, 26; 2 Corinthians 3:7, 11, 13f; Luke 13:7: same as 'make-of-no-effect;' see Romans 3:3.

Things which are: whose existence seems to be a power, and therefore a reality. By choosing as His instruments things reckoned to be nothing, and passing by things reckoned to be much, God made the latter to be practically nothing. The neuter forms are maintained throughout 1 Corinthians 1:27, 28, perhaps because of the principle asserted is true both of men and things.

A broad general statement of God's purpose in putting the Gospel in a form which would appeal chiefly to men in humble position. Cp. Ephesians 2:9.

No flesh: see Romans 3:20.

Exult, or 'boast': a favorite word almost peculiar in the New Testament to Paul, and very common in these two epistles, also Romans 2:17, 23; 5:2f, 11; Galatians 6:13f; Philippians 3:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; James 1:9; 4:16. It denotes a rising or gladness of spirit which has always in view the object, external or internal, which called it forth, and which is ever ready to express itself in words. It thus combines the meanings of 'rejoice, exult,' and 'boast.'

Before God: who watches perishing flesh and blood lifting itself up because of something man thinks he can do.

Argument of 26-29. Evidently the Gospel has been successful chiefly among the humbler ranks. And the reason is that the possession of earthly good makes men less anxious for the heavenly gifts offered in the Gospel. All this God foresaw, and took up into His plan, in choosing the Gospel to be His instrument of drawing men to Himself. It is therefore correct to say that He deliberately chose for Himself these men of humble rank. For He might have put the Gospel in a form which would have attracted chiefly the learned; as did the teaching of Plato. Now the uneducated and obscure men were, as agents for the spread of Christianity, both foolish and weak. Consequently, that God chose them and gave them success, proves that even foolish and weak things, in the hand of God, are able to achieve results altogether beyond the utmost power of man. It also proves that the Gospel and its results must not be measured by the standard of human wisdom.

**Ver. 30.** Stands in a relation to 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 similar to that of 1 Corinthians 1:24 to 1 Corinthians 1:21-23, declaring what Christ actually is to His people. 1 Corinthians 1:27, 28 say what God did that men may not (1 Corinthians 1:29) exult in themselves: 1 Corinthians 1:30 says what God has done in Paul's readers that they may (1 Corinthians 1:31) exult in Him.

You are, etc.: cp. 1 Corinthians 6:11.

In Christ: see Romans 6:11. “Christ is the element in which you live and from which you draw your life.”

From Him: from God, the source of all inward union with Christ. For, salvation and all that pertains to it has its origin in the Father.

Who has become, etc.: In those who dwell in Christ, Christ dwells; and in proportion as His presence fills and rules them are they full of divine ‘Wisdom.’ Having Him they have a key which unlocks the mysteries of God’s eternal purpose of mercy, and of the present life: and, knowing this eternal purpose and the eternal realities, they are able to choose aright their steps in life.

From God: emphatic repetition of ‘From Him.’ He who gave Christ to be the element of our life also gave Him to be in us as our ‘wisdom.’ These references to wisdom prepare the way for 4.

Righteousness: as in Romans 1:17.

Sanctification: the impartation of objective and subjective holiness. See notes, Romans 1:7; 6:19. Since Christ died that we (Romans 3:26) may be justified, and (Romans 6:10, 11) may live by spiritual contact with the risen Savior a life devoted to God, and since this purpose is realized in those who abide in Christ, He is to us both righteousness and sanctification.

Redemption: liberation on payment of a price: see Romans 3:24; 8:23. The bondage or evil, from which the redeemed are set free, must in each case be determined by the context. The general statement here suggests deliverance from the material and moral evils and powers around us, from death, and from the grave. So Luke 21:28; Ephesians 4:30. In Christ ‘redemption’ is already ours. For we are now free in spirit from the powers which once held us in bondage: and the rescue of our body is only a matter of time. And, only in proportion as Christ is the element of our life, are we free. Thus Christ crucified is (1 Corinthians 1:24) to us the power and wisdom of God.

**Ver. 31.** Supports the teaching of the whole section by recalling Jeremiah 9:23f: “Thus has Jehovah said, Let there not boast a wise man in his wisdom, and let there not boast the strong man in his strength, let there not

boast a rich man in his riches: only in this shall there boast he that boasts, to understand and know me, that I Jehovah am doing favor, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth.” That these old words may be now fulfilled, God gave Christ to be the element of our life, and by His presence in us a source to us of righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Lord: see under Romans 9:29. Its precise reference here is uncertain and unimportant. For, to boast in the Son is to boast in the Father: cp. Romans 5:11. Perhaps it is better to retain the common New Testament use; and to suppose that Paul refers to our exultation in Him “who has become to us wisdom.” The exact reproduction of these words in 2 Corinthians 10:17, suggests that they were often used by Paul, as a concise reference to Jeremiah 9:23.

**Ver.** 1-5. Paul has now proved his statement in 1 Corinthians 1:18 that the Gospel does not commend itself to human wisdom but is nevertheless a vehicle of God’s power, a statement explaining and justifying Christ’s motive in committing to him a Gospel not clothed in such language as human wisdom would have chosen. He then goes on to show that his own conduct among his readers was in exact agreement with Christ’s commission.

Not according to, etc. He was not moved to preach, nor was his mode of preaching determined, by any supposed superiority of speech, or superior acquaintance with the unseen causes of things around.

Mystery of God: a forerunner of the important teaching of 1 Corinthians 2:6ff. Cp. Romans 6:14 with Romans vii., and 1 Corinthians 5:5 with Romans viii. The reading is quite uncertain. See Appendix B. 1 Corinthians 2:2 accounts for 1 Corinthians 2:1.

Not... to know among you: not to be influenced in my intercourse with you by knowledge of anything else. For only in this sense could he resolve to know or not to know among men.

Judge-fit: or ‘judge:’ same word in 1 Corinthians 5:3; 2 Corinthians 2:1; see Romans 14:13. Paul presented himself to the Corinthians as a man who knew something but what he professed to know was only that Jesus was the Messiah, and that the Messiah had been crucified. And this was his deliberate purpose when coming to them. Consequently, his preaching to

them was not prompted or directed by supposed 'superiority of word or wisdom.' For, to human wisdom, a crucified savior (1 Corinthians 1:23) was ridiculous.

**Ver. 3-5.** And I; again directs attention to the writer.

Fear and trembling: Psalm 2:11; 2 Corinthians 7:15; Philippians 2:12; Ephesians 6:5: strong eastern hyperbole, for anxious care to do right in something difficult and serious.

Weakness: any kind of inability, including bodily weakness caused by sickness. This latter sense is very common, and is suggested in Galatians 4:13. But there is no hint of it here. Notice the slowly rising climax. In his intercourse with the Corinthians Paul was conscious of his own utter powerlessness to do the work he had in hand: this moved him to fear lest he should fail: and his fear became so great that he trembled while he preached. 1 Corinthians 2:4 gives further particulars about his preaching.

Word: any kind of verbal intercourse: 'proclamation,' the formal announcement of the Gospel. 'Persuasive words of wisdom.'

In men's wisdom: that you may believe the good news not because of the preacher's skill but because of the manifested power of God proving the message to be from God. This proof made persuasion needless.

What was the proof afforded by the Spirit and power of God? Not the effect of the Gospel in the heart and life. For this can be appreciated only by those who experience it, i.e. by those who have already accepted the Gospel. It therefore cannot be the ground of their first acceptance of it. The effect of the Gospel in earlier converts may influence us: cp. 1 Corinthians 9:2. But this would not affect the founding of a church like that at Corinth. In Romans 15:19 Paul speaks of the "power of signs and wonders, power of the Spirit of God," with which Christ wrought among the Corinthians as signs of his apostleship. And the 'proof' appealed to here can be no other than the miracles wrought by the 'power' of God through the agency of the Holy 'Spirit' in proof that Paul's 'proclamation' is true. Such proof would, as his words imply, supersede all persuasion.

Our ignorance of details prevents us from distinguishing exactly between the signs which Paul actually wrought and those which the Jews (1

Corinthians 1:22) vainly asked for. But this difficulty is, by its close coincidence with Matthew 12:38; 16:1; John 4:48, a mark of genuineness. And these passages remove any objection, based on 1 Corinthians 1:22, to my exposition of 1 Corinthians 2:4. For Christ, while refusing the signs asked for by the Jews, wrought miracles in proof of His words: John 5:36; 10:25.

Notice that 1 Corinthians 2:4 and 2 Corinthians 12:12 confirm Romans 15:19. For Paul appeals in these passages to miracles wrought among those to whom he writes, and from whose midst he writes to the Romans, in proof of his teaching. His appeal is confirmed by the independent authority of Acts 14:3, 10; 19:11; 3:7; 4:16, etc; and by the Gospels which attribute to Christ similar miracles with the same purpose.

We do not wonder now that Paul abstained carefully from all appearance of rhetorical art. The visible proofs of the power and presence of God made persuasion needless. An attempt to persuade would rather obscure the sufficiency of the divine credentials.

Although the underlying principles of this section are valid for all ages, the absence of miracles now warns us to be careful in applying to our own day Paul's words to the Corinthians.

Paul's appeal to God's power in proof of his teaching, and his description of it (certainly in 1 Corinthians 1:6) as a testimony, agree remarkably with his assumption, without any proof, of the five great foundation doctrines of the Epistle to the Romans. See my 'Romans,' Dissertation i. 3. In 1 Corinthians 1:21b we have Doctrine 1: and the prominence given to the cross of Christ in 1 Corinthians 1:17f, 23; 2:2 as the matter of Paul's preaching, finds its only explanation in Doctrine 2. And, that the success of the Gospel chiefly among the humbler ranks was by God's deliberate choice, accords exactly with the doctrine of election taught in Romans 9:12. Thus on the threshold of this Epistle we recognize the voice of the author of the Epistle to the Romans.

SECTION 3 is throughout a proof that mere human wisdom is powerless to save. The good news was not clothed in such forms as human wisdom would select, lest the clothing should obscure and thus impede the divine



power which operates through the death of Christ and through its announcement to men. This agrees with an ancient prophecy touching the statesmen of Judah at the time of Sennacherib's invasion and the deliverance then wrought by God. And it is confirmed by the facts of Paul's own day. For it is evident that all the wisdom of the world has not revealed to men a saving knowledge of God; while, by an announcement which the wisdom of the world condemned as foolish and which actually led many Jews to reject Christ, God's people have experienced the power, and have looked into the mind, of God. This is also confirmed, not only by the different effect of the Gospel on different men, but also by the kind of men whom by the Gospel God has drawn to Himself: for these are such as seem least likely to do His great work. These unlikely agents He has joined to Christ, who has become to them all they need

With this method of God's procedure Paul's conduct at Corinth was in exact agreement. The human wisdom which God refused to employ, Paul also refused. As a preacher he was a monument of weakness: but his word was accompanied by the manifestations of divine power, in order that on the manifest power of God the faith of his converts might rest securely.

The word WISDOM denotes sometimes an artist's skill: e.g. Exodus 28:3, "All that are wise of heart, whom I have filled with a spirit of wisdom: and they shall make Aaron's garments;" Exodus 35:25-35; 36:1-8. Such skill was looked upon (Exodus 36:3, 6) as a result of intelligence and knowledge; just as we say "He knows how to do it." In this sense the 'wise' man is one who knows what others do not know, and who can therefore do special work. Similarly, men who have had a special training are called 'wise,' Genesis 41:8; Exodus 7:11. For it was supposed that they knew what others did not, and that their knowledge was of practical use. Men able to direct well matters of practical life were called 'wise,' Genesis 41:33, 39; 2 Samuel 20:16, 22; Ezekiel 28:3-5. In 2 Samuel 13:3 the word wise (A.V. "subtle") denotes mere cleverness in selecting means without thought of the quality of the aim. But it was early seen that right choice of an aim is even more important than choice of the means to attain it, and needs a still deeper knowledge. Consequently, the word 'wisdom' denotes also that knowledge which enables men to choose rightly both objects of pursuit and the path to reach them. And, since all sin injures the

sinner, all pursuit of sinful objects is folly, arising from ignorance of the objects pursued. Consequently, the highest wisdom includes a moral element. Cp. Deuteronomy 4:6; 32:6, 29; Proverbs 1:2, 20ff; 2:2, 6, 7.

King Solomon was an embodiment of human wisdom, in its unity and in its variety: 1 Kings 3:9-28; 4:29-34. His wisdom included a wide acquaintance with natural objects, the practical counsel embodied in his 3000 proverbs, the poetry of his 5000 songs, and a discernment of men's characters which fitted him to be a king and judge. The noblest element of the wisdom of Solomon and his followers is permanently embodied in the 'Book of Proverbs' and in the Apocryphal 'Wisdom of Solomon' and 'Wisdom of the son of Sirach.' It is a knowledge of that which is most worth knowing, a knowledge which fits men to choose the best aims and means in life.

The wisdom of God is the attribute manifested in His eternal choice of His purposes and of the means to attain them. It is specially seen in the various works of Creation: Psalm 104:24; Proverbs 3:19; 8:22ff; Job 9:4; 12:13, 16; 28:20, Wisdom 9:9f.

The common Greek conception of wisdom was similar to that of the Jews. In Plato's 'Apology,' pp. 21-23, Socrates speaks of the wisdom of statesmen, poets, and artisans; and considers himself wiser than they because they knew not the limits of their own wisdom. He says truly ('Apology' p. 23a) that "Human wisdom is worth little or nothing;" and ('Phaedrus' 278d) that "God only is fitly called wise." See quotation under 2 Corinthians 4:2. Aristotle speaks ('Ethics' bk. vi. 7) of wise stonecutters and sculptors; and of some men as wise, not in some specialty, but generally. He denies, however, that the statesman's prudence is 'wisdom;' and defines the word to mean an acquaintance with first principles, a kind of knowledge which he declares to be profitless for matters of common life. In this he is supported by the 'Definitions' which go under Plato's name, which define wisdom to be "An understanding of the things which exist always; a contemplative understanding of the causes of existing things." Cicero ('Deuteronomy Officiis' bk. ii. 2) says: "Wisdom, as it has been defined by old philosophers, is a knowledge of things divine and human and of the causes by which these things are held together." Cp. 4 Macc. 1:16, "Wisdom then is a knowledge of divine and human matters

and of the causes of these.” But the common Greek use of the word differs little from the lower use of its Hebrew equivalent. Jews and Greeks alike conceived of wisdom as a knowledge of something worth knowing, and especially of that which is most worth knowing. But the Greeks valued most a knowledge of the underlying and eternal realities, as being the most worthy matter of human knowledge and as most fully satisfying the intelligence whereas the Jews ever remembered that knowledge is of real worth only so far as it enables a man to choose the best steps in life. And these collateral ideas were more or less embodied in the Greek and in the Hebrew conceptions of wisdom. Thus, their use of this one word reflected in no small measure the distinctive genius of the two nations.

The New Testament conception of ‘wisdom’ agrees exactly with, and develops, that of the Old Testament. We have “a wise builder,” 1 Corinthians 3:10. The “wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22) was whatever knowledge the nation had of things not generally known. So Romans 1:14. “The wisdom of the world” (1 Corinthians 1:20) is a knowledge embracing only things around, whether it be looked upon as satisfying the intelligence or as guiding the life. A life thus guided has necessarily to do (James 3:15) only with things of this world; and is closely associated (1 Corinthians 3:19) with craftiness. “The wisdom of God” is the attribute by which He selects purposes suited to His Nature, and the best means of attaining them. It is manifested (1 Corinthians 1:21) in creation; and more wonderfully (1 Corinthians 1:24) in redemption. Since the means chosen are various, it is “the manifold wisdom of God,” Ephesians 3:10. Since the purpose, and the means, of salvation were matters of divine forethought, we are told (1 Corinthians 2:7) that this “wisdom of God was foreordained before” time began. These divine purposes and the means for their accomplishment are made known to us (Ephesians 1:17) by the “Spirit of wisdom and revelation,” that thus they may become in ever increasing degree objects of human intelligence and the guide of human life. Cp. James 3:17.

In this divinely-given wisdom are realized whatever conceptions of wisdom were formed by Jews or Greeks. The believer possesses, by God’s gift, a knowledge of that which is most worth knowing, even of God Himself and His purposes, a knowledge which satisfies the highest human intelligence, reveals the eternal realities, and explains to some extent the

mysteries of life. But this knowledge, instead of being, like that of Anaxagoras and Thales, (Aristotle, 'Ethics' vi. 7,) merely speculative and of no practical use, enables its possessor to choose the best aim in life and the best means of attaining it. Thus is Christ "to us wisdom from God."

On 'The wisdom of the Hebrews,' see excellent papers in the 'Expositor' vol. xi. p. 321, vol. xii. pp. 381, 436 by Dr. A. B. Davidson.

## SECTION 4

### PAUL PREACHES WISDOM TO MATURE CHRISTIANS: BUT HIS READERS ARE NOT SUCH

#### CHAPTER 2:6-III. 4

*Wisdom, however, we do speak, among them that are full grown; but wisdom not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nought. (Or, being made of no effect.) But we speak God's wisdom, in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God foreordained before the ages for our glory; which not one of the rulers of this age knows, (for, if they had known it, not the Lord of the glory would they have crucified,) but, according as it is written, "Things which Eye has not seen and Ear has not heard and into man's heart have not gone up, so many things as God has prepared for those that love Him." (Isaiah 64:4.) But to us God has revealed them through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows, of men, the things of the man except the spirit of the man which is in him? In this way also the things of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. But we, not the spirit of the world did we receive but the Spirit which is from God, that we may know the things which by God have been graciously given to us. Which things we also speak, not in taught words of human wisdom, but in taught words of the Spirit to spiritual things joining spiritual things.*

*But a soul-governed man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. for they are foolishness to him,; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (Or, examined, examines.) But the spiritual man discernst all things: but himself is by no one discerned. (Or, examined, examines.) For who has learnt the mind of the Lord, and will instruct Him? And, as for us, we have the mind of Christ.*

*And I, brothers, I could not (Or, have not been able to speak.) speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of the flesh, as to babes in Christ. Milk I gave you to drink, not solid food. for not yet were you strong enough. No, not yet even now are you strong enough. For you are still fleshly. For where there is among you emulation and strife, are you not fleshly and walk as men? For when one says, I am a follower of Paul, another, I of Apollos, are you not men?*

Although the Gospel does not claim acceptance because it imparts wisdom, yet, to mature Christians, it imparts the highest wisdom, 1 Corinthians 2:6-9; a wisdom revealed to Paul and his colleagues by the Spirit, 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; and therefore incomprehensible to men possessing only natural intelligence, 1 Corinthians 2:14-16; to men such as the conduct of Paul's readers proves them to be, 1 Corinthians 3:1-4.

**Ver. 6.** The change from "my word" (1 Corinthians 2:4) to 'we speak,' is frequent in these epistles to mark a transition from Paul's personal matters to the Gospel and its preachers generally. Cp. 2 Corinthians 2:13, 14.

Wisdom: higher knowledge, satisfying the intelligence and directing purpose and action. See note above.

Full grown, or 'mature': that which has reached its full development or goal: common in classic Greek for a full grown man in contrast to a child. Cp. 1 Corinthians 3:1. Same word in 1 Corinthians 13:10; 14:20; Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 5:14; Philippians 3:15; Colossians 1:28; 4:12; Romans 12:2. The rendering "perfect" is less accurate; and is very liable to be misunderstood. That Paul speaks of himself in Philippians 3:15 as one of the mature ones, after saying (Philippians 3:12) that he is not yet "matured," implies that the word was not a technical term for a definite stage of spiritual growth. As in bodily, so in spiritual, life we cannot mark exactly the moment of maturity. But the use of the word implies a stage of growth higher than justification and sufficiently definite to be an object of thought. They who enjoy the full salvation proclaimed in Romans 6:11 have a maturity compared with which their earlier state was childhood. Once their spiritual life was dependent on human helpers. Now they find that God is Himself sufficient to maintain them in full vigor by His own

presence under all circumstances with or without human helpers. And, than this, there is no surer mark of Christian maturity. Full grown, refers, not to knowledge merely, but to the entire Christian life. For Paul, while admitting (1 Corinthians 1:5) the knowledge of the Corinthian Christians, appeals (1 Corinthians 3:1) to their contentions in proof that they were still “babes in Christ,” and therefore incapable of higher teaching. And to this he evidently refers here. Only mature Christians can understand the higher knowledge: and therefore, only when surrounded by such, does Paul teach it.

Not of this age: not such wisdom as is possessed by men “of this age;” not “the wisdom of the world,” 1 Corinthians 1:20.

Rulers of this age; whose policy pertains only to the present world-period. They are a conspicuous example of the ‘wisdom of this age.’

Who are coming to nought: their power is passing away. See under 1 Corinthians 1:28. Their power belongs to, and will cease with, the present age. Therefore, as this age is each moment ‘passing away,’ so is their power.

**Ver. 7-8.** God’s wisdom: the eternal purpose of salvation, embracing the noblest ends and means, satisfying the intelligence of God and of those to whom it is revealed, the guide of God’s own action and the only worthy guide of human action. This purpose, announced in the Gospel, Paul and his colleagues ‘speak’ in the form of ‘a mystery,’ (see note below,) i.e. in words which contain (under a guise which the world calls foolishness) a secret of infinite worth known only to those to whom God reveals it, viz. to mature Christians.

Hidden wisdom; keeps before us the chief thought of ‘mystery,’ thus preparing the way for 1 Corinthians 2:11, 14. Cp. Ephesians 3:9, Colossians 1:26. The ‘wisdom of God’ assumed concrete form in His purpose of salvation, which He ‘marked-out-before-hand’ (or ‘foreordained:’ see Romans 8:29) in His own mind ‘before the ages’ of time began, with a view ‘to our glory,’ i.e. to cover us with eternal splendor. Cp. Romans 8:30. That this purpose was earlier than the ages, proves it to be superior to the wisdom of this age.”

Which not one, etc.: stately contrast to ‘which God, etc.’

For if, etc.: proof that they did not know it.

The Lord of the glory: James 2:1; cp. Ephesians 1:17; Acts 7:2: the Master, of whom the well-known splendor is a marked characteristic. Before this glory, all the glitter of earthly rulers pales. And it is a pledge 'of our glory.' That the rulers 'crucified' Jesus, proves that they saw not the splendor of His rank, and knew not the purpose of eternal wisdom which He came to accomplish. Since the murderers of Christ acted on principles common to all who belong only to the present life, their action is given in proof that 'not one of the rulers of this age knows the wisdom of God.'

**Ver. 9.** But we speak according as it is written, etc.: parallel with "but we speak" in 1 Corinthians 2:7, and marking a contrast to 1 Corinthians 2:8. This verse has no exact counterpart in the Old Testament. But Paul's favorite phrase, 'as it is written,' is found elsewhere only with Old Testament quotations. Origen thought that Paul was quoting some apocryphal work. Jerome found here a reference to Isaiah 64:4. And this is confirmed by the Epistle of Clement of Rome, in ch. 34, where we read: "For He says, Eye has not seen and ear has not heard and into man's heart it has not gone up, how many things God has prepared for those who wait for Him." This quotation is so similar that either it must have been taken from the Epistle or both from the same source. And its last words, "wait for Him," point still more clearly than does the passage before us to Isaiah 64:4. In 1 Corinthians 1:31 we found Paul quoting in his own words the true sense of the Old Testament: and probably he does so here.

In prophetic view of a trodden down sanctuary, Isaiah cries to God for an unexpected and tremendous deliverance. "O that Thou hadst rent heavens, hadst come down, that from Thy face mountains had trembled; like fire kindling bushes, fire makes water to boil, to make known Thy name to Thy enemies: from Thy face nations shall be thrown into confusion; when Thou dost terrible things we expect not." The prophet grounds his hope and prayer upon the fact that "From of old men have not heard, have not listened to, eye has not seen, a God besides thee; He will act for him that waits for Him." He teaches plainly that in saving His people God surpasses their expectation, and does for them things unheard before. And this is concisely expressed by Paul in the words before us.



For those that love Him, (Romans 8:28,) rather than “that wait for Him,” was prompted, perhaps, by loving gratitude for benefits so inconceivable. This verse refers probably to the final “glory” (1 Corinthians 2:7) of God’s people, the ultimate aim of the eternal purpose hidden from the world, revealed to Paul and others, and spoken by him among mature Christians. It is already revealed (Ephesians 1:17f) as an object of hope; and will soon (Romans 8:18) be revealed as our actual possession. These words find also a fulfillment on earth. For our present spiritual blessedness is a foretaste of our eternal joy.

**Ver. 10.** To us: (like “we speak,” 1 Corinthians 2:6:) in contrast to “the rulers of this age.” Revealed. see Romans 1:17: always actual and supernatural impartation of knowledge. Only ‘through’ the agency of ‘the Spirit’ of God are the truths of the Gospel made known. This agrees with Romans 5:5: cp. Ephesians 1:17; 3:5.

For the Spirit, etc.: reason of this, viz. because only the Spirit knows the secrets of God.

Searches: vivid picture of the active intelligence of the Spirit.

The deep things, or ‘depths’: the underlying Purposes and Nature ‘of God.’ Cp. Romans 11:33: contrast Revelation 2:24.

**Ver. 11.** Proves the assertion of 1 Corinthians 2:10b, by the analogy of man’s spirit. This implies, as indeed the name Spirit does, that the Holy Spirit bears to the Father a relation in some points similar to that of our spirits to ourselves. In so mysterious a matter we must be careful not to press the analogy beyond the point for which Paul uses it. We may conceive of a man as distinct from his own spirit, as abstract personality, as a point without dimensions; and as looking out from this abstract point upon his own spirit, the animating principle which gives him life and consciousness. See note, Romans 8:17. Now ‘the spirit of the man,’ the principle of life ‘which is in him,’ and of created spirits it only, looks from within upon all the man’s thoughts and purposes. ‘In this way also the Spirit of God’ is within the essence of God, and from within looks through and investigates the entire contents of the mind of God. And, of intelligent spirits, He alone does this. Notice carefully that exclusive assertions about the Spirit never exclude the Son: and conversely. For the Son and the Spirit

move in different planes, so to say, the one as God before our eyes, the other as God within our hearts; and are alike divine, and therefore unlimited.

**Ver. 12.** From a general principle Paul now turns to himself and colleagues.

The spirit of the world: the one animating principle of the men of the world. It is “the spirit which now works in the sons of disobedience,” Ephesians 2:2; “the spirit of error,” 1 John 4:6: an intelligent spiritual power acting in obedience to (Ephesians 2:2) its ruler, “the ruler of this world,” John 12:31. Thus they who disobey God are acting under the direction of His enemy. Cp. Romans 6:16. ‘The Spirit’ of God is also ‘from God:’ for, the Spirit which breathes in the breast of God and permeates His entire consciousness, He sends forth to be the animating principle of His people’s life. Cp. Revelation 1:4; 5:6.

Graciously-given: cognate to “gift-of-grace,” 1 Corinthians 1:7; Romans 1:11. It refers probably to the future glory, (1 Corinthians 2:7,) passing human thought, (1 Corinthians 2:9,) which, in the purpose and by the undeserved favor of God, is already (to our faith and hope) our inheritance and possession. But these words are true also of present spiritual gifts. Just as God breathed into Adam’s body a human spirit, that he might become conscious of the material good which God had given to him, so God has breathed into us the breath of His own life that we may become conscious of His richer and eternal and altogether undeserved gifts to us in Christ.

That we may know, etc.; completes the explanation of 1 Corinthians 2:10a.

That the Spirit who “searches all the deep things of God” is an actively intelligent Person distinct from the Father, (cp. 1 Corinthians 12:11, “according as He pleases,”) is implied in John 16:13, “He will not speak of His own accord, but as many things as He hears He will speak,” where Christ teaches that the Spirit is so distinct personally from the Father as to listen to, and repeat, the Father’s words. And that the Spirit knows everything in the mind of the Father, as a man’s spirit knows all the man knows, proves Him to be divine. Since, sent by the Father, He dwells in us, He is “given” and “received.” Just as the Son, a Divine Person, is given

for us, that He may be our Lord so the Spirit is given to us, to be in us as the animating principle of our new life. The names of the Three Divine Persons of the One Trinity are found side by side in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Matthew 28:19; Revelation 1:4, 5.

**Ver. 13.** Which things we also speak; takes up “we speak,” 1 Corinthians 2:6, 7, after the explanation in 1 Corinthians 2:10b-12 of the statement of 1 Corinthians 2:10a. In 1 Corinthians 2:10-12 we learn the source of the matter of Paul’s preaching: we now learn that his manner has the same source. This completes the discussion, begun in 1 Corinthians 1:17, of the relation of the Gospel to wisdom.

Taught words of human wisdom: such words as human knowledge and skill would choose. Cp. 1 Corinthians 1:17b; 2:4. Just as scholastic training, without dictating words and without destroying the individuality of the speaker, nevertheless enables him to clothe his thoughts in words better than he could otherwise have chosen, so the Holy Spirit enabled Paul to give appropriate utterance to the truths already revealed to him by the Spirit. But the analogy of ‘human wisdom’ forbids us to infer that he received words by mechanical dictation. And this is disproved by the literary variety of the Bible. Many strings touched by one Divine Harpist give forth notes answering to the nature and tension of each. And thus the sacred chorus is harmony, not unison.

Spiritual things: “the things of the Spirit of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:14,) i.e. truths taught by the Spirit. So Romans 1:11; 7:14; 15:27.

Joining spiritual things: a mode of speech prompted by the Spirit. These words suggest the incongruity of trusting to human learning or skill in setting forth divine truth.

**Ver. 14-16.** Paul will now show, paving the way to an application of the foregoing teaching to the church-parties at Corinth, that this teaching places the wisdom revealed in the Gospel beyond the reach of men not animated by the Spirit.

Soul-governed man: one whose inward and outward life is directed by the soul, the lower side of his immaterial being, by the side nearest to the body and the outer world, i.e. by his appetites and emotions; but not necessarily sensual appetites and emotions, for others besides these are evoked by

things around us. Of this character, selfishness is a constant mark. For all unselfish instincts are from above, and appeal to that in us which is noblest. To these influences from the world around, the Spirit is ever opposed. Same word in 1 Corinthians 15:44, 46; James 3:15, “this wisdom is earthly, soul-governed demon-like;” Jude 19, “soul-governed, not having the Spirit.” See note 1 Corinthians 15:54. In such men, the animal element, which is controlled by the body and by the material world, controls the actions, purposes, and even in part the intelligence. They are therefore “men of flesh,” 1 Corinthians 3:1; Romans 7:14; and their wisdom is “fleshly,” 2 Corinthians 1:12. But Paul prefers to give them here the highest title they can claim, viz. “men governed by the lower side of their immaterial nature.” He thinks probably of men altogether without the Spirit, which (Romans 8:9) all the justified possess. And of them only these words are true in their full compass. But this verse is also true, in its measure, of all who, like the Corinthian Christians, yield themselves to emotions awakened by the world around. It thus prepares the way for 1 Corinthians 3:1-4.

Things of the Spirit of God: “spiritual things,” 1 Corinthians 2:13: those with which the Spirit has to do.

Does not accept: a simple matter of fact.

For they are, etc.: reason of it. The excellence of the aims, and the suitability of the means, chosen by the Spirit are not seen by the man taught only by the lower side of human nature: and therefore, to him, these aims and means seem to be an embodiment (cp. 1 Corinthians 1:18) of ‘foolishness,’ i.e. worthless from an intellectual point of view. ‘And he’ not only does not accept, but ‘cannot know, them,’ i.e. so understand their nature as to wish to have them.

Because, etc.: reason why ‘they are foolishness to him,’ and why he has not ability to ‘know them.’

Discern: to examine, and by examination detect the real nature of a thing. Same word in 1 Corinthians 4:3, 4; 9:3; 10:25, 27; 14:24; Luke 23:14; Acts 4:9; 12:19; 17:11; 24:8; 28:18. The process of discovering the divine wisdom revealed by the Spirit to the apostles and spoken by them in words suggested by the Spirit goes on only under the influence of the

Spirit. Consequently, those destitute of the Spirit cannot know the truth taught by Him: for they have not the spiritual life essential to spiritual vision.

**Ver. 15.** The spiritual man: 1 Corinthians 3:1; Galatians 6:1: whose inner and outer life is ruled by the Spirit of God, in contrast to one ruled by his animal nature.

All things: men and things; see 1 Corinthians 1:27. So far as we are under the influence of the Spirit of God do we sift the men and things around us and discover their real moral worth. Thus the Spirit within us casts a light on objects around us. So 1 John 2:20.

By no one; i.e. destitute of the Spirit. While the spiritual man, from his higher point of view, looks through and understands the purposes and motives of worldly men, his own purposes and motives are to them an insoluble mystery. And this in proportion as he is guided by the Spirit.

**Ver. 16.** Reason for this; a quotation from Isaiah 40:13, quoted also in Romans 11:34.

Of the Lord: see Romans 9:29; 10:13. The contrast of 'Christ' suggests that Paul retains Isaiah's reference to the Father.

Mind of the Lord: word for word from the LXX., instead of "Spirit of Jehovah." It is the seat of the intelligence and the wisdom of God. Since the Spirit carries out into accomplishment the purposes of God, the change is unimportant. And, as it suits Paul's argument, he adopts it.

Who will instruct Him: one who, understanding fully the circumstances and purposes of another, can give him advice. But the thought of giving 'instruction' to God reveals how infinitely far is the wisest man from comprehending the mind of God.

We have; includes all "spiritual" men.

Mind of Christ: personally distinct from, but practically the same as, the "mind of the Lord." For the Son is one with the Father. And whatever knowledge, purposes, and methods, lie in the mind of the Father, are fully understood and approved and appropriated by the intelligence of the Son. Moreover, by actual contact with Christ through the agency of His Spirit,

the contents of the ‘mind of Christ,’ i.e. His knowledge and purposes, are in part given to us and appropriated by us; so that so far as we “are led by the Spirit of God” the wisdom of Christ is the directing principle of our life. The name ‘Christ’ reminds us of His specific work. Hence the change of expression. And the context in Isaiah reminds us that the ‘mind of Christ’ contains the infinite wisdom revealed in Creation. All this explains 1 Corinthians 2:15. The spiritual man understands all men and is understood by none: for in him dwells, and he is guided by, the wisdom of the Creator, who understands all things and whose purposes and methods none can understand.

Notice the tone of triumph here. In Romans 11:33 we heard a similar triumph as Paul contemplated the wisdom of God using national prejudices and obstinacy to work out His universal purpose of mercy. And we now learn, with still greater wonder, that the same infinite wisdom which directs the affairs of nations to the attainment of His own purposes also directs the steps of even the least of those who yield themselves to the guidance of His Spirit. And, if so, his steps, though they tread the lowliest path, are guided by a wisdom which the wisest worldly man can never understand.

In 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, Paul applies to himself and the Corinthian Christians the general principles of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16: as in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, the principles of 1 Corinthians 1:17-31. The Gospel does not commend itself to human wisdom: therefore his preaching to them laid no claim to such wisdom. Yet the Gospel proclaims wisdom, a wisdom revealed by the Spirit and understood only by the spiritual: it was therefore useless to preach it to them.

**Ver. 1.** And I... to you; as in 1 Corinthians 2:1, turns suddenly from a general principle to a personal matter.

Brothers; suitably introduces a brother’s reproof. So 1 Corinthians 1:10.

Speak; takes up 1 Corinthians 2:6, 13.

Spiritual: as in 1 Corinthians 2:15. It admits of degrees, in proportion as a man’s purposes and life are controlled by the Spirit. All the justified (Romans 8:9) have the Spirit. But the contrast with ‘babes in Christ’

shows that Paul refers here to some fulness (Ephesians 5:18) of the Spirit. Only of such is the statement of 1 Corinthians 2:15 conspicuously true.

Men-of-flesh: same word in Romans 7:14. Paul is compelled 'to speak' to them 'as to' men consisting only of the material side of human nature, i.e. to teach them the rudiments of the Gospel (Hebrews 5:12) as though still unsaved.

Babes in Christ: in contrast to "full grown," 1 Corinthians 2:6. So 1 Corinthians 14:20; Ephesians 4:13f; Hebrews 5:13f; cp. Romans 2:20. It rather softens the foregoing words. He does not look at them as altogether destitute of the Spirit, but as men whose spiritual life is as yet undeveloped.

**Ver.** 2-3a. Milk: explained in Hebrews 5:12.

Solid food: the "wisdom" of 1 Corinthians 2:6. These words, which must refer chiefly to Paul's personal teaching at Corinth, suggest a long sojourn in their midst; and thus confirm Acts 18:11.

Not yet were you: when last he taught them.

Not yet even now; opens the way to their present state, which is Paul's special business now.

Fleshly: men whose conduct is more or less controlled by the material side of human nature. Not quite so strong as "men-of-flesh."

**Ver.** 3b-4. Proof that they are still fleshly, and therefore unable to digest strong food. That emulation (see under 1 Corinthians 12:31) 'and strife' are given as complete proof of a 'fleshly' disposition, proves that these arise always from a life in pursuit of the things needful or pleasant to the body. Cp. Galatians 5:19. This arises from the essential selfishness of such a life, which puts us in opposition to our fellows. See note, Romans 8:11. Not that the body is essentially evil; (for it is a creature of God; ) but sin, ever a principle of separation and discord, sets the body in opposition to the man's highest nature, that thus eventually the whole man may be corrupted.

Walk: 1 Corinthians 7:17; 2 Corinthians 4:2; 5:7; 10:2f; 12:18; Romans 6:4; 8:4: an Old Testament word (Genesis 5:24; Leviticus 18:4; 26:40; 1 Kings

2:4, etc.) favorite with Paul and John to describe the outer side, and the direction, of human life.

As men: under the influence of ordinary unsaved human nature.

For when, etc.: proof from acknowledged fact that in the Corinthian church there is 'emulation and strife,' and that therefore its members are 'fleshly.' 'Are you not men?' implies that the Christian life is superhuman. Cp. Romans 3:5. 'Where' (1 Corinthians 3:3) and 'when' (1 Corinthians 3:4) point conspicuously to Corinth and to the present time. All this explains Paul's inability to "speak wisdom" at Corinth.

SECTION 4 teaches that, to those who accept it fully, the Gospel conveys wisdom, i.e. a knowledge of that which is most worth knowing, and of that which they most need to know. It tells them what they are, what God is, how they may come to God and become like God. Amid much ignorance of details, they look up, through the various forces around, to the Great Source and Ruler of all. They understand in some measure, and approve, and appropriate, the eternal purposes of God. These purposes, and the method of their attainment, satisfy their highest intelligence and explain to them, in some measure, the mysteries of life and of suffering; and become the guide of their actions. Thus their mind is filled, and their steps directed, by the wisdom of Him who made the world. Compared with this wisdom, all merely human wisdom is folly. For it fails to explain the mystery of our being, and to put before us the true object of life and the best means of attaining it. Of the folly of human wisdom, the world's treatment of Jesus was a conspicuous example

We also learn that this divine wisdom is conveyed to us by the agency of the indwelling Spirit of God, who alone looks into and through the mind of God. Consequently, only in proportion as we are under His influence is this wisdom understood by us. It is, however, embodied in words spoken by human lips. But these words are a mystery. Only as the Spirit opens our eyes do we understand their hidden meaning. Now the Spirit seeks to direct our steps as well as to enlighten our mind: and He ever leads men to Christian unity. And He does the one only so far as He does the other. Consequently, jealousy and strife are sure marks of absence of that fulness of the Spirit without which we cannot understand the higher teaching of



the Gospel. Where these are, such teaching is useless. Thus does Paul rebuke the pride of knowledge which lay at the root of the church-parties at Corinth.

We cannot mark out particular doctrines as belonging to this higher wisdom. It is that nearer and clearer vision of God, which in all ages has been the privilege of those who dwell in His nearer presence, which they have read in the pages of Holy Scripture, which to unsaved men is incomprehensible or ridiculous, but which guides the steps of those who possess it along a path in which they find their highest happiness and usefulness.

Notice that, just as 3 assumes the first fundamental Doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans, so here Paul assumes and develops the fifth Doctrine. See Romans 5:5; 8:3-16; where we learned that the Spirit reveals to us God's love, moves us to call Him Father, and directs our steps in life. Of this teaching, 4 is but a practical application.

**MYSTERY:** An English form, and the constant rendering, of an important Greek word. A cognate word is found in Philippians 4:12. From the same root word are "mystic" and "mysticism."

The mysteries of ancient Greece were secret religious rites and teaching, forming the chief part of festivals celebrated at regular intervals in certain places. The most famous were those held annually, with great pomp, for nine days, at Eleusis, twelve miles from Athens on the way to Corinth. After six days of public ceremonies, those who had previously undergone a preliminary initiation, and were now called in Greek "mystai," were led, under the darkness of the night, by strict vows of secrecy, into the sanctuary of the goddess Demeter, where they saw and heard things forbidden to all others. So well was the secret kept that we now only can guess what then took place. But scattered references of classic writers imply that in these mysteries religious teaching was imparted, the noblest teaching perhaps of the heathen world. So Plato, 'Phaedop.' 81a: "Whither having come, it is given to the soul to be happy, being made free from error and folly and fears and coarse passions and the other human evils, as they say about the initiated (same word as Philippians 4:12) in the mysteries, in truth spending the rest of their time with the gods." And Cicero, himself

initiated, in his 'Laws' bk. ii. 14: "Though Athens seems to me to have produced and brought into the life of men many excellent and divine things, yet nothing better than those mysteries by which from a boorish and wild life we are trained to humanity and are softened, and just as they are called initiations so in truth we have learned the first principles of life: and not only have we received a way of living with joy, but also of dying with a better hope."

See the excellent remarks of p. 198 of Mahaffy's 'Rambles in Greece,' quoted in vol. v. p. 471 of the 'Expositor.'

In accordance with classic use, the word 'mystery' in the Bible denotes always a secret known only to the initiated, i.e. those to whom it has been specially revealed. It is used in the Apocrypha for any confided secret; e.g. Sirach 27:16f, "he who reveals mysteries has destroyed confidence;" Tobit 12:7; Judith 2:2: and in Daniel (LXX.) for an outward form under which lay unknown truth; Daniel 2:18f, "in a vision of the night the mystery was revealed;" Daniel 2:28; 4:9. Cp. Wisdom 8:4, "wisdom is an initiated one (mystis) of the understanding of God."

In still closer accord with classic use, the truths underlying the parables of Christ are called (Matthew 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10) 'mysteries' known only by those to whom "it is given." Cp. Matthew 11:25. And the teaching here attributed to Christ took firm hold of the mind of Paul, and frequently reappears variously developed in his writings. The many-sided purpose of redemption is called (Romans 16:25; Ephesians 1:9; 3:3; 6:19; Colossians 1:26f; 2:2; 4:3) a mystery kept in silence (even from angels, Mark 13:32; 1 Peter 1:12; Ephesians 3:10) during eternal times, but now made known. To proclaim this mystery to all, was the life work of Paul, Ephesians 3:9; 6:19; Colossians 4:3; who was thus a steward of the mysteries of God, 1 Corinthians 4:1. Of a purpose of God still kept secret, we never read. Yet God's eternal and universal purpose of mercy is none the less (Colossians 2:3) hidden in Christ. For, though proclaimed everywhere, it is understood only by those whom God leads into the secret chamber of His presence, whose eyes and ears He opens by His Spirit to the heavenly light and the heavenly voice: 1 Corinthians 2:10; Ephesians 3:5. Consequently, Paul spoke "in a mystery" words understood only by the initiated, i.e. by mature Christians. He had himself

(Philippians 4:12) been “initiated” into the secret of life, and therefore knew how “to be humbled and to abound.” Thus the word mystery is in itself an embodiment of the chief teaching of this section.

In a more general sense the same word is used sometimes of any truth revealed specially by God, e.g. Romans 11:25; 1 Corinthians 15:51; and for a secret of which the key has not yet been given, 2 Thessalonians 2:7. In Revelation 1:20; 17:5, 7, the truths underlying the visible symbols are called mysteries. Revelation 10:7 approaches the teaching of this section.

## SECTION 5

### *APOLLOS AND PAUL ARE BUT SERVANTS DOING THE WORK OF ONE MASTER*

#### CHAPTER 3:5-4:5

*What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom you believed, and as to each one the Lord gave.*

*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So that neither he that plants is anything, nor he that waters; but God who gives the growth. And he that plants and he that waters are one: and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For God's fellow-workers are we: God's field, God's building, you are.*

*According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise masterbuilder, I laid a foundation: and another builds up. But let each one see how he builds up. For, another foundation no one can lay, beside that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. And if anyone builds up on the foundation, a piece of gold, a piece of silver, costly stones, pieces of wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become manifest. For the day will declare it: because in fire it is revealed, and each one's work, of what kind it is the fire itself will prove. If any one's work shall remain which he built up, he will receive reward. If any one's work shall be burnt up, he will suffer loss. But he himself will be saved, but in this way, as through fire.*

*Do you not know that you are God's temple, and the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any one injures the temple of God, him God will injure: for the temple of God is holy, which you are.*

*Let no one deceive himself. If any one thinks himself to be wise among you in this age, let him become foolish, that he may*

*become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “He that lays hold of the wise ones in their craftiness.” (Job 5:18.) And again, “The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise ones, that they are vain.” (Psalm 94:11.) So then let no one exult in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present or things coming; all things are yours: and you are Christ’s: and Christ is God’s.*

*In this way let a man reckon us, as helpers of Christ and stewards of mysteries of God. This being so, moreover, search is made about stewards, that a man may be found faithful. But to me it has become a very little thing that by you I may be examined, or by a human day of assize. No, I do not even examine myself. For of nothing am I conscious to myself But not in this am I justified. But He who examines me is the Lord. So then, do not before the right time judge anything, until the Lord come, who will also bring to light the hidden things of the darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. And then the due praise will be given to each one from God.*

**Ver. 5.** What then, etc.: a wider question than “who then?” Since they call themselves followers of Paul or Apollos, Paul asks what these men are, i.e. what are their position, powers, and achievements. He thus, armed with the great principles developed in 3, 4, approaches the specific matter kept in view throughout DIV. 1

Ministers: see Romans 12:7.

Through whom: Romans 1:2; cp. John 1:7; 1 Peter 1:21.

You believed: were led to believe the Gospel: see Romans 13:11. From this we learn that the ministry of Apollos, not only (Acts 18:27) benefited the Corinthian believers, but increased their number.

And as, etc.; adds another important truth.

The Lord: probably Christ, the One ‘Master’ whose work Paul and Apollos were doing. So 1 Corinthians 8:6; 12:5; Ephesians 4:5.

Gave: for the converts' faith was Christ's work in them: cp. Romans 12:3; 1:8; John 6:44, 65. Therefore, since converts will be (cp. Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:19) the preacher's eternal enrichment and joy, they are Christ's gift to each one. Yet each man's faith is his own mental act, his own self-surrender (which he might have refused) to divine influences which came to him before he believed, and led him to faith. And the preacher's success is usually in proportion to his energy and skill. But the full truth of Paul's words is felt by all who have had the joy of turning a sinner from the error of his ways.

**Ver. 6-9.** A beautiful metaphor, illustrating 1 Corinthians 3:5.

I planted, etc.; expounds "through whom, etc.:" but God gave, etc., expounds "as to each one, etc." The hearts of the men at Corinth were the soil: the preached word was the 'planted' cutting: (or seed sown, Mark 4:14:) the faith with which the word was received and the life of faith, or the church at Corinth which was a visible embodiment of this faith, were the growing plant. The nourishment brought by Apollos developed the existing branches, and caused them (1 Corinthians 3:6) to put forth fresh twigs. But that the cutting took root and grew into a tree, was the work, not of the gardeners who 'planted' and 'watered' it, 'but' entirely of 'God.' As usual, Paul rises from the Son to the Father. The Son, as Master of the house and as Administrator of salvation, allots success to His servants: but all spiritual life and growth have their original source in the Father. Cp. 1 Corinthians 12:5f.

**Ver. 7.** Since we are only garden laborers who plant and sow, of whom any number may be had, we are practically of no importance whatever.

But God, etc.; is everything.

**Ver. 8-9.** Are one; literally, one thing they are practically the same, 1 Corinthians 11:5. Just so in the vineyard the man who plants is in a position neither better nor worse than the man who waters. These words, cautiously used, will cast light on John 10:30; 17:11, 21.

But each man, etc.: points both to the oneness, and the individuality, of the servants of God. Because they stand in exactly the same relation to the Master, each will receive according to his labor.

Reward: suggests their humble position as men paid for their work.

Labor: not according to results, but according to the quantity and quality of his toil.

His own reward, and his own labor, exactly correspond. 1 Corinthians 3:9a proves 1 Corinthians 3:8b.

Fellow-workers: Romans 16:3, 9, 21; 2 Corinthians 1:24; 8:23; 3 John 8: a favorite word with Paul. Men are permitted to join with God in the work of salvation. And their reward will be in proportion to their toil. For God's work will be successful: and its success will be an eternal joy to all who have labored for it. And the joy of success is always proportionate to the toil with which it has been attained.

Field: cultivated land, including the soil and the growing produce. Since the Corinthian church is a 'field' belonging to God, those who 'labor' in it are God's 'fellow-workers.'

God's building; opens the way to another metaphor.

The question of 1 Corinthians 3:5a is answered; and its answer reveals the folly of making Paul and Apollos heads of church-parties. They are but laborers in a vineyard, all standing in the same relation to the owner as hired servants each to be paid according to his labor.

The frequency of the foregoing metaphor proves plainly that it rests upon a far-reaching harmony of things natural and spiritual. Cp. Romans 11:16-24; Psalm 1:1-3; Isaiah 5:1-7; Matthew 13:3-30; Luke 13:6-9; John 15:1-6. All agriculture is man working together with God. For every pious farmer feels that his harvest is a result and reward proportionate to his own toil and skill, and yet altogether God's gift to him. Just so, the preacher places the word of God in its appropriate soil, the human heart. And, from the preached word, in virtue of its hidden life, there springs up the beautiful and fruitful plant of a Christian believer and Christian life.

**Ver.** 10-15. To show how humble is the position of himself and Apollos, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:8 that each will receive pay according to his labor. This truth he now uses as a warning to some of his readers. As a basis for the warning, he introduced in 1 Corinthians 3:9g a second metaphor, which he now develops.

Before using words which seem to imply superiority, Paul acknowledges that whatever he has done he owes to the undeserved ‘favor of God.’ This also reminds us that in laying the foundation he acted by divine authority.

Wise: in its earliest sense of “skilful;” see note, 1 Corinthians 2:5. The teaching of 4 makes the word very appropriate here.

I laid: parallel with “I planted,” 1 Corinthians 3:6. In face of some who depreciated his ability, (2 Corinthians 10:10) Paul claims to have skilfully founded the church of Corinth. Cp. 1 Corinthians 4:15.

Builds-up: carries upward the building already begun. Same word, repeated for emphasis, in 1 Corinthians 3:12, 14.

Another: Apollos or any other teacher. Hence the present tense, though (1 Corinthians 16:12) Apollos had left Corinth; and the words ‘let each one see how, etc.’ This warning, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 develop. The different modes of continuing Paul’s work warn each one to look how he builds.

**Ver. 11.** Justifies 1 Corinthians 3:10b, which confines our attention to the manner of continuing Paul’s work, by declaring that there can be no other foundation than that which he has already laid. Christ is the foundation of the church, objectively; inasmuch as upon His death and resurrection rest His people’s faith and hope. He is so subjectively, by His presence in them. The rock on which we stand is both beneath our feet and within our hearts. This foundation, laid objectively for the whole church in the Great Facts, was laid subjectively in the hearts of the Christians at Corinth as the firm ground of their personal hopes, by Paul. Consequently, all other Christian work done at Corinth will be a continuation of that which he began. This, of course, leaves out of sight the almost impossible case of the extinction of the church: in which case the work would need to be begun again.

**Ver. 12-15.** After justifying in 1 Corinthians 3:11 the limitation implied in 1 Corinthians 3:10b, Paul now takes up and develops his warning. He tells us that he refers to the materials used; and mentions two classes, one destructible and the other indestructible, each class containing different kinds of different value. The real nature of the results produced by ‘each one will become manifest,’ i.e. set publicly before the eyes of all.



For the day, etc.: proof of this.

The day; of judgment, 1 Corinthians 1:8; Romans 2:16. That Paul calls it simply ‘the day,’ reveals the large and definite place it had in his thought. Cp. 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2 Timothy 1:12, 18; 4:8.

Will declare: the great day is personified.

Because in fire... will prove: two facts showing how ‘the day will declare it.’

Revealed: see under Romans 1:17, 19. The present tense is used, as often, for that which will indisputably come and is therefore already present in the mind of the believer.

Fire: the surest and severest test of the hidden nature of objects subjected to it. There will be no need for the judge to declare what men have done. For the Day itself, as its light floods the intelligence of men, will declare all. For the light of that day is a fire searching out the inmost quality of every man’s work.

**Ver.** 14-15. Result of the testing.

Built-up; keeps before us the foundation, 1 Corinthians 3:11.

Burnt-up: if the great day put an end to the results attained in this life.

Suffer loss: viz. of the reward he would have had if his work had survived the test.

Will be saved: for Paul speaks of believers building on the one foundation. Even the “babes in Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:1) have spiritual life and are members of the family of God.

In this way: with his work destroyed.

As through fire: explains ‘in this way.’ The picture may be thus conceived. Two workmen are building on one foundation, one with imperishable, the other with perishable, materials. The building is wrapped in flames. One man’s work survives the fire: and he receives pay for it. The other’s work is burnt up: and he rushes out through the flame, leaving behind the ruins

of his own work. And for his work, which the fire proved to be worthless, he receives no pay.

What are the materials and who are the builders in this picture? Since it was by preaching and teaching that Paul laid the foundation of the church of Corinth, the builders must be different kinds of teachers. Since the matter taught is the material the teacher uses, this must be the gold, silver, wood, straw, etc. The results produced by the teacher in the hearts and lives of his hearers are the building he erects. He may produce good results which will last for ever and be to him an eternal joy and glory. Since these results are altogether the work of God, and are revealed in their real grandeur only in the great day, they are a "reward" given by God in that day for work done on earth. But a teacher may also produce results which now appear great and substantial, but which will then be found utterly worthless. He may gather around him a large number of hearers, may interest them, and teach them much that is elegant and for this life useful; and yet fail to produce in or through them results which will abide for ever. If so, the great day will destroy his work and thus proclaim its worthlessness. But he may be said to build upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ. For he is a professed Christian teacher: and people go to hear him as such. He may be a sincere, though mistaken, Christian believer; and therefore be himself saved. But his work, as a teacher, is a failure. Now the permanence of a teacher's work depends upon the matter taught. The soul-saving truths of the Gospel enter into men's hearts and lives, and produce abiding results. We understand, therefore, by the wood and straw whatever teaching does not impart or nourish spiritual life. The three terms suggest the various kinds of such teaching. It may be clever or foolish, new or old, true or false; but not subversive of the "foundation," or it would come under the severer censure of 1 Corinthians 3:16f. The frequency of such teaching is proved by 1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7; 6:4; 2 Timothy 2:14, 23; 4:4; Titus 1:14; 3:9. We have perhaps a Jewish example of it in very much that was written by Paul's earlier contemporary Philo: and we have Christian examples in many of the speculative and trifling discussions which have been frequent in all ages. We also learn that even of the teaching which produces abiding results there are different degrees of worth; in proportion, no doubt, to the fulness and purity with which the teaching of Christ is reproduced. In both cases, the buildings erected are

the results, lasting or transitory, produced in the hearers' hearts by the use of these materials; results which are in some sense a standing embodiment of the teaching.

Under 1 Corinthians 4:21 we shall see that in this solemn warning Paul strikes at the root of the church-parties at Corinth. Cp. 2 Timothy 2:23.

1 Corinthians 3:8, 14 reveal different degrees of future blessedness. Conversely, Romans 2:5. For we have here a man who "will be saved," but will not obtain the reward which others will have and which he might have had.

The excellent Roman Catholic commentator, Estius, says properly that "reward" implies merit, i.e. appropriateness for reward, in the action rewarded. But he has not observed that the reward here said to be given for work done on earth is not eternal life, (cp. Romans 6:23,) but a higher degree of blessedness. Notice carefully that, since our good works are wrought in us by God, both the actions rewarded (as Estius admits) and the reward are altogether gifts of the undeserved favor and mercy of God.

At the council of Florence, A.D. 1439, the Latin fathers appealed to 1 Corinthians 3:15 in proof of the doctrine of purgatory. But the fire here mentioned belongs, not to the interval between death and judgment, but to the judgment day. Estius, whose exposition in the main I agree with, raises a difficulty about the bodies of the saved, which must be incapable of pain, passing through fire; and supposes that the teachers referred to passed through the fire in the moment before their resurrection, and were thus cleansed from sins till then unforgiven. But Paul does not say that the fire inflicts pain or cleanses from sin, but only that it destroys the teachers' work and reward. How the consciousness of past failure and unfaithfulness will be reconciled with the unalloyed joy of heaven, is a mystery we cannot solve. But it is not lessened by the suggestion of Estius. For this consciousness of failure will certainly continue after the resurrection. It will perhaps be neutralized by joy that so unworthy a worker is permitted to enter the Master's presence.

The metaphor of the building, found also in Matthew 7:24ff; 16:18; Ephesians 2:21; 1 Peter 2:5, and in the word "edification," may be profitably compared with that of the field or garden in 1 Corinthians 3:6-9.

The latter comparison teaches that the growth of a church is a development of life, such as only God can give; and shows how subordinate is the position of a Christian teacher. It therefore reveals the folly of making Paul and Apollos heads of parties. The other metaphor presents the human side of Christian work; and teaches that its permanence depends upon the materials used, materials brought together from various places according to the builder's judgment and resources. It was therefore a suitable warning, to those who were continuing Paul's work at Corinth, to put into the minds of their hearers such teaching as would produce enduring results. And it was the more appropriate because, as 1 Corinthians 3:18-20 suggest, a love for mere human wisdom was a chief source of the evils which Paul now attempts to remove.

**Ver. 16-17.** Do you not know: common phrase of Paul: 1 Corinthians 5:6; 6:2f, 9, 15f; 9:13, 24; Romans 6:16; 11:2. Its frequency in this Epistle was a rebuke, probably undesigned, of the boasted wisdom of the Corinthian Christians. The suddenness and evident astonishment of this question suggest that 1 Corinthians 3:15 had reminded Paul of something at Corinth which implied forgetfulness of the solemn teaching of this verse. The searching test to which all Christian work will be subjected recalls to his mind some who were not building at all, but were pulling down or defacing the good work of others. And, that Paul appeals to his readers generally, suggests that the church as a whole tolerated them. Cp. 1 Corinthians 5:2. He clothes his appeal in a metaphor suggested by the preceding one. The injury these men are inflicting reminds Paul of the dread solemnity, and the solemn relation to God, of the building which he and others are erecting. He asks whether his readers are ignorant of this: and his question implies that they have no excuse for ignorance.

Temple; represents in the Auth. Version two entirely different Greek words, viz. the "sanctuary," or sacred enclosure, open (cp. Leviticus 12:4) to all Jews, 1 Corinthians 9:13, Acts 2:46; 3:1ff, 8; 5:25, 42, etc.; and the temple proper, the sacred house into which (Hebrews 9:6) only the priests went and containing the holy and the most holy place, 1 Corinthians 3:16f; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Luke 1:9, 21f; Acts 19:24 A.V. and R.V. "shrines." Same distinction among pagan writers: e.g. Herodotus, bk. i. 183, "There is belonging to the sanctuary in Babylon another temple below; where there is a great statue of Zeus." The

corresponding Hebrew and Aramaic word is rendered (A.V.) “palace” in 1 Kings 21:1; Daniel 1:4; 4:1; 5:5; 6:18.

Temple of God: not temples. So 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21. Cp. Philo, ‘On Monarchy’ bk. ii. 1: “Since there is one God, there must be only one sanctuary.” Just as in the Old Covenant there was but one temple, the place which (Deuteronomy 12:5ff) God chose, where alone (Leviticus 17:8f) sacrifice could be offered, so now there is but one temple, of which the one church throughout the world is the holy place and the church within the veil the holy of holies. Of this one church, each visible community of Christians is a miniature representative. And each separate building (Ephesians 2:21) on the one foundation is growing up into, and when completed in glory will form, one holy temple.

[The above distinction of ιερος and ναος is marked in the R.V. by the note “Or, ‘sanctuary,’” wherever the latter is found; except that in the Book of Revelation, by unpardonable parsimony, one marginal note is made to suffice for sixteen places. But, whatever be its origin, the rendering “temple” suggests now the sacred house; and therefore ought not to be used for the sacred enclosure. Moreover, the distinction should have been made in the text. Much better and everywhere available (even in Acts 19:24, which should be “temples”) is my rendering “sanctuary” and ‘temple.’ The R.V. “a temple” is a serious error. For it suggests other temples; an idea utterly opposed to the whole Mosaic Covenant. The anarthrous substantive (cp. 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:2) looks at the one temple not as a single definite object of thought but in its abstract quality.]

The Spirit of God, etc.: a restatement of Doctrine 5, (see under Romans 8:4,) viz. that God’s purpose that we be holy is realized by the agency of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. Now, if this doctrine be true, as Paul confidently assumes, believers are the ‘temple of God.’ For the central idea of a temple was, to Jews and heathens, a dwelling place of God. Cp. Exodus 25:8; 29:45f; 1 Kings 8:27; 2 Corinthians 6:16. Just as under Moses God erected a building of earthly materials by the hands (Exodus 31:3) of men filled with the Spirit of God, that it might be His one dwelling place on earth, the one spot of earth nearest to heaven, and in which He might show forth His glory; so in the New Covenant, by giving His One

Spirit to dwell in the hearts of His people, He unites them into one, raises them above the earth, and makes them His one dwelling place on earth, that He may fill them with His presence, cover them with His glory, and in them show forth His glory to the world. Cp. 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21.

The Spirit of God (as bearer of the presence of God, Romans 8:10) dwells: rather than “God dwells,” (as in the Old Testament,) because in us God is present as an animating ‘Spirit,’ the source of divine life and activity. Not as such can He dwell in a temple made with hands.

**Ver. 17.** If any one, etc.; evidently introduces the matter which caused the astonishment of 1 Corinthians 3:16. From this we infer that at Corinth there were men actually injuring the church.

The temple of God: a general term including the temple made with hands and the living temple.

Injuries: by pulling down (Romans 14:20) or defacing. The context suggests that Paul refers to those who prompted the church-parties, and to the injury they thus did to the church.

Will injure; includes the loss, damage, and destruction, bodily and spiritual, present and future, which comes by the just punishment of ‘God’ to all who pull down or deface what He has set up. Paul then gives the reason why God ‘will injure, etc.,’ viz. because ‘the temple of God’ stands in special relation to Him, as erected for His purposes and glory. See note on holiness, Romans 1:7. Therefore, to injure the temple, is to rob and insult God.

Which you are: viz. holy. In other words, the foregoing general principle applies to Paul’s readers.

1 Corinthians 3:16, 17 appeal to ideas almost universal in the ancient world, but vanished now. Both Greeks and Jews believed that the place which God had chosen to reveal Himself to men, belonged to Him in a very special sense, and was guarded by Him with infinite jealousy; and that damage or insult to the holy place would be followed by divine vengeance. Paul reminds his readers that the very name, “saint,” or “holy person,” by which they designated themselves, implies that the sacredness of the

temple belongs to the church; and rightly so, for in its members, by His Spirit, God dwells. Therefore, whatever injury is done to the church will be avenged by its Great Inhabitant.

This warning contains a metaphor well worthy of study. If, as all admitted, the Spirit of God dwells in His people, His presence makes them a temple, erected by human hands, but of materials more precious than gold or costly marble. The builders may therefore tremble lest, even without design, they injure the building they profess and endeavor to be erecting.

**Ver.** 18. Let no one, if anyone: an appeal, not to the whole church as in 1 Corinthians 3:16, but to the men of 1 Corinthians 3:17. Not only were they ignorant of the sacredness of the church, but were in error in their estimate of themselves. Cp. 1 Corinthians 6:9; 15:33.

If any one thinks: 1 Corinthians 8:2; 14:37. As compared with other church-members ‘among’ whom he moves, he ‘thinks’ himself well acquainted with the things of ‘this’ present passing ‘age.’ So 1 Corinthians 1:20. To ‘become foolish,’ is the only way to ‘become wise.’ Once we were ‘wise,’ in our own estimate. But when we find out that we cannot by our own mental power or effort learn that which we most need to know, viz. such knowledge as will enable us to choose the objects most worthy of pursuit and the best means of attaining them; and that we can learn this only as each moment God reveals it to us; we then become, in our own correct estimate of ourselves and in view of the difficult path we have to tread, utterly ‘foolish,’ i.e. destitute of the wisdom we need. Then we ‘become’ truly ‘wise.’ For we know what we are: and we ask and receive the Spirit of wisdom, (Ephesians 1:17,) who by His presence in us reveals to us that which we most need to know and guides our steps along the best path. We may therefore test the worth of our wisdom by asking whether we have ever become foolish.

**Ver.** 19-20. Proof that we can become wise only by first becoming foolish, viz. because, in the sight of God who judges rightly, that which ‘this world’ (see under 1 Corinthians 5:10) calls ‘wisdom’ is ‘foolishness.’ This has been proved in 1 Corinthians 1:20ff, of which these words sum up the results and apply them to the matter under discussion. 1 Corinthians 3:19b, 20 support 1 Corinthians 3:19a by quoting Job 5:13; Psalm 94:11.

The wise men: those who know things not generally known, and are therefore better able to choose their ends and means.

Craftiness: a disposition to do anything, right or wrong, to attain one's ends. Into this, worldly wisdom often degenerates.

Lays hold of: while pursuing their own ends in their own way, the hand of God falls upon them and stops them. That 'the wisdom of the world' is prevented by the hand of God from attaining its ends, proves it to be 'foolishness in the presence of God.' For 'the world' leaves the hand of God out of account.

The wise men: not in Psalm 94:11, but evidently implied.

Vain: Romans 1:21: barren of good results. 'Wise men' cannot by their own 'reasonings' attain any good result. To know this, is the first step in real knowledge. Therefore, to become truly wise, we must first be shorn of our own wisdom.

The abrupt transition of 1 Corinthians 3:18, like that of 1 Corinthians 1:17, seems to imply that an overestimate of their own wisdom was a chief source of the injury done by the men warned in 1 Corinthians 3:17, who were no doubt those who fomented the church-parties.

The above quotation from the Book of Job presents a difficulty, in that it gives, apparently as Scripture, the reported words of Eliphaz; although no writer is responsible for sentiments he reports, and God Himself declares (Job 42:7) that the friends did not speak rightly. Some would charge the Apostle with a moment's forgetfulness. But the complete harmony of these words with the whole book of Job and with the entire Old Testament, shows plainly that the writer here puts his own sentiments into the lips of Eliphaz. We cannot dispute the truth of the quoted words without disputing the whole moral teaching of the great Poem. Indeed the friends erred not so much in the moral principles they assert as in their application of them to Job.

**Ver.** 21a. Desired result of the foregoing. After warning us, by quotations from Scripture, not to think, (1 Corinthians 3:18) ourselves wise, Paul now says that the same quotations are a reason for not looking upon others as wise and making them the heads of parties.



**Exult:** 1 Corinthians 1:29: let no one be lifted up because of anything men are or can do. Paul refers evidently to the boasted superiority (1 Corinthians 4:6) of certain teachers, which gave rise to the church-parties. All such boasting in men is shut out by the powerlessness of all human wisdom.

**Ver. 21b-23.** Another reason for not boasting in men.

**All things:** in the wisest sense, all the men and things (cp. 1 Corinthians 1:27) with which we have to do. All these were made by God and were by Him permitted to assume their present form that they may work out, and they are now (Romans 8:28) working out, His purposes of mercy toward us, which are also (so far as we understand them) our own purposes. 'All things' are, therefore, ours; in the sense in which a father's house belongs to his whole family.

**Whether Paul, etc.:** details included in 'all things.' Whatever powers, acquirements, or spiritual life, 'Paul' possessed, were an enrichment to the whole church. For whatever Paul had, he used for the good of all. Therefore we cannot exult in one to the depreciation of others. For all exist for our good. That 'Cephas' is not mentioned in 1 Corinthians 3:4, 5; 4:6, suggests that the partisans who adopted his name and that of Christ were so few that Paul could leave them out of sight in his general treatment of the matter. His mention here of 'Cephas,' was a courteous acknowledgment that he was an enrichment to the whole church, even to Gentile believers.

**The world:** 1 Corinthians 1:20. A sudden leap from individual men to the entire world. All men and things around us are working out our good.

**Life or death:** cp. Romans 8:38. The various events of 'life' come that they may develop our spiritual strength and give us opportunities of working for God and thus obtaining eternal reward. And the angel of 'death' is our servant waiting to lead us into the presence of Christ. The infinite variety of circumstances surrounding us today, and the unknown and perhaps quite unexpected events of tomorrow, are God's gift, working out our good.

**All things are yours:** triumphant summing up. We look out into the world around and into the unknown future, and say, All these belong to me: for

they were created, and are now directed and controlled, by my Father, for my good.

**Ver. 23.** As lords of the world we belong to One infinitely greater than ourselves. Only so far as we exist for ‘Christ’ do all things exist for us. Cp. 1 Corinthians 6:19; 15:23; Romans 14:8.

And Christ is God’s: rising, as usual, from the Son to the Father. So 1 Corinthians 1:9; 3:7; 4:1; Romans 9:5; 15:5, 13; 16:20, 25. We have here the great truth that the Son is essentially subordinate to the Father, not as a creature, but as the Son, of God; a truth absolutely essential for a correct view of the unity of the divine Trinity. We belong to Christ, and exist to work out His purposes. And in this subordination our divine Master is our pattern. For the Eternal Son receives His being (John 5:26) from, and therefore belongs to, and bows to, the Eternal Father, and exists to work out the Father’s purposes. Cp. 1 Corinthians 15:28. See my ‘Romans’ Dissertation 1. 7. Christ’s absolute devotion to the service of the One Father should deter men from inscribing even His name, as did (1 Corinthians 1:12) some at Corinth, on the banner of a party. Whether Paul had this in view in writing these words, we do not know: for the truth here taught was naturally suggested by the foregoing words.

**Ver. 1.** In this way: as belonging to you, you to Christ, and Christ to God. This completes Paul’s answer to the question of 1 Corinthians 3:5, an answer to be obtained by deliberately reasoning out the foregoing teaching.

Us: Paul, Apollos, etc.

As helpers, etc.; expounds ‘in this way,’ and sums up Paul’s teaching about himself and Apollos.

Helpers: common Greek word for sailors, and for any kind of assistant in private or public business. It therefore recalls 1 Corinthians 3:8.

Stewards: Luke 16:1-8: men, sometimes slaves, who managed a household or business.

Mysteries of God; recalls 1 Corinthians 2:7. Cp. Ephesians 3:2, 9, “what is the stewardship of the mystery;” Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 4:10. God had set these men in authority in His household on earth, and had committed to

them the hidden truths of the Gospel to be distributed, as spiritual food, to His children. If we look at all Christian teachers in this light, we shall not render them such homage as will be a barrier between us and other Christians. Our desire will be to obtain from each the spiritual food committed to him for us. Notice that Paul, as a wise steward, gives milk (1 Corinthians 3:2) to babes and solid food (1 Corinthians 2:6) to full-grown men.

Some have thought that ‘mysteries’ refers expressly to the sacraments: and in Ephesians 5:32 the same word is so translated in the Latin Vulgate. But Estius properly points to 1 Corinthians 1:17, which teaches that to administer these was not Paul’s chief work. This great commentator’s loyalty to the exact meaning of Scripture, and his refusal to draw from Scripture an unfair argument for the doctrines of his church, deserve the highest praise. And every Protestant will thank God that a work so full of evangelical truth is published under the express sanction of the Roman Catholic Church.

**Ver.** 2-4. Another point involved in the teaching of 1 Corinthians 4:1 and bearing upon the church-parties. Like all stewards, Paul must (1 Corinthians 4:2) give an account of his stewardship: but as (1 Corinthians 4:3, 4) God’s steward, he owes this account to God, and to Him only. The steward expects ‘inquiry:’ and the master makes it, and the steward submits to it, ‘in order that’ the latter ‘may be found faithful.’ But, to Paul, the prospect of the Master’s inquiry has made it ‘a very little thing’ whether or not his conduct be sifted, and its true worth discovered, by men. Like “the” great “Day” in 1 Corinthians 3:13, a human day of assize is personified; as though the day itself sifted conduct. So far from caring about the sentence of others, not even upon himself does Paul sit in judgment. This does not contradict 2 Corinthians 13:5: for it refers only to examination with a view to sentence, i.e. of due reward or punishment. This, Paul does not attempt. He does not calculate the merit of his own conduct. For this, 1 Corinthians 4:4 gives a reason. In his conscience, that inner chamber (Romans 2:15) in which he contemplates his inner self, there is nothing which condemns him. Yet not in this fact does Paul find a sentence of approval from his great Judge. (This he finds only in the Gospel of Christ.) And, because his consciousness of God’s favor does not depend on his own verdict about his own faithfulness, he does not sit

in judgment upon himself. That Paul, who knew the secrets of his own heart, forbore to pronounce judgment about himself, was a warning to others not to do so. Notice Paul's fully developed Christian character, 1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 1:12; and that even this was to him no ground for assurance of God's favor.

He that examines, etc.: who sifts my conduct in order to pronounce sentence upon it.

The Lord: Christ, soon to come, 1 Corinthians 4:5. As a steward, Paul's conduct must be investigated; but he cares not for man's examination; and does not even judicially examine himself. His judge is the Master.

**Ver. 5.** Practical result of the foregoing. The metaphor of 'light,' compared with "fire" in 1 Corinthians 3:13, suggests the ease and suddenness and completeness with which the great Day will make all things known; just as the daylight reveals things unknown in the night.

The hidden things; suggests how much that is needful for a correct estimate of men's conduct now lies under an impenetrable veil.

The counsels, etc.: the purposes, now hidden in men's 'hearts,' which move them to activity and which will determine their reward. A solemn warning to many at Corinth. All judgments on Christian workers before 'the Lord comes' are 'before the right-time:' (same word as 'season,' see 1 Corinthians 7:5:) for not till then will all the facts be known.

From God: rising as usual from the Son, whose coming will bring to light all the facts of the case, to the Father, who is the original source of 'the praise' which, through the lips of Christ, will be given 'to each' faithful servant.

From 1 Corinthians 3:21-4:7 we infer that the church-parties at Corinth were occasioned and nourished by the various estimates of various persons about Paul and Apollos. But these teachers, and all others, were alike helpers of Christ, distributing the hidden wealth of God. Each of them was thus an enrichment to the whole church. Moreover, upon them and all His servants, the Master will Himself pronounce sentence; and will justify His sentence by bringing to light all the facts of the case. Since these facts are not yet fully known, the Corinthians cannot pronounce a correct sentence

on the merits of their teachers; and therefore ought not to attach themselves to one or other of them as his special disciples.

SECTION 5 deals specifically with the church-parties at Corinth. It is in part a reply to the question of 1 Corinthians 3:5a, a question suggested by the reference in 1 Corinthians 3:4 to the church-parties; and in part a warning against evils which were their real source. Our ignorance of details obscures Paul's reference to these evils, and lessens the force, which his readers would feel at once, of the sudden transitions of 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 18. But is evident that the Christians at Corinth overestimated mere human knowledge, and that some prided themselves on their superior learning. We can well conceive that some of these taught human learning rather than the "word of the cross;" and that some, by claiming undue recognition of their own learning, were actually injuring the church. Also, that the same spirit moved the church-members generally or universally to pronounce sentence on the comparative learning or eloquence of Paul and his colleagues; and that their differing estimates caused the divisions in the church

To correct this complication of evils and errors, Paul says that both Apollos and himself were but garden laborers, doing the same kind of work and paid for their work, 1 Corinthians 3:5-9; that the work of all their teachers, which is but a continuation of work already begun, will be tested in the great day, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; that they who injure the work already done will receive tremendous punishment, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; that the truly wise man is he who has learned that all human wisdom is of itself utterly worthless, 1 Corinthians 3:18-20; that for this reason, and because all things belong to God's people, no one ought to boast about men, 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; and that Paul and Apollos are but helpers and stewards, who will be judged by Christ, and whom no man is capable of judging aright, 1 Corinthians 4:1-5.

## SECTION 6

**THE DIVISIONS HAVE ARISEN FROM THE SELF-CONCEIT OF THE CORINTHIANS, WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN PAUL'S CONTRARY EXAMPLE. HE HAS SENT TIMOTHY TO REMIND THEM OF IT**

### CHAPTER 4:6-21

*These things, brothers, I have transferred to myself and Apollos because of you, that in us you may learn not to go beyond the things which are written, that you may not be puffed up and one on behalf of the one against the other. For who makes thee to differ? And what hast thou which thou didst not receive? But if thou didst receive it, why dost thou exult as though not having received it?*

*Already made full you are: already you have become rich: apart from us you have become kings. And, at any rate, would that you had become kings, that also we may become kings with you. For I think God has exhibited us, the apostles, in the last place, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men. We are foolish because of Christ; but you are prudent in Christ: we are weak; but you are strong you are well-thought-of; but we are dishonored. Until the present hour we both are hungry and are thirsty, and are without sufficient clothing, and are smitten, and are homeless, and labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we bear it; when evil spoken of, we entreat. As offscourings of the world we have become, a refuse of all men, until now.*

*Not putting you to shame do I write these things; but as admonishing beloved children of mine. For if you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, by means of the Gospel, it was I that begot you. I exhort*

*you then, become imitators of me. Because of this I have sent to you Timothy, who is a child of mine, beloved and faithful, in the Lord, who will recall to your memory my ways in Christ, according as everywhere, in every church, I teach. Supposing that I am not coming to you, some have been puffed up. But I shall come quickly to you, if the Lord will. And I shall know, not the word of those that are puffed up, but the power. For not in word is the kingdom of God, but in power. What do you wish? With a rod am I to come to you? or in love, and the Spirit of meekness?*

**Ver. 6.** These things: from 1 Corinthians 3:5 onwards, where, as here, Paul speaks only of the parties of ‘Apollós’ and himself.

Brothers: an appeal to the whole church.

Transferred: put into another shape. Same word in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; Philippians 3:21. The teaching of 5, about Christian teachers, Paul applied specially ‘to himself and Apollós.’ He now says that in doing so he put his teaching into a shape different from that which it would naturally have assumed; and that he did this for his reader’s good, that they might learn, etc.

Things which are written: in the Old Testament, according to Paul’s constant and frequent use of this phrase. These words remind the readers that a careful study of the Scriptures would have corrected these errors. An interesting coincidence with Paul’s habit of referring to the Old Testament.

Not to go beyond, etc.: not to exceed, in their estimate of themselves and others, the descriptions of human nature given in the Old Testament. Of these descriptions we have specimens in 1 Corinthians 3:19f.

That in us you may learn, etc.: i.e. by considering Paul’s description of the position of himself and Apollós, as garden laborers, paid for their work, house stewards, etc.

That you be not, etc.: further purpose, a result of that foregoing.

On behalf of the one against the other: graphic description of party-spirit.

Puffed up: become large in your own esteem. This word is a marked feature of Paul's description of the Corinthian Christians: 1 Corinthians 4:18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4; Colossians 2:18. Its use here implies that their self-conceit was the source of their party-spirit. They set themselves on the side of one man and against another because of something in the one which seemed to flatter, and something in the other which did not flatter, their vanity.

The word 'transferred' casts light upon the factions at Corinth. It tells us that, while speaking of himself and Apollos, Paul was really referring to others. These must have been those who were the real leaders or abettors of the parties. For Paul and Apollos were not such: though we are told plainly in 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4 that the factions actually bore their names. We infer, therefore, that there were men who, under cover of professed devotion to Paul or to Apollos, fomented the factions, in order thus to exalt themselves and increase their influence. These were the real party leaders. And they found a following through the extravagant estimate of their own powers and acquirements cherished by the Corinthian Christians. We can easily conceive that some man of learning began to be looked up to by some who prided themselves in their love of learning; and that he strengthened his influence over them by pointing to the learning and mental power of Paul. Another man, of fluent speech, was perhaps looked up to by some who had formerly listened with delight to Apollos. Now it is evident that Paul's whole teaching in 5 about Apollos and himself applies, with far greater force, and with solemn warning, to these men. They needed to beware with what materials they were building; and lest, while seeming to build, they were really pulling down, the temple of God. They needed, to save them from self-deception, to be reminded that the Scriptures taught that mere human wisdom is but folly in disguise; and that the light of the great day will reveal even the secret purposes of the heart.

**Ver. 7.** A direct appeal against this inflated self-estimate, which Paul has just shown to be the real source of the factions.

For who etc? reason for not being "puffed up."

Thee: any one of the church-members whose self-conceit had drawn him after a party leader.



Who makes thee to differ? No one, except thy own imagination.

And what hast thou, etc.: solemn and wide question, suggesting an answer to the foregoing question.

Exult: see under 1 Corinthians 1:29. Superior mental or material possessions led some to think that themselves were superior. This question reminds us that whatever we have was ‘received,’ and is therefore no part of ourselves, or ground for self-gratification.

**Ver. 8.** Having uncovered and rebuked the real root of the factions, Paul reveals its utter unseemliness by a bitter contrast of the conceit of his readers with the actual circumstances of himself and his colleagues.

You are: to the church collectively, in contrast to the individual (cp. “one on behalf of the other,” 1 Corinthians 4:6) singled out in 1 Corinthians 4:7.

Already, conspicuously placed and repeated, shows that the point of Paul’s irony is that their enrichment had come so early. And this suggests that he refers here to the fulness, wealth, and royalty, of God’s people in the world to come. Cp. Philippians 4:19; Romans 8:17f; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10; Matthew 5:6; 2 Corinthians 8:9. They thought, spoke, and acted, as though they had already obtained the glory for which others were waiting, as though even now, before they have gone down into the grave or Christ has appeared, all their needs and yearnings had been satisfied, as though they had already received their share of the wealth of the City of God and had sat down upon the throne beside Christ.

Apart from us: without our aid or participation. Although Paul had been the means of their spiritual life, he did not possess and therefore could not convey, such things as they boasted of.

And would that, etc.: sudden waking up from his dream of self-conceit. “Would that your dreams were true, that also we might share the royalty you seem to fancy you have already obtained!” In other words, if their self-estimate be true, they are much more fortunate than their teachers.

**Ver. 9.** An abundant reason for the wish just expressed, viz. Paul’s present position.

I think: Paul’s view of himself in contrast to his readers’ self-estimate.

Us the apostles; (see Romans 1:1, and 2 Corinthians 8:23; ) seems to imply that the other apostles endured hardships similar, though probably not equal, to those of Paul. But it does not imply that Apollos was an apostle. For Paul is now dealing, not with the factions, but with self-conceit generally. And this he puts to shame by the hardships of those who hold the first rank in the church. He conceives God as ‘exhibiting’ to the universe a public ‘spectacle,’ in which ‘the apostles’ were brought out ‘last,’ the astonishing climax of all, just ‘as men condemned to death’ were thrown to wild beasts in the amphitheatre.

Because, etc.: proof of this, from matters of fact.

The world: or, universe, consisting of ‘both angels and men.’ Since the word ‘angels’ is used in the New Testament, as with us, without further explanation, for good angels, it is best so to understand it here. The holy angels watch, with wonder and sympathy, the endurance of the apostles. And men watch them, with various feelings.

**Ver. 10.** Interrupts the description of the spectacle to remind us of its purpose, viz. to show the contrast between the apostles and Paul’s readers.

Foolish: exact opposite of “wise,” in all senses: “one who knows less than others.”

We are foolish: in a double sense. The better to serve Christ, Paul refrained from making acquirement of knowledge his chief aim. And many others have renounced a path which might have led to literary eminence in order to devote their entire energies to evangelical work. Again, by abstaining from teaching mere human learning and by preaching a Gospel which in the eyes of men was folly, Paul became, and felt himself to be, in their view, a foolish man. In other words, because of his loyalty to Christ he passed among men as one destitute of wisdom. Cp. 1 Corinthians 2:2.

Prudent in Christ: also in a double sense, either (cp. 1 Corinthians 1:5) as actually having, by union with Christ, practical spiritual intelligence, or as having it in their vain self-estimate. Both senses probably were present to Paul’s mind. If his readers had spiritual wisdom, it was because for their sakes he had laid aside human wisdom: if they prided themselves in fancied Christian wisdom, their pride was an utter contrast to his self-humiliation.

Weak: powerless and helpless amid trials, hardships, and perils.

Strong: with real or supposed spiritual strength.

Well-thought-of: by others, by each other, or by themselves.

Dishonored: a technical term for deprivation of the rights of a free citizen. See 1 Corinthians 15:43. The order of the last pair is changed, that the word ‘dishonored’ may be the keynote of 1 Corinthians 4:11-13. The contrast in this verse is between the position which, in loyalty to Christ, Paul accepted and felt that he occupied, and the position, real or feigned, which the Corinthians occupied.

**Ver.** 11-13. Development of “dishonored,” 1 Corinthians 4:10; and justification of the metaphor of 1 Corinthians 4:9. ‘Until the present hour’ and ‘until now’ lay emphasis on the ceaselessness of these hardships, and remind the readers of Paul’s position at the moment of writing.

Hungry, thirsty, etc.: 2 Corinthians 11:23-27.

Without-sufficient-clothing: “we shiver in the cold,” Stanley: literally, ‘naked,’ denoting in Greek without clothing, or lightly or insufficiently clad; Matthew 25:36; John 21:7; James 2:15. Cp. Seneca, ‘On Benefits’ v. 13: “He that has seen a man badly clothed and ragged says that he saw him naked.”

Smitten: see 2 Corinthians 12:7.

Homeless: Or, “driven about from place to place.”

Working with our own hands: so 1 Corinthians 9:6ff; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8ff; and, an important coincidence, Acts 18:3; 20:34. That Barnabas also did this, we learn from 1 Corinthians 9:6. In the eyes of men around, this was a further mark of degradation. For Paul seemed to be so little valued by his disciples that they refused to maintain him.

We bless: speak smoothly, as in Romans 16:18. See Romans 1:25.

We endure it; not repelling the attack of our enemies.

We entreat, or ‘exhort,’ as in 1 Corinthians 1:10: stronger than ‘we bless.’ “We beg a favor from those who speak hurtfully of us, as though utterly at

their mercy.” To return smooth words for rough ones, to submit to, instead of resisting, the attacks of enemies, to ask favors from, instead of spurning, those who revile us, arises usually from the absolute helplessness of men who dare not defend themselves. And Paul’s forbearance would be thus interpreted. It was, therefore, a mark of the humiliation of his position.

Offscourings, refuse: that which, for the sake of cleanliness, must be removed. Cp. Acts 22:22. Paul was treated as one who must be cast out, as defiling, not merely from his nation, but from the world, from all contact with men. Such was the position cheerfully accepted by those who held the first rank in the church. They were incessantly exposed to hunger, thirst, cold, and personal violence: they wandered about like men without a home: they had to depend for maintenance upon the labor of their hands: they had no angry words, or resistance, for those who reproached and attacked them: nay, they actually sought favor from those who defamed their character. In a word, they were looked upon as the world’s refuse, unworthy to be even trampled under foot, which must be removed from the presence of men.

Notice the modesty with which, by using the words ‘we’ and ‘us,’ Paul implies that his own hardships were not a solitary case among the apostles. What a vista this opens of early Christian endurance unknown to us!

Notice also how severely this description rebukes the self-conceit of the Christians. In the presence of such tremendous earnestness and such forgetfulness of self, they could not but feel how utterly contemptible was all thought of their own learning or skill. And in these days, amid much that tends to foster an extravagant self-estimate, we need ever to feel the purifying influence of the example of the martyrs.

**Ver. 14-16.** Paul has now completed his discussion of the church-parties, by uncovering their source, viz. an inflated self-estimate; and this he has sought to annihilate by the example of his own self-forgetfulness. So severe is the contrast thus presented that Paul’s courteous tact and tender heart move him to soften it. “To ‘put you to shame,’ is not my purpose; and therefore not the real meaning of my words.”

Admonish: Romans 15:14; Colossians 1:28: reproof with a view to improvement. Paul looks upon them ‘as children,’ even his own children, and exercises towards them the discipline of intelligent paternal love. This assumption of paternal authority, 1 Corinthians 4:15 justifies.

Ten thousand, etc.: hyperbolic supposition, indicating the readiness of the Corinthian Christians to assume the office of teacher.

Guardians: Galatians 3:24f: men, nearly always slaves, who in wealthy Greek families took care of the sons under seven years old, but did not teach them. The would-be teachers at Corinth were but guardian slaves as compared with the father of the family, i.e. in a position quite different from that of the human author of the spiritual life of the whole church.

I begat you: cp. Galatians 4:19; Philemon 10: an approach to the doctrine of the new birth; John 3:3; 1 John 3:9; 5:1, etc., 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18. To this doctrine, Paul’s only direct reference is Titus 3:5.

Through the Gospel: instrument by which Paul, ‘in’ virtue of his life-giving union with ‘Christ Jesus,’ gave them a new life and brought them into a new world. So James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23. Notice that, though Apollos and others had led (1 Corinthians 3:5) individuals to faith and thus given to them spiritual life, yet Paul, by preaching the Gospel first and making the first converts at Corinth, had been directly or indirectly the instrument of the spiritual life of the whole church; and that therefore his relation to the church was quite different from that of any one else. Cp. 1 Corinthians 3:10ff; 9:1, 2. He has therefore a right to treat them as his children.

Imitators of me: 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:6: not necessarily in his sufferings, (1 Corinthians 4:9-13,) but in the spirit Paul manifested therein. Happy are the teachers who can say this to their hearers.

**Ver. 17.** Because of this: that you may become imitators of me. From 1 Corinthians 16:10 we learn that Paul did not expect TIMOTHY (see 2 Corinthians 1:1) to arrive at Corinth till after this letter, and that his coming was uncertain. Consequently, he was not the bearer of the letter, but left Ephesus earlier than it, or at the same time. This agrees exactly with Acts 19:22, which says that some time before Paul left Asia he sent Timothy from Ephesus to Macedonia, which lay (cp. 1 Corinthians 16:5)

on the road to Corinth. We may suppose that, when sending Timothy to Macedonia, Paul instructed him to go on to Corinth; but had some doubt whether he would be able to do so. The change from ‘who will recall, etc.,’ to the uncertainty revealed in “if he come” in 1 Corinthians 16:10, is easily accounted for by the fluctuation of the human expectation, or possibly by some change of circumstances while writing this long letter.

My child; 1 Timothy 1:2, 18; 2 Timothy 1:1; 2:1; seems to imply that Timothy was converted by Paul. (Cp. Philemon 10.) And, if so, during the time of Acts 14:6-23: for, in 1 Corinthians 16:1, he was already a believer.

Faithful: either believing, as in Galatians 3:9; 1 Timothy 4:10, 12; 5:16; 6:2; or trustworthy, as 1 Corinthians 1:9; 4:2; 7:25; 10:13. Timothy’s mission suggests the latter sense. The father sends to his children at Corinth another child, an object of his love and worthy of their confidence.

In the Lord: parallel to “in faith,” 1 Timothy 1:2. The relationship between Paul and Timothy existed in virtue of their spiritual contact with the Master, Christ.

Who also; expounds ‘because of this.’

In Christ: added in consciousness that his conduct as a teacher was an outflow of spiritual life in union with Christ. How deeply a remembrance of this was woven into the entire thought of Paul, we learn from the frequency of these words.

My ways: cp. 2 Corinthians 12:18, “we walked by the same steps;” 2 Corinthians 4:2; 10:2f; 5:7. These ‘ways’ are further described, in addition to 1 Corinthians 4:11-13, in 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2:7-12. Paul wishes his readers to join the Thessalonian Christians (1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2:14) in imitating his self-sacrificing spirit.

Everywhere in every church: very emphatic.

As I teach: as I conduct myself as a teacher. Timothy’s description of Paul’s conduct will correspond with Paul’s actual behavior as a teacher, which he declares emphatically to be the same everywhere. Notice the consciousness of the Christian uprightness of his whole conduct (cp. 2 Corinthians 1:12) which breathes throughout Paul’s letters and emboldens him to point to himself as a pattern.

**Ver.** 18-21. Not only has he sent Timothy to remind them of his conduct but he will himself come shortly.

Supposing, etc.: perhaps because Paul did not fulfill his purpose (2 Corinthians 1:15) to go first to Corinth and then to Macedonia. 'Some' of the Corinthians interpreted this to mean that Paul dared not face them: and thus his change of purpose gave them an inflated notion of their own importance. The real reason of the change, Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 1:23.

If the Lord will: James 4:15. That Paul speaks always and frequently of the will of God, never unless here of the will of Christ, suggests that here as in the LXX. 'the Lord' denotes the Father. But Paul's constant use of this word as the distinctive title of the Son outweighs this, and warrants us in accepting this passage as a solitary reference to the will of Christ as the Master whose work Paul was doing.

Power: ability, given by God, to produce spiritual results in the hearts of men by means of the Gospel. Cp. 1 Corinthians 1:18; Romans 1:16. When Paul comes, he 'will know,' not what they say, but what they can do to advance the kingdom of God among men.

Kingdom of God: Romans 14:17: the eternal kingdom to be set up in full splendor at the coming of Christ, of which believers are already citizens, and which is therefore already spreading on earth as day by day men are enrolled as citizens. Its progress depends, not on man's talk, but on the putting forth, through men, of God's power. Therefore not word but power is the element in which it is being set up. And Paul cares, not what the inflated ones say, but for the degree of power which attends them. We have here the only true standard for self-measurement.

**Ver.** 21. With a rod: which belongs to a father. With what terrible power Paul could use it, we learn from 1 Corinthians 5:5. Cp. 2 Corinthians 13:2-10. We are not told to what kind of discipline he here refers.

Or with love: i.e. giving vent to his love for them. In either case, love to them will be the animating principle of Paul's conduct. But whether he comes to them armed 'with a rod,' or manifesting his 'love,' depends on themselves.

Meekness: see under 2 Corinthians 10:1; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:25; Titus 3:2; James 1:21; 3:13; 1 Peter 3:4, 5: absence of self-assertion, a disposition moving us to forego our supposed rights and to refrain from putting forth our powers in defense of them. By inflicting punishment, Paul would assert his authority and manifest his power. His usual conduct (1 Thessalonians 2:7) was the opposite of this.

Spirit of meekness: the Holy Spirit, of whose activity meekness (cp. Galatians 5:23) is a characteristic. Cp. Isaiah 11:2; Romans 8:15; 2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 1:17; 2 Timothy 1:7. For to Him much more frequently than to the human 'spirit' does the word refer. It points here to the divine source of that Christian 'meekness' which Paul wishes to display at Corinth.

From 1 Corinthians 4:18 we learn that, though the factious spirit was universal (1 Corinthians 1:12) at Corinth, certain men were especially guilty of self-inflated opposition to Paul. This suggests that he has here in view the two classes of special offenders mentioned in 2 Corinthians 11:13ff and in 2 Corinthians 12:21ff. Of these, the former would certainly foster the partisanship just condemned; and the latter would tolerate the crime mentioned in the next chapter.

After expounding in 5 the principles which ought to regulate his readers' view of himself and Apollos, Paul begins 6 by reminding them that there are others besides himself to whom these principles apply, and points to inflated self-esteem as the root of the church-parties: 1 Corinthians 4:6. Against this, he appeals directly in 1 Corinthians 4:7, 8; and supports his appeal by the contrasted career of himself and his colleagues, 1 Corinthians 4:9-13. This contrast he depicts, not to put them to shame, but to correct them, as their father in Christ: 1 Corinthians 4:14-16. That they may imitate him, he has sent to them his trustworthy son Timothy, who will remind them of his example: 1 Corinthians 4:17. And, in spite of the self-flattering predictions of some, he will himself come soon, and test the real worth of those who think so much of themselves: 1 Corinthians 4:18-20. Upon themselves it depends whether his visit be marked by severity or kindness.

The CHURCH PARTIES at Corinth are known to us only from the foregoing chapters and from uncertain allusions in the Second Epistle.



The whole church (1 Corinthians 1:12) was divided into four parties calling themselves by the names of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ. That Paul passes at once from the church-parties to discuss in 3, 4 the practical worth of human wisdom and then returns to the parties called by the names of himself and Apollos, his sudden reference in 1 Corinthians 3:18 to wisdom, and his warning in 1 Corinthians 3:21 not to boast in such men as himself and Apollos, suggest that these parties had their real source in an overestimate of human knowledge or skill. And, that they arose from an inflated self-estimate in the church-members generally, we are in 1 Corinthians 4:6 told expressly. The same verse implies that behind the names inscribed on the banners were other men who were the real leaders of the parties. And this was so, probably, in all the parties.

The Aramaic name Cephas suggests that the party which bore it was of Jewish nationality. And, if so, the parties of Paul and of Apollos were probably in the main Greek. This agrees with 1 Corinthians 1:22, which tells us that a search for wisdom was a mark of Greek, as distinguished from Jewish, nationality. From 2 Corinthians 11:22 we learn that there were at Corinth bad men, apparently (2 Corinthians 11:4) foreigners, and openly hostile (2 Corinthians 10:10) to Paul, who boasted that they were Jews, and whom, like their fellow-countrymen in Galatia, Paul distinguishes (cp. 2 Corinthians 10:2-6; 11:4, 12-15, 20, 22) from the native Christians. Of these men and their followers the Cephas party probably consisted.

That the Christ party is classed with the others, places it under the common condemnation. Indeed the mention of it moves Paul to say that Christ Himself has been divided. The words of 2 Corinthians 10:7 are in any case so easily accounted for that we cannot be sure that they refer expressly to this party. But they unveil a spirit which would easily assume form in a party using as its special or exclusive right, and therefore for party purposes, the Great Name which all Christians confess.

That only the parties of Paul and Apollos are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 3:4, 5; 4:6, suggests that the other parties were comparatively small in numbers or influence. And this agrees with the indications that the Cephas party was of Jewish nationality. The order of names in 1 Corinthians 1:12 is retained in 1 Corinthians 3:4; 4:6, the only other clear references to the

parties. This suggests that the order in 1 Corinthians 1:12 may be throughout the order of the origin of the parties. All else is mere conjecture.

We can well conceive that the fervent eloquence (Acts 18:24f) of Apollos, contrasted with the simplicity of speech which prompted the taunt of 2 Corinthians 10:10 against Paul, would evoke the special enthusiasm of some hearers; and would call forth from others special expressions of loyalty to the great Apostle who seemed to be for the moment forgotten amid the popularity of Apollos. The pride of culture would lead many to set up themselves as judges of the relative merits of their great teachers. And unscrupulous men might make use of the various estimates thus formed to increase their own influence by avowing themselves followers of Paul or of Apollos that thus they might, by flattering the vanity of others, gain a following for themselves. The party spirit, so accordant with Greek character, evoked in some such way as this, soon infected the whole church.

Amid all this, Jewish enemies of Paul and of Christ crept into the Corinthian church, as into others, (cp. Galatians 2:4,) under the guise of a false Christian profession. Such men would fan the flame of dissension; and in opposition to both existing parties would proclaim themselves disciples of the great Apostle to whom had been given by Christ the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The solemn warnings of 2 Corinthians 10., 12., confirm 1 Corinthians 1:12 by proving that these foreign intruders found a following at Corinth.

In view of these three parties calling themselves by the names of men, we wonder not that other men claimed independence of men and avowed themselves disciples of Christ, and claimed to be such specially and exclusively, thus separating themselves from their fellow-Christians and forming practically a fourth party. Like some in our own day they used as their own special name the One Name which belongs equally to the whole family of God. But, equally with the others at Corinth, they are condemned by the Apostle as partisans.

The foregoing suggestions accounts for all the known facts of the case. And, till better informed, we accept it as a probable explanation of the rise of the church-parties at Corinth.

The mention of the factions in ch. 47 of Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians (see Appendix) is only a reference to this Epistle, and gives no further facts. It is, however, very interesting as proof of the genuineness of the Epistle before us, and as showing how deeply seated in the Corinthians was the spirit of faction.

## REVIEW OF DIVISION I

The Corinthian church had written to Paul for instruction on various matters. But other matters had come to his ears, of which they had said nothing, but which demanded prior attention. Of these, the church-parties occupied the first and largest place. For this evil was universal at Corinth; and is utterly inconsistent (cp. John 17:21) with the aim of Christianity. Paul reminds his readers that he had, in their midst, purposely avoided everything tending to make himself the head of a party. Since the real source of their divisions was an overestimate of human wisdom, he shows that the Gospel reveals the powerlessness of such wisdom, and that, both in itself and as preached by him, it did not claim acceptance on the ground of the wisdom it displayed. Yet none the less Paul teaches wisdom, a wisdom quite different from that esteemed by men, revealed by the Spirit of God and incomprehensible to all but those in whom the Spirit dwells. How little fit the Corinthians are for such teaching, their divisions prove. Having thus struck at the root of the evil, Paul shows how unsuitable are men like Apollos and himself to be made heads of parties. He warns his readers to build with those materials only which will abide the test of the great Day; and bids them beware lest, instead of building up, they pull down, the temple of God. Once more he appeals against their overestimate of human wisdom. He bids them, instead of boasting about the merits of their teachers, to remember that whatever good there is in any of them belongs to the whole church. Although, as stewards, the apostles must give account, yet the Corinthians are unable to pass sentence upon them; and ought to wait till in the light of the Great Day all things are known. Paul then reminds his readers that he has in view others besides those whose names are inscribed on the banners of the church-parties. He has spoken of himself and Apollos as a rebuke of their overestimate of themselves. He wishes indeed that their estimate were true. For the lot of the apostles is very different from the fancied exaltation of the Corinthians. Yet he wishes, not to put them to shame, but to correct them. For he alone can speak to them as a father. To remind them of his own example, he has sent Timothy. And, though some self-confident men think otherwise, he will

himself come soon. It is for them to decide whether his visit be marked by kindness or severity

## DIVISION II

### ABOUT THE MISCONDUCT OF SOME CHURCH-MEMBERS

#### CHAPTERS 5, 6

#### SECTION 7

#### *THEY TOLERATE, BUT MUST EXPEL, A NOTORIOUS OFFENDER*

#### CHAPTER 5:1-8

*To speak generally, fornication is heard of among you, and a kind of fornication which is not even among the gentiles, for one to have his father's wife. And you are puffed up; and you did not rather mourn in order that he who has done this work might be taken out of your midst. For I indeed, absent in the body but present in the spirit, have already pronounced judgment as though present, touching him who in this way has carried out this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, you having been gathered together and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus, to give up such a one to Satan, for destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

*Not good is your ground of exultation. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens all the lump? Cleanse out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump; according as you are unleavened. For indeed our passover has been sacrificed, even Christ. So then let us keep feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of wickedness and maliciousness, but with unleavened cakes of sincerity and truth.*

*Besides the party-spirit which had permeated the whole church at Corinth, there were individual cases of special misconduct, in which all the church-members were more or less involved, and with which Paul must deal before he goes on to the matter mentioned in their letter to him. To the worst of these cases, the severe words of 1 Corinthians 4:21, "with a rod," are a convenient stepping stone.*

**Ver. 1.** Fornication: literally "intercourse with harlots," but often including, as being practically the same, all improper intercourse of the sexes. Of this sin, Paul first 'speaks generally;' then of a specially aggravated 'kind of fornication.' With the "many" other cases (2 Corinthians 12:21-13:2) Paul will himself deal when he comes. But "to 'so' great a degree, not found even at Corinth among the heathen, has fornication risen 'among you that some one has, etc.'"

His father's wife; or stepmother, recalls the same words in Leviticus 18:8; Deuteronomy 22:30. That he had actually married her, seems to be implied in "has," denoting present possession, compared with "has done" and "has carried out," 1 Corinthians 5:2, 3, denoting a past act. Cp. Mark 6:17f; Matthew 14:4; 22:28; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 29; 1 Macc. 11:9. This would explain the confidence with which Paul assumes the man's guilt, and at once pronounces sentence. That he says nothing about the woman, suggests that she was not a Christian. From 2 Corinthians 7:12 we infer that the woman had a living and injured husband. He was probably the offender's own father: for if she had married again she would hardly be called here 'his father's wife.' If so, the man was guilty, not only of incest, but of the worst kind of adultery. That this matter precedes 1 Corinthians 7:1 and is introduced with suddenness and surprise, implies that of this gross scandal nothing was said in the letter to Paul.

**Ver. 2.** Turns suddenly from the one notorious sinner to the church generally. By tolerating him, all exposed themselves to blame.

Are puffed up: or, 'are men who have been puffed up:' 1 Corinthians 4:6, 19. Their inflated self-esteem not only gave rise to the church-parties but made the whole church oblivious of the disgrace which this man had cast upon it.

Rather mourned: instead of being ‘puffed up.’ For his sin was a calamity to all.

Done this work: married the woman he now “has.”

In order that, etc. They ought in sorrow to have resolved that the guilty man should be driven from their ranks. This censure proves that a church ought to separate from itself those indisputably guilty of gross immorality.

**Ver. 3-5.** Notice the contrast: “some one,” 1 Corinthians 5:1; “you,” 1 Corinthians 5:2;

I. Paul supports the blame implied in 1 Corinthians 5:2, by saying what he has ‘already resolved’ to do in the matter.

In the spirit: Paul’s own spirit, implied in the contrast with his own body. So 1 Corinthians 7:34, Romans 8:10. Though ‘absent in the body,’ Paul was ‘present in the spirit,’ not only (Colossians 2:5) observing them, but able to put forth his power in their midst by inflicting punishment. His bodily distance made his spiritual presence more wonderful.

Have already resolved: or, ‘judged,’ i.e. pronounced sentence in his mind: see 1 Corinthians 2:2. He did this remembering that he was virtually ‘present,’ i.e. able from a distance to put forth his power among them.

In this way; refers to the aggravating manner, unknown to us, of the crime.

In the name, etc.: 2 Thessalonians 3:6: as the servant, and with the authority, of Jesus. Close parallels in Acts 3:6, 16; 4:10, 12. Cp. 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:20; Philippians 2:10; Colossians 3:17. Paul had already resolved to hand over, as the representative of Christ, this man to Satan; and he will do so in the presence of the assembled church, himself present in spirit and using the power which (2 Corinthians 13:10) Christ has entrusted to him.

And my spirit: emphatic repetition of ‘present in spirit.’ This assembly of the church and of Paul in spirit will also be accompanied by ‘the power of the Lord Jesus,’ manifested in punishing the offender.

To give up, etc.: see note, Romans 1:24: the sentence then to be executed.



To Satan: 1 Timothy 1:20; Job 2:6: surrender to the power of Satan for the infliction of some kind of evil.

For destruction, etc., immediate purpose; ‘that the spirit, etc.,’ ultimate purpose, of the surrender. It is, as in 1 Corinthians 5:3, 4, the man’s own spirit.

May be saved in the, etc.: admitted, by the verdict of that ‘Day,’ (1 Corinthians 1:8; cp. 2 Timothy 1:18,) into eternal life. Both spirit and body will be saved. But the ‘spirit’ only is mentioned, as the nobler and essential part, and in contrast to the ‘flesh’ now to be given up to ‘destruction.’

This surrender to the power of Satan evidently includes, but means much more than, expulsion (1 Corinthians 5:2, 13) from the church. A man already by his sin a captive (2 Timothy 2:26) of the Devil, is to be given up to his power in some further sense. This can only refer, as in Job 2:6, (cp. Luke 13:16,) to the infliction of bodily injury by the agency of Satan and by the permission and design of God. Cp. Acts 5:5; 13:11. The grossness of the present offense called for alike terrible penalty. Such would manifest ‘the power of the Lord Jesus’ and the apostolic authority of Paul who was present in his spirit. It was not immediate death: for it was designed (cp. 1 Timothy 1:20) to lead the sufferer, by repentance, to final salvation. That it was a work of Satan, increases its terror and marks its connection with the man’s sin. All sin is self-surrender (Ephesians 4:19) to the power of evil: and the surrender reaches further than the sinner thinks.

Destruction of the flesh, which is given as the immediate purpose of this bodily infliction, might denote destruction of the power of bodily appetites, to which this man was evidently a slave. Cp. Galatians 5:24. For these have their source in the peculiar material of the body, ‘the flesh,’ which “body of the flesh” must therefore (Colossians 2:11) be “put off.” If so, the man’s body was to be smitten, (for, no other surrender to Satan can we conceive to be beneficial,) that it might cease to be a chain binding him to sin. Or, by naming the purpose, these words may practically specify the extent, of the surrender to Satan, viz. to be smitten with a fatal disease, which, by leading him to repentance, may save his soul. And this is the simplest and most likely meaning of the words used. The word ‘flesh,’

instead of “body,” is no objection to it. For the body of believers will live for ever. Only their ‘flesh,’ i.e. the present material of their body, (cp. 1 Corinthians 15:50,) will be destroyed. Nor is this view disproved by Paul’s subsequent forgiveness, 2 Corinthians 2:6ff: for this may have been, and doubtless was, as miraculous as the punishment, a miraculous deliverance from otherwise certain death. This miraculous punishment for gross immorality cannot in any way justify corporal punishment inflicted by man for doctrinal error.

It is remarkable that in this matter of discipline, and throughout these two Epistles so full of church matters, Paul never refers to the elders or bishops. That such existed, is made almost certain by Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:2; 1 Timothy 3:1ff; 5:1, 17ff; Titus 1:5. The omission arose perhaps from this, that in a church where all were recent converts the distinction between officers and private members was necessarily less conspicuous than in a church of longer standing. But, however explained, it is a sure mark of the very early age, and therefore of the genuineness, of these Epistles.

**Ver. 6-8.** After dealing with the notorious offender, Paul turns again to the whole church, with words similar to 1 Corinthians 5:2. Your supposed wisdom ‘is no good ground-of-exultation.’

A little leaven, etc.: found word for word in Galatians 5:9. This suggests that it was a kind of proverb; which agrees with the metaphorical mention of leaven in Matthew 13:33; 16:6.

Lump, of dough, as in Romans 11:16. The proverb reminds us that there are other things besides leaven of which a small quantity silently permeates, and influences, and communicates its nature to, the whole of that with which it comes in contact. Paul assumes that in this respect sin is like leaven, and asks whether his readers are ignorant of the wide-spread effect of even a ‘little leaven.’ His question, and the proverb, apply to sin both in the abstract and as embodied in the wicked church-member at Corinth. The least sin tolerated affects the whole man and the whole church.

Cleanse out: remove from your midst by cleansing.

Old, new: a spiritual contrast favorite with Paul; Romans 7:6; 6:4, 6; Ephesians 4:22ff; Colossians 3:9f. Sin, which like 'leaven' communicates its nature to whatever it touches, was an essential ingredient of our 'old' life. We must therefore become altogether 'new.' To this end we must 'cleanse out' all sin as belonging to the past.

Although deliverance from sin is entirely a work of God's undeserved favor, through the death of Christ and the agency of the Holy Spirit, we are here exhorted to cleanse ourselves. Cp. 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 1:22; James 4:8; Colossians 3:5, 9f. For, only by speaking thus can we grasp the great truth that it depends upon ourselves whether or not we actually receive the purity which God works. We receive it by faith: and by a life of faith we work out (Philippians 2:12f) the salvation which God works in us. This exhortation is quite general: cp. 1 Corinthians 5:8. But it includes (cp. 1 Corinthians 5:13) the removal of the man whose obstinate sin was contaminating the whole community.

According as, etc.: what Paul bids, accords with objective fact. In the purpose and command of God, and in their own profession, they are separated from all sin; which is to them what, during the Passover week, leaven was to the Jews. This objective use of 'unleavened' accords with "sanctified" in 1 Corinthians 1:2.

For indeed our Passover, etc.; explains 'unleavened,' and gives a motive for the foregoing exhortation. Our position is analogous to that of the Israelites, who were forbidden (Exodus 12:15-20) under pain of death to eat leaven during the seven days which followed the death of the paschal lamb. For 'Christ' is to His people what the lamb was to Israel. This comparison, not found elsewhere, agrees exactly with John 1:29.

So then let us keep feast: for the death of the lamb was always followed, at the strict command of God, by the feast of unleavened bread, during which no leaven was allowed in the houses of Israel. The word 'old,' repeated from 1 Corinthians 5:7, suggests perhaps a reason for this, viz. to teach Israel by a change of food that there must be a change of life. And, just as the death of the paschal lamb laid upon the Jews a divine obligation to put away their 'old' food and begin to eat 'new' bread, so the death of Christ lays us under obligation to put away sin and begin to lead a new life.

Nor with a leaven of wickedness, etc.: further description of the 'old leaven,' giving its moral constitution. Just so 'sincerity and truth' are the moral constitution of the new spiritual food.

Maliciousness: Romans 1:29.

Sincerity: 2 Corinthians 1:12: that which is the same throughout.

Truth: see Romans 1:18: that which corresponds with eternal realities.

The exhortation of 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 rests upon two great truths, viz. that sin, like leaven, communicates its nature to all it touches; and that the death of Christ lays upon us an obligation to cast away all sin. Of these, the former attests itself to the conscience and experience and observation of every one. Even the least thing which God hates, if clung to, darkens our spiritual intelligence, weakens our spiritual efforts, and pollutes our entire being. Therefore sin may justly be compared to leaven. That Christ is our Passover, follows by direct inference from Doctrines 2 and 3, viz. that salvation comes through the death of the Son of God, and that God designs us to be by union with Christ sharers of the life of Christ, a life devoted to God. See under Romans 3:26; 6:10; 8:39. For, if we are saved from death by the death of Christ, then Christ is to us what the lamb was to the firstborn, who but for its death would himself have died. Whereas, apart from this doctrine we cannot conceive any sufficient justification for the comparison here used by Paul. Nor can we account for the institution of the Mosaic sacrifices. Thus this comparison, introduced incidentally to support a moral exhortation, strongly confirms our exposition of Romans 3:24-26. Again, if Christ died that we may become (Romans 6:6-11) dead to sin, then His death lays upon us an obligation to reject all sin, an obligation similar to that which bound Israel in Egypt to abstain from leaven after the paschal lamb was slain. In other words, Christ died that His death might be to us the gate to a life altogether new, and be a never-passed barrier between us and our old life in sin. Thus the exhortation of 1 Corinthians 5:8 implies the teaching of Romans 6:6-11.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 also suggest the practical use, and the probable design, of the Mosaic ritual. It embodied essential truth, truth expounded fully only when Christ came, in a form which, while actually conveying

important teaching, yet as evidently needing further explanation, kept alive expectation for the coming of Him who was to unlock its mysteries.

That Paul nowhere else refers to the Passover, taken in connection with 1 Corinthians 16:8, suggests that he wrote this letter about the time of the Jewish Passover, and that this comparison and exhortation were prompted by the associations of the season at which he wrote.

Paul's mention of Christ as our Passover agrees with John 19:14, 31; 18:28; 13:29, which assert or imply that Christ died on the afternoon of Nisan 14, at the very time prescribed in the Law (Exodus 12:6) for the slaying of the paschal lamb; and with John 19:36, where a command about the Passover is said to be fulfilled in Christ. This agreement is not invalidated by the apparently contrary testimony, which we cannot here discuss, of Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7; Matthew 26:17ff. See 'The Expositor,' vol. xii. p. 82.

## SECTION 8

**THEY MUST WITHDRAW, NOT FROM ALL WICKED MEN, BUT  
FROM ALL WICKED CHURCH-MEMBERS**

### CHAPTER 5:9-13

*I wrote to you, in the letter, not to be mixed up with fornicators. Not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous ones and grasping ones or idolaters. Since, if so, you ought to go forth out of the world. And now I have written to you not to be mixed up, if any one bearing the name of brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or drunken, or grasping; with such a one not even to eat together. For what have I to do with judging those outside? As to yourselves, is it not those within whom you judge? But those outside God judges. Take away the bad man from among yourselves.*

**Ver. 9.** A new subject closely connected with the foregoing, introduced abruptly by a reference to something Paul has already written to the Corinthians.

In the letter: a previous letter. Cp. 2 Corinthians 7:8; which refers evidently to this First extant Epistle. Had Paul written no earlier letter and referred here only to 1 Corinthians 5:1-8, these words would be needless and meaningless: whereas, if he wished to say that he referred here not to some earlier letter but to this one, he would certainly have written "in this letter." Moreover, the word "now" in 1 Corinthians 5:11 contrasts 1 Corinthians 5:1-8 with something written before. An earlier letter from Paul to the Corinthians is by no means impossible or unlikely; and seems to be implied in 2 Corinthians 10:10. Nothing is proved by Romans 16:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; Colossians 4:16: for they refer to a letter just finished, and the word 'letter' is needful to make up the sense. We need not suppose that Paul wrote no letters but those now extant. God has preserved so many as He saw to be needful for the direction and edification of the church. But there were doubtless others, written under

the guidance of the Spirit and for those who received them clothed with apostolic authority, which attained their purpose by meeting a temporary emergency. 'In the letter,' refers to some one definite letter, known to the Corinthians, which Paul has here in view; and therefore does not imply that he had written to them only one earlier letter.

**Ver. 10.** Not altogether. The words "not to be mixed up, etc." in the earlier letter are not to be understood universally, as referring to all fornicators without exception. Whether these words had been actually misunderstood, and the misunderstanding made known to Paul either orally (e.g. 1 Corinthians 1:11) or by letter, (1 Corinthians 7:1,) we do not know. Perhaps some had wilfully misinterpreted them, to make them appear impracticable. In either case he naturally deals with the matter here.

Of this world: 1 Corinthians 3:19; 7:31; Ephesians 2:2; John 8:23; 11:9; 12:25, 31; 16:11; 18:36.

World: 1 Corinthians 1:20: all the complex realm of things around us, looked upon as existing in space. It then denotes, in contrast to those who belong to the coming age, men and things around so far as they do not submit to Christ. As an outward distinction, it denotes those outside the community which professes to have been saved from the world. So here. Paul's words about fornicators are not to be taken universally, i.e. of those who belong to the world around us, but only of professing Christians.

Or, etc.: other sins mentioned in Paul's letter.

Covetous: greedy for material good. It will be discussed under Ephesians 5:5.

Grasping: who with violence take other men's goods.

Since, if so, etc.: such a universal prohibition would forbid all intercourse with men around; which would be evidently impracticable. And this impracticability proves sufficiently that Paul's former words are not to be thus understood.

**Ver. 11.** Now I have written, etc.: viz. in 1 Corinthians 5:1-8, which are practically a repetition of the injunction given in the former letter. For, the blame in 1 Corinthians 5:2 implies that they ought to separate themselves from immoral professors.

Not to be mixed up, etc.: repeated from 1 Corinthians 5:9 reminds us that the principle involved in 1 Corinthians 5:2 is but a repetition of the earlier injunction. The word ‘idolaters’ betrays, as do 1 Corinthians 6:9; 10:7, 14; 1 John 5:21, a proneness in some early Christians to take part, publicly or privately, through fear or through an inadequate sense of the evil of all idolatry, in the rites of heathenism.

A railer: using violent language against others.

With such a one, etc.: teaches plainly that they were to treat a wicked church-member quite differently from a heathen guilty of the same sins. For the church-member was sailing under false colors. Any intercourse with him would be a practical acknowledgment that he was what he professed to be, which it was most important to disown.

**Ver.** 12-13a. Reason for this different treatment of equally immoral church-members and heathens, viz. that Paul has no business to pronounce sentence on ‘those outside’ (Colossians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:12; 1 Timothy 3:7) the church.

Whom you judge: an appeal, in support of this reason, to their own church-discipline. “It is your business to see, not whether heathens, but whether church-members, are guilty of sin.”

God judges: both now, and finally at the great day. The punishments which in this world follow sin, prove that sinners are already condemned.

**Ver.** 13b. After enforcing and guarding the express injunction of a former letter, and a principle involved in 7 of this letter, Paul concludes 8 by urging his readers to carry out this principle with the notorious offender of 1 Corinthians 5:1.

Take away, etc.; almost word for word from Deuteronomy 17:7; 21:21, which refer to the punishment of death for idolatry and for disobedience to parents. Thus the wicked Israelite was removed from the people. The terrible meaning of these words in the Old Testament gives great weight to them when used for the lighter sentence here enjoined; and clothes this sentence with Old Testament authority.

From among yourselves: emphatic contrast to “those outside,” reminding the readers that the evil to be removed was in their own midst.



The great precept of 8, viz. that we must have nothing to do with those who profess to serve Christ and yet live in sin, was probably more easy to obey in Paul's day than in ours. For the veneer of a higher general social morality covers up, now more than then, very much actual sin, and makes it often impossible to determine the guilt or innocence of suspected persons. In nothing is Christian wisdom more needed than in our treatment of such. But, wherever it can be applied with certainty, the general principle is valid and important.

## SECTION 9

### *SOME OF THEM GO TO LAW, AND THAT BEFORE UNBELIEVERS*

#### CHAPTER 6:1-11

*Dares any of you, having a matter with another, go to law before the unrighteous ones, and not before the saints? Or, do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if before you the world is judged, are you unworthy of smallest judgments? Do you not know that angels we shall judge? To say nothing of this life. If then touching matters of this life you have judgments, is it those who are despised in the church, is it these whom you appoint? To put you to shame I say it. To this degree is there among you no wise man who will be able to judge between his brother? But brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers.*

*To go no further indeed, speaking generally, it is a damage to you that you have judgments among yourselves. Why do you not rather suffer injustice? Why do you not suffer fraud? But it is you that practice injustice and practice fraud, and that to brothers. Or, do you not know that unrighteous (Or unjust.) men will not inherit God's kingdom? Be not deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor luxurious men, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous men, no drunken men, no railers, no grasping men, will inherit the kingdom of God. And these things some of you were. But you washed yourselves, but you were sanctified, but you were justified, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of our God.*

**Ver. 1.** A new subject, viz. another disorder among church-members which Paul must deal with before he comes to the matters mentioned in the letter from Corinth. The suddenness and surprise of the question,

Dares any one of you, etc., suggest the peril of thus insulting the majesty of the Church of Christ. That no one person is mentioned as in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, the earnest appeal to the whole church, the words of 1 Corinthians 6:4, “you appoint,” and perhaps the present tense in 1 Corinthians 6:6 noting a general practice “goes to law,” suggest that there were more cases than one.

Any of you: Even one case would be outrageous.

Go-to-law: same word in Romans 3:4.

Unrighteous: same word as ‘unjust,’ used often both in this narrower sense, and in the wider sense of “not as it ought to be.” See note, Romans 1:17.

The unrighteous ones: heathen judges, who doubtless in many cases well merited this description. Cp. Galatians 2:15.

The saints: the church-members, whom God had claimed to be His own, and who professed to live for Him. In this contrast an argument lies. “Do you seek a settlement of your disputes from those whom you look upon as sinners under the anger of God rather than from those whom God has made specially His Own?”

**Ver. 2.** Or, do you not know: common phrase of Paul, Romans 6:3; 7:1; 11:2: see 1 Corinthians 3:16. By a second question he supports the argument implied in the first.

The saints will judge the world: a truth which the readers ought to ‘know,’ but which their preference for heathen judges proves that they had strangely forgotten. Same teaching in Daniel 7:22, 27, “judgment (the right to pronounce sentence) was given to the saints of the Most High.” Cp. Wisdom 3:8. Christ’s people will share His royalty, Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:12; and therefore they will share the government which (John 5:22) the Father has committed to the Son. Cp. Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30. In the great Day the saints will intelligently and cordially approve and endorse the sentence pronounced by Christ on the millions of earth. Possibly, this approval may be a divinely appointed and essential condition, without which sentence would not be pronounced. For, it may enter into God’s plan that sentence be pronounced, not only by Man upon

men, but by men, themselves redeemed from their own sins, upon those who have chosen death rather than life. (In Matthew 12:41; Romans 2:27, the words “condemn” and “judge” are differently used.) It may be that final sentence cannot, according to the principles of the Divine Government of the Universe, be pronounced upon the lost without the concurrence of the saved, i.e. without a revelation of the justice of the sentence so clear as to secure the full approbation of the saved. If so, the concurrence of the saved is an essential element in the final judgment; and they may truly be said to judge both men and angels. That the sentence which the saints will pronounce is put into their lips by Christ, does not make their part in the judgment less real: for even the Son says (John 5:30) “I cannot of myself do anything; as I hear, I judge.”

The world: either all men, or (cp. 1 Corinthians 5:10) all unsaved men. But this latter limitation is not absolutely needful here. For as summoned by Christ to sit with Him, the saints will approve and endorse the measure of reward to be given to themselves. To appeal to human courts of law, was to appeal to men upon whom, as upon all men, they themselves, amid the splendor of the great assize, will pronounce an eternal sentence.

Smallest judgments: about earthly matters, and therefore, as compared with the awards of that Day, utterly insignificant. That they ‘will judge,’ implies that already they ‘are’ not ‘unworthy, etc.’ For, not only does designation to honor confer present dignity, but whatever we shall be in full degree and outward actuality we are already in some degree inwardly and spiritually. The light of eternity, which will enable us to estimate with infallible justice all actions done on earth and to approve and endorse the sentence of Christ, already shines in the hearts of those in whom the Spirit dwells. For His presence imparts (1 Corinthians 2:15f) the wisdom of Christ. Therefore, in proportion as we are influenced by the Spirit, we are able to estimate conduct so far as the facts are known to us: i.e. spiritual men are, other things being equal, most fit to decide the differences of their brethren.

**Ver. 3.** Another known truth, forming with 1 Corinthians 6:2 a climax.

Angel, when not otherwise defined in the New Testament always a good angel. But here the word ‘judge’ recalls at once the angels who sinned. This verse implies, as 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6 plainly assert, that the sentence of the

great Day will include at least the fallen angels. We cannot doubt that it will be pronounced by Christ. If so, 1 Corinthians 6:2 suggests that in this sentence His people will join. Thus Man and men will pronounce sentence on those mighty powers which have seduced men, but from whose grasp the saints have been saved. The condemnation of wicked angels suggests that in the great Day the faithful angels will receive reward. If so, they may be included here; as in 1 Corinthians 6:2, “the world” may include “the saints.” All this reveals a mysterious and wonderful connection (cp. Colossians 1:20) between the moral destiny of our race and that of other races.

The teaching of 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3 is implied in the great truth that whatever Christ is and does He calls His people to share; and therefore helps us to realize the infinite grandeur of our position. We cannot (1 Corinthians 4:5) pronounce judgment now: for the facts are not yet fully before us. But in view of the majesty of that great assize, before which even angels will tremble, ‘matters of this life’ are unworthy of mention.

**Ver. 4-6.** Those who are despised: heathen judges, who, as ignorant of the wisdom which the Corinthian Christians conceived that they had obtained through the Gospel, were, ‘in the church,’ looked down upon with contempt. By taking their disputes into courts of law Christians practically ‘appoint’ heathens to be their judges. Paul asks with bitter irony, “Is it because your matters of dispute are so small, as belonging merely to the present passing life, compared with the tremendous sentence yourselves will share in pronouncing-is it for this reason that you submit them to men on whom you look down with contempt as aliens from the kingdom of God and exposed to the condemnation of the great Day, to men worthy to decide only these trifling temporal matters?”

To put you to shame: 1 Corinthians 15:34. It states Paul’s immediate aim; 1 Corinthians 4:14, his ultimate aim.

I say it: I ask the foregoing bitter question. Your conduct implies that ‘to this degree’ your large church is destitute of wisdom, that ‘there is not among you even one wise man who will be able’ as cases arise ‘to judge, etc.’

Between his brother: viz. the one man who brings the complaint. This question was most humiliating. Just as in 1 Corinthians 3:1ff Paul proves from the existence of the church-parties that they were incapable of the higher Christian teaching, so now from their lawsuits he infers that the whole church does not contain one wise man. 1 Corinthians 6:6 asserts as fact, in reply to Paul's own question, the matter which gave rise to the question of 1 Corinthians 6:1.

Unbelievers; explains "the unrighteous" in 1 Corinthians 6:1.

**Ver. 7-8.** To go no further, than the fact that "brother goes to law with brother," that you have judgments with yourselves. As in 1 Corinthians 6:1, Paul descends from fornication "generally" to a specially aggravated "kind of fornication," so now he rises from lawsuits before unbelievers to all lawsuits between Christians.

Judgment: sentence pronounced by a judge, which, as being the culminating point, implies the whole process of the suit. Apart from the heathen judges, the lawsuits were themselves a spiritual injury; they tended to lessen and destroy the spiritual life of those concerned and of the church generally.

Damage: same word in Romans 11:12.

Why...? why...? solemn repetition and climax. It is better to 'suffer-injustice' and 'fraud' than spiritual 'damage.' 'But' their conduct was the precise opposite of this.

Injustice: that which is not right, 1 Corinthians 6:1.

Fraud: taking, generally by guile, the known property of others. Of this, Paul must have known that some of them were guilty.

**Ver. 9-10.** Do you not know: This conduct, like all sin, arose from ignorance.

Unrighteousness, or 'unjust,' refers specifically to 1 Corinthians 6:8; but includes the sin of 1 Corinthians 6:1 and all other sin. For, against all sin equally this solemn warning is valid.

Inherit God's kingdom: 1 Corinthians 15:50; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5: become, in virtue of filial relation to God, citizens of the future and

glorious realm over which, in a royalty which His children will share, He will reign for ever.

Be not deceived, etc.: solemn repetition, and exposition in its wider sense, of 1 Corinthians 6:9a. Cp. Galatians 5:21.

Fornicators; recalls 1 Corinthians 5:1ff.

Idolaters; see 1 Corinthians 5:11.

**Ver. 11.** Supports the foregoing solemn warning by the contrast of their entrance to the Christian life. When Paul speaks of sin in the abstract, he says, "There is no difference: for all have sinned," Romans 3:22; 5:8ff. But, when speaking of gross and open sins, he says 'some of you.' For there may have been at Corinth men who, like Paul, (Acts 26:5,) were outwardly moral from their youth.

You washed yourselves: close coincidence with Acts 22:16, "Baptize thyself (or, have thyself baptized) and wash away thy sin." God designs the Christian life to be one of purity, i.e. free from the inward conscious defilement, causing shame, which always accompanies sin. To this life of purity, Baptism, as a public confession of Christ and formal union with His people, was the divinely appointed outward entrance. Only thus, in ordinary cases, could men obtain salvation: Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. And the use of water set forth in outward symbol the inward purity which God requires, and is ready to give. Therefore by voluntarily receiving Baptism, not only did the early converts profess their desire for the purity promised in the Gospel, but, by fulfilling the divinely ordained condition, they actually obtained it in proportion to their faith. Consequently, by coming to baptism, they practically 'washed themselves' from the stain of their sin. Cp. Titus 3:5, "He saved us by means of the laver of regeneration." This does not imply purification in the moment of baptism, or apart from the converts' faith and steadfast resolve to forsake sin. But these words reminded the readers that, unless it was a meaningless and an empty form, their baptism was a renouncing of all sin. The allusion here is similar to the mention of baptism in Romans 6:2ff: see notes.

You were sanctified: as in 1 Corinthians 1:2. "When God rescued you from sin and joined you to His people, He claimed you for His Own, and thus placed you in a new and solemn relation to Himself."

Justified: a solitary instance probably in the New Testament of the simplest sense, “made righteous.” For Paul is dealing here (cp. 1 Corinthians 6:9a) with practical unrighteousness: and with him the justification of pardon always precedes (e.g. 1 Corinthians 1:30) sanctification. But we have the opposite order here, because practical conformity with the Law is an outflow and consequence of devotion to God. Therefore, by claiming us for His Own, and by breathing into us the devotion He claims, God makes us righteous. ‘You washed yourselves,’ reminds the readers that by their own act they renounced sin: therefore to continue in sin is to retrace their own act. ‘You were sanctified, etc.,’ reminds “them that by One greater than themselves they were devoted to the service of God and made righteous: therefore, to sin is to resist God.” Thus the change of expression sets before us two sides of the Christian life.

In the Name, etc.; belongs probably to all three verbs. Their baptism was an acknowledgment that ‘Jesus’ claimed to be their ‘Anointed Master,’ whose ‘Name’ they were henceforth to bear. Cp. Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5. They were “sanctified in Christ,” 1 Corinthians 1:2. And moral uprightness was imparted to them in view of their confession of the Name of Christ, and for the honor of that Name.

The Spirit of God: the inward and immediate source, as ‘the Name of Christ’ is the outward professed source, of the Christian life. This Spirit they received at Baptism, 1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 2:38; 19:5f: (though not by mechanical necessity but by faith, Galatians 3:14, 26f: Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13; and therefore not necessarily in the moment of Baptism:) and He was the source of (Romans 15:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13) their loyalty to God; and of (Romans 8:4) their conformity to the Law.

In this section, as frequently, Paul deals with matters of detail by appealing to great principles of wide application. Not only are there at Corinth legal disputes, but these are carried into the common law-courts. The litigants insult the majesty of the church, forgetful of the dignity awaiting its members, by submitting their disputes to the decision of men on whom they themselves look down with contempt as aliens from God, as though the church did not contain even one man wise enough to decide them. That there are lawsuits at all, is a spiritual injury to them, an injury



they would do well to avoid, even at the cost of submitting to injustice. It is needful to warn them against the error of expecting that bad men will enter the kingdom of God; and to remind them that, when they entered the church and so far as their profession was genuine, they renounced sin, became the people of God, and therefore righteous men.

The above does not imply that in that early day there were regularly constituted Christian law-courts. The readers are simply urged to settle their disputes privately by Christian arbitration rather than by a public legal process. A century later there were regular, though private, Christian courts; in which the bishops gave judgment between church-members.

To us, the argument of 1 Corinthians 6:1-6 is modified by the fact that our public courts are for the more part presided over by excellent Christian men. But the injury inflicted upon a church by lawsuits between members, and the spirit of unscrupulous grasping, in one or both parties, which lies at the root of nearly all lawsuits, are the same in all ages. And, in proportion as men are moved by the Spirit of God, disputes about property will become rare; and the disputants will decide them, not in a public court, but by private arbitration, and by arbiters who themselves are guided by the same Spirit. Whether, in any one case it be more for the advancement of the kingdom of God that we defend our property or submit to injustice, must be determined by that spiritual wisdom which God has promised to give. From 1 Corinthians 6:8 we learn that there are cases in which we shall do well to choose the latter alternative.

## SECTION 10

### ALL LICENTIOUSNESS IS CONTRARY TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

#### CHAPTER 6:12-20

*All things to me are allowable: but not all things are profitable. All things to me are allowable: but not I will be mastered by any. The food-stuffs are for the belly, and the belly for the food-stuffs: but God will bring to nought both it and them. But the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God both raised the Lord and will raise up us through His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of the body of Christ? Shall I then, having taken away the members of the body of Christ, make them members of a harlot's body? Far from it. Or, do you not know that he who joins himself to the harlot is one body? For, says he, "The two will become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24.) But he who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit. Fly from fornication. Every act of sin, whatever a man may commit, is outside the body. But he who commits fornication sins against his own body. Or, do you know not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have from God; and you do not belong to yourselves? For, you were bought with a price. Then glorify God in your body.*

After various matters of detail, viz. the incestuous church-member, intercourse with such men, and lawsuits, Paul asserted in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 a negative and a positive truth condemning all kinds of sin. He now takes up one sin, which, because of its prevalence at Corinth even (2 Corinthians 12:21) in the church, he has already placed first in the dark catalogue of 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; and brings to bear against it, in addition to the general truths of 1 Corinthians 6:10, 11, special and weighty arguments.

**Ver. 12.** The subject is introduced by a startling assertion, which is immediately repeated,

All things to me are allowable. The repetition of these words, and their occurrence, similarly repeated, in 1 Corinthians 10:23, suggest that they had been spoken before, by Paul or others. But whatever be their origin Paul makes them his own, thus admitting their correctness; and guards them from abuse. That in both places they are spoken in connection with food, and the abrupt and transitory mention of food in 1 Corinthians 6:13, suggest that this was their original reference, and that they are equivalent to Paul's own words in Romans 14:20, "All things are clean." If so, they may have come originally from his lips, touching food offered to idols or forbidden in the Mosaic Law. Cp. 1 Timothy 4:3. We notice that these words are here carefully guarded against abuse, and that the broad difference between food and the intercourse of the sexes is argued at length. This suggests that, though true and important within their own limits, these words had been perverted into an excuse for in chastity; and that some professed to infer from them that all restrictions on the intercourse of the sexes, as on food, had been set aside by the Gospel. This misuse of words which he does not hesitate to reassert, Paul meets at once by showing in 1 Corinthians 6:12 that they contain in themselves a limit to their practical application, and (1 Corinthians 6:13, 14) that the cases of food and of intercourse of the sexes are so altogether different that we cannot argue from the one to the other.

To me: who have been set free by Christ from the Mosaic Law. Cp. Romans 14:14.

Profitable: helpful to ourselves or others. In all matters, and especially about food, we ask not only whether it is lawful but whether it will do us good or harm.

Be mastered by anything: be put under its rule; one case in which an action may be allowable but not profitable. Some actions (e.g. the use of stimulants) tend to create in some persons an irresistible habit. Now whatever deprives us of self-control does us harm; and must therefore be avoided, even though in itself lawful. In this case, in order to preserve our liberty we put a limit to its exercise. Paul says, "All things are in my power: but over me nothing shall have power." He leaves his readers to apply these principles to the matter of fornication; to determine whether it is profitable to them, or whether it brings them into humiliating bondage.

This verse is a good guide of conduct in matters not expressly forbidden. By experience and observation, guided by the Spirit of wisdom and love, we must discover the effect of various actions upon our own inner life and through us on those influenced by our example, and act accordingly. For no intelligent man will do a thing, without considering its results, merely because it is lawful. A beautiful development of this principle is found in 1 Corinthians 10:23-33; 8:9-13; Romans 14:13-21.

**Ver. 13a.** After showing that the maxim of 1 Corinthians 6:12 contains its own limitation, Paul now meets its misapplication to the unrestricted intercourse of the sexes, by showing that this case differs so entirely from that of food that inference from the one to the other is unsafe.

The food-stuffs: the different kinds of food. Same word in 1 Timothy 4:3; Hebrews 9:10; 13:9; Mark 7:19. These were created 'for the belly,' i.e. in the purpose of God, the stomach and whatever gives nourishment were designed, each for the other. Cp. Genesis 9:3. Even much of the food forbidden in the Law was nourishing and its nourishing properties must have been given by the Creator. Therefore, in eating such food, we are carrying out His purposes.

Bring to nought: 1 Corinthians 2:6: at the death of the individual, and finally at the destruction of the world. Therefore both food and digestive organs belong, not to the eternal, but to the passing things of time. This implies that nourishment, at least in its present mode, will, like marriage, (Matthew 22:30,) have no place in the world to come. Cp. 1 Corinthians 15:44, 50.

**Ver. 13b-14.** In the rest of 10, Paul sets forth the dignity of the body: and thus makes us feel instinctively how altogether different from food is the intercourse of the sexes. 'The body' was 'not' created in order that we might use it 'for fornication.' That it was created for this end, not one, probably, of Paul's readers, and few others, would venture to assert. Thus the two cases differ. Whoever eats food, of whatever kind, puts it to its designed use: whoever commits fornication uses his body in a way for which it was never designed.

But for the Lord: that it may belong to Christ, as a means by which He will work out His purposes and a medium through which He will reveal

Himself to men. Cp. Philippians 1:20. And for this end our bodies were created. This infinite contrast supports strongly the foregoing negative, 'not for fornication.'

For the body: to save it from vanity and sin and corruption, and to make it His own for ever. This is an essential part of the purpose Christ came to accomplish.

And God, etc., corresponds with "but God, etc." in 1 Corinthians 6:13: as does 'but the body, etc.' with "the food-stuffs, etc."

Both Christ... and us: an inseparable connection. So Romans 8:11.

Through His power; suggests the difficulty of breaking the barrier of the tomb, and the solemnity of the resurrection as a manifestation of the power of God.

**Ver.** 15-17. develop and support "for the Lord." 1 Corinthians 6:13; in order to strengthen the instinctive feeling, already evoked by the contrast between food and intercourse of the sexes, that fornication is utterly opposed to the purpose for which our body was created.

Members of the body of Christ: see under 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27; Romans 12:4. The bodies of believers stand in a relation to Christ similar to that of the various members of a man's own body to the spirit within. For they are the visible and material and variously endowed organs through which He shows Himself to, and acts upon, the world. So that, as far as God's purpose is now attained in us, the presence of our bodies in a place is the presence of Christ there, who smiles through our face, speaks His own words of wisdom and love and life through our lips, and through our hands perform His works of mercy. In this sense "the body" exists "for the Lord."

Shall I then, etc.: intense reality of Paul's thought. Cp. Romans 3:7. If to do this is right, it is right for Paul to do it. But how inconceivable!

Having taken away, etc.; shows what the foregoing question practically involves. To be unchaste is to rob Christ of the members of His own body, to deprive Him of the use of them as organs of His self-manifestation to the world.

A harlot: whom Paul assumes, and no one will deny, to be absolutely opposed to Christ.

**Ver. 16.** A truth which the readers ought to ‘know,’ justifying the foregoing words.

Is one body: therefore, he who commits fornication makes his body a part, or member, of a harlot’s body.

For, etc.: proof of ‘is one body.’

The two, etc.: word for word from Genesis 2:24, LXX.

Says he: Adam, or the author of Genesis. Probably the former, moved by prophetic impulse on seeing Eve. But to Paul both were invested with divine authority. So Romans 3:19. That these words refer originally to marriage, does not lessen their appropriateness here. For they teach that the marriage relation was divinely instituted at the creation of the race, in order to unite husband and wife so closely that in them even personal distinction should in some respects cease. Intercourse with harlots desecrates this divine ordinance to a means of sin. Therefore, in a Christian, it robs Christ of a member of His own body in order to place it in union with one utterly opposed to Christ, a union so close that it implies a cessation in some sense of personal distinction.

**Ver. 17.** Increases the force of the foregoing, by showing how exalted is the fellowship with Christ of which fornication is a renunciation.

Joined to the Lord: to Christ. Same words, in reference to God, in Deuteronomy 10:20; 11:22; 2 Kings 18:6; Jeremiah 13:11. They denote here that spiritual contact with Christ by which we abide in Him and He in us.

Is one spirit. In proportion as we are joined to the Lord are the thoughts, purposes, efforts, and entire activity, of our spirit an outflow of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us and moving us. Thus in Him and in us one Spirit dwells, moves, and manifests itself. This oneness of spirit with Christ is the source of the mutual oneness (John 17:11, 21ff) of His people. This union with Christ, for which we were created, which comes to us through the noblest element of our nature, even our spirit, and permeates our whole being, making even our mortal bodies to be members of the body of Christ,

reveals the infinite indignity of intercourse with a harlot; an intercourse prompted only by the lower and material side of our nature, and preventing absolutely all union with Christ.

**Ver. 18.** Fly from fornication: direct exhortation, carrying the force of the foregoing arguments, and further supported by those following.

Outside the body: they require some motive or weapon other than the body. But this sin stands alone in making the human body, the chosen medium of Christ's self-manifestation to the world, to be itself a sufficient motive and instrument of sin. Therefore, as a unique dishonor (Romans 1:24) to the body, it is in a unique sense a 'sin against' (1 Corinthians 8:12; Luke 15:18) 'our own body.'

**Ver. 19-20.** Known truths which greatly aggravate this unique sin against the body.

Your body, not bodies: see Romans 1:21.

Temple, etc.: exactly parallel of 1 Corinthians 3:16.

Holy Spirit: appropriate designation of that inward, personal, divine, animating principle, whose every impulse is towards God and away from sin. See note, Romans 8:17. That the Spirit comes to us from God, makes dishonor to the Spirit a dishonor to the Father. This verse claims for the believer's body, as 1 Corinthians 3:16 claims for the church generally, the dread solemnity associated with the temple at Jerusalem. The Christian's body is the most sacred spot on earth. And every dishonor to it is an insult to the Great Spirit who has chosen it to be His dwelling place on earth, and to the Father who gave Him to us.

Not belong to yourselves: another thought suggested at once by 'temple.' For God's presence there removed it, as the palace of the heavenly King, from all human ownership. For where the King is, He is both ruler and owner. Therefore, the presence of the Spirit in our bodies has made them no longer our own.

**Ver. 20.** For you were bought, etc.: 1 Corinthians 7:23; ground of the foregoing, and another argument in support of 1 Corinthians 6:18a. Christ died in order (Romans 14:9) that we may live a life of which He is the one aim. Therefore He died that we may be His: and His blood was the price

with which He bought us for Himself. Cp. 1 Peter 1:18. Consequently, all in chastity is, not only dishonor to that dread Spirit whom God has put within us, but resistance to Him who so earnestly desired us for His own that to gain us He poured out His blood.

Then glorify God: positive and general exhortation, including the negative and specific one in 1 Corinthians 6:18a. We ‘glorify God’ when we receive Him as an object of our admiration; and when, by words or works, we make Him known to others to be an object of their admiration. See under Romans 1:21.

In your body: Philippians 1:20. “So act that your bodily presence may be a display of the grandeur of God, and may call forth admiration for God in those who have intercourse with you.”

SECTION 10 is the one New Testament passage which deals professedly and fully with this one sin. Paul begins by quoting with approval a maxim used by some as a cloak for it. He shows that this maxim contains its own limits, even in these matters to which it properly refers; and, after indicating these limits, leaves his readers to apply them to the matter in hand. But indiscriminate food, to which the maxim really refers is altogether different from promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, to which some would apply it. For the one is according to, the other opposed to, God’s original design; and the one pertains to time, the other to eternity. The dignity of the human body, which Paul refers to first as a contrast, he then uses further as a direct dissuasive. To commit fornication, is to rob Christ of the members of His own body, in order to place then, by desecrating God’s ordinance, in closest fellowship with a harlot; whereas it is our privilege to have spiritual fellowship with Christ. It is a dishonor to our own sacred bodies, and to the divine inhabitant whom God has placed to dwell therein; and an invasion of a right which Christ has acquired at the cost of His own blood

It is not Paul’s purpose to prove that fornication is wrong; (for this, in their heart of hearts, all men know; ) but to show how terribly wrong it is, how utterly opposed to God’s glorious purpose about our body, how insulting to the Great Spirit who dwells within us, and how hostile to the earnestness of Him who made us His own at the cost of His life. From 1



Corinthians 5:1; 2 Corinthians 12:21, we learn how much this teaching was needed at Corinth.

The teaching of this section implies, and flows directly from the fundamental doctrines assumed in the Epistle to the Romans. 1 Corinthians 6:20a is explained by Doctrine 2, Romans 3:24ff; ‘for the Lord’ in 1 Corinthians 6:13, by Doctrine 3, Romans 6:3-11; 1 Corinthians 6:19, by Doctrine 5, Romans 8:4-11. “Members of Christ” is a development of Doctrines 3 and 5. DIVISION II., which deals with the gross misconduct of some church-members, is now complete. Paul has pronounced a severe sentence on one conspicuous offender, and has supported it by referring to the paschal sacrifice of Christ, 1 Corinthians 5:1-4; and has urged his readers to separate themselves, not from all bad men, but from all bad Christians, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13. He has shown the impropriety of their lawsuits between church members, and against all other sins, 1 Corinthians 6:1-11; and especially against in chastity. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Paul has thus completed his discussion of those more pressing matters which demanded his first attention before he could reply to the questions in the letter from Corinth He dealt first, and at greatest length, in DIV. 1, with the church-parties. For these had spread over the entire church; whereas only a part, probably a small part, was guilty of the misconduct mentioned in DIV. 2; and because these church-parties, and the overweening self-conceit from which they sprang, were weakening the spiritual life of the whole church and thus opening a way for the immoralities mentioned immediately afterwards.

## DIVISION III

### ABOUT MARRIAGE

#### CHAPTERS 7

#### SECTION 11

#### *COUNSELS, CHIEFLY TO THE MARRIED*

#### CHAPTER 7:1-17

*About the things of which you wrote. It is good for a man not to touch a woman. But, because of the fornications, let each one have his own wife, and let each one have her own husband. To the wife let the husband pay that which is due; and in like manner also the wife to the husband. The wife has not authority over her own body, but the husband and in like manner also the husband has not authority over his own body, but the wife. Defraud not one another; except perhaps it be by agreement for a season that you may have leisure for prayer, and again may come together, lest Satan tempt you because of your want of self-control. But this I say by way of making allowance, not by way of command. But I wish all men to be like myself. But each one has a gift of grace of his own from God, one in this way and one in that way.*

*But I say to the unmarried and to the widows, it is good for them if they remain as I also am. But if they have not self-control, let them marry: for better it is to marry than to burn.*

*But to those who are married, I give charge, not I but the Lord, that a woman do not separate from her husband, (but, if she do separate, let her remain unmarried, or let her be reconciled to her*

*husband; ) and that a man do not send away his wife. But to the rest say I, not the Lord, if any brother has a wife an unbeliever, and this woman agrees to live with him, let him not send her away: and any woman who has an unbelieving husband, and this man agrees to live with her, let her not send the husband away. For sanctified is the unbelieving husband in the wife, and sanctified is the unbelieving wife in the brother. Else we should infer that your children are unclean. but now are they holy. But, if the unbeliever separates himself let him separate himself. Held in no bondage is the brother or the sister in such cases. Moreover, in peace has God called us. (For what dost thou know, Wife, whether thou wilt save thy husband? Or, what dost thou know, Husband, whether thou wilt save thy wife?) Except that as to each one the Lord has allotted, as God has called each one, so let him walk. And in this way in all the churches I ordain.*

**Ver. 1.** You wrote; implies a letter from the Corinthian Christians to Paul, asking advice on sundry matters. To these he now comes, after dealing with the more pressing matters of 1 Corinthians. 1 — 6. Only imperfectly, from Paul's own words in this Epistle, can we infer what these questions were. One of them referred to marriage. And to this question the solemn teaching of 10 forms a suitable transition.

**Ver. 1b.** Not to touch a woman: to be unmarried. For it is contrasted with 'have his own wife,' which refers evidently to marriage: and in 1 Corinthians 7:3ff Paul advises married people not to separate. In 1 Corinthians 7:1 Paul admits and asserts a general principle; but points out in 1 Corinthians 7:2 a practical obstacle to it. He reasserts it in 1 Corinthians 7:8 with the limitation of 1 Corinthians 7:9. Since here and in 1 Corinthians 7:8 the principle is asserted without explanation or proof, but is fully discussed and proved in 1 Corinthians 7:25-38, the words "because of the present necessity," placed conspicuously in front of this full discussion, must be taken as applying to, and limiting, the cursory statement of the principle here and in 1 Corinthians 7:8.

The fornications: the actual and ever recurring cases of this sin, for which Corinth was infamous. These exposed the Christians to so great

temptation that to them the principle of 1 Corinthians 7:1 was impracticable.

Each one; not quite so absolute as “every one.”

Have: as in 1 Corinthians 7:1.

Wife: same word as ‘woman’ in 1 Corinthians 7:1. The Greeks had no common distinctive word for “wife” or “husband.” The emphatic words his own make the meaning clear. The reason given, ‘because of, etc.,’ shows that this verse is not mere permission but real advice; i.e. that the general principle, ‘not to touch a woman,’ though good in itself, was, to speak generally, impracticable at Corinth.

Each... each: for the good of each sex equally, marriage is desirable.

The foregoing recommendation of marriage introduces suitably advice to married people, 1 Corinthians 7:3-7; and, after a word (1 Corinthians 7:8f) to the unmarried suggested by Paul’s reference to himself, further advice to the married, chiefly about divorce, 1 Corinthians 7:10-17.

**Ver.** 3-5. The emphatic repetition, and in like manner also, gives to husband and wife exactly equal marriage rights, which the other is bound to pay. This equal right is made very prominent by the repetitions of 1 Corinthians 7:2-4. It culminates in 1 Corinthians 7:4, which states a truth which lies at the base of the injunction of 1 Corinthians 7:3, and is the essential principle of monogamy.

Do not defraud; keeps before us the obligation, “that which is due,” 1 Corinthians 7:3.

Except perhaps, etc.: an exception to his prohibition of separation, which Paul hesitatingly allows, on condition that it be by mutual consent, and only for a definite time.

Season: 1 Corinthians 7:29; 4:5; 2 Corinthians 6:2; 8:18; Romans 5:6, etc.: not mere length of time, but a portion of time looked upon as an opportunity of doing something.

Have leisure for prayer; suggests the excellent custom of occasionally setting apart a period of some days for special devotional exercises. During

such periods, for unremitting attention to spiritual matters, separation may ‘perhaps’ be desirable.

And may again come together: an integral part of the purpose to separate. So careful is Paul lest a temporary separation become permanent.

Lest Satan tempt, etc.: object to be avoided by making reunion a part of the purpose to separate, viz. that Satan should make their ‘want-of-self-control’ an occasion for tempting them to sin.

Your; points to a special weakness of the readers. Therefore Paul fixes narrow limits to the allowed separation. This careful warning implies some real need for it; and suggests either that the matter was mentioned in the letter from Corinth, or that separation was inculcated by some in the church.

To fasting and: certainly spurious, as is the same word in Acts 10:30, probably in Matthew 17:21, and not unlikely in Mark 9:29. These various readings affect materially the teaching of Scripture about fasting.

**Ver. 6-7.** This: viz. that married people do not separate except for a definite time.

Making allowance: taking into indulgent consideration “your want-of-self-control.” The prohibition to separate is not an imperative ‘command,’ as touching right and wrong, but advice prompted by their spiritual weakness.

But I wish, etc.: something better than the counsel just given.

Like myself: endowed with complete self-control. This would make these counsels needless.

But each one, etc.: a modest softening down of the apparent assumption, in 1 Corinthians 7:7a, of superior piety.

Gift-of-grace: as in 1 Corinthians 1:7; Romans 1:11; 12:4. Paul remembers that his own self-control was the gift to him of God’s undeserved favor; that ‘each’ believer has a gift, i.e. some kind of spiritual excellence wrought in him by God; that in some the favor of God shows itself ‘in this way,’ i.e. by giving self control, in others in some other gift, perhaps equally valuable. Therefore, Paul’s possession of this one gift is no proof of

superiority on the whole. Cp. Romans 12:3-6. This principle ought to control all our comparisons of ourselves with others.

**Ver.** 8-9. After expressing a wish that all men had the self-control which by God's grace he has, and prompted by this mention of himself, Paul now says a word to those who, like himself, are 'unmarried,' i.e. without wives, including (cp. 1 Corinthians 7:11) widowers.

And the wives: included in 'the unmarried,' but added because to them (cp. 1 Corinthians 7:40) these words apply specially. Cp. "and Peter," Mark 16:7.

It is good, etc.: restates the principle of 1 Corinthians 7:1.

Remain as I also am: continue unmarried, in contrast to 'let them marry.' The words 'if they remain' imply that Paul refers here to his outward position, not as in 1 Corinthians 7:7 to his inner self-control. And this proves that he had no wife when he wrote; but gives no hint whether he once had.

Have not self-control: case in which the foregoing principle does not apply. Practically the same is the reason given in 1 Corinthians 7:2, "because of the fornications." For these would not expose to danger a man of perfect self-control; and therefore to him would be no reason for marrying. That the sensuality around is given in 1 Corinthians 7:2 as a reason why "each one," speaking generally, should marry, seems to imply that the Corinthians generally had not the self-control needful to make celibacy expedient. But here Paul leaves each to determine this for himself.

To turn: 2 Corinthians 11:29.

Better: because the one, though disadvantageous, is innocent; the other is not. The matter touched in 1 Corinthians 7:8, 9, is dealt with fully in 1 Corinthians 7:25-40.

**Ver.** 10-11. To those who are married: in contrast to "let them marry." That those married to unbelievers are made in 1 Corinthians 7:12 a special case, implies that Paul refers to Christians married to Christians. Just so, in 1 Corinthians 7:9 "let them marry" refers only (cp. 1 Corinthians 7:39) to marriage with a believer.

Give charge: not advice, but solemn command.

Not I but Christ, the Lord of the Church; who had already (Matthew 5:32; 19:6-9) given an express command. His word made Paul's word of no account. This implies, not that Paul's own authority (cp. 1 Corinthians 14:37) is less than absolute; but that special solemnity belongs to those words which came from the lips of the incarnate Son.

Not to separate, etc.: cp. Matthew 19:6, where with the same word Christ expressly forbids a divorce.

But if she do separate; suggests that there may be a case in which for special reasons even the solemn words of Christ may be inapplicable.

Remains unmarried, i.e. without a husband: according to still more solemn words of Christ, Matthew 5:32; 19:9.

Be reconciled: Matthew 5:24: lay aside, or persuade him to lay aside, whatever prevents them from living together. The mention of this alternative suggests that reunion is desirable, even in the special case in which separation has taken place. A dissolution of marriage, for any reason or no reason, was easy in Roman law. Hence the need for the injunctions of Matthew 5:32; 19:9. The shorter injunction in 1 Corinthians 7:11b to the husband, suggests perhaps that the wish for divorce was more likely in the wife. And we can easily conceive a wife to be prompted to the total change consequent on her conversion and by a new-born consciousness of Christian liberty, to avail herself of the laxity of Roman law, in order to escape from the control of one whom, though a Christian, she felt to be an unsuitable consort. Paul reminds her, while leaving room for an exceptional case, that Christ has expressly forbidden separation; and has still more emphatically forbidden re-marriage.

**Ver. 12-13.** To the rest: to those married to unbelievers, whose case is so different from that of 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11 that it requires special treatment, and which now alone remains.

Not the Lord; implies that Matthew 19:6 does not apply to them. The intimate connection of heathenism with the details of social life made the position of Christians married to heathens so peculiar that it could not be dealt with on the ground of words spoken by Christ to those only who

were worshippers of the true God. Therefore, having no command of Christ to quote, Paul himself speaks. Cp. 1 Corinthians 7:25.

Has a wife an unbeliever; whom he has already married, before or since his conversion. To marry such is, in 1 Corinthians 7:39, expressly forbidden.

Agrees to live with him; implies that both husband and wife are willing.

**Ver. 14.** Justifies the foregoing advice against a possible objection. The Israelites were forbidden Deuteronomy 7:3 to marry heathens. And those who had done so were bidden by Ezra (Ezra 9:2) to put them away: for “the seed of holiness” must not mingle with the unholy. But Christians also are holy: 1 Corinthians 1:2. And it might be thought that contact with a heathen husband, or wife would defile them. Paul says no, the heathen husband in virtue of his wife’s holiness, is himself holy. Just so “whatever touches the altar shall be holy,” Exodus 29:37; Leviticus 6:18. The Christian wife lays her heathen husband upon the altar of God; and in all her intercourse with him as God’s servant, striving ever to accomplish His purposes. Therefore, whatever the husband may be in himself, he ‘is sanctified in the wife:’ i.e. in the subjective world of her thought and life he is a holy object; and her treatment of him is a sacrifice to God. Such intercourse cannot defile. Therefore, his heathenism is not in itself a reason for separation. (Similarly, the Christians’ friends, abilities, wealth, time, are, or should be, holy. Else even they will defile him.) Notice the contrast of 1 Corinthians 6:16. All intercourse with a harlot is sin; and cannot therefore be a sacrifice to God, nor she a holy object. Consequently, her presence is ever defiling.

Else etc: inference we are compelled to make if the principle involved in 1 Corinthians 7:14a be not admitted. It is an argument, *reductio ad absurdum*, in proof that the heathen husband or wife is holy, and therefore not defiling.

Your children: an appeal to all Christian parents, in contrast to the special case of 1 Corinthians 7:14a.

Unclean: and therefore polluting; and not to be touched by the holy people. If a wife must leave her husband because intercourse with a heathen is defiling, she may infer fairly that her ‘children’ also are ‘unclean,’ and must be forsaken. For some of these may be adult heathens.



But all natural and Christian instinct says that she is in every case bound to show to them a mother's love; and that such love, even towards a heathen, cannot pollute. But on what principle is this? Only that in the Christian mother's thought and life her children are laid upon the altar of God, and therefore, in relation to her, holy.

But now, etc.: in contrast to the absurd inference which would follow a denial of 1 Corinthians 7:14a. That the children 'are holy,' Christian instinct compels us to admit. And their holiness can be explained only by admitting the principle involved in 1 Corinthians 7:14a. Thus from the admitted case of the children Paul argues the case of the husband.

From this verse, Neander, Meyer, Stanley, and others, have inferred that infant-baptism was not usual when it was written; on the ground that, if the children of believers had been baptized, the difference between them and the unbaptized husband would bar all argument from one to the other. And we must admit that the children referred to here were unbaptized. But the word 'children' includes adults; (cp. Matthew 10:21; 21:28; ) and therefore, in some cases, adult heathens. Indeed the argument suggests such, as being a closer parallel to the unbelieving husband. Consequently, it does not necessarily imply that the infants were not baptized. For, even if they were, the argument from the older children would still remain. That Paul did not find it needful to say "your unbaptized children," suggests perhaps that baptism in infancy was not then usual. But on this argument no great stress can fairly be laid. Whether or not the children were baptized, and whether they were infants or adults, they had an indisputable claim to the care of a Christian parent. Therefore, to give them such care, could in no case defile. Consequently, baptism had no bearing at all on the case. And this is sufficient reason for Paul's silence about it, even though the rite had been administered to some of the children. Similarly, as not affecting the argument, nothing is said about converted 'children.' Yet we cannot infer from this that at Corinth none of the children of believers were themselves believers.

We cannot therefore accept this verse as proof or presumption that infant-baptism was unknown in the Apostolic church.

On 1 Corinthians 7:10-14, see further in 'The Expositor,' vol. x. p. 321.

**Ver. 15.** After dealing with the case of 1 Corinthians 7:12, “if she agrees to live with him,” Paul takes up now the other alternative, ‘if the unbeliever separates himself;’ thus completing his counsel “to the rest,” i.e. to those married to unbelievers.

Let him separate himself; refers probably to simple separation, as opposed to “live with him,” 1 Corinthians 7:12; but doubtless includes divorce. “If the unbeliever wishes to go, do not prevent him.” To be obliged to force oneself on a reluctant heathen husband or wife, would be a ‘bondage’ inconsistent with Christian liberty.

Moreover in peace, etc.: additional reason for letting him go. The Gospel came proclaiming ‘peace,’ Ephesians 2:14, 17; in contrast to the bondage, and therefore confusion, which would follow an attempt to force oneself on an unbeliever. The peacefulness of Christianity forbids this.

**Ver. 16.** A negative reason for the foregoing advice.

Thou will save: 1 Corinthians 9:22; see Romans 11:14.

Whether, etc.: same phrase in LXX. as a ground of hope and motive for action, in Esther, Esther 4:14; 2 Samuel 12:22; Joel 2:14; Jonah 3:9. But that here it supports the foregoing permission to separate, is proved by 1 Corinthians 7:17a, which gives an injunction not to change one’s position as an ‘exception’ to the principle defended in 1 Corinthians 7:16. If it were certain that the enforced presence of the Christian would save the heathen consort, this certainty would justify the spiritual risk of the continued connection. But it was far from certain; and therefore not worth the risk involved. And separation did not imply an abandonment of any suitable efforts to save the separated one.

**Ver. 17.** A general and universal principle, viz. “Be not eager to change;” which limits the foregoing counsel.

As the Lord: Christ the ruler of the church and the world, who divides among men the various circumstances, and ‘has’ thus allotted ‘to each one’ his position. But this allotment does not include positions of sin. These are always self-chosen.

As God hath called: the circumstances in which you received, and obeyed, the gospel call. [The perfect tense directs attention to the abiding result of

the call.] That this verse does not imply that believers have received a call withheld from others by God for secret reasons, see under Romans 8:28.

Walk: see 1 Corinthians 3:3. "Continue in the position and pursue the path, in which Christ has placed you, and in which God has called you to be His people." In 12, this important principle will be developed and supported.

I ordain; asserts Paul's authority to announce the principles on which Christians should act.

In all the churches; testifies the importance of this universal principle, and Paul's impartiality in applying it.

THE COUNSEL of 11 reveals Paul's careful consideration of everything bearing upon the matter in hand, undisturbed by personal prejudice or by a desire to force upon others his own practice. He has found out by experience the advantage under present circumstances of celibacy. But the self-control which alone makes celibacy expedient many have not. This, however, gives Paul no right to boast: for self-control is a gift of the undeserved favor of God, who gives to all believers real, though various, Christian excellences. The immorality prevalent at Corinth makes marriage, to speak generally, desirable both for men and women. But the force of this reason depends upon each one's degree of self-restraint, which each must estimate for himself. The marriage relation should be real, not pretended. The separation of husband and wife is not desirable, except for a spiritual purpose, by mutual consent, and for a definite time. If prolonged, it may, owing to the imperfect self-control of the Corinthian Christians, expose them to temptation. Paul reminds believers married to believers that Christ has forbidden them to break the marriage tie; and has specially forbidden re-marriage of divorced persons. That Christ's command does not apply in full force to believers married to heathens, Paul admits; and gives his own advice. He recommends that, if the heathen desires it, the marriage relation be kept up. This is not inconsistent with the holiness of the people of God. For the heathen husband is laid by the Christian wife upon the altar of God, and becomes to her a sacred object. Only on this principle can we justify the intercourse of Christian parents with unsaved children; which all admit to be both right and obligatory. But if the unbelieving partner wishes to go, the believer is not bound to oppose

it. This would be an unworthy bondage; and would lead to a confusion contrary to the essence of Christianity. The uncertain benefit to the heathen is no sufficient reason for endeavoring to force upon him the continuance of an alliance he wishes to break off. But this permission to separate must be limited by the general principle, a principle which Paul inculcates everywhere with apostolic authority, that it is well not to disturb existing relations.

Notice that Paul does not give, as do small-minded men everywhere, one specific direction to be applied in all cases; but states general principles, principles bearing in opposite directions, and leaves each man to determine which of them bears with greater force on his own case. Each of these conflicting principles, he states impartially and fully.

## SECTION 12

### *BE NOT EAGER TO CHANGE YOUR POSITION*

#### CHAPTER 7:18-24

*Circumcised, was one called? let him not become uncircumcised. In uncircumcision has one been called? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing; and uncircumcision is nothing but a keeping of God's commandments. Each one, in the calling with which he was called, in this let him remain. A slave, wast thou called? Care not for it. (But if also thou art able to become free, prefer to use the opportunity.) For the slave called in the Lord is a freedman of the Lord. In like manner the free man, when called, is a slave of Christ. With a price you were bought. Do not become slaves of men. Each one, in the state in which he was called, Brothers, in this let him remain with God*

**Ver.** 18-20. The great principle of 1 Corinthians 7:17, viz. that change is at present undesirable, bears not merely on the marriage relation but on all others, and especially on the believer's relation to Judaism. Therefore, while adducing it in relation to marriage, Paul takes the opportunity of expounding its wider bearing. He thus reveals its great importance as a broad and universal principle; and strengthens himself for further use of it in 13 in reference to marriage.

Become uncircumcised: as in Macc. i. 15, Josephus, 'Antiquities' xii. 5. 1: a recognized surgical operation; see Celsus, bk. vii. 25. 1. "Let those who received the Gospel as Jews lay aside formally their visible connection with the ancient people of God; and let not those who as heathens received it enter the Jewish community. "This equally balanced advice, 1 Corinthians 7:19 supports with an equally balanced fundamental principle. Cp. Galatians 5:6. A man is neither better nor worse by being a Jew. Therefore, neither side has any reason for change.

Keeping the commands of God, is everything: only upon the degree to which we do what God bids, depends our rank in the kingdom of God.

And nothing... nothing, implies that circumcision neither helps nor hinders our obedience to God. Paul thus proclaims explicitly, as did Christ in Matthew 15:11, the abrogation of the Old Covenant. For of that Covenant circumcision was an obligatory sign: Genesis 17:10; Leviticus 12:3. See under Romans 2:25.

Keep commandments: 1 Timothy 6:14, cp. Romans 2:26: favorite words with John, John 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10; 1 John 2:3f; 3:22, 24; 5:2f: cp. Revelation 12:17; 14:12. This verse and Galatians 5:6 help to harmonize the teaching of Paul with James 2:24, etc. All who believe become thereby (Galatians 3:26) sons of God, and receive (Galatians 4:6) the Holy Spirit, who leads them (Romans 8:4-14) in the path of obedience. But, unless we follow His guidance, our faith will die: James 2:20. Consequently, our obedience is the test and measure, though not the ground or source, of our Christian life.

**Ver. 20.** Repeats the general principle of 1 Corinthians 7:17, just applied to the believers relation to Judaism.

The calling: the Gospel call, as in 1 Corinthians 1:26, but looked upon in connection with the various circumstances in which it found the readers and was accepted by them, circumstances henceforth linked with it indissolubly in the thought of the called ones. "In whatever circumstances you heard the Voice of God, 'therein remain.'"

**Ver. 21.** After dealing with the chief ecclesiastical, Paul now turns to the chief social, distinction. To the 'slave' (or 'servant:' see under Romans 1:1) he does not say, as in 1 Corinthians 7:18, Do not seek to change your position; but, Do not let it trouble you. Lest, however, he might seem to underrate civil liberty, he adds at once, 'nevertheless,' although I bid you not be troubled about your slavery, yet if you who received the call of God as a slave 'are also able to become free, rather' than remain a slave 'make use' of your ability to become free.

**Ver. 22.** Reason for the chief thought of 1 Corinthians 7:21, "care not for it;" overleaping 1 Corinthians 7:21b, which needs no support, as being counsel any one would give, thrown in parenthetically to guard against misapprehension. Just so the exception in 1 Corinthians 7:17 attaches itself to 1 Corinthians 7:15, overleaping 1 Corinthians 7:16.

Called in the Lord: practically equal to “called in the grace of Christ,” Galatians 1:6. Only in virtue of the mission, death, and resurrection, of Jesus, our Master, does the gospel call come to us: and it brings us into spiritual union with Him.

Freedman: in Latin, ‘libertus’ and ‘libertinus:’ one who has been made free, as distinguished from a born ‘freeman, liber.’ The liberation of slaves, as reward for good behavior or for other reasons, was so common in the Roman Empire that the case of 1 Corinthians 7:21b was not unlikely. A freedman stood in special relation, and was under special obligations, to his former master, now called his “patron.” This relation, past and present, was expressed by the phrase “Cicero’s freedman.” But ‘The Lord’s freedman’ was one set free from service not to Himself but to sin, (Romans 6:22,) by Christ, who is now, not his patron, but in the fullest conceivable sense his Master and Owner. These words simply mean that the slave who hears and accepts the gospel call, and is thus brought into union with Christ as his Master, is thereby made free (John 7:32, 36) from every kind of bondage; and, made free by Christ, belongs to Christ. So complete is this freedom that it cannot be destroyed or weakened even by civil bondage. The Christian slave knows that his hard lot has been chosen for him by the wisdom and love of his Father in heaven, as the best pathway to infinite happiness and glory; and that his human master can inflict upon him no task or pain except by the permission of God, which will be given only so far as will conduce to the slave’s highest good. Therefore, as long as civil freedom is beyond his reach, he accepts with a free heart the bondage which God has put upon him; and, though a slave, is free indeed. But, if liberty be offered, he accepts it with gratitude as God’s gift, and as a pleasanter pathway to the same glorious goal. Chrysostom, in an excellent note on this passage, contrasts Joseph, who was morally free though a slave, with his mistress who was a slave to her own passion.

In like manner, etc.: much more alike than at the first appears are the positions of Christian slaves and freemen. The rendering slave of Christ need not alarm us. The slave-master assumes rights belonging only to Christ, who made us and bought us, and who claims us to be in every sense His own. We cannot, like hired servants, give notice to leave His service. For we are bound to be His servants for ever. And only as we realize that we are slaves of Christ are we truly free. For only then can we

work, unhindered by fear of consequences, what our best judgment proclaims to be for our highest good.

In the light of this verse, all human distinctions vanish. We are all servants, doing what seems good, not to ourselves, but to our Lord. We are all free: for we accept with joy, and with the full consent of all that is noblest within us, the position in His household which our Master has allotted to each.

**Ver. 23.** Proof of “slave of Christ.” Same words in 1 Corinthians 6:20 to prove “you are not your own.”

You were bought, do not become: an appeal to the whole church. The word “freeman” in contrast to “slave” marked the end of the discussion about slavery.

Servants, or ‘slaves, of men’: cp. Galatians 1:10; Colossians 3:22, 24. Those who forget the Master who has put them where they are that they may do His work and who will pay their wages, become ‘servants of men:’ i.e. whether slaves or freemen they feel that their well-being depends upon the favor of men, and that they themselves are therefore at the mercy of men. And this is the essence of bondage. ‘Become,’ rather than “be,” reminds us that Christ has made His people free, and that to look upon men as the arbiters of our destiny is to abandon our freedom. Cp. Galatians 5:1. Christ died that we may be His servants and His only. Therefore, the blood shed on Calvary, which has made us free, forbids us to bow to the yoke of bondage.

**Ver. 24.** Repeats abruptly; 1 Corinthians 7:20, without any evident connection with 1 Corinthians 7:23, to open a way to 13. But notice that the principle underlying 1 Corinthians 7:21f, viz. that all human differences, so far as they come to us without our choice and therefore from God, are powerless to destroy or lessen our Christian liberty or to hinder our service to Christ, and this principle only, justifies the exhortation of this verse.

With God; marks the progress of thought since 1 Corinthians 7:20. In every position in life we are in His presence: and His presence, as our Guide, Protector, and Supply of all our need, sanctifies our lot and saves us from undue eagerness for change.



1 Corinthians 7:21b has given rise to much discussion. Instead of ‘prefer to use the opportunity,’ Chrysostom expounds, “prefer to be a slave,” and is followed by the Greek fathers generally, but Estius, and by Meyer, Alford, Stanley, and others. But the Peshito Version, some men referred to by Chrysostom, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Neander, and others, give the exposition adopted above.

Against this latter view are urged the words **ἀλλ εἰ καὶ**, and the thrice given advice not to change one’s position. But **καὶ** is used in its simple sense of ‘also’ (cp. Luke 11:18; 2 Corinthians 11:15) to give prominence to **δυνασθαι**, i.e. to the supposable case of a slave who has not only received the Gospel but who is ‘also able to become free.’ **ἀλλὰ** brings in a contrast, not to ‘care,’ the matter deprecated, as it does usually with a negative, but to the deprecation itself, ‘care not,’ looked upon as one idea, as in 1 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 12:16; Romans 5:14. That this exposition does not contradict the scope of the passage, I have already endeavored to show.

On the other hand, **χρησάι** finds its complement naturally in the opportunity implied in the words immediately preceding, rather than in the distant word ‘slave.’ Moreover, if Paul were advising the Christian slaves at Corinth to refuse an opportunity of becoming free, advice utterly repugnant to all true human instinct, he would certainly convey his strange advice, not in words which might mean this or the exact opposite, but in words open to no doubt whatever. Again, the teaching of 1 Corinthians 7:22, so weighty as a reason for not being troubled about compulsory bondage, is no reason whatever for refusing offered liberty. The inevitable we accept, as from God, and as therefore designed to give us the best opportunity of doing our Master’s work. But this is no reason for remaining, by our own choice, in a position which, to all appearance, presents many hindrances to our service of Christ. In short, the former exposition implies that Paul gave advice repugnant to one of the noblest instincts of humanity, a love of freedom, that he conveyed it in language which might mean this or the exact opposite, and that he did not support it by any reason whatever. Probably not one of the writers who adopt this exposition would themselves give to a slave the advice they attribute to the Apostle. According to the exposition I adopt, the counsel ‘care not for it’ in 1 Corinthians 7:21a is fully justified in 1 Corinthians 7:22: and 1

Corinthians 7:21b is thrown in parenthetically to show that, while proving that the Christian slave has abundant reason for contentment, Paul is not indifferent to the advantages of freedom. And the ambiguity will not surprise us. For the only alternative is between advice which anyone would give, put in merely to guard against a mistake to which the foregoing words might give rise, and advice utterly unlikely and unsupported. See further in 'The Homiletic Quarterly,' vol. iv. p. 210.

Paul concluded 11 with a principle which he everywhere inculcates. In 12 he shows that it applies not only to marriage but to other relations in life. He supports it in reference to circumcision by showing that this neither helps nor hinders the Christian life; and then reasserts the principle. How comparatively indifferent are outward differences, and therefore how practicable the principle is, he proves by adducing the greatest social difference, viz. that between freemen and slaves, and by showing that even this difference is not inconsistent with the fulness of the Christian life. While referring to the case of slaves as an extreme proof that the Christian need not be eager for change, Paul is careful to say that he does not wish his readers to apply to this extreme case the general principle of conduct asserted in 1 Corinthians 7:20, 24. Indeed, that circumcision and abandonment of it are voluntary, whereas slavery is with few exceptions involuntary, marks sufficiently the difference between the two cases. Having thus given, by expounding the Spiritual position of slaves and freemen, an abundant reason for contentment with our lot whatever it be, Paul again repeats his advice that we be not eager for change. This principle, thus emphatically reasserted, will be the foundation stone of 13.

This section contains two important principles of universal application. The sudden change from heathenism or Judaism to Christianity might prompt some of the converts to seek to express their inward change by some conspicuous outward change. But Paul saw that such desire for change would both unsettle the minds of the converts and prejudice against Christianity those who were interested in maintaining the present state of things. He therefore counsels them to remain as they are. Perhaps for the same reason he forbore to speak against slavery. Had he done so, he would, by arousing the hostility of all slave owners, have hindered the spread of Christianity. He preferred to assert great principles, and to leave these to work out silently the changes which must in time inevitably

follow. Paul also asserts a principle which is the only rational preservation from restless desire for change, viz. that even the humblest social position is consistent with the highest degree of the Christian life, and therefore with our highest good. This principle applies to all the varieties of human lot. The poor man is rich in Christ: whereas the rich man is but a steward who must give account for all he has. Sickness has often driven men to seek help from God: and bodily strength, by making men unconscious of their need of One stronger than themselves, has often allured them to eternal ruin. The distinctions of outer life are less important than they seem. We may therefore view them with comparative indifference.

To these general principles there are two practical exceptions, of which Paul mentions one, and leaves the other to be understood. If improvement of position comes fairly within our reach without spiritual loss, he counsels us to accept it. But he has no need to say that a mode of life which involves sin must be forsaken at any cost.

## SECTION 13

### COUNSELS TO THE UNMARRIED

#### CHAPTER 7:25-40

*About the maidens, a command of the Lord I have not: but an opinion I give as one to whom mercy has been shown by the Lord to be trustworthy. I think this then to be good because of the present necessity, that it is good for a man to be thus. Bound to a wife art thou? Do not seek to be loosed. Loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if even thou marry, thou hast not sinned. And if the maiden marry, she has not sinned. But, affliction for the flesh such will have. But you I, for my part, am sparing.*

*And this I assert, brothers, The season is cut short; in order that henceforth they having wives be as though not having them, and the weeping ones as though not weeping, and the rejoicing ones as though not rejoicing, and those buying as though not retaining, and those using the world as though not using it to the full. For the form of this world is passing away.*

*And I wish you to be without anxiety. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he who has got married is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife. And divided also are the wife and the maiden. She that is unmarried is anxious about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy in her body and her spirit. But she that has got married is anxious about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. But this I say with a view to your own profit; not that I may put a rein upon you, but with a view to that which is becoming and to waiting before the Lord without disturbance.*

*But if any one thinks that is acting unseemly towards his maiden, if she be beyond her bloom, and if it ought so to be, what he*

*wishes let him do; he commits no sin: let the affianced ones marry. But he who stands firm in his heart, not having necessity, but has authority about his own will, and has determined this in his heart, to keep his own maiden, will do well. So that both he who gives in marriage his own maiden does well, and he who does not give in marriage does better.*

*A woman is bound for so long time as her husband lives. But, if her husband fall asleep, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. But happier she is if she remain thus, according to my opinion, And I think that I also have the Spirit of God.*

Paul will now deal fully with the matter touched for a moment in 1 Corinthians 7:8. He gives his opinion, 1 Corinthians 7:25-28; states a great principle which is broader and better than this opinion, 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; gives a reason for his opinion, 1 Corinthians 7:32-35; deals with an exception, 1 Corinthians 7:36-38; and gives special advice to widows, 1 Corinthians 7:39, 40.

**Ver. 25.** Maidens: women never married, as is evident from 1 Corinthians 7:34, 36. So always, Revelation 14:4 is figurative. This verse suggests that ‘about the maidens’ advice had been specially sought in the letter to Paul. He replies in words applicable to both sexes. That Paul knew that ‘the Lord’ had given ‘no command’ reveals his full acquaintance with the teaching of Christ. Whether he learned it by written documents or by report of those who heard Christ, we do not know. That no word of Christ about the marriage of maidens is found in our Gospels, indicates their agreement with the teaching reported to Paul.

I give an opinion: refusing to speak with apostolic authority. This by no means proves that when he claims this authority, as in 1 Corinthians 7:17; 14:37, his words are not absolutely binding. It rather proves that he could measure the degree to which he was enlightened by the Spirit.

Mercy: kindness to the helpless. Compare carefully 2 Corinthians 4:1; 1 Timothy 1:13, 16; Romans 9:15.

Trustworthy: same word as faithful. See 1 Corinthians 4:17. In giving his opinion Paul remembers with humility that whatever claim he has to his readers' confidence, and he has such a claim, he owes entirely to the compassion of God.

**Ver.** 26-27. That this is good; repeats 1 Corinthians 7:1, 8.

Present: either "already existing," as usually, 1 Corinthians 3:22; Romans 8:38; or "now beginning;" or "just going to begin," 2 Thessalonians 2:2.

Necessity: 1 Corinthians 7:37: the existing pressure of outward circumstances, which compels men to do what otherwise they would not. Cp. 2 Corinthians 6:4; 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 3:7; Luke 21:23. Cp. 3 Macc. 1:16, "to give help for the present necessity;" Galatians 1:4. This makes it undesirable for a man to change his state; e.g. for the unmarried to marry. Meyer, Alford, and Stanley suppose that Paul refers to the calamities immediately preceding the coming of Christ, which they think he supposed to be near. But of this there is no hint whatever. The already existing perils of the early Christians were sufficient reason for the advice here given.

Man: a human being of whatever age or sex, (cp. John 16:21,) like the Latin 'homo' and the German 'mensch.' But 1 Corinthians 7:27, 28a show that here Paul thinks of men. This is not inconsistent with 1 Corinthians 7:25: for Paul's advice is good for both sexes.

Thus: expounded in 1 Corinthians 7:27.

Do not seek... do not seek: on the principle of 1 Corinthians 7:17, 20, 24, and according to the advice already given in 1 Corinthians 7:8-13. The married are mentioned first to make it prominent that the advice to the unmarried is but an application of a general principle applicable to all.

Loosed; includes, as the whole section proves, even those never married. Else, to these no advice is given. It is more graphic than "loose." Those who received the Gospel while unmarried may look upon themselves as made free by the providence of God from the anxieties (1 Corinthians 7:32) of married life.

**Ver. 28.** A safeguard, for both sexes, against the supposition that this advice is anything more than mere expediency justified only by the present abnormal circumstances.

The flesh: as in 2 Corinthians 12:7: the body, as now constituted. What the ‘affliction’ is, Paul leaves us to infer. And this is not difficult. A man with wife and family presents more points of attack in days of persecution, and is therefore more exposed to troubles, and even bodily privation, than the unmarried man. Hence the “anxiety” of 1 Corinthians 7:32.

Am sparing you: from this bodily privation, by advising you to remain unmarried. An appeal appropriate to men over whom (1 Corinthians 3:1-3) the bodily life had great sway, and doubtless Paul wished to save them, not merely from bodily privation, but from the peril of apostasy to which such privation would expose babes in Christ. This advice will be further discussed below.

**Ver. 29-31.** After giving advice prompted by the present abnormal circumstances and carefully guarded, Paul ‘asserts’ a great principle which ought to regulate the conduct of all men in all they do.

The season: 1 Corinthians 7:5: our present life, whether it be ended by death or by the coming of Christ.

Cut-short: more graphic than “short,” like “loosed” in 1 Corinthians 7:27. God has compressed into a short period our relations with the present world; ‘in order that’ we may pass through the world without clinging to it. Even the shortness and uncertainty of life are ordained by God to save us from trusting to material good.

Henceforth: very emphatic, in contrast to our earlier life.

As though not having them: remembering that the marriage relation is a passing one, of importance only as it bears on the realities of eternity.

They that weep, mentioned before they that rejoice as being more numerous during “the present necessity.” To remember that the causes of our sorrow and our joy are alike passing away, will even now wipe away many tears and moderate our joy.

As though not retaining; the purchased goods. A solemn warning to all who lay up wealth.

The world: the whole realm of things around us; see 1 Corinthians 1:20.

Using-to-the full: eagerly using up all opportunities of gain or pleasure, as though these were the end of life.

By thus giving God's purpose in cutting short the present life, Paul virtually bids us not to cling to the things of earth. And this he supports by saying that 'the form of this world,' i.e. the whole aspect of things around us in the present life, 'is passing away.' Even the mountains and islands (Revelation 6:14; 16:20) will fly from their places; and with them will vanish at once and for ever the complex stage and scenery of the present drama of life. To the eye of Paul, illumined by the light of eternity, the external aspect of the world around 'is' already 'passing away:' 1 John 2:17; 1 Corinthians 2:6; Revelation 21:1; Matthew 5:18; 2 Peter 3:10. For each moment is bearing it towards the fiery grave in which it will soon be buried.

These words are parallel to "the season is cut short;" but are more tremendous. Many rejoice not only in the present life as their chief good, but in the thought that their possessions and their fame will abide when they have gone. But Paul reminds us that whatever exists around us is but a part of the passing appearance which the world has assumed for a time and will soon lay aside. Notice (cp. 1 Corinthians 3:13; 4:5; 13:12, etc.) how Paul discusses various details of the present life in the light of eternity.

**Ver.** 32-34. Armed now with the great truth of 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, viz. that things around are passing away and are therefore of secondary importance, Paul now comes to expound the reason given in 1 Corinthians 7:26, viz. "the present necessity," for his advice to the unmarried not to marry. In times of persecution family cares increase terribly a man's 'anxiety.' And from this he wishes to save them. The bearing of this wish upon marriage, he now expands.

**Ver.** 32b-34. Anxious about the things of the Lord: quite consistent with 'without anxiety.' And with Philippians 4:6. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:28. The use of the same word in 1 Corinthians 7:32 and 33, only reveals to us the



total difference, in their nature and spiritual effects, of these two kinds of anxiety. The former, even in “the present distress,” does not expose to, but guards us against, spiritual peril; and prompts to ceaseless “waiting before the Lord,” 1 Corinthians 7:35.

Anxious about the things of the Lord, of the world: not in all cases, but usually. It notes a natural tendency. ‘The married man’ was compelled to take account of the disposition and pleasure of his wife; and might thus be kept back from that unswerving, and sometimes reckless, courage which in those dark days full loyalty to Christ demanded. But ‘the unmarried man’ stood alone before his Master, Christ, and need think of nothing but ‘how,’ whether by avoiding or incurring peril, ‘he might’ best ‘please’ Him.

Also the wife, etc.: of the female sex also 1 Corinthians 7:33 is true. Marriage has put the wife in a position quite removed from that of the unmarried woman: and has thus ‘divided’ womankind as well as men in reference to anxiety. On the variations of text here, see Appendix B.

Holy: subjectively so; see note, Romans 1:7: parallel with, but stronger than, ‘please the Lord.’ Her ‘anxious’ purpose is to exist only for God, and to use all her powers and opportunities to work out his purposes.

In her body: by using her body and its powers for God only; Romans 12:1.

And her spirit: so that every pulsation of the principle of life may have God for its one aim. The sanctification of the soul, (1 Thessalonians 5:23,) the connecting link (see note, 1 Corinthians 15:44) of ‘body’ and ‘spirit,’ is implied in their sanctification. But the ‘married’ woman’s obligation to ‘please her husband’ makes her ‘anxious about the things of the world,’ which are needed for his necessities or pleasure; and this may induce forgetfulness that she belongs only to God.

**Ver. 35.** Parallel with “I spare you,” 1 Corinthians 7:28.

Put a rein: fling a noose over you to catch you as animals are caught, in order to deprive you of your liberty. To immature Christians, God’s commands often seem like a bridle pulling them back from the way they wish to go. But this was not Paul’s purpose in writing this letter.

Becoming: that your conduct may be worthy of the dignity of your position. Of this, anxiety is unworthy. It is therefore forbidden, Philippians 4:6; Matthew 6:25-34.

Without-disturbance: literally, ‘without-being-pulled-about.’

Waiting before the Lord, etc.: a second purpose of Paul’s advice, viz. that, free from worldly anxiety, not only may their outward conduct be worthy of the gospel but that they may in their inner life present themselves undisturbed by distracting cares before Christ, to hear His voice and feel to the full His life-giving power. All worldly anxiety hinders spiritual communion with God.

We now see Paul’s reason for dissuading the unmarried from marriage. The perils of the early Christians tended to create in them great anxiety. But all such was, however excusable, unworthy of the Christian name and obstructive to communion with God. Now, the possession of wife and family increased immensely this anxiety; and gave rise, in many cases, to (1 Corinthians 7:28) severe hardship. Therefore, without wishing to restrict their Christian liberty, but seeking only their benefit, Paul advises his readers not to marry. This advice does not contradict the great truth (Philippians 4:6) that it is the Christian’s glorious privilege to be free under all circumstances, married or unmarried, from all anxiety. For we cannot claim “the peace of God” if by our choice we go deliberately into needless peril. We are bound to avoid peril (cp. Matthew 10:23) so far as is consistent with absolute loyalty to Christ. But when, using our best judgment and for the work of God, we go into danger, we may claim, and we shall have, deliverance from fear.

Although “the distress” which prompted Paul’s advice has passed away, there are even now cases in which it is rightly adopted in spirit and even in the letter. There are men in the vanguard of the missionary army who, in view of their constant peril, have preferred to forego the happiness of family life, lest care for the safety of wife and children should fetter their daring enterprise as pioneers of the cross. In view of the shortness of time they are content to wait for domestic joys till that Day when they will take their place, their place of honor, in the glorified family of God.

1 Corinthians 7:32-35 contain also a principle of abiding validity, viz. not needlessly to increase our anxieties. In choosing a path in life, and in the conduct of business, it is well to avoid, if practicable, those positions which are likely to give us unseemly care and thus hinder our spiritual life. This has been often forgotten, even by Christians, merely for greater gain; and with terrible results.

**Ver.** 36-38. An exception to the advice of 1 Corinthians 7:32-35.

His maiden: daughter or ward. Paul here deals specifically with the matter of 1 Corinthians 7:25.

Acts unseemly: if for any reason, in the maiden or in her circumstances, the father thinks that by keeping her unmarried he is acting in a way which will not command respect, etc.

If she be, etc.: the only case in which the above exception could occur.

Bloom: given as twenty years by Plato, 'Republic' bk. v. 460e. For the reason of 1 Corinthians 7:32-35, early marriages were then specially desirable.

It ought so to be: parallel with 'acting unseemly,' adding to it moral emphasis. Many circumstances might make it not only unseemly but morally wrong for the father to withhold his consent to marriage. In such cases, refusal of consent has often produced serious results.

What he wishes; limits this exception to cases in which the father wishes his daughter to marry.

Does not sin: parallel to 1 Corinthians 7:28.

Let them marry: the maiden and he who seeks her hand. This verse admits that there may be cases in which the advice of 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 is unsuitable: and its indefiniteness suggests that this may arise from various causes. Paul declares that in these cases the father may act, without fear of committing sin, according to his own judgment.

**Ver.** 37. Restatement of the advice of 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 for those cases in which the exception of 1 Corinthians 7:36 does not apply.

Stands firm: in his resolve to keep his maiden at home, in contrast to him who “wishes” to give her in marriage. One who in his heart thought it better to keep his daughter at home might be moved from his resolve by the prevalent fear (cp. Sirach 42:9) of having an unmarried daughter, or by other similar reasons. To those not thus moved away, Paul speaks.

Not having necessity: where the reasons do not exist which in 1 Corinthians 7:36 made it unseemly or wrong to refuse consent to the marriage. Else he cannot rightly persist in his purpose.

Authority about his own will: When circumstances permit him to do as he wishes. It is an emphatic exposition, in positive form, of the negative ‘not having necessity.’ Only in this case the father ‘does well’ to refuse marriage.

Determine, or ‘judge’: as in 1 Corinthians 2:2; Romans 14:13.

This: not to give his daughter in marriage.

In order to keep, etc.: purpose of this resolve, viz. to keep his daughter, in those perilous times, under his own control. “If the father is unmoved from this purpose, and is not morally bound by special circumstances, he will do well to carry it out.”

**Ver. 38.** Paul’s last word “about maidens.” It is evidently limited by the reason placed in front (1 Corinthians 7:26) of the whole section, “the present distress.” The peculiar circumstances of the early Christians made change in social position undesirable: and the shortness of time made it unimportant. Marriage would add greatly to their anxieties. Therefore, where no special circumstances determined otherwise, Paul advises that the maidens of the church remain such.

Well, better: not a matter of strict right or wrong, but of less or greater advantage. Not that it would be better for him who gives his daughter in marriage not to do so, but that circumstances prevent the more advantageous course. Taking all into account, it is sometimes (e.g. 1 Corinthians 7:9) “better to marry.”

**Ver. 39.** First a restatement of 1 Corinthians 7:10, as a contrast (cp. Romans 7:1) to a special case, that of widows.

Fall asleep: see under 1 Corinthians 15:18.

Free: Romans 7:3.

Only in the Lord: acting in spiritual union with Christ. This would make marriage with an unbeliever impossible: cp. 2 Corinthians 6:14. And this is the reference which Paul's words naturally suggest.

Happier: Romans 4:6. For reasons given in 1 Corinthians 7:34, her position 'is' more desirable.

Thus: in the position in which her husband's death has placed her.

An opinion: notification at the end, as (1 Corinthians 7:26) at the beginning, of the section that Paul does not speak with apostolic authority.

My: emphatic, revealing his consciousness of the value of his 'opinion.'

And I think, etc.: modest proof of this, one which no one can question.

Also I: as well as others who claim to 'have' the 'Spirit of God.' To whom he refers, the readers probably knew. Cp. 2 Corinthians 10:7. He speaks, not necessarily of some special apostolic gift, but of the spirit given (Romans 8:9) to all believers, that He may be in them Ephesians 1:17) "A Spirit of wisdom." The opinion of men actuated by the Spirit of God, and in this proportion, claims our respect. And that Paul had the Spirit in a rich measure, no one could deny. Notice here Doctrine 5, asserted in Romans 8:4.

SECTION 13, the completion and crown of DIV. 3, explains and justifies 1 Corinthians 7:1, 8. Paul begins and ends it by saying that he is merely giving an opinion, but one which claims respect. It is not an abiding principle, but advice prompted by special and difficult circumstances. He advises the unmarried to remain as they are; and gives this as a case of the broader principle that in existing circumstances a change in social position is undesirable. But he is careful to say that marriage is not a sin, an opinion he elsewhere (1 Timothy 4:3) condemns as serious error. Yet, though marriage is no sin, it will bring trouble and anxiety. In giving this advice, he wishes not to bridle his readers, but to save them from that which may lead to conduct unworthy of a Christian and may hinder their communion with God. Having given this advice, Paul admits that there are cases in

which, from various causes, it is impracticable; and concludes by saying that they will do well to follow his advice if they can. To widows he gives the same advice; but does not find it needful to repeat in their case the exceptions mentioned in reference to maidens

## REVIEW OF DIVISION 3

The Corinthian church had written asking advice about marriage; referring perhaps specially to maiden daughters and to those married to heathens. In reply, Paul discusses in 11 the case of married people; states in 12 a great principle applicable to all; and shows in 13 its special applicability in those days to the unmarried

He reminds married believers that Christ has forbidden divorce, and advises them not to separate for any length of time. He advises believers to live even with heathen partners, if the latter wish it. To the unmarried, his advice is conflicting; because conflicting reasons bore upon their case. In 1 Corinthians 7:1, 8 he says that celibacy is good. This assertion he justifies, and thus limits, in 1 Corinthians 7:26, by referring to the present distress; and in 1 Corinthians 7:32-34, by referring to the anxiety which marriage then entailed. Yet in 1 Corinthians 7:2 he seems to set aside this principle as impracticable; and, in 1 Corinthians 7:9, mentions a case, a very common one, in which it is impracticable. But, in spite of this apparent contradiction, the Apostle's meaning is harmonious and clear. The perils of his day made celibacy desirable to those who had full self-control: to others it was dangerous. He seems to contradict his own words because he states great principles bearing in different directions, from which each must select that which suits his own case, known only to himself. Paul's advice for maidens he gives also to widows, without hesitation and without noting any exception. But we notice that further experience or altered circumstances led him (1 Timothy 5:14) to modify this advice. He bases his advice, both to married and unmarried, on the undesirability of change; and his advice to the unmarried, also on the un wisdom of increasing causes of anxiety. And even now, when the distress which made celibacy expedient has almost passed away, these two principles of conduct are still safe and good. We shall do well to be slow to make important changes or to incur anxiety.

## DIVISION IV

### ABOUT THE IDOL SACRIFICES

#### CHAPTERS 8-9:1

#### SECTION 14

**BE CAREFUL LEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE LEAD OTHERS TO SIN**

#### CHAPTER 8

*About the idol-sacrifices. We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up: but love edifies. (Or, builds up.) If anyone thinks that he knows anything, not yet has he learnt as one must needs learn. But if anyone loves God, this man is known by Him.*

*About the eating, then, of the idol-sacrifices, we know that there is no idol in the world, and that there is no God except one. For indeed if as all know, there are so-called gods, whether in heaven whether on earth, (just as there are gods many and lords many,) nevertheless to us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through Him.*

*But not in all is there knowledge. And some, by their accustomed intercourse until now with the idol, as an idol-sacrifice eat it: and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. But food will not present us to God. Neither if we do eat do we abound, nor if we do not eat do we fall short. But see lest in any way this right (Or authority.) of yours become a stumblingblock to the weak ones. For if one see thee, who hast knowledge, sitting in an idol-precinct, will not his conscience, he being weak, be edified (Or, built up.)*



*to eat the idol-sacrifices? For the weak one perishes through thy knowledge, the brother because of whom Christ died. But, while thus sinning against the brothers and smiting their conscience, it being weak, against Christ you are sinning. For which cause indeed if food ensnares my brother, I will not eat flesh for ever, that I may not ensnare my brother.*

**Ver.** 1. The idol-sacrifices: animals offered in sacrifice to idols, of which the greater part was eaten by the offerer and his friends either (1 Corinthians 8:10; 10:27) within the precincts of the temple or in private houses, or (1 Corinthians 10:25) was sold in the market. Same word in Acts 15:29; 21:25; Revelation 2:14, 20. Similarly, a great part of the Mosaic peace offerings was eaten by the offerer: Leviticus 7:15-18, 20; 17:24. The sudden and matter-of-fact transition to this subject without any reason given (contrast 1 Corinthians 1:11; 5:1; 6:1) and in a form similar to 1 Corinthians 7:1, suggests that it was mentioned in the letter to Paul. He deals with it by first laying down as usual a great general principle, viz. that love is better than knowledge, 1 Corinthians 8:1-3; and then looks at the matter in the light (1 Corinthians 8:4-6) of knowledge and (1 Corinthians 8:7-13) of love. He supports the warning thus given by referring to (15) his own rights, and (16) to his own example and to (17) the story of ancient Israel; and then gives specific advice about eating idol-sacrifices (18) at an idol-feast, and (19) in private homes.

We all: a general admission, of which the compass cannot be exactly defined. Paul here tells his readers that when speaking of the weak brethren he does not refer to himself or them. He therefore uses the third person: 1 Corinthians 8:7-12; 10:28. Contrast Romans 14:3, 10.

Have knowledge: cp. i. 5; and the many indications throughout the Epistle that the Corinthians boasted, and probably possessed, considerable Christian intelligence; e.g. 1 Corinthians 1:17-2:16; 3:18ff; 6:5.

Puffs up: as in 1 Corinthians 4:6, 18; 5:2: the inflated self-esteem which is the natural tendency of 'knowledge,' and its constant result when not counterbalanced by love.

Love: as a general principle, and embracing all with whom we have to do. So 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Romans 12:9.

Edifies: builds up. Cp. 1 Corinthians 3:9, and see Romans 14:19. Love, by its own nature, prompts us to use our powers for the good of others, and especially for their highest good, i.e. the development of their spiritual life. It is therefore better than knowledge.

**Ver. 2.** Further superiority of love.

Thinks that he knows; expounds “puffs up.” This thought is a natural result of knowledge not counterbalanced by love.

Knows anything: thinks that what he knows is something of intrinsic value.

Learnt it: viz. the ‘anything’ he ‘thinks he knows.’ All knowledge which does not teach us that even the highest knowledge cannot of itself bless, is defective even as knowledge. Yet we ‘must needs know:’ for salvation and spiritual life come through the intelligence; John 8:32; 17:3. But the knowledge we ‘need’ is so thorough that it reveals its own powerlessness of itself to save.

**Ver. 3.** Love to God (Romans 8:28) is of the same nature as, and is parent of, (1 John 5:1,) love to our brethren; and may therefore be contrasted with knowledge.

Known by Him: Galatians 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:19: present to His mind as an object of observation and thought. Cp. “foreknew,” Romans 8:29. The context implies that God’s knowledge of us will be used for our protection and well-being. We are ignorant of much that concerns us. But, if we love God, His infinite intelligence, which comprehends fully our nature, our weakness, our circumstances, and our needs, is at work for us, watching us with ceaseless vigilance and choosing for us whatever is best. And, that God knows us, is a pledge that His purposes about us will not fail. Thus, love, whether we know much or little, places us under the protection and guidance of the infinite knowledge of God.

1 Corinthians 8:2, 3 teach the important principle that Christian love is in itself essentially good, so that whosoever has it is better in proportion as he has it. For love is the inmost essence of God, 1 John 4:8, 16; and is therefore the inmost essence and the summit of the Christian life. Cp. 1

Corinthians 13. But knowledge is of secondary value, like wealth and bodily health, and like them will do good or harm according as we use it.

**Ver.** 4-6. After asserting and expounding the great principle of 1 Corinthians 8:1-3, Paul now takes up the special matter of DIV. 4

Idol: not here a mere image, but, by an inevitable transition of thought, the deity worshipped in the image. Paul says that Zeus, Apollo, etc, have no existence. If you search everywhere ‘in the world,’ you will find no reality corresponding to the images. Consequently, ‘there is no God,’ no supreme power, ‘except one.’ This assertion, 1 Corinthians 8:5, 6 support in face of prevalent polytheism.

So-called gods: conceptions to which the name ‘God’ is given. The fancy of the Greeks peopled with deities the ‘heaven,’ visible and invisible, and the mountains, woods, and rivers of ‘earth.’ That ‘gods many and lords many’ refers only to the subjective thought of the heathen, is proved by the express statement of 1 Corinthians 8:4, and by the subjective reference, “to us,” in 1 Corinthians 8:6. Of the objective and superhuman and infernal bases and source of idolatry, (see 1 Corinthians 10:20,) there is no hint here. In the thought and lips and life of the heathen, the ‘gods many and lords many’ were and are a terrible reality. These words admit, as fact, the supposition of 1 Corinthians 8:5a; and prepare, by contrast, a way for 1 Corinthians 8:6.

God: a superhuman power.

Lord: one whose bidding men do.

**Ver.** 6. To us: practically the same as “we know,” 1 Corinthians 8:4. There is no deity whose existence concerns us except ‘One God’ and ‘One Lord.’

The Father: constant designation of the ‘One God’ 1 Corinthians 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:24; 2 Corinthians 1:2f; Galatians 1:1, 3f; Romans 6:4; and especially John 1:14, 18; 5:17-45; 10:15-38, etc. Moved by the Spirit of adoption, (Romans 8:15,) our chief thought of God is of ‘the Father’ who begot us to be His children and who looks upon and cares for us with a Father’s love.

From whom: as the original source.

All things: creatures, with or without reason, as in Colossians 1:16; John 1:3. Cp. 1 Corinthians 1:27f. Whatever exists has sprung from our Father.

And we for Him: another truth, counterpart of the foregoing. Like 'all things' we sprang 'from' God. But, though "all things are from Him and for Him," (Romans 11:36,) yet, in a special sense, through the death of Christ and the gospel call, God has claimed 'us' for His own and claims to be Himself the one aim of our every purpose and effort.

Lord: specially set apart in the New Testament for Christ's relation to us. Cp. 1 Corinthians 12:5. 'Just so, through' expresses His relation to the work of creation and redemption. So Romans 1:5; Colossians 1:16, 20.

All things: as above. Jesus of Nazareth, the Anointed King, the one Master whose commands we obey, is the one Agent through whose activity the universe was created; and through whose incarnation, teaching, death, and resurrection, in a special sense 'we' believers are what we are.

Notice that even as compared with the Son, the Father is the 'One God;' and that everywhere Paul uses the term 'God' as the distinctive title of the Father. Cp. 1 Corinthians 3:23; 12:3; 15:28; John 20:17. But this does not contradict John 1:1, (John 1:18 probably,) John 20:28, where the Son is expressly called "God;" any more than the special title 'One Lord' denies that the Father is also our Master. But it does imply that the title 'God' is specially appropriate to the Father even as distinguished from the Son, and the title 'Lord' to the Son even as distinguished from the Father. In the thought of His contemporary followers, Jesus was distinguished from the Father as He cannot be in our thought. For, the chief element of their spiritual life was loyalty and obedience and service to One from whose human lips commands had been given. To Him, therefore, the title 'Lord,' by which He was accosted on earth, (Matthew 7:21; 8:2, 6, 8, etc.,) was specially appropriate. And, to the Father, as being First of the mysterious Three, the Eternal Source, essentially and historically, of the Eternal and in their days Incarnate Son, (John 5:26; 6:57; Colossians 1:19,) and of the Spirit, (John 5:30; John 16:13,) thus furnishing an eternal pattern of devotion; to Him, even as compared with the Divine Son and Spirit, the supreme title 'One God' is specially appropriate. For this reason, in presence of prevalent polytheism and of jealous Jewish monotheism, Paul never (see note, Romans 9:5) speaks of the Son as God and even John uses

(cp. John 17:3) the word God as the distinctive name of the Father. Paul left others to make the correct inference embodied in the august title God the Son. Oversight of this has given rise to unitarian arguments based on the monotheistic language of Paul.

Notice that before Paul advises his readers to abstain in certain cases from meat offered to idols, in order to show that his advice is not prompted by latent suspicion of the reality of their power, he proclaims the great truth, destructive of all idolatry, that there is One God; and the great Christian truth that this one God operates and rules through the One Master, Jesus Christ.

**Ver. 7.** Not in all, etc.: a fact which in our conduct we must take into account.

Knowledge: recalls “we know,” 1 Corinthians 8:4. With his usual courtesy Paul does not say, “‘not in all’ of you;” as though his readers were without knowledge.

On the interesting and very early variation, ‘accustomed-intercourse with the idol’ or ‘conscience of the idol,’ see Appendix B. The former reading is the word rendered ‘custom’ in 1 Corinthians 11:16. It is literally ‘a living together with’ some one, and thus by unconscious self-adaptation becoming accustomed to him. In days gone by the idols had been to Paul’s readers a terrible reality ever molding their thoughts and lives. And the impress made by this long continued mental intercourse with idols remained ‘until now,’ even after they had accepted Christianity. These words, though they would apply to Jewish superstitious dread of idols as infernal, or to the continued obligation of Deuteronomy 7:25f, refer more naturally to converted heathens who were unable to cast away altogether the deeply inwoven mark made in their minds by the idolatry of earlier days. Instances of this are very common now on the mission field.

Eat it: the meat of idol-sacrifices. Owing to their former contact with idolatry, they look upon the meat, while eating it, ‘as an idol-sacrifice.’ To those who know that idols do not exist, it is but common meat.

Conscience (see Romans 2:15) being weak: the inward faculty which contemplates the secrets of the man’s own heart not having mental and spiritual strength to grasp the truth that an idol is but an empty name.

Consequently, in his heart of hearts he is conscious of ‘defilement,’ i.e. of that which lessens his respect for himself and which he would hide from others. By speaking of this as something actually going on, Paul makes it more easy for us to realize and contemplate the process of defilement.

**Ver. 8.** A great truth which bears on this matter.

Present to God: set before Him for service or approval; Luke 2:22; Romans 6:13, 16, 19; 12:1; 14:10; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:27; 2 Timothy 2:15.

Food: of any kind, including idol-sacrifices. Such will not lay us more completely on the altar of God, or place us before Him more favorably.

Neither, etc.: emphatic exposition of the foregoing. Eating, or absence from, any kind of food, can make the spiritual life richer or poorer. Thus before showing how greatly we may injure a brother by eating an idol-sacrifice Paul proves that to abstain from this or any other kind of food will do us no real harm. On the confusion of various reading here, see Appendix B.

Notice, in the careful repetition of this verse, another express abrogation (cp. 1 Corinthians 7:19) of the Mosaic Covenant, of which the distinction of food was an essential feature. So Colossians 2:21; 1 Timothy 4:3; Matthew 15:11; Acts 10:15.

**Ver. 9-10.** Solemn warning lest, from something in itself unimportant, serious injury arise.

Right or ‘authority’: see ‘Expositor,’ 1st series, vol. p. 26.

This right of yours: liberty to eat anything, involved in the great truth of 1 Corinthians 8:8.

Stumbling-block: see Romans 14:13. The man whose “conscience is weak” (1 Corinthians 8:7) is himself weak. Cp. Romans 14:2; 15:1. In 1 Corinthians 8:10 we have reason for the warning of 1 Corinthians 8:9.

Who hast knowledge: and whose known intelligence would increase his influence over a weak brother.

Idol-precinct: same word in 1 Macc 1:47: 10:83: the sacred enclosure round the temple. Here public banquets were held. Consequently, without entering the precinct, a weak brother might see him sitting at a feast.

Edified: or ‘built up:’ terrible irony. “If you do this you will develop your brother’s faculty of pronouncing sentence on his own actions, and to such a degree that he will eat that which in his heart he believes to be wrong.” Thus ruinous development will be a result of his weakness, which is unable to make a firm judgment. The extreme case, ‘in the idol-precinct,’ betrays the tendency of all such conduct. And, possibly, even this extreme case was found among the worldly Christians at Corinth.

This verse warns us not to force upon others our own standard of right and wrong. That which is right to us may be wrong, and there fore very hurtful, to others less instructed.

**Ver.** 11-12. Terrible and possible result of this “edification,” given as a dissuasive; and then expounded.

Perishes: see 1 Corinthians 1:18. A natural tendency, Paul represents as actual fact. For tendencies are sure to realize themselves sooner or later in facts. And this gives them their significance.

Through thy knowledge: melancholy result. If the strong man had not known that idols do not exist at all, the weak brother would not have been overcome by his example (an example the stronger because of his well-known ‘knowledge’) and led to eat that which he believed to be wrong, and thus made still weaker till he fell from Christ and fell into eternal death. Notice the three-fold darkness of this picture; there perishes, a brother, for whom Christ died. Same argument, Romans 14:15. This argument,!Co 8:12 further expounds.

Thus: as expounded in 1 Corinthians 8:10, 11.

Sin against: Matthew 18:21.

The brothers; reproduces the argument lying in “brother,” 1 Corinthians 8:11.

Smiting their conscience: By leading them to do what their conscience disapproves, we create in them unintentionally a consciousness of having

done wrong; and thus inflict upon them a blow in the inmost and most vital part of their being.

It being weak: and, therefore, liable to receive injury. A reason for caution on the part of the strong.

Against Christ: for by doing so we frustrate the purpose of His death. Cp. Matthew 25:45; 18:5.

**Ver.** 13. For which cause: because to wound the conscience of the weak is to “sin against Christ.”

Ensnares my brother: as in Romans 14:13.

Food: spoken in contempt, as in 1 Corinthians 8:8; Romans 14:15, 20. “If a piece of meat, eaten by me, entraps my brother.”

Not eat meat; does not imply that this was needful to avoid ensnaring a brother, but only shows how far Paul is ready to go rather than do this.

For ever: strong hyperbole, as some say now “While the world lasts.”

That I may not, etc.: emphatic repetition of Paul’s definite purpose. By turning suddenly away from his readers to himself, and by giving voice to his own deliberate resolve to make any sacrifice for any length of time rather than cause a brother’s fall, Paul puts to shame by his own example the possible objection that it is unfair to ask us to give up our liberty because of the ignorance of others. The example thus given will be expounded fully in 15, to which this verse is a stepping-stone.

Of 1 Corinthians 8:9-13 the animating principle, though not expressly mentioned, is love, which in 1 Corinthians 8:1-3 Paul proved to be better than knowledge. The connecting link is found in Romans 14:15. Of this love, the word “brother,” four times in 1 Corinthians 8:11-13, is an expression. After proving that love is better than knowledge, which he admits his readers have, Paul recognizes the worth of knowledge by looking in the light of it at the idol-sacrifices. But he remembers that such knowledge is not enjoyed by all; and that, therefore, to some the idol-food is defiling. On the other hand, no kind of food is in itself necessary for the highest degree of Christian life. He therefore warns his readers not so to use their liberty as to entrap those whom they acknowledge to be brethren;



and shows how they may do this. He supports his warning by pointing to the terrible consequence of neglecting it and to Christ who died to save even the weak. In view of all this he expresses his own determination to submit to any sacrifice rather than entrap a brother.

1 Corinthians 8:13 has been appealed to, I believe justly, in support of the practice of abstaining as far as practicable from intoxicating beverages. To so great an extent men do what they see others do that we may be sure that some will drink these beverages because we do so. And we notice that a moderate use of them not unfrequently develops into intemperance with its various and terrible consequences. We shall therefore do well to consider whether any benefit we may derive from the habitual use of stimulants is of value equal to the risk of thereby occasioning, though unintentionally, injury to others. And we cannot forget that this injury may lead to eternal ruin, of our brethren, for whom Christ died. God will give to each one wisdom to decide in his own case what course will combine the greatest good to others and to himself with the least harm.

## SECTION 15

### **PAUL'S OWN EXAMPLE. HE HAS A CLAIM TO BE MAINTAINED BY THE CHURCH**

#### CHAPTER 9:1-14

*Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Jesus our Lord, have I not seen? My work, are not you, in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, yet at least to you I am. For my seal of the apostleship you are in the Lord. My defense to those who examine me is this.*

*Have we not a right (Or, authority) to eat and drink? Have we not a right (Or, authority) to lead about a sister as wife, as do also the other apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or, I only and Barnabas, have we no right (Or, authority) not to work?*

*Who serves as soldier ever with his own rations? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or, who shepherds a flock and does not eat from the milk of the flock? Is it as a man that I speak these things? Or, the Law also, does it not say these things? For, in the Law of Moses it is written "Thou shalt not muzzle an ox while thrashing." (Deuteronomy 25:4.) Is it for the oxen that God cares? Or, because of us altogether does He say it? For, because of us it was written; because in hope he who ploughs ought to plough, and he who thrashes, in hope of partaking "If we for you have sown spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your fleshly things? If others partake the authority (Or, right) over you, do not we more? But we have not made use of this right; (Or, authority) but we bear all things, that we may not cause any hindrance to the Gospel of Christ. Do you not know that they who perform the sacred things eat the things from the sanctuary? that they who give attendance at the altar receive a portion together with the altar? In this way, also the Lord ordained for those who announce the Gospel that they should live from the Gospel.*

At the end of 14 Paul supported his warning to beware lest by eating idol-sacrifices those who have knowledge injure the weaker ones, by the example of his own firm purpose to abstain from all meat rather than ensnare a brother. The force of this example he will not increase by expounding the principles of his own entire conduct, and specially his reasons for refusing to be maintained by the church. For this exposition, which occupies 16, he prepares the way by asserting and proving, in 15, his right to maintenance.

**Ver.** 1-3. Free: further expounded in 1 Corinthians 9:19. In view of his purpose to lay a restriction on his own food because of the weaker brethren, Paul asserts virtually in this question his full liberty to eat what he likes.

An apostle: the first rank (1 Corinthians 12:28) in the church, and therefore least likely to be under restrictions. See note, Romans 1:1.

Seen Jesus our Lord; supports the assertion implied in 'Am I not an apostle?' Doubtless it refers specially, though perhaps not exclusively, (cp. Acts 22:18-21,) to the appearance of Christ on the way to Damascus. Then (Acts 26:16ff) or shortly afterwards (Acts 22:14) he received his commission to the Gentiles. Cp. Galatians 1:1, 16. This question suggests that they only were apostles who received a commission immediately from the lips of Christ.

Are not you, etc.; proof, from evident matter-of-fact, that Paul was indeed an apostle.

In the Lord: objectively and subjectively; as in 1 Corinthians 1:2. The historic facts of Christ were the basis upon which, and the living presence of Christ was the spiritual element 'in' which, were wrought the results attained by Paul at Corinth. 1 Corinthians 9:2 Develops the proof implied in the foregoing question.

Others may doubt my claims: you cannot. Of this, 1 Corinthians 9:2b is proof.

Seal: a visible, solemn, authoritative attestation. See Romans 4:11. The church at Corinth being evidently God's work, was a conspicuous and

divine attestation of Paul's often repeated claim that by the immediate voice of Christ he had been called to be an apostle. For, no impostor or fanatic could produce the abiding and blessed results which had followed Paul's preaching. Similar argument in 1 Corinthians 15:15.

To those who examine (same word as in 1 Corinthians 4:3f) me. The present tense suggests that Paul's apostleship was frequently called in question. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:22.

Is this; refers probably to 1 Corinthians 9:1-3, in which Paul has given complete proof of an important point, viz. his apostleship, rather than to 1 Corinthians 9:4ff, where Paul, on the ground of the proof given in 1 Corinthians 9:1-3, merely claims equal rights with the other apostles.

**Ver.** 4-6. After proving his apostleship, Paul now begins to prove (1 Corinthians 9:4-14) his claim to be supported by the church. He thus introduces the specific matter of 1 Corinthians 9.

Eat and drink: at the cost of the church. For God to give Paul a work which so occupied him that he could not earn (2 Corinthians 11:8) sufficient food, and yet to forbid him to be supported by his converts, would be practically to forbid him to 'eat and drink.' Contrast Luke 10:7.

We; includes (1 Corinthians 9:6) Barnabas, and perhaps others. Contrast 1 Corinthians 9:1-3. The mention of 'eating,' in a matter quite different recalls 1 Corinthians 8:13.

As wife: see 1 Corinthians 7:2: to be maintained by the church. To refuse this, would be practically to forbid the apostles to marry.

Lead about: as companion of their apostolic journeys. These words seem to imply that at least Paul was not married: so 1 Corinthians 7:8. And the words following imply clearly that most of the apostles and certainly 'Cephas' (cp. Matthew 8:14) and 'the brothers of the Lord' were, when Paul wrote, living in married life. The mention here of 'the brothers of the Lord' reveals their important position among the early Christians. Cp. Acts 1:14. The mention of 'Cephas' suggests that opponents are referred to here belonging to the Cephas-party. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:22. If so, these words betray their inconsistency. The mention of 'Barnabas' implies that he, Paul's earliest missionary companion and originally a man of property,

(Acts 4:37, 13:2,) shared the resolve to labor at a trade rather than be maintained by his converts. To refuse Paul's claim to maintenance, is to make "him and Barnabas" exceptions to 'the other apostles.' "Am I forbidden to eat and drink? To forbid me to be maintained by the church, amounts to this. Do not the other apostles, whose equal I have proved to be, and even Cephas, whose disciples my opponents profess to be, claim maintenance not only for themselves but for their wives? Have I and Barnabas been specially forbidden to desist, even while preaching the Gospel, from manual toil?"

Estius, (who, however, honestly corrects the order of the words in the papal Vulgate,) following Tertullian, 'On Monogamy' ch. 8, Jerome, 'Against Jovinian' bk. i. 26, Augustine, 'The work of monks' chs. 4, 5, supposes that Paul refers in 1 Corinthians 9:5 to Christian ladies who accompanied the apostles in their journeys, and at the cost of themselves or others supplied their wants; and compares Matthew 27:55; Mark 15:41; Luke 8:2f. But this supposition has no historic ground whatever except this verse. For the explanations of this verse by Tertullian, Jerome, and Augustine, cannot be accepted as such. The suggested practice would lie open to grave suspicion; especially as Paul speaks of leading about one sister. The entire context shuts out all thought of a lady who at her own cost supplied the apostle's need. And the added word 'wife' cannot be accounted for except as indicating that the 'sister' in Christ was also a 'wife.' Acts 22:1, a rhetorical appeal with different order of words, is no parallel to the plain language of this verse. That some of the apostles were married, Estius admits.

'The brothers of the Lord,' will be discussed under Galatians 1:19.

**Ver. 7.** His claim to maintenance, Paul has supported by an appeal to the example of the other apostles, whose equal he has proved himself to be. He now further supports it by appealing to his readers' sense of justice.

His own rations: at his own expense. It includes both food and pay. Same word in Romans 6:23. These words remind us of the mercenary service so common at one time among the Greeks. This first comparison suggests that in the following comparisons Paul refers to those who 'plant' and 'shepherd' not as owners but as servants. Such expect naturally to be maintained out of the produce of their own toil.

The fruit: not “all the fruit.” He who produces may fairly claim to ‘eat.’

From the milk; including both the butter and cheese made ‘from,’ and the money derived ‘from’ sale of, ‘the milk.’ The man who tends the flock has food from its produce. Cp. 1 Corinthians 9:14, “live from the Gospel”; 1 Corinthians 10:4. Each of the above occupations Paul uses elsewhere (2 Corinthians 10:3; 1 Corinthians 3:6; Acts 20:28: cp. 1 Peter 5:2f) as metaphors of himself or of Christian teachers generally. It is evident that one who devotes himself to the care of others, and who by his own toil produces for them food and nourishing drink, has a right to be maintained by them.

**Ver.** 8-10. These things: about the shepherd and the vinedresser. Not ‘as a man,’ i.e. merely asserting a principle current among men, (cp 1 Corinthians 15:32; Galatians 3:15,) does Paul speak; but says that which ‘the Law also says.’

Moses: an appeal to the authority of the great Lawgiver; to whose lips the following injunction, taken word for word from Deuteronomy 25:4, LXX., is expressly (Deuteronomy 5:1; 27:1) attributed. It is quoted also, in a similar connection, in 1 Timothy 5:18. It refers to oxen treading out grain with their feet, or dragging over it a threshing machine. Both modes are still common in the east: and the injunction of Moses is observed by both Christians and Mohammedans. See Thompson, ‘Land and Book’ ch. xxxv.

Is it for the oxen, etc.; must be interpreted to mean, not, “does God care for oxen?” but, “was it His care for them that prompted these words.”

Altogether: not, “for us only;” but that every letter of Deuteronomy 25:4 was written because of us, viz. for those who labor to provide spiritual food for others. Paul then justifies the question of 1 Corinthians 9:10a, by asserting, and giving the Divine motive for, that which the question clearly implies.

Because in hope, etc.: a broad principle which moved God to have Deuteronomy 25:4 ‘written’ one applicable both to gospel workers and to all who labor to provide food of any kind for others. Hence the change from the first person, ‘because of us,’ to the third, ‘he who ploughs.’

Ought: an obligation resting on those for whom he works. It is right that a ploughman's toil be lightened by a prospect of reward.

He who thrashes; ought to do so 'in hope.'

Of partaking: sharing the grain he thrashes out, according to the custom, everywhere prevalent in the early stages of civilization, of payment in kind. But the ploughman ought not to have to wait for this. Hence, of him, the word partake is not used.

Deuteronomy 25:4 is very conspicuous for its unexpected, sudden, and momentary reference to cattle, amid matter quite different. For this there must be some reason more important than the mere well-being of cattle. Indeed, all injunctions of kindness to animals are more for our good than theirs. For he who needlessly hurts them inflicts by doing so a far deeper wound in his own moral nature. Moreover, the very insignificance of a mouthful of corn reveals some deeper motive for these words. The open mouths of the cattle treading out the grain proclaim in plain language the great principle that they who by their toil obtain food for others ought themselves to share it. And, of this principle, the gospel laborer is a special and very conspicuous case. For his remuneration is voluntary; and therefore needs to be supported by some great principle. Therefore, if, as Paul and his readers believed the words of Moses are the voice of God, since whatever God says He says in view of all its future applications, we cannot doubt that He moved Moses to write these words with a definite reference to laborers like Paul.

Notice carefully that these words, spoken and written (Deuteronomy 27:1; 31:9) by Moses, are assumed by Paul, as a matter not open to doubt, to be the voice of God, and to have been written 'because of us,' a purpose far above Moses' thought. This implies that through the lips and pen of Moses' God spoke. See my 'Romans,' Dissertation iii.

**Ver. 11-12a.** Two more arguments in support of Paul's claim to maintenance.

We: Paul and others such as Timothy and Silvanus, (2 Corinthians 1:1; Acts 18:5,) his fellow-workers at Corinth.

Spiritual, fleshly: same thought in Romans 15:27.

A great thing: 2 Corinthians 11:15. The word preached by Paul at Corinth was a seed (Luke 8:11) from which his hearers had reaped a spiritual harvest. Was it then a great recompense if he received from them things needful for the body, which were a far less valuable product of their bodily labor?

Sow, reap: keeping up the metaphor of 1 Corinthians 9:10, and specially appropriate for results corresponding to the organic laws of bodily and spiritual life. Cp. 2 Corinthians 9:6; Galatians 5:22; 6:7ff.

If others, etc.: another argument, similar to, but more pointed than, 1 Corinthians 9:6. “‘Others’ are already exercising ‘the right’ (or, ‘authority’) ‘over you,’ the right to maintenance, 1 Corinthians 9:4, 6,) which I claim.” This question reminds us irresistibly of the hostile and false teachers of 2 Corinthians 11:12; with which passage it is an important coincidence. But, to whomever Paul refers, his claim was infinitely superior to theirs.

**Ver.** 12b. A forerunner of 16: cp. 1 Corinthians 9:15, 18. Paul has proved his apostleship, and therefore his right to the maintenance enjoyed by other apostles for themselves and their wives. This claim he has supported by an appeal to the common practice of men, to a remarkable passage in the Mosaic Law, to the greater value of the spiritual good his readers have received as compared with any material gifts from them to him, and to the fact that they concede to others what he claims for himself. All this is but a background designed to throw into bold relief his own refusal to use his claim. This refusal he now begins to expound.

This right: as in 1 Corinthians 9:12a.

All things: cp. 2 Corinthians 11:7ff; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; Acts 20:34. These words raise the case in point into a universal principle with Paul. He makes it his constant practice to submit to every kind of hardship rather than in any way hinder the Gospel. The progress (2 Thessalonians 3:1) of the Gospel depends very much upon the impression made upon the hearers by the character of the preacher. Now, if Paul had been maintained by his converts, he might have seemed to be merely making a living by his teaching as others did. Whereas his refusal to be paid for teaching claimed attention for the gospel as something new and disinterested. Cp. 2



Corinthians 11:7-12. Therefore, had Paul used his right to maintenance, the Word he preached would have lost this moral advantage and would so far have been hindered.

We: cp. 1 Corinthians 9:6. He does not wish us to think that he is alone in this forbearance.

The Gospel of Christ: full emphatic title. He is careful not to hinder the spread of the good news about the long-expected Anointed One. This verse warns us that the life-giving Gospel may be hindered, even by an Apostle, claiming his rights. Therefore, our right to anything is in itself no sufficient reason for claiming it. We are bound by our loyalty to Christ to consider whether we shall most advance His kingdom by claiming or waiving our right.

**Ver.** 13-14. Two more arguments supporting Paul's claim to maintenance. That they are separated from the former arguments by 1 Corinthians 9:12b and are introduced by the emphatic words 'do you not know,' gives them great prominence.

The sacred-things: the various rites of the temple.

Eat from the sanctuary, or 'sacred-place': receive maintenance from the temple. A part of most sacrifices was given to the priests for food: Leviticus 6:16, 26; Numbers 18:8-19.

Give attendance at the altar: present themselves to offer sacrifice.

Receive portions with, etc.: Of peace offerings, a part was consumed on 'the altar,' and a part by the priest. In 1 Corinthians 9:13a we have the priest's work generally; in 1 Corinthians 9:13b, that part of it in which the principle before us is most conspicuous.

In this way also: not only adds to the ordinances of Moses an ordinance of Christ, but strengthens the authority of each by showing that they embody the same principle.

The Lord, Master of His church, ordained: in Matthew 10:9f; Luke 10:7; another mark of agreement of our Gospels with the words of Christ as reported to Paul. Cp. 1 Corinthians 7:10.

Live from the Gospel: obtain by preaching it the things needful for bodily life.

This section was primarily designed to be merely a background throwing into bold relief Paul's refusal to be maintained by the church. But the earnestness of his tone, the accumulation of arguments, and hints in 1 Corinthians 9:3, 13, betray the presence of opponents whom Paul wished to confute and abash. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:12. And the general applicability of his many arguments, and especially of 1 Corinthians 9:14, have evident reference to the necessity, foreseen by Paul though possibly not then existing, for paid workers in the church. And doubtless, with a view to this, as well as to the preachers sent forth by Himself personally, the words of Matthew 10:9f; Luke 10:7 were spoken and recorded.

Probably the conspicuous feature of the Mosaic ritual mentioned in 1 Corinthians 9:13 was designed with the same purpose. That each church has a right to decide which of its members shall be thus maintained, Paul admits, by presenting in 1 Corinthians 9:1-3 his own credentials. And, by waiving his right to maintenance in order thus more effectively to do Christ's work, Paul set an example of that gratuitous service of the church which is not only a beautiful expression of unselfish devotion but is also one of the most important factors in the progress of Christianity.

## SECTION 16

### TO SAVE OTHERS AND HIMSELF, PAUL REFUSES TO USE HIS CLAIM TO MAINTENANCE

#### CHAPTER 9:15-27

*But, for my part, I have not used any of these. And I have not written these things that it may be so with me. For it were good for me rather to die, or no one shall make vain my ground of exultation. For, if I be preaching the Gospel, it is not to me a ground of exultation. For necessity lies upon me. For woe is there for me if I do not preach the Gospel. For, if of my own will I am doing this, I have a reward: but, if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a stewardship. What then is my reward? That when preaching the Gospel I may make the Gospel without cost, in order not to use to the full my right in the Gospel.*

*For, being free from all, to all I made myself a servant, (Or, brought myself under bondage.) that I may gain the more part of them. And I became to the Jews as a Jew, that I may gain Jews; to those under law as under law, (not being myself under law,) that I may gain those under law; to those without law as without law, (not being without law to God but in law to Christ,) that I may gain those without law. I became weak to the weak ones that the weak ones I may gain. To all I am become all things, that in all ways I may save some.*

*And all things I do because of the Gospel that I may become a sharer of it with others. Do you not know that they who run in a racecourse, all indeed run, but one receives the prize? In this way you are running, that you may obtain. And every one that contends at the festal games in all things is self-controlled. They indeed that they may receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable. I then in this way am running, as not without a definite goal: in this way I box, not as striking air. But I bruise*

*my body, and lead it about as a slave; lest in any way having acted as herald to others, myself be rejected.*

Paul will now reassert and explain his refusal (1 Corinthians 9:12) to receive a livelihood from the Gospel. He persists in his refusal, as being his only ground of exultation, 1 Corinthians 9:15-18; that he may save others, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; and thus himself obtain the victor's crown, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

**Ver. 15.** After arguments of general application. Paul turns now to his own conduct.

Not used; takes up the same words in 1 Corinthians 9:12.

Any of these: the various advantages implied in "living from the Gospel;" according to the use of the Greek plural.

That thus, etc.: that I may receive maintenance from the Gospel.

For it were good, etc.: reason for 'I have not written, etc.'

Or no one, etc.: the only alternative. Either he will retain in its fulness his 'ground-of-exultation' (see under 1 Corinthians 1:29) or he prefers to die. His refusal to receive a livelihood from the Gospel was to him a source of joy and of spiritual elevation: and he is resolved that this source of joy no one shall reduce to an empty thing by persuading him to be paid for his work. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:10.

**Ver. 16-17.** Reason for this steadfast purpose, viz. that this is Paul's only ground of exultation. 'For,' that he merely preached the Gospel is no ground of special inward elevation and joy.

For necessity, etc.: proof of this.

For woe, etc.; explains the necessity which compels him to preach.

Woe: calamity, in this case, eternal death. So explicit and solemn was Christ's commission that Paul could not retain His favor if he refused to obey it. 1 Corinthians 9:17 shows how this impending woe, and the 'necessity' it laid on Paul, make the mere fact of his preaching no ground of exultation.

Reward: as in 1 Corinthians 3:8, 14: not necessarily eternal life (which is God's free gift to all who believe,) but the special reward to be given to all who have done work for Christ.

Have a reward: Matthew 6:1; Luke 6:23.

Stewardship: cp. 1 Corinthians 4:1. If in preaching the Gospel Paul had acted of his own prompting, and without the necessity of 1 Corinthians 9:16, his preaching would have moral worth, (a worth, however, wrought in him by God's free undeserved favor,) and would be followed by 'reward' in the great Day. But the compulsion under which he preaches, i.e. the 'woe' which awaits him 'if' he 'do not preach,' deprives it of moral worth, and places him in the position of one (with the Greeks, usually a slave) to whom his master has entrusted the oversight of an establishment, and who under pain of punishment disposes properly of goods committed to his charge. Cp. Luke 17:10. Consequently, Paul's preaching is to him no ground of exultation, whereas it would be if it had the moral worth which God will reward.

**Ver. 18.** What then, etc.? "Since the threatened woe deprives the mere fact of my preaching of all merit, what service remains to me which God will reward? Am I shut out from the reward of 1 Corinthians 3:8, 14?" This question must have a positive answer. For, evidently, Paul is not shut out from such reward. And the answer must be sought for, and is found, in 'that when preaching, etc.' That Paul of his own prompting refuses to use the privilege of maintenance given to him by Christ, is meritorious and will receive reward. His refusal to 'use-to-the-full, while preaching-the-Gospel, the right' to maintenance, involving as it did much extra toil and prompted by a belief (1 Corinthians 9:12) that he would thus help forward the Gospel, was acceptable to God and will be followed by reward. This answer to the question is put in the form of a purpose: because the conduct which God will reward is a steadfast purpose directing Paul's conduct.

This verse implies that to preach the Gospel without pay was Paul's usual practice. Cp. 2 Thessalonians 3:8f; Acts 20:34. And the wisdom of it is evident. He wished to make church finances as simple as possible, and to discourage the idle people (cp. 2 Thessalonians 3:10ff) who are ever ready to make gain of the piety of others. But Paul accepted (2 Corinthians

11:8f; Philippians 4:16) gifts from churches at a distance. For such offerings were a noble mark of Christian character, were little liable to abuse and to accept them had no appearance of self-seeking.

Notice that certain actions will receive ‘reward’ because of their spontaneousness; and that this is evidently looked upon here as meriting reward. But all our good actions are God’s work in us and gift to us. Even when they spring from our own free choice they are really a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) given to us by God. But they are none the less good actions: and God graciously recognizes His work in us as meriting reward.

Notice Paul’s wish to do something beyond that made almost compulsory by his circumstances and by Christ’s definite command. Much that is right loses its value and moral influence because other reasons besides loyalty to Christ move us to do it. The true test of fidelity is our conduct when we have no definite command and when we can do otherwise without serious and evident consequences. We may well be eager to do that for which there can be no conceivable motive except devotion to our Master.

We learn here that our own actions may be a ground of spiritual exultation. When we find ourselves actuated by motives which once were foreign to us but which our best judgment commends, and doing work which is evidently Christ’s work in us and a precursor of eternal reward, we are filled with a gratitude, joy, and confidence, which are truly an “exultation in the Lord,” 1 Corinthians 1:31.

**Ver.** 19. Reason, in addition to those of 1 Corinthians 9:15ff, for the conduct described in 1 Corinthians 9:18.

Free; takes up 1 Corinthians 9:1, and thus marks a transition from Paul’s specific refusal of maintenance to his conduct generally.

Free from all: from any one who can compel him to do this or that.

Servant: or ‘slave:’ see Romans 1:1.

Made myself servant: cp. Galatians 5:13. He submitted to restriction, toil, privation, for their benefit.

May gain: explained in 1 Corinthians 9:22. To “save” his soul, is to ‘gain’ him as an eternal Crown of rejoicing: 1 Thessalonians 2:19f; Philippians

4:1. Cp. Matthew 18:15, Philemon 15. Paul reminds us that he will ‘gain’ by his voluntary service.

The more part: as in 1 Corinthians 10:5; 15:6; Acts 19:32; 27:12. It suggests a sad conviction that in some cases Paul’s self-denial would be in vain.

**Ver.** 20-22a. Expounds in detail “I made myself to all:” 1 Corinthians 9:22b restates Paul’s purpose, “that I may gain the more part.”

As a Jew: observing among Jews the Mosaic ordinances of food and feasts. An important coincidence with Acts 21:26; 16:3. But Galatians 2:14 proves that even among Jews he did not pretend to share Jewish repugnance to Gentiles.

I became: by my own purpose and conduct. For, though born a Jew he had, by his conversion, been set free (Galatians 3:28; 5:1) from Jewish restrictions.

Those under law: Romans 6:14f; Galatians 4:4f, 21; 5:18: Jews, looked at from an inward and spiritual, not an outward and national, point of view. The Law is, to those who accept it as the only way to God, a ruling power ‘under’ which they lie powerless and condemned. And by submitting to the restrictions of the Law Paul put himself in some measure by their side.

Not under law: no longer looking up to it as a master: cp. Romans 6:14, explained Romans 7:1-6; Galatians 5:18. For he knows that, instead of God’s gifts being obtained by obedience to law, both obedience and its rewards are God’s free gifts to those who believe.

To those without-law: as in Romans 2:12, 14.

As without-law: not observing, among Gentiles, Mosaic restrictions. Not without-law of God: not without commands of God which I obey.

In-the-law of Christ; expounds the foregoing. Although the commands of God are no longer a rule and a burden ‘under’ which he lies, yet the commands of Christ (Galatians 6:2, cp. Matthew 22:37ff) are a directing element ‘in’ which he walks. Cp. Romans 8:2; Hebrews 8:10. These words remind us that Christian liberty is ours only so long as we abide in the will of Christ.

I became weak: 2 Corinthians 11:29; see Romans 15:1. Because they were unable to grasp the full practical bearing of the Gospel, and lest his example should lead them to do that which would injure them Paul imposed limitations (e.g. 1 Corinthians 8:13) upon himself; and thus, in sympathy and practice, shared their weakness. This last detail of conduct brings before us 1 Corinthians 8:7-13, the specific matter of DIV. 4 It refers to believers: 1 Corinthians 9:20, 21 include, and refer chiefly to, unbelievers. These latter Paul sought to 'gain' by leading them to Christ and thus to heaven; those of 1 Corinthians 9:22, by saving them from falling, and thus saving them for ever.

To all: broad statement of principle, parallel with 1 Corinthians 9:19 and 1 Corinthians 9:12b.

**Ver. 22b.** All things: limited by the word 'save' to things not actually sinful. To do wrong can save no one.

In-all-ways: leaving untried no method likely to win.

Save: see note, Romans 11:14.

In 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 lies an important principle, viz. that, other things being equal, our spiritual influence over others is in proportion to our nearness to them in the various circumstances and habits of life. In harmony with this principle, the Son of God clothed Himself in human flesh that He might speak to us through human lips and stretch out for our salvation a human hand. Cp. Galatians 4:4. And Paul was accustomed to diminish as far as practicable, by conforming to their habits and practice, the distance between himself and those he sought to save. To the Athenians he spoke as a philosopher, Acts 17:22-31; among Jews, he acted as a Jew, Acts 21:26; but always without surrendering principle, Galatians 2:5. For, to do this, would benefit no one. We shall do well to imitate him. Whatever reminds our hearers that our circumstances and endowments differ from theirs, will lessen the force of our words.

**Ver. 23.** All things; takes up the same words in 1 Corinthians 9:22, 12.

Because of the Gospel, etc.: 3rd reason, in addition to those of 1 Corinthians 9:15-18, 19-22 for the conduct stated in 1 Corinthians 9:12b and reasserted in 1 Corinthians 9:22b.



That I may become, etc.; expounds because of the Gospel Sharer with others: “by obtaining, in company with those whom I hope to save, the blessings promised in the Gospel.” The good news he announces moves Paul to use all means to save men, because by doing so he will (1 Timothy 4:16) save himself and those who hear him.

**Ver.** 24-27. Justifies 1 Corinthians 9:23 by the analogy of the athletic festivals so well known at Corinth. See note below.

Racecourse: the oldest and most popular kind of contest.

The prize: same word and thought in Philippians 3:14: the ‘crown’ (1 Corinthians 9:25) or garland of leaves given to the winner.

But one receives, etc.: so that it can be obtained only by surpassing all rivals. This thought nerved the athlete to intense exertion. These words are no part of the comparison; (for they are not true of the Christian race; ) but are added to depict the intense effort required to gain the prize.

In-this-way: like racers.

You are running; asserts that the racer is a pattern of the Christian. These words remind the readers that, although this metaphor is introduced professedly to expound Paul’s own conduct, it is really an example for them.

That you may obtain: expounds ‘in this way,’ and directs attention to the one essential point of comparison. Like a racer you are aiming at a prize to be obtained only by victory. 1 Corinthians 9:25 brings the comparison of 1 Corinthians 9:24 to bear on the matter of 1 Corinthians 9:23.

Contends-in-the-athletic-festivals: includes racing boxing, and all kinds of athletic contests. Same word in Luke 13:24; John 18:36; Colossians 1:29; 4:12; 1 Timothy 4:10; 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7.

In all things is self-controlled; refers not to the actual race, but to the ten months’ preparation. Indeed this preparation was in some sense a part of the contest: for upon it very much depended success or failure. During these ten months, the athlete, not only submitted to the prescribed limitations of food, drink, and the entire mode of life, but without asking whether it was specially enjoined, did whatever would strengthen him for

the decisive day and thus increase his chance of victory, and avoided whatever would weaken him.

In all things: emphatic. Every detail of his life was ‘controlled’ by his earnest purpose to gain the prize.

Crown: not a mark of royalty, (different word in Revelation 12:3; 13:1; 19:12,) but a wreath of leaves (or sometimes a golden imitation of such, Revelation 4:4; 9:7; 14:14) given as (2 Timothy 4:8) a reward, or worn (Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19) in token of joy. A garland of pine or olive leaves, fit symbol of transitory human glory, was the prize at the Isthmian festival. With this fading wreath Paul contrasts the imperishable reward awaiting the Christian; thus increasing the force of the example in 1 Corinthians 9:25a.

**Ver. 26.** After calling (“you,” 1 Corinthians 9:24) his readers athletes, then placing himself (“we,” 1 Corinthians 9:25) among them, Paul now speaks of himself alone; thus bringing 1 Corinthians 9:24, 25 to bear upon 1 Corinthians 9:23.

Then: since Christians are athletes striving for an unfading crown.

In this way, in this way: viz. as athletes run and box.

Am running: The Christian life is both a preparation for contest and an actual contest. For each day we make ourselves stronger or weaker for the conflict of tomorrow: and each day we are in actual contact with our adversary, and are or ought to be actually pressing towards the goal. Though the Christian has no rival, a race fitly symbolizes his life. For even the athletic racer forgets his rivals, and simply presses forward with all his powers.

As not without-a-definite-goal; expounds ‘in this way.’ In his self-denial and efforts Paul, like a racer, has a definite aim in view.

I box: another common mode of contest. “Like an athlete, I am not fighting a shadow, but have a real antagonist.” And the visible goal and the real antagonist prompt the self-denial of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

**Ver. 27.** Bruise: as boxers do. So far is Paul from fighting a mere shadow that his own body is his adversary whom he must conquer if he is to win

the crown. For, through the body sin seeks to conquer him and rob him of the prize. See Romans 8:13. These words reveal the great influence of the body, in Paul's view, upon the Christian life. But the figurative nature of the passage forbids us to infer that Paul inflicted upon his body pain or injury as a spiritual exercise.

Lead-as-a-slave: he not only conquers it and robs it of power, by refusing to indulge its desires and dislikes, but compels it to work out his own purposes. And he presents (Romans 12:1; 6:19) the captive as a sacrifice to God. Paul's refusal of maintenance, and the bodily toil resulting therefrom, and his refusal to eat meat which might injure a weak brother, were blows against the spiritual power of his own body, and tended to make the body more and more a servant of the spirit within. He inflicts these blows lest his body gain the upper hand, and thus ruin him.

Herald: see Romans 2:21. At the festival he summoned the athletes to the contest.

Rejected: as unworthy of the prize. i.e. lose his soul. For the prize is eternal life, James 1:12; 1 Timothy 6:12. Hence the solemn examples in 1 Corinthians 10. It is the opposite of "become sharer of the Gospel," 1 Corinthians 9:23. By divine appointment Paul calls men to contend for an unfading crown. But, like all preachers of the Gospel, he is himself an athlete as well as a herald. And he is careful lest, after summoning others to contend, himself fall short of the prize.

In-any-way: for in many ways we may fall.

From 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 we learn that not to do our utmost to save, at any personal sacrifice, the souls of others, is to imperil our own salvation. For such effort and sacrifice strengthen the spiritual life. And so serious is our conflict and so tremendous are its issues that we dare not leave unused any means of spiritual strength. Therefore, in seeking to save others we are working out our own salvation.

SECTION 16 reasserts 1 Corinthians 9:12b, and gives three reasons for it. To refuse maintenance in order not to hinder the Gospel, is an outgrowth of spiritual life, and is therefore to Paul a ground of present inward joy and confidence, 1 Corinthians 9:15-18. To save others, Jews or Gentiles, is

itself a “gain” worthy of pursuit, 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 Moreover, Paul is an athlete, contending for an eternal prize: and therefore, even to save his own soul, he uses all possible means to save others, 1 Corinthians 9:23-27

Of the GREEK ATHLETIC FESTIVALS, the most famous was that held every fourth year at Olympia in the west of the Peloponnese. Very famous and ancient also was the Isthmian festival held every two years at the Isthmus, about eight miles from, and in full sight of, the city of Corinth. Similar festivals were held at Nemea and Delphi. But in these the athletic element was less conspicuous. All these were instituted before the dawn of history. Other festivals in imitation of them, were held in Paul’s day in many cities of Asia e.g. at Tarsus, and notably at Antioch in Syria.

All athletes, i.e. competitors for prizes, had ten months’ training under the direction of appointed teachers and under various restrictions of diet. At the beginning of the festival they were required to prove to the judges that they were of pure Greek blood, had not forfeited by misconduct the right of citizenship, and had undergone the necessary training. Then began the various contests, in an appointed order. Of these, the oldest and most famous was the footrace. Others were wrestling, boxing, chariot and horse racing. The prize was a wreath (or ‘crown’) of olive at Olympia, and of pine leaves (at one time of olive) at the Isthmus. The giving of the prizes was followed by processions and sacrifices, and by a public banquet to the conquerors. The whole festival at Olympia lasted five days.

The importance of these athletic festivals in the eyes of the ancient Greeks is difficult to appreciate now. They were the great family gatherings of the nation, held under the auspices, and under the shadow of the temples, of their gods. The laws regulating them were held as binding by the various independent states of Greece. The month in which they were held was called the sacred month, and was solemnly announced. And all war between Greek states ceased, under pain of the displeasure of their gods, while the festival lasted. The festivals were attended by immense crowds from all the Greek states and from even the most distant colonies. The various states sent embassies, and vied with each other in the splendor of them and of the gifts they brought. The greatest cities thought themselves honored by the victory of a citizen. The victor was received home with a triumphal procession, entered the city by a new opening broken for him

through the walls, was taken in a chariot to the temple of its guardian deity, and welcomed with songs. In some cases a reward in money was given, and release from taxation. In honor of the successful athlete poems were written; of which we have specimens in the poems of Pindar. A statue of the victor was permitted to be placed, and in many places was placed, by townsmen or friends, in the sacred grove of the presiding deity. An avenue of these statues, shadowed by an avenue of pine trees, leading up to the temple of Poseidon, which stood within 200 yards of the race-course at the Isthmus of Corinth, is mentioned by Pausanias, bk. ii. 1. 7. Close by this temple with its avenue of statues Paul probably passed on his way from Athens to Corinth.

The Olympic festival, which survived the longest, was abolished in A.D. 394, four years after the public suppression of paganism in the Roman Empire.

The Greek Athletic Festivals must be carefully distinguished from the bloody Roman Gladiatorial Combats.

That these athletic festivals permeated and molded the thought both of classic writers and of the Apostle to the Gentiles, we have abundant proof. Eternal life is to be obtained only by contest and victory: 1 Corinthians 9:24ff; Philippians 3:14; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:5; 4:7f: cp. Luke 13:24; Hebrews 12:1; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 2:10; 3:11. The Christian life is both a preparation for conflict, 1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 2:5; a race, 1 Corinthians 9:24; Philippians 3:12; Acts 20:24; 2 Timothy 4:7; 'a boxing,' 1 Corinthians 9:27, and a wrestling, Ephesians 6:12. Paul's converts will be his crown in the great day: 1 Thessalonians 2:19; Philippians 4:1. And, just as the athlete, victorious but not yet crowned, lay down to rest on the evening after conflict, waiting for the glories of the morrow, so Paul: 2 Timothy 4:7f.

This metaphor presents an important view of the Christian life a needful complement of Paul's doctrine of justification by grace and through faith. Though eternal life is altogether a free gift of God, it is given only to those who strive for it with all their powers. Therefore we must ever ask, not only whether an action open to us is lawful, but whether it will increase or lessen our spiritual strength. Just so, an athlete would forego many things

otherwise harmless, and some not even forbidden by the laws for athletes, simply because he was striving for a prize.

Again, this metaphor receives in turn its needful complement in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Had we to contend for life in our own strength, we might be doubtful of the result, as was many a resolute athlete on the morning of the contest. But in us is the might of God crushing (Romans 16:20; 1 John 4:4) our adversary under our feet, and carrying us (1 Kings 18:46) forward to the goal. Therefore, day by day we go down into the arena to fight with foes infinitely stronger than we, knowing that “we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

That the crowded Isthmian Festival was held each alternate year at the very gates of Corinth and almost under the shadow of its Acropolis, must have given to the metaphor of 1 Corinthians 9:24ff special force in the minds of the Corinthians. And, possibly, Paul was himself present at a festival during (Acts 18:11) his eighteen months’ sojourn at Corinth, using perhaps the opportunity to summon the assembled strangers to a nobler contest.

## SECTION 17

### **THE STORY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL PROVES THAT THEY WHO STAND MAY (THOUGH THEY NEED NOT) FALL**

#### CHAPTER 10:1-13

*For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brothers, that our fathers all were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized for Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they were drinking from a spiritual rock following them. And the rock was Christ.*

*But not with the more part of them was God well-pleased: for they were smitten down in the wilderness. Now these things took place as types of us; that we should not be desirers of bad things, as also they desired. And do not become idolaters, as did some of them: as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." (Exodus 32:6.) And let us not commit fornication; as some of them committed fornication, and there fell on one day twenty-three thousand. And let us not tempt the Lord; as some of them tempted, and were being destroyed by the serpents. And do not murmur, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them typically; and were written for our admonition, to whom the ends of the ages are come. So then, he that thinks that he stands, let him see lest he fall.*

*Of you no temptation has laid hold except a human one. And God is faithful, who will not let you be tempted beyond what you are able; but will make, with the temptation, also the way out, that you may be able to bear up.*

In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul introduced the matter of food offered to idols; and warned his readers not to do that which might destroy their brethren. This

warning he supported in 1 Corinthians 8:13 by his own example. This example he strengthened in 1 Corinthians 9, by expounding his rights in the Gospel and his conduct; and concluded by saying that he submits to all kinds of bodily privation lest he should himself be lost. Already he has told his readers (1 Corinthians 9:24) that they like himself are striving for a prize. And he now supports the warning implied in 1 Corinthians 9:27, by reminding them that, whereas all who left Egypt were professed followers of God, 1 Corinthians 10:1-4; yet most of them never reached Canaan, 1 Corinthians 10:5-10. These things were designed to be a warning for us, 1 Corinthians 10:11, 12; and God has provided for us a way of escape, 1 Corinthians 10:13.

**Ver. 1.** For: an important various reading; see p. 7. Paul now supports, by Old Testament examples, the warning implied in the fear expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:27b.

Our fathers: writing as a Jew, but not with special reference to Jews. The 'fathers' were common property of all Christians.

All: the emphatic word (four times) of 1 Corinthians 10:1-4.

Under the cloud: both locally (cp. Psalm 105:39; Wisdom 10:17; 19:7) and by subordination. All ranged themselves under the guidance and protection of Him who revealed Himself in the Pillar of Cloud above their heads.

**Ver. 2-3.** Spiritual significance of the bare facts of 1 Corinthians 10:1.

Baptized for Moses: see under Romans 6:3.

In the cloud, etc. or, 'with the cloud': the material instruments of their baptism. By ranging themselves under 'the cloud' and passing through 'the sea,' they formally placed themselves in a new relationship to Moses as His followers. They thus openly separated themselves from Egypt, and became the professed people of God. That the position they then took up was analogous to that of Christians, is suggested by the word 'baptized.' And the presence of water, in the cloud and sea, made it very appropriate. We saw, under Romans 6:4, that in Paul's day baptism by immersion was usual. But, that the passing of Israel beneath the cloud and through the divided sea on dry land is called baptism, now warns us that if water be



used, the mode is not essential to the reality of the baptism. The immersion was reserved for the Egyptians.

**Ver. 3.** The emphatic repetition of ‘all’ and ‘the same’ keeps conspicuously before us the similar position of men whose fate was different.

Spiritual food: the manna, bread from heaven, Psalm 78:24f; Wisdom 16:20; John 6:31f; because produced, not naturally, but by the special energy of the Holy Spirit, who is the personal bearer, even in the material world, of the presence and power of God. Cp. Romans 1:11; 7:14; 1 Corinthians 15:44; Ephesians 5:19; 1 Peter 2:5; cp. Genesis 1:2; Psalm 33:6; Galatians 4:29.

Spiritual drink: the water from the rock, Exodus 17:1-6; Numbers 20:2-11.

**Ver. 4.** Proof that it was “spiritual drink.” That the manna was spiritual, needed no proof: for it was evidently supernatural. But the water from the rock was ordinary water.

Were drinking: graphic description of the scene. The real source of the water drunk by Israel on two occasions in the wilderness was not the natural rock from which it visibly flowed, but a spiritual rock, viz. the invisible and spiritual presence and resources of God; and this not stationary like “the rock in Horeb” and that at Kadesh, but ‘following’ them, i.e. God not only going before them as a guide but, after they had pitched their tents providing in each encampment for their need. Therefore, the water from the rock, though natural in composition, was “spiritual drink:” for it was a miraculous work and gift of God present in the Holy Spirit. This exposition is so complete and simple that we have no need to assume a reference here to the foolish Jewish fable about the rock following the Israelites.

And the rock was Christ: a great truth linking the spiritual facts of 1 Corinthians 10:3f with Christianity: as the word “baptized” linked with it the historical facts of 1 Corinthians 10:1. ‘Christ’ was actually the source of the water which flowed from the visible rock, being Himself the divine Presence which accompanied, and supplied the need of, Israel in the wilderness. This implies that the not yet incarnate but pre-existent Son of God was the Leader of Israel. Cp. Hebrews 11:26. Under these passages

and Colossians 1:16; John 1:3, lies the great truth that whatever God has done and does outwardly and visibly, in the material universe and in His spiritual kingdom, is through the agency of His Son. Paul here reminds his readers that the same divine power and presence which brought them into, and now maintains them in, the Christian life, of which the two sacraments are a visible representation, also led Israel of old through the Red Sea and daily fed them in the wilderness. This identity lays a foundation for the warnings of 1 Corinthians 10:5-12.

**Ver. 5-6.** The more part: very much less than the truth, as the readers knew, but sufficient for Paul's warning. Of this statement, 1 Corinthians 10:5b is proof.

Smitten-down in the wilderness: exact words of (LXX.) Numbers 14:16; cp. Numbers 14:32. That they died in the wilderness instead of entering Canaan, was a punishment for the sin of Numbers 14:1-10 Cp. Hebrews 3:16ff.

These things: all that was included in 'smitten down, etc.:' cp. "none of these things," 1 Corinthians 9:15.

Types of us: sketches in outline of what will come to us if we do as they did. See under Romans 5:14. All lessons learned by others from the fate of the sinning Israelites were not only foreseen but designed, by God. Therefore, since the Old Covenant was preparatory to the New, Paul could say that the various punishments of Israel were chosen and inflicted by God in order to teach the men of his own day the evil of desiring bad things. Cp. 1 Corinthians 9:10.

Bad-things; refers only to the men of Paul's day, not to Numbers 11:4: for flesh and vegetables were not in themselves bad.

As they also, etc.; gives prominence to the conduct followed by such punishment.

**Ver. 7-10.** Four examples, expounding in detail "as they also desired."

Idolaters: put prominently first, preparing the way for 1 Corinthians 10:14-22. So "fornicators" in 1 Corinthians 6:9, preparing for 1 Corinthians 6:13-20.

The people sat, etc.: word for word from Exodus 32:6. This verse, without expressly mentioning idolatry, recalls the idolatrous scene; and is specially suitable to dissuade from taking part (1 Corinthians 10:21; 8:10) in idol feasts.

Fornication: ever closely connected with idolatry, especially at Corinth; and expressly in Numbers 25:1-9, to which Paul here refers.

Twenty-three thousand: 24, 000 in Numbers 25:9, with which agree Josephus, 'Antiq.' bk. iv. 6. 12, and Philo, vol. ii. 382. Since Paul had no source of information but the Old Testament, we cannot evade this discrepancy but supposing that 'on one day' only 23, 000 fell. Surely we need not stretch his apostolic authority to trifling numerical details. See my 'Romans,' Dissertation iii. 2. Nor does a trifling slip of memory, if this be such, in a matter no way touching the spiritual life, lessen in the least degree his absolute authority when declaring the commands and promises of God. Cp. Galatians 3:17. How needful at Corinth was this second warning, we learn from 1 Corinthians 5:1; 2 Corinthians 12:21.

The Lord: probably, especially after 1 Corinthians 10:4, in its usual sense, viz. Christ, the Master whom all Christians obey.

Tempt, or 'try': put to the test, as if to see how long His patience will last.

The serpents: plain reference to Numbers 21:6. Consequently, 'tempted' refers to the murmuring about their food. The similar murmuring in Exodus 17:3 is expressly called (Exodus 5:7, cp. Deuteronomy 6:16) tempting God; and gave a name to the place, Massah, or Temptation. In these cases the Israelites tested whether God was among them and His longsuffering towards them, by looking back to the land of bondage out of which He had brought them. A similar leaning in the Corinthians to the idolatrous practices and the impurity of their past life, prompted the warnings of 1 Corinthians 10:7f. Such looking back was a tempting of their Master, Christ, similar to that punished by the fiery serpents.

Were-being-destroyed; both depicts the scene, and includes the bitten ones who looked at the brazen serpent and recovered. 1 Corinthians 10:10 refers evidently to Numbers 16:41-49; and was naturally suggested by the murmuring of Numbers 21:5.

The destroyer: Wisdom 18:25; Exodus 12:23. It implies that the “plague” of Numbers 16:46ff was inflicted by a personal agent, probably an angel of God. Cp. 2 Samuel 24:16; Isaiah 37:36. The story of Numbers 16:41ff is a solemn warning to all who set themselves against a divinely constituted authority; and was perhaps referred to here as a covert warning to those at Corinth who rejected Paul’s apostolic authority.

**Ver. 11.** Parallel to 1 Corinthians 10:6; as are 1 Corinthians 10:7-10 to 1 Corinthians 10:5b.

These things; the foregoing punishments.

Typically: by way of pattern of what will happen to others. Yet they were real events: for they ‘happened to them.’

Written for our admonition: cp. Romans 3:19; 4:24; 15:4; see my ‘Romans,’ Dissertation 3.

The ages: the various world-periods, in which God dealt with men in different modes, e.g. antediluvian, pre-Abrahamic, patriarchal, Mosaic. Of these, the age introduced by Christ is a completion (Hebrews 9:26) and ‘the end,’ to be immediately followed by the coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the new earth and heaven.

Ends, (see under 2 Corinthians 11:15,) rather than “end:” because in the Christian dispensation each of the former ages finds its goal and consummation: This justifies Paul’s assertion that the narratives ‘written’ in former ages were designed for admonition of those living in the Christian age.

Have come: as though the Christian age had overtaken them; and specially appropriate in the lips of one who lived before the Christian age began.

**Ver. 12.** Desired result of the foregoing narratives.

He that thinks: the man’s opinion about himself, whether true or false. Cp. 1 Corinthians 7:40. Same word (R.V. “reputed”) in Galatians 2:2, 6, 9. The man of whom Paul thinks actually ‘stands:’ else he could not fall.

Stand: Romans 5:2; 11:20: retain his Christian position.

Fall: lose it by committing the sins of 1 Corinthians 10:7ff. Cp. Romans 11:11, 22.

**Ver.** 13. Encouragement after warning.

Temptation: whatever, painful or pleasant, tends to lead us to sin, and thus tests our loyalty to Christ. Cp. Matthew 4:1-10.

Human: within the limits of the spiritual powers God has given to men. We can conceive higher intelligences to be attacked by severer temptations.

Faithful: 1 Corinthians 1:9. To what has been (1 Corinthians 10:13a) in the past, Paul adds what 'will' be in the future.

Will not let: for each temptation attacks us under His eye and restraint.

Will make, etc.; does not imply that 'the temptation' is God's work, (though, in a sense, this is true: cp. Genesis 22:1,) but that God will provide that it shall be accompanied by 'the way-out.' And that 'God is faithful,' pledges Him to do this. For He has promised life to all who believe; and this implies escape from all temptation, which in turn implies that we shall not be tempted beyond the powers God has granted to men.

That you may, etc.: God's purpose in making 'the way out.' We endure temptation by flying from it.

SECTION 17 confirms strongly my note under Romans 11:24 in disproof of Calvin's doctrine that all who have been justified will be finally saved. The word "rejected" in 1 Corinthians 9:27, supported as it is by examples of those who never entered Canaan, can refer only to rejection from heaven. And Paul must have thought this possible in his own case; or the motive given in 1 Corinthians 9:27 would be utterly unreal. Yet he was quite sure (Romans 5:9f; 2 Corinthians 5:18) of his own justification. The examples of those who, as Paul so emphatically tells us, actually started for Canaan but never reached it, would be quite inapplicable to those who, the right start once made, could not fall finally.

## SECTION 18

### AVOID GIVING ANY SANCTION TO IDOLATRY

#### CHAPTER 10:14-22

*For which cause certainly, my beloved ones, fly from idolatry. As to prudent men I say, Judge yourselves what I assert. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not partnership in (Greek, partnership of the blood, etc.) the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not partnership in (Greek, partnership of the blood, etc.) the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, one body we, the many, are. For, from the one bread, we all partake.*

*Look at Israel according to flesh. Are not they who eat the sacrifices partners with the altar?*

*What, then, do I assert? That an idol-sacrifice is anything? or that an idol is anything? but that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, to demons and not to God they sacrifice. And I do not wish you to become partners with demons. You cannot be partaking of a table of the Lord and a table of demons. Or, are we moving the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?*

On introducing the matter of food offered to idols, which occupies DIV. 4, Paul laid down in 14 the principle of not doing that which injures others. This he supported in 15, 16 by his own example; and in 17 by a warning from the story of the Israelites. He will not deal specifically with one part of the matter in hand, viz. idol-feasts; by showing that attendance at them involves partnership with evil spirits. This he proves by the analogy (1 Corinthians 10:16, 17) of the Lord's Supper and (1 Corinthians 10:18) of the Mosaic sacrifices; shows it to be (1 Corinthians 10:19, 20a) in harmony with what he has already said, and the Old Testament has said, about idols; and adds (1 Corinthians 10:20b-22) a threefold dissuasive from such feasts.

**Ver.** 14-15. Fly from idolatry: 1 Corinthians 10:7 abstain from idol-feasts, (cp. 1 Corinthians 8:10,) which Paul will prove to be actual idolatry.

For which cause: Since God has pledged Himself to make in every temptation a way of escape, there is no need even in Corinth to yield to the many inducements to attend such feasts. These words remind the readers that such inducements were only a “trial” of their faith.

Prudent: or ‘thoughtful.’ This appeal prepares us for something important and difficult.

Assert: not an unproved assertion. For ‘judge for yourselves’ implies that reasons will be given.

**Ver.** 16. Appeal to, and exposition of, The Lord’s Supper, as a foundation for the argument of 1 Corinthians 10:21 and also to support the analogy of 1 Corinthians 10:18. Our interpretation of these words will be in great part determined by our interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:23ff: and this interpretation must be in turn attested by its applicability to the argument here. We must therefore assume the results gained in our note under 1 Corinthians 11:34.

The cup: put first (contrast 1 Corinthians 11:24) perhaps because of the fuller exposition in 1 Corinthians 10:17 of the other element, the bread, which presents a closer parallel to 1 Corinthians 10:18.

Cup of blessing: name given by the Jews to the third cup of wine at the Passover. Whether Paul refers to this and whether this term was commonly used of the Lord’s Supper, we cannot determine.

Bless; see Romans 1:25: literally, to speak good words. The words spoken over the cup evidently set forth the goodness of God; as in Luke 1:64; 2:28. Hence they were equivalent to “thanksgiving.” Cp. 1 Corinthians 14:16; 1 Samuel 9:13; Matthew 14:19; Luke 9:16, with John 6:11; Mark 8:6 with 7; Matthew 26:26 with 27. So Chrysostom: “A cup of blessing He called it; since, holding it in our hands, in this way we sing praise to Him.” Our first thought as we behold the symbols of the death of Christ is gratitude to God. Hence the term “Eucharist,” i.e. thanksgiving. And the cup which recalls the death of Christ is made here (cp. Mark 8:7; Luke

9:16) the object or matter of our blessing. The gratitude evoked by sight of the cup is made very prominent by the addition, which we bless.

We: whether by one person at each celebration or by the whole company, is left uncertain. Paul joins with others, whoever they be, in pronouncing it.

Partnership: 1 Corinthians 1:9; see Romans 15:26.

Partnership of; denotes both partnership with others, as 1 Corinthians 10:18, 20; 1:9; Hebrews 10:33; and partnership in something, as 2 Corinthians 1:7; 8:4; Philippians 3:10; 1 Peter 5:1; 2 Peter 1:4. Here probably, in spite of 1 Corinthians 10:18, 20, partnership (with others) in the benefits of the death of Christ, (contrast Matthew 23:30,) reminding us that others share these benefits with us. Cp. 1 Corinthians 10:17. For we cannot well conceive a partnership with the blood of Christ.

Is; must be expounded by Paul's teaching elsewhere, but requires a sense which justifies the argument of 1 Corinthians 10:16-21. Elsewhere we learn that through the shedding of the blood of Christ we receive pardon of sins and a union with Him so close that He lives in us making our life to be an outflow of His; that this truth is set forth visibly in the wine poured into the cup and drunk; and that to drink the material wine is a divinely-appointed and, to speak generally, indispensable condition of this spiritual partnership. Consequently, had not Christ died, there had been no Eucharist cup: and if we refuse the cup we surrender, by disobeying Christ's express command, all claim to the blessings which flow from the shedding of His blood. Therefore, to us 'the cup is,' both symbolically and practically 'a partnership of the blood of Christ.'

We break: made prominent in the narrative (1 Corinthians 11:24) as setting forth, like the poured out wine, the death of Christ.

Of the body of Christ: partnership with other believers in the benefits resulting from the entire history of the human body of Christ, from His incarnation, holy life, death, resurrection, and glorified human presence in heaven.

**Ver. 17.** Confirmation of 1 Corinthians 10:16b, from the oneness of the church, by an argument from effect to cause. A similar argument would



support 1 Corinthians 10:16a. But to develop one side is sufficient: and the bread is a closer analogy to 1 Corinthians 10:18.

We, the many, are one body: an admitted and glorious truth, a forerunner of 1 Corinthians 12:12ff.

Because there is, etc.; declares that of this 'one body' the 'one' sacramental 'bread' is a 'cause.'

For we all, etc.: connecting link between the 'one bread' and the 'one body.' If to partake the eucharistic bread be a condition of receiving spiritual life of the church, which is its very essence, is in the same sense a result of 'all' the members of the church partaking 'the one' symbolic 'bread.' Consequently, the church of Christ, consisting of 'many' members of various nations and all ranks but living the same spiritual life and embodying it before the eyes of men, and drinking this life from the same source, viz. the death and life of Christ, on the condition that all its members partake the same material and symbolic food-the one church proves by its very existence the importance of the Lord's Supper and the spiritual reality which underlies it. These words also suggest the direct uniting influence of this one simple rite. Wherever a Christian went among Christians he found them eating and drinking the same bread and wine in memory of the same bruised body and shed blood; and was thus made to feel, in the most effective way conceivable, the oneness of the whole church. Paul may therefore say that the wonderful fact that the many and various members of the church are visibly united into one community, in which each member lives the same spiritual life, is a result of the fact that upon a table in their various assemblies the same bread lies; and may explain his words by reminding us that of this one bread all the members of all the churches partake.

**Ver. 18.** After justifying beforehand the words "cup" and "table of the Lord" in 1 Corinthians 10:21, Paul now introduces beforehand an analogy in support of "partners with" and "cup of demons" in 1 Corinthians 10:22.

According to flesh; suggests that already the word 'Israel' was used in a spiritual sense: cp. Galatians 6:16; 4:29.

They who, etc.: the offerers of peace-offerings, who, after a part had been burnt on the altar and a part given to the priest, ate the rest in the temple court: Leviticus 7:15-21; Deuteronomy 12:5ff, 17ff. They were 'partners of the altar,' not only inasmuch as part of the sacrificed animals was consumed by the altar and part by them, but in that, by joining that sacrificial feast in the holy place, they visibly and formally set themselves on the side of the God of the Temple, and lent their influence to maintain the temple ritual. Thus, by simply eating and drinking, they were aiding to set before the nation and the world the great preparatory lessons taught by the ancient symbols. And, in so doing, they were 'partners of the' brazen 'altar,' which, stained with the blood of the sacrifices, held so prominent a place in the ritual. That in days of spiritual declension the ritual was left in abeyance, and was restored in days of revival, (2 Chronicles 29:, 30:, 35:1-19,) reveals its spiritual importance.

**Ver.** 19-20. Application of 1 Corinthians 10:16f and 1 Corinthians 10:18 to the idol-feasts, in a form which answers an objection.

What then, etc.: "in bringing the Christian and Jewish feasts, so full of spiritual significance, as analogies of the heathen feasts, am I not conceding to heathenism the reality of its idol-gods?"

Is anything: that any reality underlies the name; 'that an idol-sacrifice is anything' more than common meat, and 'an idol' than a block of wood or stone.

Idol-sacrifices, idol: a climax. The answer to these questions is so plain that Paul does not give it, but merely tells us what he does assert about idols. He does not say that idol-sacrifices or even idols themselves are anything at all, but that the sacrifices offered to them are really offered to 'demons.' Same word in Tobit 3:8; 6:15f; Matthew 9:33f, etc., John 8:48f; 1 Timothy 4:1: in classic Greek, a superhuman being, (Acts 17:18,) generally of an inferior class; elsewhere in the New Testament, an evil superhuman being.

To demons and not to God: word for word from Deuteronomy 32:17, LXX.; (cp. Psalm 106:37; Baruch 4:7; ) and probably a correct rendering of the rare Hebrew word there used. That heathen sacrifices are a service rendered to evil spirits, is but an application of the broad principle of

Romans 6:16 to the specific matter of idolatry. For it is assumed everywhere in the New Testament that the abstract power and rule of sin have taken concrete form in superhuman beings, acting under one personal head, and bringing evil influences to bear on the human race: Ephesians 6:12; 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:26; Romans 16:20; 2 Corinthians 4:4. Therefore, every act of sin, being (Romans 6:16) obedience to sin, is also obedience to these superhuman enemies, and tends to carry out their purposes of death. Now idolatry is the ritual of sin. It is, therefore, the ceremonial of the rule of evil spirits over men. Consequently, though the heathen neither intend nor know it, every act of idolatry and whatever tends to support it, is a 'sacrifice' laid on the altar of 'demons.' And nowhere and never was this more evident than at Corinth in Paul's day. The variety of idols suggests 'demons' rather than "Satan."

**Ver. 20b.** Dissuasive from idol-feasts. It is explained and justified by the analogy, in 1 Corinthians 10:18, of the Mosaic sacrifices. Those who took part in the sacrificial feasts of the temple were, perhaps unconsciously, supporting by their presence the Mosaic ritual, and thus helping forward the educational and spiritual purposes for which it was ordained by God. And they who sat down at a heathen feast were, really though perhaps unintentionally, giving by their presence countenance to idolatry, and thus helping to maintain it and to accomplish its deadly tendencies. They were thus aiding the work of, and making themselves 'partners with, demons.'

**Ver. 21.** A second dissuasive from idol-feasts, suggested by 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17. Now only was the presence of Christians at an idol-feast a service rendered to demons, but the pleasure which induced them to go was a 'cup' which 'demons' held to their lips. For such pleasure was a result of idolatry, and therefore a result of the reign of demons over men. In this lies an argument. For 'a cup of demons' must needs be poison.

You cannot, etc.: another argument. Not only is it a cup of death, but it keeps from us the cup of life.

Drink: the inward reality underlying the material act of drinking, the absorption into our inner nature of the influences proceeding from Christ and from demons. For, outwardly and materially, it is possible to drink both cups at once. But the spiritual and life-giving influences which flow to believers from the shedding of Christ's blood, and of which the

eucharistic cup is a condition, are not given to those who indulge in pleasures resulting from sin. Therefore, to accept the pleasures which idolatry offers, is to renounce the salvation offered by Christ.

The Lord's table, table of demons; adds emphasis by picturing, in their incongruity, the sacred meal and an idol-feast.

**Ver. 22.** A third dissuasive, suggested by Deuteronomy 32:17 and 21. Paul asks, "What is the practical significance and effect of our conduct? For, to countenance idolatry, is to rouse the anger of Christ, who claims to be our sole Master." This solemn warning, 1 Corinthians 10:22b supports by appealing to the greater strength of Him whom some were so carelessly provoking.

**ARGUMENT.** Paul wishes to dissuade from all contact with idolatry, and especially from attendance at idol-feasts. Even this might be thought allowable; since (1 Corinthians 8:4) idols have no real existence, and (Romans 14:14; Matthew 15:11) no food can of itself defile. But Paul reminds us that upon eating and drinking hang great spiritual consequences; that a simple Christian feast is a condition of receiving individually the results of Christ's death, and a means of maintaining the wonderful oneness of the church throughout the world, a result far from the thought of many who partake the feast. But a closer analogy is at hand. They who partake the Mosaic feasts in the temple-court at Jerusalem are evidently, though most of them think nothing about it, supporting by their presence the Mosaic ritual and economy. Now, although idols have no existence, yet behind and beneath them is a real and superhuman and diabolical power. (Else, idolatry were harmless.) Therefore, as in the analogous case of the Jewish sacrificial feasts, all who join the idol-feasts lend by the presence aid to idolatry, and thus help demons to rule over men. Therefore, whatever pleasure comes from such feasts, since it is a result of sin, is a cup presented by evil spirits. From such a cup we may well draw back.

Again, Christ claims our sole allegiance, and will tolerate no rival. Therefore, to indulge in the pleasures offered by idolatry, is to forego the salvation which comes through the shed blood of Christ, which is solemnly set forth in the Christian feast and makes the sacramental cup to be a cup of praise to God. To attempt to mingle the pleasures of idolatry and the

salvation of Christ, is but to attempt, in spite of God's warning to ancient Israel, to call forth the jealous and irresistible anger of our Master, Christ.

This section is the stronghold of the Lutheran doctrine of CONSUBSTANTIATION, viz. that all who partake the Lord's Supper thereby receive Christ, though it depends upon themselves whether they receive Him to bless or to condemn. See note under 1 Corinthians 11:34. The argument is, that he who attends an idol-feast is said to become thereby even without or against his intention, a partner with demons, and that therefore by analogy we must suppose that he who partakes the Lord's Supper becomes thereby, whatever be his state of heart, a sharer of the body and blood of Christ. But it is unsafe to build up an important doctrine not expressly taught in Scripture on its supposed necessity to give validity to one Scripture argument, an argument somewhat obscured by distance of time and total change of circumstances. Moreover, without assuming the Lutheran Doctrine, we have already felt the great force of Paul's argument. Nay more. The Lutheran doctrine is inconsistent with 1 Corinthians 10:21. For, since outward attendance at idol-feasts involves, even against our will, spiritual partnership with demons, if in like manner material eating of the Lord's Supper involved spiritual union with Christ, then it would be possible and easy to eat on the same day of the Lord's table and the table of demons: which Paul declares to be impossible. We therefore infer that he refers to a spiritual reception of the results of Christ's death which does not always accompany a reception of the bread and wine.

The argument of 18 was doubtless suggested by the matter of 21. The matters which come before him, Paul grasps so firmly that he instinctively makes various use of them: e.g. 1 Corinthians 9:13f and 1 Corinthians 10:18.

This section teaches the solemn and far-reaching lesson that, if by our countenance we help forward anything of which the results are evil, we thereby become allies of those evil spirits who through the bad things of the world are seeking to destroy men; and that, if by the countenance thus given to evil we obtain pleasure or profit, we thereby accept and drink a cup which demons hold to our lips.

## SECTION 19

**FOR OTHERS' SAKE, DO NOT EAT WHAT IS POINTED OUT TO YOU AS AN IDOL-SACRIFICE**

### CHAPTER 10:23-11:1

*All things are allowable: but not all things are profitable. All things are allowable: but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own interest; but that of his fellow.*

*Everything sold in the shambles, eat, making no examination because of conscience. For "the Lord's is the earth and the fulness of it." (Psalm 24:1.) If any one invites you, of the unbelievers, and you wish to go, all that is set before you eat, making no examination because of conscience. But if any one say to you, This is a sacred-sacrifice, do not eat, because of him who pointed it out and because of conscience; conscience, I say, not thy own, but the other's. For why is my liberty judged by another's conscience? If I with thanks partake, why am I evil spoken of about that for which I for my part give thanks?*

*Whether then you are eating, or are drinking, or are doing anything, do all things for the glory of God. "Become men giving no cause of stumbling either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God. According as I also in all things please all, not seeking my own profit but that of the many, that they may be saved. Become imitators of me, as I also am of Christ.*

18 dealt with one side of the matter of DIV. 4 viz. with attendance at idol-feasts: 19 will deal with the other side of it, viz. with the eating at a private meal of meat offered to idols. An abrupt reassertion of the general principle of 1 Corinthians 6:12, modified and developed, marks the transition from the one side to the other; and forms a suitable platform from which to treat of the only question now remaining about idol-sacrifices.

**Ver. 23-24.** All things, etc.: see under 1 Corinthians 6:12.

Profitable: to ourselves or to others. It thus bears on 18 and on 19. Though all kinds of food are lawful, it is against our interest to drink a cup which demons put in our hands. Consequently, the advice of 18 is consistent with full Christian liberty.

Edify: spiritual progress resulting both (1 Corinthians 14:4) to ourselves and (1 Corinthians 14:17) to others from our actions. That the latter chiefly is in Paul's thought, we learn from 1 Corinthians 10:24, the foundation stone of 19. Cp. Romans 15:2. In 1 Corinthians 6:12 he developed 'profitable' by "be mastered by any;" because he was dealing with a sin which robs man of self-control. But here, in view of injury to others from our conduct, he develops it by the word 'edify.'

Let no one seek his own interest: a broad principle which must guide our entire conduct. Cp. Philippians 2:4. Our own interest must not be our real aim. If we make even our spiritual profit our final aim, we shall miss the object aimed at. Regardless of all else we must seek to do the greatest possible good to men around us. It is true that in order to do this we must care for the preservation and greatest possible development of our bodily and spiritual life. But this must be a means to an end. And, between making it a means and an end, is an infinite moral and practical difference.

**Ver. 25-26.** Specific advice.

Examination because of conscience: do not allow yourselves to be compelled, by that inner judge which pronounces sentence on conduct, to inquire, when buying food, whether it has been offered to idols. Just as all the meat eaten, even privately, by Israel in the wilderness, had (Leviticus 17:2-6: contrast Deuteronomy 12:21) first been presented as a sacrifice to God, so the heathens frequently offered as a sacrifice the animals slain for food. Consequently, a Christian might, without knowing it, eat an idol-sacrifice either (1 Corinthians 10:27f) in the house of a heathen, or as 1 Corinthians 10:25 implies, by purchase in the public market. Paul bids his readers not trouble themselves about this possibility.

Conscience: the man's own, as representing the abstract and definite idea of conscience. There is no hint here, as there is express and emphatic mention in 1 Corinthians 10:29, of "another conscience."

For the Lord's, etc.: word for word from Psalm 24:1; a reason for 1 Corinthians 10:25. Cp. 1 Timothy 4:3f.

The fulness of it: parallel with "they that dwell therein:" the totality of men and things, with which the world is full, and without which it would be empty. Cp. Romans 9:12. In itself and looked upon as mere material, everything belongs to God: and therefore nothing is in itself defiling. For a Christian to eat an idol-sacrifice, is merely to claim for God that which is His by right, but which a rebel has offered to His enemy. Whatever evil there is about any created material comes from its associations. But the fear which Paul here declares to be needless rests upon a belief that meat offered to idols is in itself defiling.

**Ver.** 27-29a. A second case. In 1 Corinthians 10:25 Paul gave advice to Christians when in the market: he now gives them the same advice when at the table of a heathen.

Invites: same word as "call" and "bid" in Matthew 20:1-14. See under Romans 8:28. We cannot detect, in 'if you wish to go,' a tacit dissuasion from going. This is left entirely to the reader's own judgment.

But if any one say, etc.: a further development of this second case.

Any one: a weak brother, (cp. 1 Corinthians 8:7-13,) probably a Gentile Christian. For, to eat an idol-sacrifice would not injure the conscience of a heathen: and a Jew, or a Jewish believer of weak faith would not be at a heathen's table.

Sacred-sacrifice: more suitable at a heathen's table than "idol-sacrifice," which means "meat offered to an image."

And conscience: added to remind us that while refusing to eat because of our brother we are really paying deference to the majesty of the abstract principle of Conscience, the judge divine who speaks in every heart.

Conscience, I say; tells us whom Paul has in view in this appeal to conscience in the abstract.

The motive here given is expounded in 1 Corinthians 8:9. If we eat, our example may lead him to do the same, though he believes it to be wrong. Conscience will then pronounce sentence against him. He will thus receive



a wound in that inner chamber of his being in which he contemplates his own actions. See under 1 Corinthians 8:7; Romans 2:15. And this wound may be fatal. Therefore, a remembrance of our brother's condition and of the judge which speaks in him, is a reason for not eating that which he has pointed out to us as sacrificial meat.

**Ver.** 29b-30. Questions supporting, by reference to the strong man's freedom, the advice prompted by thought of the weak man's conscience.

My: as in 1 Corinthians 6:15; Romans 3:7. To show the impropriety of that from which he dissuades, Paul supposes himself to be doing it. "My knowledge that idols are nothing makes me free from all personal fear of eating meat offered to them. But if by eating it I injure another man, his conscience will declare that my freedom has been in its effect upon him a bad thing, that it would have been better for him if I had had less knowledge." And Paul sees no reason why such a verdict should be pronounced on his 'freedom,' which he knows to be good, by a voice which he is compelled to respect, viz. 'another' man's 'conscience.' Similar argument in Romans 14:16. The same argument, 1 Corinthians 10:30 repeats in a modified form, that we may feel its full force.

With thanks: (same word as grace; see under Romans 1:5:) proof that his conscience approves his eating.

Evil-spoken-of: or, 'blasphemed:' see Romans 2:24.

I for my part, give thanks: conspicuous incongruity. "While eating this meat I thank God for freedom from scruples which cause such trouble to others. Yet, while I do this, my brother's conscience declares that my liberty has done him harm, that it would have been better for him if I had not that for which I thank God." Such incongruity Paul will not tolerate. And, to avoid it, he advises his readers to abstain from food which is pointed out to them as being an idol-sacrifice.

**Ver.** 31-32. General principles of conduct, exemplified in the reasons given in 1 Corinthians 10:29b, 30 for the specific advice of 1 Corinthians 10:28, in a form, 'eat or drink,' suggested by the matter of 19.

Glory of God: see Romans 1:21; 3:7. "Since your conduct and the worth of your religion will be estimated by others according to its effect upon

themselves, so act in all the details of life that your action may show forth the splendor of God, the Author of all human excellence, and thus exalt Him in the eyes of men.” This conveys a solemn lesson. The practical impression made upon men by the revealed character of God is determined very much by the conduct of His people, even in little things, and especially by the degree to which they take into account the effect of their conduct upon the well-being of others. 1 Corinthians 10:32 gives a second and negative principle of conduct, suggested by 1 Corinthians 10:28ff, and a special point to be avoided by all who wish that their entire conduct bring glory to God.

To Jews or to Greeks: cp. Romans 15:8ff following Romans 14. Whether the weak brethren were Jews or Gentiles, the matter of sacrificial food brought into great prominence distinctions of nationality.

Men-without-cause-of-stumbling: having nothing likely to overthrow themselves or others. Latter reference here (cp. Romans 14:13) and in Sirach 35:21; the former, in the same word in Philippians 1:10; Acts 24:16. But practically the two senses coincide. Whatever in us tends to overthrow others tends to overthrow ourselves. Be careful so to act as not to trip up men, Jews or Gentiles, who are groping their way to heaven.

Church of God: title of dignity. Even those who belong to God and are His representatives to the world may (1 Corinthians 8:11) be thrown down or hindered by our conduct.

**Ver.** 33-11:1. Paul’s own example, as in 1 Corinthians 8:13, supporting his advice. This example received irresistible force in 1 Corinthians 9, which expounded and justified the principle which found expression in 1 Corinthians 8:13.

In all things: as in 1 Corinthians 9:25.

Please all men: not an end but a means, viz. ‘that they may be saved.’ Cp. Romans 15:2. Else it would be unworthy: Galatians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:4. But, to seek men’s favor in order to save them and only thus far, is one of the noblest acts of service to God.

I please all: not actually; but noting, according to the use of the Greek present tense, a course of action tending in the direction. So Romans 2:4; Galatians 5:4; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Galatians 1:13.

Not seeking, etc.: as in 1 Corinthians 10:24.

That they may be saved: the final object Paul has in view in 'seeking the profit of the many.' He wishes to save them: and, in view of so worthy and so serious an object, he gives up all thought of personal advantage and seeks only their good.

Imitators: as in 1 Corinthians 4:16.

As I also of Christ. Therefore, in following his example, they are walking in the steps of Christ. Cp. Romans 15:3.

Paul's advice about the IDOL-SACRIFICES (1 Corinthians 8:1) is now complete. He warns his readers in 18 to abstain from all contact with idolatry; and, especially, not to sanction by their presence idolatrous feasts. Such sanction helps forward the work of demons: and any pleasure resulting therefrom is a cup presented by demons. Yet there is no inherent defilement in meat offered to idols; and therefore (19) no need to inquire about the previous history of meat sold in the market or placed on the table of a heathen friend. Nevertheless, in the presence of one who conscientiously and openly disapproves of eating meat offered to idols, Paul advises his readers to abstain from it, lest their example inflict spiritual injury upon him. He does not find it needful to mention the case of meat which they may casually learn to have been offered to idols. For his whole argument implies that there is no sufficient reason for abstaining from it.

Notice that Paul disregards utterly the apostolic decree of Acts 15:23ff, which he himself apparently assented to and in his second missionary journey (which first brought him to Corinth) distributed to the churches, and which enjoined abstinence from idol-sacrifices as one of the "necessary things." For even the advice of 1 Corinthians 10:28 referred, not to his readers' conscience, but (1 Corinthians 10:29) to that of the weak brother who gave the information. This disregard cannot be accounted for by a change of circumstances, making expedient a change of practice in so short a time. It rather points to an advance of knowledge in the mind of the

apostle, to a firmer grasp of (e.g. Mark 7:18) the teaching of Christ. This does not lessen the authority of the apostles as unanimous witnesses of the teaching of Christ. But it warns us to be careful in accepting, as binding for all time, the letter of their advice in matters of small detail. The contrast of Revelation 2:20 is a difficulty which I can neither dissemble nor solve. It refers, however, to specific erroneous teaching, known to the readers but not to us, and perhaps to such an eating as directly sanctioned idolatry.

Section 19 teaches that our conduct must often be limited, not only by what we think, but by what those around us think, to be right. Else we may lead them to do what their conscience condemns, and thus inflict upon them serious injury. By thus refraining for their good, we are bearing their burdens and fulfilling (Galatians 6:2; Romans 15:1) the law of Christ.

## REVIEW OF DIVISION 4

Paul might have passed at once from 14 to 18. Indeed 15-17, like 3, 4, and 12, seem to interrupt the matter in hand. But, in reality, they immensely increase the force of the advice which follows them. From matters of detail Paul rises to broad principles, that he may bring the principles to bear with accumulated force on the matters of detail. He thus makes passing details a pattern of the application of great abiding principles.

In 14 Paul bids his readers consider the effect upon others of their own conduct. This advice he supports by expounding in 15 his rights in the Gospel, and in 16 his cheerful surrender of them to save men; that, by the example of his own self-denial, an example well known to his readers, he may drive away by very shame all hesitation to submit to a trifling limitation in a matter so trifling as food rather than expose to risk of destruction those who are already brethren in Christ. Their confident but false security, Paul puts to shame by saying that this unlimited self-sacrifice is needful for his own salvation; and supports the warning herein implied by the example in 17 of those who fell in the wilderness for conduct exactly analogous to that of the Corinthians. And for this conduct there is no excuse: for God ever provides a way of escape. The destruction of the Israelites in the wilderness gives great force to Paul's specific warning in 18 against all contact with idolatry, especially all participation in idolatrous feasts. At the beginning of 19 he reasserts the great principle of which his own conduct (1 Corinthians 9) is so conspicuous an example; and then gives specific advice based on this principle about food eaten in private houses. He concludes DIV. 4 by reasserting the same all-important principle, as embodied in his own example and in that of Christ.

The principles exemplified in DIV. 4 have abiding and infinite value. Now, as then, there are in the church differences of opinion about right and wrong; and there are many weak brethren. If we resolve to do whatever we think to be allowable, and to claim our rights to the full, we shall lose opportunities of doing men good and inflict actual injury, shall lose the spiritual progress which immediately follows all self-denial for the good of others, and imperil our own salvation.

## DIVISION V

### ABOUT THE ABUSES IN CHURCH MEETINGS

#### CHAPTERS 11:2-34

#### SECTION 20

#### WOMEN MUST NOT LAY ASIDE THEIR APPROPRIATE AND DISTINCTIVE DRESS

#### CHAPTER 11:2-16

*I praise you that in all things you remember me, and that, according as I delivered to you the traditions, you hold them fast. But I wish you to know that of every man Christ is the head: and head of woman, the man is; and head of Christ, God is. Every man praying or prophesying with covered head puts to shame his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with the head unveiled puts to shame her head. For she is one and the same thing as the shaven woman. For, if a woman is not veiled, let her also be shorn. But if it is a shameful thing to a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled. For indeed a man ought not to have his head veiled, being an image and glory of God. But the woman is man's glory. For not the man is from the woman, but the woman from the man: for also man was not created because of the woman, but woman because of the man. For this cause the woman ought to have authority upon her head, because of the angels. Except neither is woman without man nor man without woman. For, just as the woman is from the man, so also is the man by means of the woman. And all things are from God.*

*Judge in yourselves. Is it fitting that to God a woman pray unveiled? Does not Nature itself teach you? Because indeed a man, if he have long hair, it is a dishonor to him. But a woman if she have long hair, it is a glory to her. Because the hair is given to her instead of a covering. But if anyone thinks to be fond of strife, we for our part have no such custom, nor have the churches of God.*

By a commendation (1 Corinthians 11:2) and a broad general principle (1 Corinthians 11:3) Paul opens the way to a new matter; on which in 1 Corinthians 11:4, 5a he at once pronounces sentence. This sentence he justifies in 1 Corinthians 11:5b-15; and in 1 Corinthians 11:16 concludes 20 with a warning.

**Ver. 2.** In all things: limited (see under Romans 5:18) by Paul's mental horizon at the moment of writing. It refers probably to church-meetings only: for only of these does 1 Corinthians 11 treat. In all their conduct of public worship they think of Paul and of the directions he gave. This is a mark that underneath the disaffection implied in the factions there lay a genuine loyalty to the apostle. Of this loyalty, the mission of Stephanas and others (1 Corinthians 16:17) was a mark: and an enthusiastic outburst of it was evoked (2 Corinthians 7:11f) by this Epistle.

Delivered: cognate with 'tradition:' 1 Corinthians 11:23; 15:3; Jude 3; Luke 1:2; Acts 6:14; 16:4; Romans 1:24; 4:25.

Traditions: instructions about doctrine or practice (here probably the latter: for of this 20 treats) handed on from one to another: 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6; Galatians 1:14; Colossians 2:8; Matthew 15:2.

The traditions: probably the more or less definite instructions given by Christ to the apostles for the church. Samples are found in 1 Corinthians 11:23; 15:3. These instructions Paul had, when present with them or by his former letter, given to his readers: and he now commends their careful remembrance of them. This does not contradict what follows: for 20, 21 refer, not to omissions or alterations, but to new practices which had crept in. And Paul does not say, I praise you all.

To these words, Estius appeals in proof that there is an unwritten, but binding, apostolic tradition. If we, like Paul's readers, had proof that certain instructions came actually from him, we should accept them as authoritative, even though unwritten. But I do not know of any unwritten tradition which can be confidently traced to an apostle.

**Ver. 3.** An important general principle, set up as a platform of approach to the specific matter of 20.

The head: placed by God above the body but in closest and vital union with it, to direct its action. The same word in Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 2:19 suggests that 'every man' refers only to believers, whom alone in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul has in view. For, although the headship of Christ rests originally upon our creation "in Him" and "through Him and for Him," (Colossians 1:16,) yet only those who believe are vitally joined to Him.

Head of woman: i.e. immediate head. For Christ is Head of the whole Church. 'Woman' is placed by God under the rule and direction of 'the man.' This is most conspicuously true of husband and wife. But since marriage is but a fulfillment of God's purpose in the creation of the sexes, these words are true of the sexes generally.

Head of Christ: even touching his divine nature. For the Eternal Son, though equal (John 16:15) to the Father is yet (John 5:26; 6:57) derived from and therefore (1 Corinthians 15:28) for ever subject to, Him. Of this eternal subordination, the eternal devotion and the historic obedience of the Son to the Father are an outflow. See under 1 Corinthians 3:23; 8:6. Notice that the headship is an objective relationship on which (Ephesians 5:22f) rests an obligation to obedience.

Before he warns women not to seek to escape, even in the matter of dress, from the subordinate position of their sex, Paul reminds them that order and subordination are a law of the kingdom of God; that the husband is himself under the direction of Christ; and that even within the divine Trinity the Son is, in accordance with the law of His being, obedient to the Father.

**Ver. 4.** Does not even suggest that this abuse existed at Corinth. For to woman pertains the whole argument of 20: and, for this argument, since it



turns on the relation of the sexes, it was needful to explain the contrasted position of the 'man.' By this contrast, as usual, Paul paves a way to his main argument.

Prophecy: see 1 Corinthians 12:10.

Puts to shame, etc.: proved in 1 Corinthians 11:7a. He forsakes his place of honor in the race, which a correct instinct has ever marked by a distinction of dress; and thus does himself dishonor. And this dishonor is visible and conspicuous in his treatment of 'his' own 'head.'

**Ver. 5a.** Same form as 1 Corinthians 11:4, giving force to the contrast. Since Paul expressly and solemnly (1 Corinthians 14:33ff) forbids women to speak in assemblies of the whole church, 'praying or prophesying' must refer to smaller and more private gatherings, probably consisting chiefly or wholly of women. For it would be ridiculous first to argue at length that they ought not to speak with uncovered heads, and then to forbid them to speak at all. On the other hand, common sense forbids us to extend this prohibition to prayer in the family circle. To what Paul refers, his readers knew.

Unveiled: without the peplum or shawl, which Greek women wore usually on their shoulders, but in public over their heads. See an engraving in Smith's 'Dictionary of Antiquities,' art. 'Peplum,' where a bare-headed man takes the hand of a veiled woman.

Puts to shame, etc. For she deserts, by obliterating the distinction of dress, her appointed position, which is to all God's creatures the place of honor; and does this by her treatment of 'her head,' the noblest part of her body. The careful proof of these words in 1 Corinthians 11:5b-15, proves that this abuse actually existed at Corinth. But Paul's mode of introducing it, (contrast 1 Corinthians 7:1; 8:1; 12:1,) and the analogy of 1 Corinthians 11:18, suggest, but do not absolutely prove, that he had learned it, not from their letter, but (cp. 1 Corinthians 1:11) by hearsay.

**Ver. 5b-15.** Proof and explanation of 1 Corinthians 11:5a. To pray with unveiled head is practically the same as removal of the hair, which is admitted to be shameful: 1 Corinthians 11:5b, 6. Reason of this in the original relation of the sexes: 1 Corinthians 11:7-10. A limitation: 1

Corinthians 11:11, 12. Appeal to the readers' sense of propriety and to the teaching of nature: 1 Corinthians 11:13-15.

**Ver. 5b-6.** The shaven woman: words well understood by Paul's readers. There were women at Corinth, the most shameless women who shaved off their hair, to obliterate entirely from their appearance all distinction of sex. With proofs of this, I cannot stain my pages. Paul says that the woman who lays aside her usual head-dress is practically the same as these shameless women. Of this argument, 1 Corinthians 11:6 shows the force.

Shorn, or 'cropped': the hair cut short.

Shaven: the hair removed altogether with a razor.

It is a shameful thing: point of the argument in proof of "puts to shame" in 1 Corinthians 11:5a. Human propriety declares it to be 'a shameful thing to a woman to be shorn:' and the case of those women at Corinth who actually were 'shorn or shaven' confirmed this verdict. What is the ground of this sense of shame? A universal and correct sentiment that the distinction of sex ought to be seen very conspicuously in a person's dress. Now, for a woman to remove her hair, was in part to obliterate this outward distinction of sex; and was therefore a trampling under foot of this universal sentiment of propriety. And, as a matter of fact, in Paul's day it was a mark of desertion of the dignity of womanhood. Paul says, and leaves his readers to judge of the truth of his words, that to lay aside the distinctive head-dress of women is practically the same. For it arose from a similar motive, viz. a wish to lay aside an outward mark of the subordination of the female sex. He therefore urges the woman who is determined to pray with a veil to carry her own practice to its logical result, and lay aside her natural as well as her artificial headdress, that thus she may see the direction in which it is leading her; or, if she be conscious of the disgrace of this; to act consistently and abstain from conduct which differs from it only in degree. It is now evident that a woman who "prays with her head unveiled dishonors her head." For, by her treatment of her head she does that which differs only in degree from what all admit to be shameful.

**Ver. 7-10.** Supports "let her be veiled," by expounding the truth which underlies the "shame" of 1 Corinthians 11:6, viz. that the distinction of the

sexes is original and essential. As usual with Paul, the reverse is put first to increase by contrast the force of the real argument, which lies in 1 Corinthians 11:8, 9.

Image: a visible representation of God, Genesis 1:26. By looking to man we see in outline what God is. Such, in a higher degree the Son of God, 2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3.

Glory of God: an outshining of His grandeur. See under Romans 1:21. Cp. 2 Corinthians 8:23; Ephesians 3:13. While contemplating man, we behold, and wonder at, the greatness of man's Creator. 'Glory' is explained by, and supplements 'image.' For there may be (cp. Romans 1:23) an image without glory; and a shining forth of splendor without its definite embodiment in an image. The words before us are true in many senses. But here Paul is speaking only of order and rule and subordination. He means that the male sex, as holding the highest power on earth and exercising undisputed sway over all else, is a visible pattern of God and a shining forth of His splendor. Therefore, since a veiled head is a mark, though an artificial one, of distinction of sex and of woman's subordination, 'a man ought not to have his head veiled.'

**Ver. 7b-10.** Glory of man: a manifestation of his greatness. That God provided for him a consort and helper so noble as woman, proves the worth of man in God's sight, and thus adds dignity to him. "Image" is omitted now: for in the one point Paul has in view, viz. supremacy, she is not a pattern of man. The distinction between the sexes, asserted in 1 Corinthians 11:7, 1 Corinthians 11:8 justifies by a simple restatement of Genesis 2:18, 21. Man was not originally derived from the woman, but the reverse. To this simple historic fact, 1 Corinthians 11:9 adds a reason for it. Man was the goal of creation. Woman was created (Genesis 2:18) for his pleasure and assistance. To make this conspicuous, man was created first; and woman was derived from him. Similar argument in 1 Timothy 2:13.

Because of this: because woman is, by the purpose of her creation, subordinate to man.

The woman ought: parallel to 1 Corinthians 11:7. Her head-dress proclaims that she belongs to the subordinate sex. Therefore, 'upon her

head,' the most conspicuous part of her body, the veiled woman bears a visible embodiment of the 'authority' under which God has placed her. She bears aloft, and thus exalts before men, the great principle of 'authority' which is the universal law of the kingdom of God and a source of infinite blessing to all who bow to it. Just so a soldier's obedience reveals and exalts the majesty of military discipline.

Because of the angels: a motive for obeying this obligation. The absence of "and" suggests that it is a motive, not additional to, but confirmatory of, that given in 1 Corinthians 11:9. Already (1 Corinthians 4:9) we have seen 'the angels' contemplating the apostle's hardships. They attend upon men, Hebrews 1:14; are placed side by side of the church militant, Hebrews 12:22; and desire to look into the teaching of the prophets, 1 Peter 1:12. Now, if they take interest in men, they must take special interest in those assemblies in which men unitedly draw near to God, and which have so great influence upon the spiritual life of men. We must therefore conceive them present at the public worship of the church. Now the presence of persons better than ourselves always strengthens our instinctive perception of right and wrong; and deters us from improper action. And the moral impression thus produced is almost always correct. To this instinctive perception Paul appealed by the word "shame" in 1 Corinthians 11:6; and has revealed its source in the purpose of woman's creation. He now strengthens his appeal by reminding us that we worship in the presence of the inhabitants of heaven. For every right instinct in us is strengthened by the presence of those better than ourselves. Surely a remembrance of these celestial fellow-worshippers will deter us from all that is unseemly.

To this exposition it may be objected that a feeling of shame would be strengthened still more by an appeal to the presence of God. But this objection would lie against all mention of angels in the work of redemption. For whatever they do God could do without them. Angels are mentioned, probably, in condescension to our weakness. We can more easily conceive of God by taking hold, in our thought, of those holy beings who, though creatures like ourselves, yet see His face and perfectly obey Him. Hence the mention of angels has been popular and effective in the religious teaching of all ages. Notice also that, after strengthening his appeal by

mention of angels, Paul strengthens it still further in 1 Corinthians 11:13 by mention of God.

Tertullian ('Against Marcion' bk. v. 8, and 'Veiling of virgins' ch. 7) understood these words to refer to the "angels whom we read to have been banished from God and from heaven because of desire for women," according to the tradition embodied in the Alexandrian MS. (LXX.) of Genesis 6:2, "The angels of God saw, etc." But the word 'angels' without further explanation suggests holy angels: and we cannot conceive such to be liable to be led into sin by sight of a woman's face; else they would be much weaker, in the matter of sensual desire, than average Englishmen now. Nor could spiritual damage, actual or feared, to angels good or bad, be a practical motive for women on earth.

See further in 'The Expositor,' 1st Series vol. xi. p. 20.

**Ver.** 11-12. A corrective against undue depreciation of woman, which might seem to be implied in 1 Corinthians 11:7-10. In the development of the spiritual life, of which Christ our Master is the element, each sex helps and needs the other. Both man's strength and woman's tenderness develop Christlike character in the other sex. As in 1 Corinthians 11:3, this is emphatically true of husband and wife; and is therefore true of the sexes generally as originally constituted. It is very conspicuous in the brothers and sisters of Christian families. Neglect of it is a great defect of monastic life. As usual, the stress lies in the second assertion, for which the first prepares the way. Just as in the Christian life woman needs man, so man needs woman. In 1 Corinthians 11:12. Paul proves this, from the original bodily relation of the sexes. He assumes that with this the spiritual life must accord. Cp. 1 Corinthians 11:3. It may, therefore, be quoted in proof of the relation of the sexes in the spiritual life.

From the man; restates Genesis 2:21f. 'The man' enters the world 'by means of the woman.' This suggests also our unspeakable debt to woman's maternal care. Paul thus places side by side, in the order of creation, the obligation of each sex to the other. And the differences noted are not so great as might appear. For man and woman and all else have alike sprung from God. Thus, as in 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul concludes his argument in the presence of the Supreme.

**Ver. 13-15.** Two abrupt appeals: viz. to his readers' instinctive 'judgment' of what is 'fitting;' and to the 'teaching' of 'Nature.'

To God: emphatic, It strengthens the former appeal by bringing us into the presence of Him whose voice all true human instinct is. To lay aside the veil, is to obliterate in part the distinction of the sexes. But this an inborn sense of propriety forbids. This instinctive judgment Paul traced in 1 Corinthians 11:7ff to the original constitution of the sexes; and strengthened it by pointing to the celestial partners of our worship. He now further strengthens it by reminding us that in prayer we speak 'to God.'

**Ver. 14-15.** A second abrupt appeal, supporting the former.

Nature: Romans 2:14, 27: the totality of material objects around us, animate or inanimate, as they exist in virtue of their mode of being, and apart from interference. It denotes here the bodily constitution of men and women. This ought to teach women not to pray unveiled.

Because a man, etc.: facts in 'Nature' which 'teach.' As usual, the weight is on the second clause, for which the first, by contrast, prepares the way.

It is a dishonor to him: as a partial effacement of the distinction of the sexes which Nature makes by giving (1 Corinthians 11:15b) to woman a more abundant covering of hair. So far, long hair robs a man of his honor which belongs to the stronger sex. All attempts to look like women betray an effeminate spirit; and are thus a 'dishonor' to men.

**Ver. 15.** A glory to her: A woman's long hair elicits admiration. The ground of this follows. 'The' long 'hair' is Nature's gift, to mark her sex. It increases the womanliness of her appearance. It therefore accords with the constitution of things; and so calls forth admiration.

Instead of a covering i.e. as a natural head-dress. This suggests how Nature's teaching bears upon the matter in hand. Nature has made a visible distinction of the sexes by covering woman's head with more abundant hair. This teaches that the God of Nature designs the sexes to be distinguished, in the most conspicuous part of their body. This natural distinction is recognized in the general judgment of mankind that it is dishonor for men or women to assume, in this respect, the appearance of

the other sex. Now when men stand uncovered before God, and women covered, they accept formally and visibly by their own action this distinction of sex, and the position in reference to the other sex which God has given. Whereas, if women appear in public unveiled they do something to obliterate a distinction written visibly and conspicuously by nature in the very growth of their hair. Thus 1 Corinthians 11:14, 15 develop, after 1 Corinthians 11:7-10 have revealed its essential basis, the argument of 1 Corinthians 11:6.

The rendering “does not nature teach you that, etc.” (A.V. and R.V.) is grammatical equally with that given above. But it would make the short and long hair the chief matter to be proved, and indeed the goal of the argument of 20. The rendering given above makes it merely a proof of what is evidently the chief matter here, viz. that women ought to be veiled.

In times much earlier than those of Paul, both Greek and Roman men wore long hair. But this does not weaken his argument, which rests on a natural bodily difference. And, that this practice was discontinued, and that in nearly all ages and nations a contrary custom has been usual, supports his argument. For this nearly universal custom proves that the race generally has recognized the meaning of the greater abundance of woman’s hair.

**Ver. 16.** Reveals the probable source or support of the practice objected to.

Thinks: looks upon himself, and with approval, as one ‘fond of strife.’ But strife is opposed to an abiding ‘custom’ of the apostles and of ‘the churches of God.’ This warning suggests that, from a boasted love of strife, some defended the women who rejected the head-dress. To such Paul says that in loving strife they stand alone among the churches.

## REVIEW OF SECTION 20

Paul cannot pronounce what is virtually a censure without remembering his readers' care to follow his directions in all matters of worship. To his implied censure he paves a way by stating the great principle that subordination is a rule of the kingdom of God, one extending even to the Eternal Trinity. This suggests, and the tenor of the whole section implies that the real source of the evil before us was a desire of some Christian women to claim equality with men. This claim Paul meets by reminding us that in the order and purpose of creation woman was made subordinate to man; and says that upon this original distinction rests the universally admitted obligation that the sexes be visibly distinguished in dress. His readers' instinctive sense of the propriety of this, he seeks to strengthen by reminding them that they worship in the presence of angels and that in their prayer they draw near to God; and by pointing to the shameless women who obliterated still further than the women in question the visible mark of their sex, and who did so evidently because they had deserted the dignity of womanhood. To the propriety of the visible distinction of the sexes, even Nature bears witness, by giving to women a more abundant covering. But, while insisting thus upon the subordinate position of woman, Paul declares that, in the spiritual life as in the order of Nature, neither sex is independent of the other. That he treats so seriously a matter apparently so trivial, warns us that in the Christian life even small defects may be serious; either as implying forgetfulness of important principles, or as first steps in a dangerous path.

From this section we learn that whatever is purely human, i.e. whatever is older than man's sin, is not set aside, but is glorified, by Christ in the Christian life. We learn also the value of our instinctive sense of right and wrong; and that it is strengthened and purified by study of the great truths objectively revealed, and by thought of the presence with us of those heavenly beings who do perfectly and always the will of God and of the presence of Him before whom even angels veil their faces.



## SECTION 21

### **THE LORD'S SUPPER MUST BE RECEIVED IN A MANNER SUITABLE TO THE SOLEMN TRUTHS THEREIN SET FORTH**

#### CHAPTER 11:17-34

*But, while giving this charge, I do not praise you that not for the better but for the worse you come together. For, in the first place, when you come together in church-meeting, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in some part I believe it. For there must needs be even sects among you, in order that the proved ones may become evident among you. When then you come together to the same place, there is no eating the Lord's Supper. For, his own supper each one takes beforehand in the eating; and one is hungry and another is drunken. Have you not (is this the reason?) houses for eating and drinking? Or, the church of God do you despise, and put to shame those that have not? What am I to say to you? Am I to praise you? In this matter I give no praise.*

*For, as to myself I received from the Lord, that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was being betrayed took bread, and, having given thanks, broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this for the remembering of me." In the same way also the cup, after having taken supper, saying, "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, for the remembering of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you announce the death of the Lord, till He come. So then, whoever may eat the bread or may drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. Let a man prove himself, and thus let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks for himself judgment, if he do not recognize the body. Because of this, among you, are many sick and weak ones, and some sleep. But if we recognized ourselves*

*we should not be judged. But being judged, by the Lord we are chastised, in order that we may not be condemned with the world.*

*So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait one for another; if any one is hungry, let him eat at home: in order that you may not come together for judgment. And the remaining matters, whenever I come, I will set in order.*

A second disorder at church-meetings, viz. improper conduct at the Lord's Supper, 1 Corinthians 11:17-22: the facts and purpose of the institution of the Supper, and the proper way of receiving it, 1 Corinthians 11:22-32: exhortation to better conduct, 1 Corinthians 11:33-34.

**Ver. 17.** This charge: probably the very strong charge implied in 20, viz. that women do not lay aside the veil. For 1 Corinthians 11:17b contains no definite charge; and 1 Corinthians 11:22 is too distant. Paul prefaced his charge in 20 with words of praise. He now tells us that his praise does not extend to the matter of which he is going to speak, which he introduces by saying that their church gatherings tend to do them more harm than good.

**Ver. 18.** Explains and justifies 1 Corinthians 11:17b.

First: Without any "second" following it, as in Romans 1:8; 3:2; implying that the misconduct mentioned is not the only one. In 1 Corinthians 11:34 we find other matters which need to be set in order, but which are allowed to remain till Paul's arrival at Corinth; and in 1 Corinthians 14:23-35, other definite abuses 'when' they 'come together,' though perhaps not sufficiently great as was the matter of 1 Corinthians 11:20ff, to justify the strong language of 1 Corinthians 11:17.

In church: simplest meaning of the word, viz. a formal gathering of the people of God; as in 1 Corinthians 14:19, 35. See note 1 Corinthians 1:9.

I hear: contrast 1 Corinthians 1:11. The news continues to come in from various sources.

Divisions: not necessarily organized parties, but whatever separates brother from brother. They are mentioned only for a moment, to open a way for 1 Corinthians 11:20ff, where we find divisions at church-meetings

based on different degrees of wealth. These divisions were, therefore, probably not coincident with those of 1 Corinthians 11:10.

In some part; suggests Paul's hope that, though he cannot doubt that the report is true in the main, it may be exaggerated. Notice the courtesy, mingled with seriousness, of these words.

**Ver.** 19. Paul's reason for believing that there is some truth in the report.

Sects: organized parties, Acts 5:17; 15:5; 26:5; 24:5, 14; 28:22; implying, but more (cp. Galatians 5:20) than, "divisions."

Must needs be: the defects of human nature render inevitable not only separations between brethren, but organized church-parties. But this necessity is no excuse for those who create divisions: for it rests upon their foreseen and inexcusable selfishness. Cp. Romans 16:17f; Matthew 18:7; Lk 17:1. These words do not necessarily imply that the sects already exist; nor do they suggest, as does Matthew. 18., that they are still future, but says simply that there are, or will be, sects. Cp. Acts 20:30. Notice that Paul does not mention the sects with express blame or warning, but merely as a reason for his belief that the report he has heard is in part true. He knows what human nature is, and is therefore not surprised at the existence of divisions.

Approved-ones: 2 Corinthians 10:18; 13:7; James 1:12: they who have passed satisfactorily through the test and are thus proved to be genuine. In 1 Corinthians 11:19b, we have a purpose of God. He uses the inevitable and foreseen tendency to church-parties as a means of showing to the church-members ('evident among you') those who already to His eye are the 'approved-ones.' This suggests that not all the church-members had thus approved themselves to God. There is no severer test of loyalty to Christ than the existence around us of church-parties. They who in such circumstances behave aright are 'evidently approved.'

1 Corinthians 11:18, 19 point out beforehand a serious consequence of the abuse in hand, viz. Division in the church; and, even in that act of worship which is specially designed (1 Corinthians 10:17) to be a center of unity, divisions tending to the outward and formal separation of Christians. Nearly all sects have arisen from abuses within the church

**Ver. 20-21.** When then you come together; takes up the same words in 1 Corinthians 11:18, and continues the justification of 1 Corinthians 11:17.

To the same place; 1 Corinthians 14:23; adds definiteness to ‘when you come together,’ as does “in church-meeting” in 1 Corinthians 11:18.

The Lord’s Supper: a meal provided by our Master, Christ; in contrast to ‘his own supper.’ Cp. 1 Corinthians 10:21.

There is no, etc.: i.e. it is impossible that that which they eat is a supper provided by Christ. Of this, 1 Corinthians 11:21a is proof. It seems to imply that at Corinth the Lord’s Supper was kept by each one bringing bread, possibly also other food, and wine; and that each one, instead of putting his food into the common stock and thus sharing it with others, used to ‘take’ back ‘before’ the supper began the food he had brought.

Takes (not eats) beforehand. Perhaps, before service began each appropriated to himself the food he had brought; and then, after the blessing had been pronounced, all began at the same time to eat what each had previously taken.

Each one; implies that the practice was universal. And, if those who brought the best food took it for themselves, there would be nothing left for the poorer members but what they had themselves brought. This would cause the “divisions” of 1 Corinthians 11:18: for it would create in the church-meetings a conspicuous distinction of richer and poorer members.

Is hungry, is drunken: extreme cases of this distinction. But we have no right to say that they never occurred. These words imply either that the Lord’s Supper was a real meal, capable of satisfying hunger, and at which it was possible to drink to excess, or that it was connected with such a meal. The hunger of some members in the midst of plenty, and the insobriety of others, were a gross and conspicuous abuse.

**Ver. 22.** Question after question reveals the unseemliness of their conduct. “Is your reason this, that you have no other place in which to satisfy hunger and thirst except that in which you unite to worship God?” This implies that they did wrong in making the Lord’s Supper a meal for

supplying bodily need. The next question exposes a special and more serious abuse in this their wrong mode of keeping the Supper.

Do you despise, etc.: explained by put to shame. By taking back before the Supper began the richer food which they had themselves brought, and thus leaving for the poorer members nothing but their own poorer food, the rich made them feel their poverty even in the church assembly and thus 'put' them 'to shame.' And this was contempt for 'the church of God.' For it betrayed ignorance of the essential and infinite grandeur of the position of every member of the family of God. To men guilty of such conduct Paul knows not 'what to say.' He bids them judge for themselves whether they deserve 'praise.'

I give no praise: his own solemn answer to his own question.

In this matter: a conspicuous exception to his praise of them in (1 Corinthians 11:2) other matters. It marks the completion of the matter begun in 1 Corinthians 11:17.

**Verses 20-22** may be illustrated by Xenophon's 'Memoirs of Socrates,' book iii. 14.1: "Whenever, of those who came together for supper some brought a small portion of food and others much, Socrates used to bid the attendant boy to put the small portion before the whole company, or to divide a part to each. They then who brought much could not for shame refuse to partake that which was set before the whole company, and in return to put their own food. They put therefore their own food before the whole company. And, since they had nothing more than they who brought little, they ceased bringing much food." Probably from this Greek custom arose the practice of church-members bringing their own food to the Lord's Supper; and from this arose, even in a Christian church, the abuse which Socrates corrected. Paul condemns both (1 Corinthians 11:21a) the custom, as a mode of keeping the Lord's Supper, and (1 Corinthians 11:21b) its abuse. Whether this custom prevailed in other churches, we have no means of judging. At Corinth both the custom and its abuse were fostered by the worldliness of the church.

**Ver. 23-34.** After condemning this double abuse, Paul narrates the facts and words of the institution of the Lord's Supper, 1 Corinthians 11:23-25; explains them, 1 Corinthians 11:26; draws from them a practical and

general inference about the proper spirit and manner of partaking the Supper, 1 Corinthians 11:27-32; and a special inference about the above-mentioned abuses at Corinth, 1 Corinthians 11:33, 34.

**Ver. 23 — 25.** Reason why he cannot praise them. In contrast to their misconduct, Paul tells what he has learned from Christ.

I received: not “we received.” This implies that in some way peculiar to Paul, not by ordinary tradition, ‘the’ risen ‘Lord’ made known to him His own words at the Last Supper. Cp. Galatians 1:11f. The mode of this revelation, whether by angel, or direct voice of the Spirit, or a divinely-sent human messenger, is quite unknown to us. [Had the words come from the actual lips of Christ, another preposition would probably have been used, as in 1 Thessalonians 4:1, etc.] But the fact is plainly asserted here. Nor need we wonder that words so important were specially communicated to the one prominent apostle who was not present at the Last Supper. The close verbal similarity of 1 Corinthians 11:24f to Luke 22:19f, by no means implies that Paul learned from Luke, or from the same source as he. That Luke learned from Paul, (cp. Luke 1:2,) is much more likely. Notice here an account of the Last Supper unquestionably apostolic, and which an apostle declares that he received from Christ.

I also delivered: (1 Corinthians 11:2; 15:3; ) emphatically directs attention to the communication, as well as the reception, of these facts. That Paul found it needful to repeat what he had said before, suggests to the readers that the abuses arose from their forgetfulness.

In the night: graphic picture.

Bread: or a loaf.

Gave thanks: Matthew 15:36; John 6:11. That this is mentioned in all four accounts of the Last Supper, suggests that there was something in our Lord’s demeanor while giving thanks which deeply impressed all present.

Which is for you: i.e. “My body exists for your good. For you it was created: and for you the historic facts of my earthly life took place.” But the broken bread was a silent and touching witness that Christ had specially in view the fact of His death.

Do this: break and distribute the bread: spoken probably while Christ was giving the bread to His disciples. Matthew 26:26.

For the remembering of ME; by the disciples present and by His followers to the end of time. This was to Christ a definite object of thought; and was the aim of the Lord's Supper. The word denotes both 'remembering' and 'bringing' to others' 'remembrance,' ideas closely associated.

In the same way: i.e. He 'took' and 'gave thanks.'

After having taken supper; Luke 22:20; directs attention to the fact that with the eating of the broken bread the Supper was finished.

The New Covenant: see under 2 Corinthians 3:6.

In my blood. Because Christ's 'blood' was shed, we have the 'Covenant' with God of which the 'cup' is a symbol and condition. The 'blood' is the link between the 'cup' and the 'Covenant.'

As often as you drink it: only here. These words assume that the Supper will be repeated, and point out the spiritual purpose of it which must ever be kept in view.

The essential agreement of the four accounts (Matthew 26:26ff; Mark 14:22ff; Luke 22:19f (See Appendix B.)) of the institution of the Lord's Supper is a complete proof, apart from the authority of Scripture, of their historic correctness. That in all four, otherwise varying, accounts we have the words 'This is my body' and 'The New Covenant,' proves indisputably that these very words or their Aramaic equivalents were actually spoken by Christ. But, that each account was altogether verbally exact, is hardly possible. For it would involve a repetition unsuited to the solemnity of the occasion. But this does not disprove that the New Testament is, as Paul held the Old Testament to be, (see my 'Romans,' Dissertation iii. 4, ) the word and voice of God. For we can well conceive that the Holy Spirit, who, if Paul's view be correct, preserved the sacred writers from theological error and exerted upon them a directive influence which we cannot measure exactly, nevertheless forebore to save them from trivial verbal inaccuracies, and aided them only so far as His aid was needful for the ends He had in view. Indeed these trifling variations are a gain to us. For each supplements the others: and each is, if Paul's view of

the authority of the Bible be correct, God's voice to us expounding the meaning of the Lord's Supper. In view of this gain we can afford to be in doubt about the exact form and order of the words which fell on that memorable night from the lips of Christ.

We may perhaps reverently suggest that Paul's account is the more likely to be verbally exact. For the variation "This is my blood" (Matthew. Mark.) may be accounted for by the similar words preceding, 'This is my body.' Whereas, the changed form 'This cup is the New Covenant' (Paul and Luke) cannot be accounted for except as being genuine. And we shall see that this change guards from abuse the words 'This is my body.' Therefore, among four accounts, all which have for us divine authority, we may give a preference to that which Paul says he received specially from the Risen Savior.

How these words of Christ were likely to be understood by those who first heard them, we will now inquire. We place ourselves in thought among the assembled disciples. At the close of the supper the Savior takes a loaf or cake of bread, breaks it, and gives the broken pieces to the disciples, saying, 'This is my body, which is for you.' They could not possibly conceive Him to mean that the bread was actually His own body. Else He would have two bodies visible in the same room, each to be given for his disciples. And the body crucified the next day was then living and uninjured: whereas the bread was already broken. They could only understand His words to mean that the bread was symbolical, and the breaking and distribution of it prophetic, signifying and announcing that the body now living before their eyes was to die, for their spiritual nourishment. Cp. Isaiah 20:2ff; Hosea 1:4. Just as we point to a picture and say, without fear of being misunderstood, This is my father, or my house, so the disciples would naturally understand our Lord's words. And their interpretation of them would be confirmed by the words following. For the cup was not even practically identical with the Covenant. A cup given and received denoted that the Covenant was ratified: whereas the New Covenant was not ratified till the actual blood of Christ was shed. But the poured out wine was a prophetic symbol of the blood soon to be shed. And, therefore, the cup given and received was a silent announcement of the Covenant of which that blood was the pledge. This interpretation, which would naturally suggest itself at once would be



confirmed by the repeated words, 'For the remembrance of Me.' For the symbol of the broken body and of the Covenant ratified in blood would recall forcibly to those who in after years broke the bread and drank the wine the memory of Him who died that they might live.

This exposition does not assume that the disciples as they gathered on that night round the Savior understood the full import of His words and actions. How these were understood by Paul, we must gather from his own exposition of his own narrative, and from 1 Corinthians 10:16-21, etc. This will enable us to test, and will supplement, the exposition just given of the words spoken by Christ.

**Ver. 26.** Explains and justifies 1 Corinthians 11:25b, by showing how the Supper is a memorial of Christ.

You announce: either by the very act of breaking and eating, or by concurrent word of mouth. Probably the former. For the word 'announce,' used elsewhere only for verbal announcement, is very appropriate to remind us that the silent rite of the broken bread and poured out wine has a voice, and declares in plainest language that Christ died for us. And this silent announcement makes the rite a memorial of Christ.

Till He come: for a memorial is needful only while the remembered one is absent. These words teach us to eat the Supper in faith and hope, knowing that He who died still lives, and will return; and imply plainly that the rite is to be kept up till the end of time.

**Ver. 27.** Practical inference from the words of Christ in 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25, as explained by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:26.

Unworthily: without self-examination, 1 Corinthians 11:28; or contemplation of the crucified body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 11:29. Doubtless Paul refers specially to those who made his solemn rite an occasion of ostentation. All are unworthy. But they who receive the Supper as sinners for whom Christ died do not 'eat' it 'unworthily.'

Guilty of the body, etc.: more fully, "liable to penalty for sin against the body and blood of Christ." So James 2:10. This follows from 1 Corinthians 11:24f as expounded in 1 Corinthians 11:26. In the Lord's Supper we set before ourselves and others, in the most solemn manner,

Christ crucified for us and for the world. And this setting forth of His death is a condition (see note below) on which, and therefore a channel through which, we personally receive the blessings which come through His death. Consequently, every misuse of the sacred symbols keeps back from us these blessings; and is thus an insult to, and a sin against, the body nailed to the cross and the shed blood. Similarly, an insult to the symbols of royalty is an insult to the king, and in its measure a revolt against his government. This is very conspicuous in countries under foreign rule. Notice the change from “and” in 1 Corinthians 11:26 to ‘or’ in 1 Corinthians 11:27. Whoever treats ‘unworthily’ either symbol, sins thereby against Christ, and therefore against both ‘the’ pierced ‘body and the’ shed ‘blood of the Master.’ But from this we cannot infer, as Estius does, that they who receive the bread only (according to the custom for laymen in the Roman Church) receive both the body and blood of Christ. For, that he who breaks one commandment breaks all, does not imply that he who keeps one has thereby kept all.

**Ver. 28.** Practical application of the foregoing solemn inference.

Prove himself: inquire into his own motives in coming to the Lord’s table and his disposition in relation to the death of Christ.

And thus: i.e. having discovered that his motives are pure, or, having laid aside any impure motives he may detect. This Paul assumes.

Eat and drink; teaches plainly that it was usual for all Christians to do this. Estius simply denies it without proof; and expounds 1 Corinthians 11:28b to mean “either eat or drink.”

**Ver. 29.** Supports 1 Corinthians 11:28 by a modified restatement of 1 Corinthians 11:27.

Eats and drinks for himself judgment: i.e. by the very acts of eating and drinking he causes sentence (evidently God’s sentence of condemnation) to be pronounced against himself. In other words, his unworthy reception will be followed by punishment. It is therefore, practically equivalent to “guilty of the body, etc.” in 1 Corinthians 11:27.

Judgment: cp. Romans 2:27, and see notes.

The body: viz. that crucified for us. Further specification is needless.

Recognize: or ‘discern’ or ‘distinguish:’ perceive its real worth and thus distinguish it from others. Similarly we might say, pointing to a picture, This is my father: do you recognize him? Unless, when we receive the symbols we look through them to the great reality they represent, to the precious body nailed to the cross for us, and receive them in a fitting manner, by our very acts of eating and drinking we cause sentence to be pronounced upon ourselves. For we thus sin against (1 Corinthians 11:27) the body and blood of Christ. For the various readings here, see Appendix B.

**Ver. 30.** Practical and actual outworking at Corinth of the foregoing general principle, supporting the warning therein implied.

Among you: emphatic. You can see the consequences in your own church.

Sleep: are dead, as in 1 Corinthians 7:39. These words refer probably to bodily sickness and death, inflicted by God as punishment for abuse of the Lord’s Supper. For, though they might be correctly used of spiritual weakness and loss of spiritual life (cp. Ephesians 5:14) as consequences of such abuse, yet we must not, without any hint or any reason in the nature of things, set aside their simplest meaning. In the apostolic church the power of God manifested itself before men’s eyes both in works of mercy and in punishment. Cp. Acts 5:5; 13:11, with which this verse is a coincidence. The severity of the punishments proves how great was the sin. Whether before receiving this letter, the Corinthian Christians knew the spiritual cause of this sickness and death, we cannot now determine.

**Ver. 31-32.** A double comment on the facts of 1 Corinthians 11:30. These penalties may be avoided; and are inflicted in mercy.

Recognized ourselves: same word as in 1 Corinthians 11:29, and cognate to ‘judge’ and ‘condemn.’

Judged: the sentence which they who (1 Corinthians 11:29) eat and drink without recognizing the body bring upon themselves, and which was followed in some cases by the penalties of 1 Corinthians 11:30.

We: Paul puts himself by courtesy among the sick and weak ones. “If we recognized our own true character as compared with others and with what we ought to be, (and thus pronounced sentence upon ourselves,) sentence

would not be pronounced upon us by God.” i.e. the condemnatory sentence implied in the punishments of 1 Corinthians 11:30.

Chastised: by the above mentioned punishments. This word is expounded in Hebrews 12:6-11.

Condemned with the world: final sentence of eternal death. Paul says that the penalties of 1 Corinthians 11:30 were inflicted by the Master, in order to lead the smitten ones to repentance, and thus save them from the severer condemnation which will fall upon the unsaved world; (cp. 1 Corinthians 5:5; ) and that, if they had recognized the true nature and impropriety of their own conduct, they would have escaped even this lighter sentence. Thus Paul discovers a purpose of mercy in the severe punishments of 1 Corinthians 11:30. If the death of those who “sleep” was preceded by sickness which gave opportunity for repentance, even this (cp. 1 Corinthians 5:5) might be in mercy. And the tone of 1 Corinthians 11:31, 32 suggests this. Otherwise, bodily death would be, as in Acts 5:5, itself a final condemnation.

**Ver.** 33-34. Practical inference from 1 Corinthians 11:23-32, in reference to the special abuse at Corinth.

Come-together (twice) marks the conclusion of the matter introduced in 1 Corinthians 11:17. That the words ‘to eat’ are sufficient to specify what Paul refers to, suggest that they did not ‘eat’ together except at the Lord’s Supper.

Wait one for another: let each refrain from appropriating food till all are ready to do so together, in contrast to “take beforehand his own supper.” The context implies that, when the united meal is ready, the whole food, by whomever brought, must be eaten by all in common. Paul thus corrects the second abuse mentioned with astonishment in 1 Corinthians 11:22.

Let him eat, etc.: i.e. do not make the Lord’s Supper a meal to satisfy hunger. This corrects the first and broader abuse of 1 Corinthians 11:22.

That you may not, etc.: belongs to both abuses.

For judgment: parallel with “for the worse” (1 Corinthians 11:17) in the form assumed in 1 Corinthians 11:29. Paul bids his readers, instead of taking before others are ready the food they have themselves brought, to

wait for the united meal; and, again, not to make the sacred rite a means of satisfying hunger, which ought to be done at home; lest their meetings tend to bring upon them condemnation and punishment.

The remaining matters: perhaps those implied in the word “first” in 1 Corinthians 11:18. If so, these also pertained to church-meetings.

Whenever I come: 1 Corinthians 4:18ff.

I-will-set-in-order; implies Paul’s apostolic authority as a ruler in the church. This purpose implies that in various churches he left unwritten directions, which would naturally assume the form of the apostolic traditions of 1 Corinthians 11:2. But we cannot now say with certainty that any particular direction or teaching, not found in his epistles, came from his lips.

## REVIEW

Paul has heard, and has reason to believe, that at Corinth the Lord's Supper has degenerated into a mere meal to satisfy hunger and thirst; and that the church-members take back for themselves the food they have brought, thus erecting barriers between brethren meeting together in one place. He rebukes these abuses by narrating and expounding the facts and words of the institution of the Supper as revealed to him by Christ. From this we learn that they who misuse the sacred symbols are guilty of sin against the body nailed to the cross and the shed blood; and that to them participation of the bread and wine brings condemnation and punishment. Indeed, upon some of their number bodily punishment of sickness and death has already fallen. This, the guilty ones would have avoided, had they understood the meaning of their own conduct. And it was inflicted in mercy, to save them from a more terrible condemnation. Paul therefore urges each one to put to the test, when coming to the Lord's Table, his own motives and disposition. And, in reference to the special abuses at Corinth, he bids them supply their bodily needs at home, and wait till all are ready to share together the sacred meal. The other matters which need attention may wait till his arrival at Corinth.

THE LORD'S SUPPER: its primitive mode of celebration, and its significance.

That the excesses corrected in 21 occurred at the sacramental Supper, is quite certain. For, the 'Lord's Supper' in 1 Corinthians 11:20 can be no other than 'the bread' and 'the cup of the Lord' in 1 Corinthians 11:27. And Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11:21, viz. that to take beforehand each his own supper made it impossible for the meal to be the Lord's Supper, implies that the food thus taken was not merely eaten in connection with the sacred symbols, but was actually that food and drink which ought to be received by all together as a supper provided by Christ. This proof is confirmed by the solemn warning in 1 Corinthians 11:27, supporting the reproof in 1 Corinthians 11:22, that they who eat and drink unworthily are guilty of the body and blood of Christ. This warning Paul applies expressly in 1 Corinthians 11:33 to the abuses at Corinth. We cannot therefore accept the opinion of Chrysostom, Estius, and others,

that these abuses occurred at a semi-spiritual repast connected with the Lord's Supper.

If these abuses occurred at the Lord's Supper, Paul's reference to them is our earliest and most valuable source of information about the primitive mode of its celebration. That private members were able to appropriate beforehand the food designed for the communion, implies that they were not in the habit of receiving the bread and wine from the officers of the church. That Paul did not reprove them for not receiving the elements thus, and did not even recommend it, although it would have effectually prevented the abuses in question, shows clearly that he did not look upon the reception of the elements from the hands of the church officers as essential to the validity of the sacrament. And the same is confirmed by the absence of any censure on the officers of the church, who, if the distribution of the sacred symbols had been committed to them only, would have been chiefly to blame. From this we infer with certainty that when Christ instituted the Supper, He did not direct, and that at the time when this Epistle was written the apostles had not directed, that it should be administered only by the officers of the church. Nor have we in the New Testament any hint that the apostles afterwards gave this direction.

That the sacred feast was looked upon as a means of satisfying hunger and that drinking to excess was possible, reveals how widely different was the mode of its celebration then from that of succeeding ages. Contrast Justin, 1st 'Apology' 65: "After the prayers we greet one another with a kiss. Then there is brought to the leader of the brethren [*τῷ προεστώτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν*] a cup of water and mixed wine [*κραματος*] and he, having taken it, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe through the name of His Son and the Holy Spirit, and to some length makes thanksgiving for having been counted worthy of these things from him. When he has finished the prayers and the thanksgiving all the people present confirm them by saying, Amen. The deacons, as we call them, give to each of those present to partake of the bread, wine, and water, over which thanks has been given; and for those not present we take them to their houses." Also Tertullian, 'On the soldier's crown' ch. iii.: "The sacrament of the eucharist we receive from the hands of none but those who preside."

The force of the above arguments is felt, and put very clearly, by Estius. To evade it, he is compelled to suppose that the abuse in question occurred, not at the Lord's Supper, but at a repast partaken in connection with it. This opinion I have already attempted to disprove.

The mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper during the latter part of the apostolic age, we have no means of tracing. Consequently, the limitations of its administration to the officers of the church cannot claim undoubted apostolic authority. But it has been, as a matter of church order, the universal, or nearly universal, practice of the entire Church of Christ in all its sections and in all countries, from the second century to the present day. From so general a practice, as a matter of church order, few will have, without very special reasons hardihood to dissent.

The spiritual meaning and purpose and operation of the Lord's Supper, now claim attention. Already, under 1 Corinthians 11:25, we have endeavored to expound the words of institution as they would be understood by those who first heard them. These words we will now study again in the light of the great doctrines of the Gospel assumed and taught in the Epistle to the Romans. And the results thus obtained we will compare with the references to the Lord's Supper in this Epistle.

Paul taught (see my 'Romans,' Dissertation i. 3) that God accepts as righteous, i.e. He pardons the sins of, all who believe the Gospel; that this pardon could not have been, had not Christ died; and that by the inward presence and activity of the Holy Spirit believers are so united to Christ that His purposes and life and love are reproduced in them. And this we accepted as the teaching of Christ.

These doctrines will explain John 6:33-59, which is a link connecting them with Christ's words at the Supper. Christ could correctly call Himself in John 6:35 "the bread of life:" for just as bread nourishes (and without such nourishment we must die) only by its own destruction, so Christ (see Romans 3:26) could give us life only by His Own Death. And that, to give us life, His body must needs be bruised and His blood shed, justifies abundantly, and fully accounts for, the strong words of John 6:53: "Except you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, you have no life in you." How His hearers were to eat and drink, etc., i.e. how they were to appropriate the results of His death, Christ tells them plainly in John 6:35,



40, 47, viz. by coming to Him and believing Him. And He tells them in John 6:56 that the spiritual results of this will be an inward, spiritual, mutually interpenetrating contact of themselves and Christ. We see then that in John 6:33-59 Christ does but assert the great doctrines of the Epistle to the Romans, and asserts one of them, No. 2, under the most forceful image possible. And in no other sense but this can I conceive men to eat and drink practically the body and blood of Christ.

We come now, prepared by our study of John 6:33-59, and of the Gospel as taught by Paul, to listen again to the words of Christ as recorded in 1 Corinthians 11:24f. In 1 Corinthians 11:26 Paul tells us that (just as the Gospel is a verbal announcement that through the shedding of Christ's blood God covenants to pardon sin and to give eternal life to all who believe so) the Lord's Supper is an announcement of Christ's death by visible emblematic action. And this is given as an explanation of the words of Christ. We infer then that "the remembrance of Me" is chiefly a memory that Christ by dying gave, and now gives, us life; and that Christ ordained the Supper in order to keep this great doctrine before the mind and in the heart of His people. And for this end no more effective means could be devised. For this doctrine is the only conceivable explanation of the prominence given to Christ's death both by the institution of the Supper and by the words of institution. We therefore cannot doubt that it was instituted in order to be an abiding monument in the Church of the truth and importance of this doctrine.

Again, the proclamation of this truth is the divinely chosen means of conveying, to those who believe it, the life which results from Christ's death. And, to those within sound of the Gospel, the Truth is the only channel through which this life flows. Now the preached word gives life only through the presence and agency of the Spirit of Christ, who breathes life and power into what would otherwise be empty sound. Cp. 1 Corinthians 2:10ff. The universality of this principle compels us to apply it also to the Truth as set forth visibly in the sacred emblems. Therefore, just as in the preached word, in some sense to all who hear it and in the fullest possible sense to those who receive it by faith, we have the real, living, active, objective presence of the Crucified and Living Savior, so we need not hesitate to say that in the same sense we have His presence in the Lord's Supper.

Again, Christ has bidden us expressly, at the most solemn period of His life and in the most solemn manner possible, to keep the sacred feast; and Paul's exposition in 1 Corinthians 11:26 makes this command binding to the end of time. This command of Christ makes participation in the Supper an essential condition of salvation. For, not to eat and drink would be direct disobedience to Christ; and, therefore, a renunciation of the covenant of which the cup is an emblem. Consequently, with exceptions noted below, only by eating and drinking the bread and wine can we share the results of Christ's pierced body and shed blood. Now, practically, in our thought, we cannot distinguish between a condition performed in order to obtain that which depends upon it and an instrument with which we lay hold of something we desire. Consequently, we cannot but look upon both faith and the Lord's Supper (both being simply conditions of salvation) as instruments by which we lay hold of Christ. We may therefore say correctly, as in 1 Corinthians 10:16, that by receiving the material elements we become sharers of the body and blood of Christ; and that our entire spiritual life, (cp. 1 Corinthians 10:17a,) each moment received from Christ, is a result of our reception at intervals of the bread and wine.

Yet the Lord's Supper is not another condition of salvation beside faith. Rather, Christ's command has made intelligent faith impossible without participation in the Supper; just as it is impossible to exercise faith without repentance or to retain it without confession. Cp. Luke 13:3; Romans 10:9. For we cannot believe that we enjoy Christ's favor while we deliberately disobey His word. Moreover, circumstances may prevent us from partaking the Supper: and our reception of it is at intervals. Under all circumstances and each moment we live by faith.

The suitability of the Lord's Supper as a condition of salvation, and the relation of this condition to faith, the one inward condition are not difficult to trace. The Lord's Supper is the most searching test of our faith that Christ is actually and supernaturally present and active in the hearts of His people. And, that Christ is thus objectively present in us, is an essential truth, and the great characteristic truth, of Christianity. Little faith is required to believe that a preached word may do good: for the connection between the means and end is evident. But, to expect spiritual good from material bread and wine, implies reliance upon the presence and infinite power of Him who fed the five thousand and made water into wine, and

who has promised to be in His people as their life to the end of time and through eternity. Thus the sacramental feast tests, develops, and testifies, our faith in the supernatural presence and activity of Christ in His Church.

Another purpose of the Lord's Supper is suggested in 1 Corinthians 10:17; viz. to give formal and visible unity to the followers of Christ. Such visible unity was of infinite importance for the continued existence of Christianity in the face of the hostile and powerful influences which beset its early course. And we cannot conceive any means so likely to secure visible unity as this simple rite. To perpetuate the rite and thus to give corporate form to His followers, Christ instituted it at the most solemn period of His life, and, by bidding us observe it in remembrance of Himself, made it practically a condition of salvation.

Again, that Christ commands, as a condition of salvation, a bodily reception of material bread and wine, gives to these elements a mysterious and unique dignity. (Similarly, God's choice of a spoken word as the channel of salvation gives to the human voice an incomparable dignity.) Since the eating and drinking which Christ requires are real, we may say that His command makes our reception of the spiritual, and ultimately material, benefits purchased by the death of His body and the shedding of His blood conditional, with exceptions marked below, on our reception into our own bodies of the material bread and wine. Christ has thus placed these elements of food in a unique relation to Himself. Remembering this, as we look at them we may almost forget the material food produced by nature and by human manipulation, and think only of the pierced body and shed blood, without which there had been no bread and wine on the sacramental table and of the spiritual nourishment we derive therefrom. To the eye of faith the symbols disappear, and the infinite and amazing reality alone remains.

We shall understand now all that Paul says about the Lord's Supper. Well might Christ say "this is my body." For, had not the Eternal Son assumed a human body to be pierced for our life, there had been no broken bread in His hands then. Had not that body died, there would be no bread upon our sacramental table now. And, but for the pouring out of His blood, and but for the New Covenant between God and us (virtual in that night, ratified now) through His blood, there would be no poured out wine. Therefore, as

setting forth and implying the most amazing event of all time, and as a solemnly appointed condition of sharing its eternal results, the broken bread is the body of Christ, and the full wine-cup is the New Covenant in His blood. And, as setting forth and implying and bringing about (as an essential condition and in some sense an instrument) a participation in the results of His death, the bread and the cup are (1 Corinthians 10:16) “fellowship in the body and blood of Christ.” In the same way all manifestations of the Christian life are results of the sacred feast. Therefore, the outward and visible unity of believers (1 Corinthians 10:17) is a result of their joint reception of the same symbolic food. Since the Supper was ordained by Christ, it is, with all its consequent blessings, (1 Corinthians 10:21) “a table of the Lord.” Since it is a visible symbol of Christ crucified and a solemnly ordained means of consolidating and extending His kingdom, any indignity done to the feast is done to Christ, and specially to the body and blood bruised and shed for us. Such indignity arises from oversight of the awful reality, even ‘the’ crucified ‘body’ of Christ, which the sacred symbols are designed to bring to mind. On this indignity sentence was already pronounced by Christ: and at Corinth upon many persons penalty was already inflicted. Consequently, they who receive the elements without a spiritual view and apprehension of Christ Crucified, receive thereby judgment. Thus Paul’s entire teaching about the Lord’s Supper (and to his teaching the New Testament adds nothing) is but a development of the words of institution in the light of the great principles asserted and expounded in the Epistle to the Romans.

I cannot overlook the fact that some godly men, I refer chiefly to the Society of Friends, set aside altogether the outward and visible celebration of the Lord’s Supper. How they reconcile this with Christ’s words, “Do this,” and with Paul’s explanation of them in 1 Corinthians 11:26, I do not know. That they lose much by refusing, even in ignorance, to obey the express and solemn command of Christ, I cannot doubt. But, if their refusal arises from sincere, even though mistaken, loyalty to Christ, God will not refuse them a part in that New Covenant of which they refuse the visible pledge and condition. And for the loss they sustain by absence from the Lord’s table, no small part of the blame rests upon those who by their misrepresentation and misuse have brought it into contempt. But, were I to absent myself as they do, I should thereby exclude myself from

the Covenant. For I should refuse to do what I believe Christ has expressly and solemnly bidden. It is worthy of notice, in view of 1 Corinthians 10:17, that the united influence upon the world of the Society of Friends bears no proportion to the personal excellence of its members.

In the New Testament the Lord's Supper is never said to be a sacrifice. But its connection with the Jewish Passover reminds us that it is in some sense a sacrificial act. The analogy of the Jewish rites and the Christian rite is very close. The Jewish sacrifices set forth in symbol the truth that man's salvation comes through the death of the innocent: and, as solemnly ordained by God at (Exodus 24:8) the ratification of the Old Covenant, they were a condition on which its benefits were obtained. Consequently, after disuse in times of spiritual declension, the sacrifices were restored (2 Chronicles 29:7ff, 20ff) in times of revival. Now the Lord's Supper is the one recurring rite of the New Covenant. Of this Covenant, the most conspicuous benefit is forgiveness of sins: Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 8:12. Therefore, while receiving the Supper in faith, we claim from God the benefits of the Covenant, and especially the forgiveness of our sins. We thus present to God, for our own sins, in our hearts and by faith, the pierced body and shed blood of Christ: for we hide us beneath His cross from the penalty of our sins. And, while we do so, the blood of Christ saves us from the anger of God: for (Romans 3:25) "in His own blood" Christ becomes through our faith a propitiation for our sins. Thus, in the Lord's Supper we do a spiritual act analogous to the sprinkling of the blood by the High Priest once a year in the Most Holy Place. But, since we do but present to God as a propitiation for our own sins the blood already once for all shed on Calvary, it is better to speak of the Sacrament as a sacrificial act rather than as a sacrifice.

We conclude then that Christ ordained the Supper in order to give great prominence, in the eyes of even the humblest believer, to the great truth that our life comes through His death; also as a means of testing, developing, and confessing to the world, our belief that salvation is an outworking of a power which cannot be explained by, and is altogether above, the laws of mind and morals; and as a means of giving to His people corporate and visible unity in face of the world. In order to secure, to the end of time, the observance of the rite by all His followers, and thus to secure the aims just mentioned, Christ made the Supper, by expressly

commanding it, an indispensable condition of salvation. And, since in the kingdom of God there are no useless conditions. He determined to make it a channel through which, by His own presence and activity, He would pour the spiritual benefits therein set forth. We infer that, as in the preached so in the symbolic word, the designed benefits are received only by those who believe. And, since unbelief in those who partake the Supper implies resistance to the truths therein conspicuously and forcefully portrayed, and great dishonor to Him who died even for those who reject Him, we infer that in a very terrible sense the sacred rite is, to those who misuse it for their own base ends, an thus betray their ignorance of its true significance, “an odor (2 Corinthians 2:16) from death tending to death.”

About the Lord’s Supper the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH teaches, (‘Council of Trent,’ Session xiii. canon 1,) together with much important gospel truth, that “in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist is contained, truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and accordingly the entire Christ;” that (Session vii. canon 7) “Grace is conferred by sacraments of this kind always and to all, so far as God is concerned, if they receive them with correct ritual;” and that (Session xiii. ch. 4) “By consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a conversion of the entire substance of the bread into the substance of the body of our Lord Christ and of the entire substance of the wine into the substance of His blood. This conversion is conveniently and appropriately called Transubstantiation.” The Roman Church guards (Session xxi. ch. 3) this doctrine by teaching that the entire Christ is present both in the consecrated bread and in the wine.

The LUTHERAN CHURCH is fairly represented in the following extract from the ‘Lutherische Dogmatik’ of Kahnis, 21. 6. “Luther’s teaching is this. When Christ said, “Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you,” He said, in the form of syndoke, That which I give you to eat is my body which is given for you, i.e. is here imparted to you, for the forgiveness of sins, i.e. as sign, warrant, and medium, of the forgiveness of sins for believing receivers. According to the conception of a sacrament, which is a visible word, the chief matter in the Lord’s Supper is the word of the forgiveness of sins. Thereby the promise of the Lord’s supper is suspended on the condition of faith. But independent of faith is the

reception of the body of Christ, which in, with, and under, the bread and wine is distributed.” Also the ‘Apology for the Confession of Augsburg’ declares: “We defend the opinion received in the entire church that in the Lord’s Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, and are truly offered with those things that appear, viz. with the bread and wine.” Luther rejected Transubstantiation. But he and the Lutheran Church assert strongly that Christ is locally present in the bread and wine; and is thus received, as Savior or as Judge, by all who receive the sacred symbols.

But no hint is given, in the words either of Christ or of Paul, of any change in the substance of the consecrated elements. Indeed, even after the blessing we read in 1 Corinthians 11:26 “eat this bread.” The words “This cup is the New Covenant” warn us not to infer such change from the words “This is my body:” and we have seen that Paul’s argument is complete without it.

As proof that in the Lord’s Supper Christ is actually received (to their condemnation) even by unbelievers, Lutherans appeal to the arguments of 1 Corinthians 10:16ff, and 1 Corinthians 11:27ff. But it is always perilous to assume an important doctrine not expressly taught in Scripture because it seems to be implied in a Scripture argument. That Paul’s argument does not imply this doctrine, and that 1 Corinthians 10:21 directly contradicts it, I have in my notes endeavored to show. And we notice that in the New Testament Christ is never said to be spiritually present except to bless. We have also seen that, although the words of Christ imply a real and special presence of Christ in the sacred ordinances, they do not imply His local presence in the bread and wine and in the stomachs of those who receive them. Thus, in my view, the Lutheran doctrine falls to the ground. For, its advocates appeal in support of it only to Scripture: and Scripture does not teach it. But Roman Catholics appeal not only to Scripture but to the authoritative teaching of the Church; and thus introduce into the question before us an important and far-reaching element which cannot be discussed here. All that can be required from me as a commentator is, to show that the doctrines in question are not taught in the Bible.

In absolute opposition to both the Roman and the Lutheran churches, ZWINGLI taught (‘Confession to Charles V.’ Art. 7) “I believe, indeed I

know, that all the sacraments are so far from conferring grace that they do not even distribute it;” and that the Lord’s Supper was nothing but a mode of recalling the death of Christ and of confessing faith in Him. How far this teaching falls below the great and solemn significance of the rite, my exposition has already shown. Yet we need not wonder that to this extreme and rationalistic view Zwingli was driven by the assumptions of the papacy.

CALVIN asserted (‘Institutes’ bk. iv. 17. 10, etc.) in opposition to Zwingli the supernatural and life-giving presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, making the ordinance to be a special channel of spiritual blessing; and, in opposition to Luther, denied His local presence in the bread and wine, and asserted that only those who receive the elements with faith thereby receive Christ. His teaching has been accepted, to speak generally, by the Reformed Churches of the Continent, and in the articles of the Anglican Church. And it agrees in the main with the above exposition of the words of Christ and of Paul. I notice, however, that Calvin and many Anglican writers cling to the teaching that in some sense believers actually though spiritually receive in the Supper the body and blood of Christ. But to these words I can give no meaning except that believers receive the spiritual benefits which result from His incarnation and crucifixion: and, to express this by the words “receive the body of Christ” seems to be very inappropriate.

The teaching of the Lutheran, and of the Reformed, Churches is ably set forth in the ‘Lutherische Dogmatik’ of Kannis and the ‘Christliche Dogmatik’ of Ebrard, each of which writers has given special attention to this matter. The Roman Catholic doctrine is defended with great ability, candor, and devoutness, in the ‘Symbolik’ of Moehler. This last work I strongly commend to Protestant theologians. Only by a study of the best writings of those who differ from us can we understand their opinions and correctly estimate our own.

After all, the differences between the Roman, Lutheran, and Reformed teaching, as discussed above, are not so great as at first sight they appear; and are indeed rather verbal than real. Each doctrine contains important elements of truth. Many godly Roman Catholics cling to transubstantiation as being the strongest protest they can make against



prevalent materialism. And even Zwingli, in his strong rebound from papal assumptions, still upheld the divine institution and perpetual obligation of the sacred feast. Luther and the Roman Church assert that, though all who receive the Lord's Supper therein receive Christ, it nevertheless depends upon themselves whether Christ comes into them to save or to condemn. And Calvin taught that, even to those who receive it unworthily, the Lord's Supper has terrible reality, a reality of condemnation. So far then the differences are not serious.

But I am compelled sorrowfully to believe that around and in close connection with the Lord's Supper are taught doctrines not only false but exceedingly hurtful. The Roman Church ('Council of Trent,' session xxii.) lays great, and not altogether improper stress, upon the sacrificial aspect of the Supper. Now sacrifice implies priesthood: and the universal priesthood of believers is plainly taught in 1 Peter 2:5. But, for this priesthood, the Roman Church practically substitutes a priesthood in the Christian Church similar to that of Aaron in Israel. In other words, it claims for its ministers the sole right of distributing the symbols which Christ commands His people to receive. And it requires, before the distribution of the bread, which only it gives to the laity, confession to a priest, and such confession as shall satisfy the priest. So 'Council of Trent,' session xii. ch. 7; session xiv. 3, 6. By this claim the Roman Church places itself practically between the sinner and Christ; and claims virtually, for the support of its authority, the very solemn words of Christ and of Paul about the sacred Supper. I am compelled to say, in spite of my sincere affection for our brethren of the Roman Church I hope to spend eternity in the One Universal Church above, and while acknowledging our deep obligation to that Church for preserving the light of Christianity, often obscured but still burning, during the long night of the dark ages-I am compelled to believe that the claim of the Roman hierarchy to be the sole ordinary depositary of the benefits conveyed by Christ to His people through the Supper, has produced, directly and indirectly, terrible and wide-spread injury.

So far as the New Testament teaches, this claim is met by the proof given above (p. 199) that neither Christ nor His apostles claimed for the officers of the church the exclusive distribution of the elements. They preferred the risk of the abuses mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:21f; and even when these

abuses actually existed, refrained from limiting the distribution of the elements to the church officers, rather than permit sacerdotal assumptions to have the smallest foothold in Scripture. It is right to say that the priestly monopoly of the right to administer the Lord's Supper is utterly rejected by both Luther and Calvin. This places an infinite distance between the otherwise similar teaching of Luther and of the Roman Church.

It must not be thought that I look upon the foregoing arguments as sufficient to overturn the Roman claims. For these claims rest ultimately upon the authority of the Church, an authority resolutely maintained with increasing clearness and boldness by a succession of the greatest fathers of the Church and by a general consensus of the Church during many centuries. I have merely endeavored to show that these claims have no basis whatever in Scripture. The question whether we are bound to concede to the Catholic Church the authority which Cyprian and Augustine and others claimed for it, and the immense issues involved in this question, lie beyond the scope of the present work.

The priestly monopoly of the administration of the Lord's Supper, which Luther resisted, is claimed for the ministry of the Anglican Church by Anglo-Catholics. Their views are set forth with ability and fairness in Sadler's 'Church-Doctrine.' With almost all he says in the long chapter on "Holy Communion," I heartily agree. Indeed this chapter is little more than an able defense of Calvin's teaching. But in his chapter on the "Christian Priesthood," an element is introduced which changes completely the aspect of the Lord's Supper. He reminds us that the "commission to celebrate the Lord's Supper was not given to the whole church gathered together, but to the twelve alone." But from this we might infer as easily that the Supper was designed for the apostles only as that its administration was limited to them. Mr. Sadler then says that the apostles must have committed to others the power to administer the Supper; because, otherwise, apart from the apostles themselves the Supper could not have been held at all. But this takes for granted the chief point, viz. that the supper cannot be duly received except from the hands of a church-officer. And of this he gives no proof. Christ must have given, either verbally or through the guidance of His Spirit, directions about the details of the Supper fuller than His recorded words. What these directions were, we can learn only from the

writings of the apostles and from the practice of the primitive church as portrayed in the New Testament. But here not one word is said limiting the administration of the Supper to church-officers. And we have found (1 Corinthians 11:21f) church-members actually receiving the Lord's Supper without official administration, and doing so without a word of reproof from Paul, even when reproving them for other irregularities in the same matter. Thus the claim to the sole right to administer the Lord's supper in this country, a claim made by Anglo-Catholics for the ministers of the Anglican Church, and involving most serious consequences, finds in Scripture no support whatever and finds there a clearly implied contradiction.

See further, from myself and various others, in a volume containing a 'Symposium on the Lord's Supper.' (Hodder and Stoughton.)

## DIVISION VI

### ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

#### CHAPTERS 12-14

#### SECTION 22

#### *THE ONE SPIRIT GIVEN TO ALL IMPARTS TO EACH A SPECIAL GIFT*

#### CHAPTER 12:1-11

*About the Spiritual Gifts, brothers, I do not wish you to be ignorant. You know that when you were Gentiles, men led away you were after the voiceless idols, as it might be that you were led. For which cause I make known to you that no one speaking in the Spirit of God says, Anathema (Or, Accursed,) Jesus. And no one can say, Lord Jesus, except in the Holy Spirit.*

*But varieties of gifts of grace there are; but the same Spirit. And varieties of ministries there are; and the same Lord. And varieties of works done there are; but the same God who works all things in all.*

*But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit, with a view to profit. For, to one through the Spirit is given a word of wisdom; to another, a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to a different one faith, in the same Spirit; to another, gracious gifts of healing, in the same Spirit; to another, workings of miracles; (In Greek, powers.) to another prophecy; to another discernings of spirits: to a different one, kinds of tongues; and to another, interpretation of tongues. All these works the one and the*

*same Spirit, dividing to each one individually, according as He pleases.*

An entirely new subject, occupying DIV. 6: Compare 1 Corinthians 7:1; 8:1. At the close of it Paul corrects two abuses in church-meetings, each connected with this subject, in addition to those corrected in DIV. 5: But the cursory, though appropriately placed, mention of them, suggests that they were not the chief motive for this important DIVISION of the Epistle. And the matter-of-fact introduction of the subject, taken together with 1 Corinthians 7:1, suggests that it was mentioned in the letter from Corinth

**Ver. 1.** Spiritual gifts, or ‘spiritual-things’: Romans 1:11, 15:27; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 9:11; 10:3f; 14:1; etc: things pertaining to, i.e. bestowed by, the Spirit of God, 1 Corinthians 12:3f. The lists in 1 Corinthians 12:7ff, 28ff, show that the word is used here as a technical term for the special and various capacities for Christian work, ordinary or extraordinary, with which the Spirit enriches those in whom He dwells. This technical sense was very appropriate. For, these capacities were a conspicuous proof that they who possessed them were animated by a spirit higher than their own.

This new subject suggests to Paul, by contrast, the powerlessness of idolatry, 1 Corinthians 12:2. He begins it by stating the relation between inward spiritual gifts and the historic Jesus, 1 Corinthians 12:3; and the variety and the one source of these gifts, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; of which he gives examples, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. As in the human body various powers, all needful, are variously allotted, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; so in the church, 1 Corinthians 12:28-30. Yet some gifts are greater than others, 1 Corinthians 12:31: and love is both the best way to the greater gifts and itself greater than the greatest of them, 1 Corinthians 13. Prophecy is more useful, and therefore more to be desired, than speaking with tongues, 1 Corinthians 14:1-25. The possession of gifts is no excuse for disorder, 1 Corinthians 14:26-39.

**Ver. 2.** The new powers, far surpassing man's natural power, possessed by the early Christians, remind Paul, by contrast, of the worthless images of heathendom, whose unreasoning votaries his readers formerly were.

Voiceless: a conspicuous proof of worthlessness, (Habakkuk 2:18f; 3 Macc. 4:16,) in contrast to the new powers of speech so characteristic of early Christianity. That idols cannot speak, proves that they cannot hear and understand.

Led, led away; graphic picture of the unreasoning action, and the bondage, of idolaters, While frequenting the temples, and following the processions, of heathenism they were really surrendering themselves to the guidance of an unseen power operating upon them as circumstances or events might determine. Men are idolaters usually not by their own choice, but by circumstances. In Ephesians 2:2f we have a similar contrast of past and present.

**Ver. 3.** Their unfavorable former position moves Paul to instruct them in the matter before us. This suggests the disadvantage, for understanding Christianity, of converts from heathenism as compared with those who, like Paul and Timothy, had been trained from childhood in the Jewish Scriptures.

Speaking in the Spirit of God: moved, guided, and controlled by the Spirit, as in Romans 8:15; Matthew 22:43. Cp. 2 Samuel 23:2.

Anathema: as in Romans 9:3. The Spirit never moves a man to say that Jesus is under the curse of God. Cp. 1 John 4:2f.

No one can say, etc.: It is absolutely impossible for any one not moved by the Spirit to look up to Jesus and call Him "Master," meaning what he says; i.e. to look at Jesus with the feelings with which we look at earthly masters, waiting for commands and expecting reward.

Jesus: appropriately used, twice, to designate our Lord as a man among men.

This verse embodies two important principles already asserted in 1 Corinthians 2:10-16, viz. that inward spiritual life is always in harmony with historic Christianity, i.e. that the Spirit of God, who is the animating principle of all devotion to God, ever leads men to recognize the claims of

the carpenter of Nazareth; and that without the inward presence of the Spirit none can recognize rightly these claims. This latter principle implies that every one who looks up to Jesus and from the heart calls Him Master (cp. 1 Corinthians 1:2) possesses the inward presence of the Spirit, and therefore possesses a measure of capacity for Christian work. Upon this broad basis rests the whole teaching of 1 Corinthians 12.

**Ver. 4-6.** Variety in the just-mentioned unity, and emphatic reassertion of the unity.

Gifts-of-grace: technical use, as in 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30f, Romans 12:6; 1 Peter 4:10; corresponding with the technical use of ‘spiritual things’ in 1 Corinthians 12:1. See Romans 1:11. Instead of giving to one man the whole round of the capacities which His favor prompts Him to bestow, the One Spirit who dwells in all believers gives different capacities to different men.

Ministries: see under Romans 12:7: the various positions and kinds of work allotted by the One Master to His various servants, requiring from each some work for the common good. The technical sense “deacon” is forbidden here by the breadth of the statement. Cp. 1 Peter 4:10.

Lord, or ‘Master’; correlative to ‘ministry,’ and pointing to “Lord Jesus” in 1 Corinthians 12:3. See under Romans 1:4.

Works-done: results produced, corresponding to ‘works all things.’ Whatever is done ‘in’ any one is done by the Father, who sent His Son to be our Master, and His Spirit to be the motive principle of our life. Thus, as usual, Paul leads us up to the presence of the Father; and lingers there. Moreover, that the gifts are from the spirit and that the ministries are service to Christ, is evident: but it is needful to say expressly that the results achieved are wrought by the Father.

Notice the rising climax, revealing the relation of these various gifts to the three persons of the Trinity, and culminating in the presence of Him who is Supreme even in the Godhead. Cp. Ephesians 4:4ff. Paul has already said that the Holy Spirit, who dwells in all believers, ever moves them to call Jesus their Master. But their capacities are different, fitting them for different kinds of service, and producing different kinds of results. Yet all the capacities come from one Spirit: the different kinds of service are for

the same Master: and the different results are produced by the same First Cause.

**Ver. 7.** Each-one: emphatic, repeated in 1 Corinthians 12:11, and leading on to “all” (three times) in 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13. Not only (1 Corinthians 12:3) does every servant of Christ possess the Spirit, but amid various gifts, kinds of service, and results produced, every one has some capacity for usefulness.

Is-given: i.e. day by day; not once for all as bodily capacities are given. Only so far as each moment the Spirit works in us can we do spiritual work.

Manifestation of the Spirit: (2 Corinthians 4:2, see under Romans 1:19:) the Holy Spirit dwelling in each believer and made apparent by the capacities for usefulness which He imparts.

With a view to profit: i.e. benefit to the church arising from gifts possessed by each member. This leads towards the argument of 1 Corinthians 12:21-26. Each has a capacity for usefulness, an outflow of the Spirit, given to him for the general good.

**Ver. 8-10.** List of gifts, in support of 1 Corinthians 12:7, making very prominent that all come from the One Spirit. The list is broken up, by a slight verbal change, into three series: intellectual gifts, ‘wisdom’ and ‘knowledge,’ 1 Corinthians 12:8; gifts conspicuously miraculous, under the heading of ‘faith,’ 1 Corinthians 12:9, 10a; gifts connected with ‘tongues,’ 1 Corinthians 12:10b.

Word of wisdom: not the same (cp. 1 Corinthians 1:5) as wisdom; mentioned specially here because it is in the utterance (cp. 1 Corinthians 2:13) of wisdom that the Spirit within is manifested to those around.

Wisdom and knowledge: found together in Romans 11:33; Colossians 2:3; Ecclesiastes 1:16, 18; 2:21, 26; 9:10. Cp. Colossians 1:9; Philippians 1:9. The difference is difficult to mark in exact detail; but, in broad outline, is quite clear. ‘Knowledge’ is mere acquaintance with things past present, or future. ‘Wisdom’ is, from the Christian point of view, such a direct grasp of underlying principles and eternal realities as enables a man to choose the right goal and the best path in life. See note under 1 Corinthians 2:5. Paul’s



readers were rich in knowledge: and (1 Corinthians 8:2) it tended to inflate them. But he could not (1 Corinthians 2:6) speak to them ‘wisdom:’ nor does wisdom ever inflate. ‘Wisdom,’ as the highest mental excellence may be distinguished, as here, from ‘knowledge:’ from “understanding,” (Colossians 1:9,) a capacity for interpreting the details of daily life; and from “prudence,” (Ephesians 1:8,) a thoughtful capacity for choosing the best means for any ends we have in view. [For the distinction as understood by the Greeks, Aristotle, ‘Nicom, Ethics’ bk. vi. 5-10 is very instructive.]

Through according to, in the Spirit: three aspects conspicuously put, of the relation of these gifts to the Spirit. He is the channel through which they come, the standard with which they agree, and the element in which they are possessed and used. Only by the operation of the Spirit, can we understand the words of spiritual men, and thus take up ‘knowledge,’ i.e. learn what they knew before us: and this communication of knowledge accords with the nature of the spirit; as does the revelation of the deeper mysteries of ‘wisdom.’

**Ver. 9-10a.** Second series of gifts.

**Faith:** belief, not of the Gospel, (for this is, to all Christians, the one source of all Christian life and usefulness, Romans 12:3,) but of some special revelation not given to all. Its position at the head of the second series, suggests a connection with the gifts which follow. And 1 Corinthians 13:2 suggests a special relation to the next pair of gifts. Power to work miracles was probably, according to an abiding principle (Matthew 9:29) of the Gospel, conditional on faith. We can conceive that God revealed to a man His will to work a miracle through his hands; and that, if the revelation was embraced with confident assurance, the miracle followed. In 2 Kings 2:14 the effort of such faith, and in Acts 3:6 its confident assurance, find voice. Probably, as in the latter case, the faith of the worker was usually a conspicuous accompaniment of the miracle. Hence the special mention of faith here.

In the same Spirit: as the surrounding element and the divine source of confident assurance that God will fulfill His promise, i.e. in this case, His promise to work a miracle through the believers agency. See under Romans 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:13.

Gifts of healings: in the plural, because each cure was a special and fresh gift of God.

In the One Spirit: is the one source of the many cures wrought by many persons. These words are not repeated, because it is quite evident that they are true of all the following gifts.

Workings of powers: any other supernatural manifestation of God's power, beside the healing of diseases. Probably cures were mentioned first as being the most common kind of miracle.

Prophecy: an utterance of truth under a special, and probably temporary, influence of the Spirit. See note, 1 Corinthians 14:40.

Discernment: power to distinguish the Holy Spirit's voice from that of evil spirits. Akin to "discern" in 1 Corinthians 14:29; 11:29, 31; and in the same sense. Cp. 1 John 4:1.

Spirits: a general term, as in 1 John 4:1. When men spoke under the influence of a spirit other than their own, it was needful to determine its nature.

It is not unlikely that this second pair of gifts was, like the first pair, a manifestation of 'faith' in a special and personal revelation; that God first revealed to a man His purpose to make him a mouthpiece of the Spirit or a judge of the professedly inspired words of another man, and then fulfilled His purpose in proportion to the man's faith. 'Faith' is not conspicuously at the head of this second series of gifts, probably because these were occasional manifestations of the spirit, preceded by belief of a special revelation; whereas, in the 'word of wisdom', etc., as a more abiding endowment, faith was less conspicuous though doubtless always present as an essential condition. The gift of tongues possibly was not preceded by a special revelation.

**Ver. 10b.** A third series.

Gifts of tongues, etc.: see note under 1 Corinthians 14:40.

**Ver. 11.** Repeats, after a survey of the different kinds of gifts, the chief thought of 1 Corinthians 12:4-10, viz. that the various capacities for usefulness have one source, the Holy Spirit.

Dividing: cognate to “varieties” in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, marking the end of the matter there introduced.

Individually: so that each has a gift of his own.

As He likes; asserts emphatically that the distribution of the gifts springs simply and only from the sovereign choice of the Spirit.

He: or ‘It:’ see Romans 8:16. The original has no pronoun.

That ‘the Spirit’ has a ‘will,’ and is yet in 1 Corinthians 12:4ff distinguished from and placed side by side of, the Father and the Son, implies clearly that He is a Person distinct from Them, and that the words Spirit of God are not a mere description of the Father as animating men. For to have a ‘Will’ is the essence of personality. Still more clearly is this implied in the words of Christ recorded in John 16:13: “He will not speak prompted by Himself; but as many things as He may hear He will speak.” For He who can listen to the Father must be a person distinct from Him. Again, since the Spirit possesses the entire knowledge of God, as our spirits know all that we know, (1 Corinthians 2:10f,) He must be infinite and therefore divine. For the finite cannot comprehend the Infinite.

The matter of spiritual gifts is now fairly before us. We have learned that the Spirit ever prompts men to bow to Jesus; and that His presence is an indisputable condition of service of Jesus. We have had a list of various capacities for usefulness possessed by the early church; and have been taught emphatically and repeatedly that all these are from the One Spirit of God, who fits us for service of the One Master and produces results wrought by God in us. The way is now open for the wonderful parable of 23.

With 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 compare Homer’s ‘Iliad,’ bk. xiii. 730ff.

“To one God gave warlike works To another, dancing; to a different one harp and song. In another’s breast far-seeing Zeus puts A noble mind, of which many men reap benefit.”

## SECTION 23

**AS IN THE HUMAN BODY THERE ARE MANY MEMBERS, ALL  
NEEDFUL FOR THE GENERAL GOOD, SO IN THE CHURCH**

### CHAPTER 12:12-30

*For, just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body; so also is Christ. For indeed in one Spirit we all were baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether servants or freemen. And we all were made to drink one Spirit. For also the body is not one member, but many. If the foot say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body; it is not on this account not of the body. And, if the ear say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body; it is not on this account not of the body. If all the body were eye, where would be the hearing? If all were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has put the members, each one of them, in the body, according as His will was. And if all of them were one member, where would be the body? But now are there many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, No need of thee have I: or again the head to the feet, No need of you have I. But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those which we think to be less honorable parts of the body, these we clothe with more abundant honor: and our unseemly parts have more abundant seemliness. But the seemly parts have no need. Yes, God has mixed together the body, to that which falls short having given more abundant honor; that there may be no division in the body, but that the same care the members may have on behalf of each other. And both if one member suffers, there suffer with it all the members: and if one member is glorified, there rejoice with it all the members. And you are Christ's body, and members part with part.*

*And some indeed God placed in the church—first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miraculous powers, then gracious gifts of healings, helpings, governings, kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all miraculous powers? have all gracious gifts of healings? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?*

This section explains the Spirit's allotment of different gifts to different church-members, by the analogy of the human body. The analogy is asserted in 1 Corinthians 12:12; and justified in 1 Corinthians 12:13 by the spiritual facts of the church. Its lower side is expounded practically in 1 Corinthians 12:14-26; 1 Corinthians 12:27 reasserts the analogy: 1 Corinthians 12:28-30 develop its higher side.

**Ver. 12.** A comparison closely interwoven (cp. 1 Corinthians 6:15; Romans 12:4; Ephesians 1:23; 4:16, 25; 5:30) into the mind of Paul; and among the sacred writers, peculiar to him.

Is one: as having one interest, and being instinctively conscious of this. See below. A living body is the most wonderful instance on earth of oneness amid variety. With great emphasis Paul says that 'all the members, though they are many,' not only belong to, but 'are, one body.' Just as we have many bodily members which together make up one undivided body, 'so also' it 'is' with 'Christ.'

**Ver. 13.** Proof of "so also is Christ."

We all: emphatic, in contrast to the human body.

Baptized into, or 'for one body': see note, Romans 6:3. It denotes either the aim or the result of baptism; perhaps here the latter. They were made by baptism members of an outward and visible community which has a oneness similar to that of a human body. Nothing suggests any but the common sense of water-baptism. For the baptism of the Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16) is never mentioned by Paul: and here 'body' in contrast to 'Spirit' suggests an outward and visible community, and an outward rite of admission to it.

In One Spirit: put prominently forward as the invisible source of the oneness of the visible community of the baptized. Just as the oneness of

the human body flows from the one living spirit which animates, and moves in harmony, all the members. This oneness, a dead body has lost. Consequently, baptism is an effective union only when administered 'in the Spirit' as its surrounding and life-giving element. In this sense Paul's readers 'were in one Spirit baptized into' and made members of 'one' living 'body.' This assumes, as does 1 Corinthians 6:11, that all were genuine believers; and that in all such the Spirit is, 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 12:3. If at Corinth there were false brethren, these are left out of view.

Jews or Greeks, etc.: national distinctions and the widest social distinctions being completely broken down.

And we all, etc.; gives further prominence to the great teaching of 1 Corinthians 12:13a, which permeates 1 Corinthians 12, and lies at the base of the comparison before us, viz. that every genuine member of the church has received into himself, henceforth to be to him the source of a new life, the One Spirit who makes the many members into one living body. Notice here two aspects of the Spirit's relation to us. We receive Him into ourselves; and we are ourselves in Him. For He both permeates our being, moving and filling us from within, and by so doing raises us into a new element in which we henceforth live.

This verse does not imply that Paul's readers received the Spirit in the moment of their baptism. Cp. Acts 10:44-48. Baptism, like the Lord's Supper, was commanded by Christ, and thus made a condition of salvation indispensable in all ordinary cases; and for the same reason, viz. to give to, and maintain in, His people a visible and united front before the world. There was, therefore, no way to the blessings of the Gospel except through baptism. And Paul could correctly say (Titus 3:5) that God saved His people "through the laver of the new birth, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit;" and Ananias (Acts 22:16) could say, "Have thyself baptized and wash away thy sins." Consequently, without a purpose to be baptized there could be no intelligent and sustained faith; and therefore no reception of the Holy Spirit. But, nevertheless, the spirit is received by faith when we believe: Galatians 3:14; John 7:39. In this verse Paul simply links together, as necessarily connected in all ordinary cases, the outward rite and the spiritual element which alone gave it reality.

**Ver. 14.** Parallel with 1 Corinthians 12:12a, developing for use the comparison there introduced. Paul accounts for the differences of nationality and rank in the church animated by one Spirit, by reminding us that 'also the' human 'body' is not all alike but consists of 'many' members. This is made very clear in 1 Corinthians 12:15, 16 by the evident absurdity of inferring that because one member is unlike some other it therefore does not enjoy the privilege of belonging to the body. This inference might be drawn not merely by the lowest members but by those next to the highest; and with equal absurdity. Notice that the members mentioned compared themselves, as men do, with others resembling, though superior to, themselves.

**Ver. 17-18.** Not only is difference from others no proof that a member does not belong to the body, but it is a real gain to the body, which otherwise would be seriously defective. For the greater abundance of the best faculties would in no way supply the lack of the lesser ones.

But now: as things actually are, in contrast to all the members being alike.

God has put: the existing arrangement is His work.

According as He willed: when He formed the eternal purpose to make man. Paul strengthens his appeal to the Creator by pointing to His sovereign and deliberate determination.

Each one of them; suggests God's special forethought about each member, and thus rebukes those who would have chosen otherwise.

**Ver. 19-20.** The absurdity of the objections in 1 Corinthians 12:15, 16, already exposed by the question 1 Corinthians 12:17, which evoked the contrary statement of 1 Corinthians 12:18, is still further exposed in 1 Corinthians 12:19 by another question, making with those of 1 Corinthians 12:17 a climax. Not only would a body in which the whole was endowed with the same faculties, even with the noblest faculties be seriously defective, but it would be no body at all, i.e. it would lack that which we all conceive to be the very essence of a living body. For a body is something composed of many and various parts endowed with widely different and mutually-supplementing capacities, all animated by one spirit and having one interest which all subserve. Therefore, to conceive all members to be equally endowed, would destroy our conception of a living

body, a conception which we all feel to be not only very good but divinely wonderful. 1 Corinthians 12:20 is parallel with 1 Corinthians 12:18; and repeats the statement of 1 Corinthians 12:14 and 1 Corinthians 12:12, after showing the absurdity of the contrary supposition.

**Ver. 21.** Continues the description, begun in 1 Corinthians 12:20, of the human body, by adding a fact implied in 1 Corinthians 12:17 and bearing very broadly on the Church of Christ. Without the labor of ‘the hand,’ the lustre and the sight of ‘the eye’ would perish. For, all the members ‘need’ that which each one contributes to the general good, which is also its own good.

The head, the feet: widest extremes. Probably Paul thought only of the human body, not of Christ, the Head of the Church. As divine Christ needs (Acts 17:25) no one. Yet perhaps we may say reverently that as incarnate He needs, for the purpose and according to the purpose for which He became man, the services and even the sufferings (Colossians 1:24) of those whom He joins to Himself as members of His body. The argument of Estius that, since Christ does not need man’s help, ‘the head’ here must be the pope, is overturned by his own words a few lines below: “The metaphorical body is not bound to square with the human body in all points, but in those only for which the reference or comparison was chosen.”

**Ver. 22-24a.** But, etc.: in contrast to “No need of you have I.”

Much rather: we are much more ready to say what follows than what goes before. To which ‘weaker members’ Paul refers, it is needless to determine. Many members, ‘necessary’ to the body, are incapable of self-defense: and the strength of the strong members is ever ready to protect them. A special reference to the eye, is made unlikely by 1 Corinthians 12:21.

Less-honored: viewed by us with less pride. For these we show our esteem by ‘clothing’ them, for their well-being and comfort, carefully and it may be luxuriously and beautifully.

Unseemly: stronger than less honored, completing the triple climax.

Seemliness: respectable in appearance, because suitably clothed. The face has ‘no need’ of the care bestowed upon, and the expensive covering



provided for, the feet. Nor do we adorn the eye. Thus we treat the members of our body, not according to their excellence or our esteem of them, but according to their ‘need.’

**Ver.** 24b-25. But God, etc.: parallel to 1 Corinthians 12:18; as, in some sense, are 1 Corinthians 12:21-24a to 1 Corinthians 12:15-17.

Mixed together: He has so joined the members as to make them ‘one body.’

Having given, etc.; represents the honor paid to the less conspicuous parts of the human body as ordained by God. And rightly so. For God has put the members of the body in such relation to each other that the stronger and more beautiful are compelled for their own good and indeed for their existence to defend and care for, and thus to honor, the weaker members. Consequently, by God’s design, ‘in the body’ there is ‘no schism;’ i.e. no member seeks its own good to the disadvantage of others, thus separating itself and its aims from the other members.

Have the same care: a bold personification. Each member acts as though moved by anxious care for the well-being of the others. And it was in order to evoke this harmony and mutual care that God 80 joined the members together that they are compelled to pay special honor to the less honored ones. In other words, God has so linked our bodies together that we are compelled to treat our members not according to their beauty but their need; and has done this that there may be complete harmony in the body, and that each of our members may put forth its peculiar powers for the general good, thus securing for every part of our body the benefit of all the various powers with which its various members are endowed.

**Ver.** 26. Instinctive recognition, by the members, of this common interest. Pain to any member at once affects all, thus moving them to joint action for its alleviation.

Suffer with: the Greek original of our word “sympathize.”

Rejoice-with it: a bold personification prompted by the intense feeling of oneness which pervades the human body.

**Ver.** 27. Sudden transition from the human body, to which our attention has been for a time exclusively directed, to Paul’s readers, to remind them

that, as proved in 1 Corinthians 12:13, a human body is a picture of their relation to Christ and to each other.

Part with part: each having only a part needing to be supplemented by the other parts.

**Ver.** 28. That believers are “Christ’s body,” inasmuch as they are a visible community animated by the one Spirit of Christ, was proved in 1 Corinthians 12:13. Paul will now prove, by evident matters of fact, that they are “members part with part;” and that therefore the mutual relation of the members of a human body has a counterpart in them.

God put; corresponds with the same words in 1 Corinthians 12:18. Same word ‘put’ (R.V. ‘made.’) in Acts 20:28.

In the Church; corresponds with “in the body, ‘; 1 Corinthians 12:18. The word ‘apostles’ proves that Paul refers, not to the church at Corinth, but to the entire Christian community. So Philippians 3:6. Of this universal Church, each local church is a miniature pattern. Instead of continuing “some to be apostles, others prophets, etc.,” Paul breaks off the construction (cp. Romans 5:12; 7:12) to say that ‘in the Church’ the ‘apostles’ hold the ‘first,’ and the ‘prophets’ the ‘second’ rank. This would remind the readers that no one at Corinth stood in the first rank of the servants of Christ; and that the useful, but underestimated (cp. 25,) gifts of prophecy and teaching were next in worth.

Apostles: see under 1 Corinthians 15:7; Romans 1:1: to be discussed under Galatians 1:19.

Prophets: see note, 1 Corinthians 14:40.

Teachers: probably men who communicated knowledge acquired (under guidance of the Spirit) by ordinary methods, and held as a constant mental possession: the ‘prophets’ spoke, apparently, under extraordinary and temporary impulses of the Spirit. In choosing elders or bishops, the church would naturally select for the more part men endowed with this gift. Cp. 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9. But the words ‘God put’ directs attention, not to an official position, but to a divinely-given capacity for church work. Same order in Ephesians 4:11.

Then, etc.: conspicuous mark of inferiority. By endowing certain men with miraculous powers, God ‘put’ the ‘powers in the Church.’

Gracious-gifts of healings: converse order to 1 Corinthians 12:9, descending here from the general to the particular. The inferior position of these brilliant gifts is explained in 25.

Helpings: probably assistance to the sick and poor. (Same word in 2 Macc. 8:19; 3 Macc. 5:50, for miraculous help from God in time of need.) Cp. Acts 20:35, where the cognate verb is used.

Tongues, etc.: last pair here, as in 1 Corinthians 12:10.

**Ver.** 29-30. By question after question Paul compels his readers to acknowledge how many capacities for usefulness each of them lacks and how much they need their own powers to be supplemented, as in a human body, by others. He thus completes his exposition of 1 Corinthians 12:4. Compare, in 1 Corinthians 12:8ff, the repetition of “to another.”

To rebuke murmuring or contempt prompted by the lack of the possession of the more conspicuous gifts, “to each one according as He pleases,” 1 Corinthians 12:11; viz. that the Church may be a living body, in which each member both needs and helps the others and shares their joys and sorrows, that thus each member may be raised above the little circle of his own immediate interests to care for the general good. Consequently, our lack of certain brilliant gifts is no proof that we do not belong to Christ. For we possess other gifts incompatible with those we lack and needful for the highest good of the community. An allotment of various gifts to various men is by the thoughtful care of God, and is needful for the welfare of the Church. All the members have capacities of usefulness; and all need to be supplemented by others. The human body is, therefore, both a picture of our relation to each other, and a pattern for our treatment of others. So far as a church imitates the action of a healthy human body, it attains its ideal and realizes the purpose of God. For then the endowment of each becomes an enrichment to the whole; and the church becomes the noblest embodiment of what is found in all God’s works, viz. Harmony amid infinite Variety.

That the Church is the ‘Body of Christ,’ follows logically from the great fundamental doctrine of Romans 8:1-11 in connection with the obvious

fact that the members of the Church, which in Paul's day was one community throughout the world, are endowed with different capacities.

Indeed this analogy is suggested by the word "Spirit." For, of this word the central idea is, an inward invisible principle permeating visible organized matter and giving to it unity, life, intelligence, power, and activity. See note, Romans 8:17. The analogy thus suggested is the most wonderful known to us. And its deep mark on the mind of Paul may be traced in Romans 12:4; 1 Corinthians 6:15; 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:23; 4:12; 16, 25; 5:30; Colossians 1:18, 24; 2:19.

In man we find, joined in most intimate and wonderful partnership, two elements absolutely different and belonging to different realms of being. The body is akin to the earth from which it came and with which it will soon mingle: the spirit is akin, not only to the immortal spirits around God's throne, but to God Himself. Bodily life is the mysterious link binding together these elements. When this link is broken, each element returns (Ecclesiastes 12:7) whence it came. The body is the living dwelling place kept from corruption and kept alive and erect by the presence of the spirit; the instrument with which the spirit lays hold of, and uses, and enjoys, the material world, and the medium through which it reveals itself to other kindred spirits. The spirit is the animating principle giving to its material abode life, unity, intelligence, and power.

Now Paul has taught (Romans 8:1-11) that in each believer dwells the Spirit of Christ, as the source of immortal life and moral uprightness and the main-spring of new activity. Consequently, the Church is the material and living dwelling place of the Spirit of Christ, and the medium through which Christ manifests Himself to the world and works out His purposes of mercy. Through His people He smiles upon men, speaks words of life, and saves the lost. Therefore, since the spirit is One and believers many, and the many believers were joined in one outward and visible community, Paul could correctly speak of the Church as the body of Christ.

Again, in the Church as in a human body, each member is designed and fitted to do service for the whole, a service which can be rendered only so far as each member is animated by the one spirit. This service corresponds with the natural constitution of each member. But just as without life the eye cannot see, so, apart from the Spirit of Christ, the noblest human

powers are powerless to do the work of God. Consequently, these various powers are gifts of the Spirit.

We notice also, as matter of fact, that in the church various men are endowed with various capacities, wealth, rank, learning, intellectual power, eloquence, administrative tact; and that these capacities seldom found together in one man, may be used for the good of the entire community. Even the helpless ones, by their cheerful patience reveal to those around the grace and glory of God.

Once more. The whole church, both the universal family of God on earth and any portion of it large or small, has one interest. Whatever develops or lessens the spiritual life of an individual is gain or loss to the whole community: for his influence will directly or indirectly affect the whole, for good or ill. And each church is a gainer or loser (cp. Romans 11:14) by the progress or the imperfection of neighboring churches. And all this is true, whether individuals and churches recognize it or not. We cannot benefit or injure others without thereby affecting ourselves. This wonderful oneness results from the presence of the One Spirit of God in the whole people of God. Therefore, by giving His Spirit to each believer, God has bound together the whole company of believers into one body having one interest.

From the foregoing analogy we may learn our relation to Christ and to each other. In a healthy human body each member is completely controlled and guided by the one spirit: and each member is instinctively conscious that the interest of the body is its own interest and puts forth all its powers for the general good. And so far as we are in spiritual health shall we be controlled by the Spirit of Christ, animated by desire for the general good, and in harmony with all other members. We cannot despise others; nor they despise us. We need, and may be enriched by, even the humblest: and it is our privilege if Christ abide in us, to be a benefit to all around. Again, just as every man defends every part of his body with his whole strength, so will Christ defend with His infinite power every one of His people. And just as a man's body shares his fortunes, for good or ill, so we shall share the fortunes of Christ and shall sit down with Him, clothed in His royal raiment, upon His throne.

It is evident to all that the community of believers is not one in outward and visible form in the same sense now as in Paul's day. This is to Catholics an argument against Protestantism. And this argument, which has some force, I cannot discuss here. But very strong reasons now keep back both individuals and churches from submitting to the sway of that great Church which is the lineal descendant of the apostolic Church. And the felt presence and life-giving activity of the Holy Spirit in these individuals and churches is to them complete proof that their separation from the See of Rome does not involve separation from Christ.

It is worthy of note that the important comparison of this section is peculiar, among the sacred writers, to Paul; but is found in the Latin writers. It is embodied in a well-known fable of Menenius Agrippa (B.C. 493) narrated by Livy, bk. ii. 32; and is found in Seneca, 'On Anger' bk. ii. 31; ("It is wrong to injure the Fatherland: therefore, a citizen also; for he is a part of the Fatherland.... What if the hands wish to injure the feet? the eyes to injure the hands? How all the members agree among themselves, because it is the interest of the whole that each be preserved.") and elsewhere. That the analogy was observed by heathens, need not surprise us. For society was ordained by God; and is, even in its fall, a rough outline of the kingdom of God. It is therefore an unconscious prophecy of the Church. We need not doubt that the comparison was suggested to Paul by modes of thought current among heathens. And, that this classic conception is reproduced only by the apostle who came most in contact with Greeks and Romans, is a mark of genuineness. The same metaphor is found (see Appendix A) in ch. 37 of Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians; but is evidently a reference to the Epistle before us, which in other places Clement quotes expressly.

## SECTION 24

### LOVE IS BETTER THAN THE BEST GIFTS

#### CHAPTER 12:31-13:

*Be emulous for the greater gifts. And, further, a surpassingly good way I show you.*

*If with the tongues of men I speak, and of the angels, but have not love, I am become sounding bronze or a noisy cymbal. And if I have prophecy, and know the mysteries, all of them, and all the knowledge, and if I have all the faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, nothing am I: And if I give as food all my possessions, and if I give up my body that I may be burned, but have not love, I am nothing profited.*

*Love is longsuffering, is kind. Love is not jealous: love does not vaunt itself, is not puffed up, is not unseemly, does not seek its own, is not moved to anger, does not reckon the evil, does not rejoice at unrighteousness but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

*Love never falls. But both if there be prophecies they will come to nought; and if tongues, they will cease; and if knowledge, it will come to nought. For, in part we know, and in part we prophesy: but, when the fully developed have come, that which is in part will come to nought. When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, I used to think as a child, I used to reckon as a child: when I became a man I made as nought the things of the child. For we see now through a mirror, in a dark saying; but then face to face. Now I know in part: but then I shall understand, according as also I have been understood. And now remain faith, hope love; these three. But the greatest of these is love.*

After asserting the broad foundation truth that in the Church, as in a human body, the various members are endowed by God with various gifts, all useful and all needful for the general good, Paul now says that we must, nevertheless, make these gifts objects of desire and effort, and that some of them are greater than others and therefore more worthy of pursuit. But, instead of naming at once ‘the greater gifts,’ (see 1 Corinthians 14.,) he interposes 1 Corinthians 13. to show us the best ‘way’ of pursuing them. And, in so doing, he gives us a standard by which to measure their relative worth. (Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 8., before discussing his subject from the point of view of knowledge, he proves that love is better than knowledge.) He then, in 1 Corinthians 14., repeats the exhortation of 1 Corinthians 12:31 and goes on to show that prophecy is more worthy of pursuit than the gift of tongues.

**Ver. 31. Be-emulous-for:** one Greek word combining the sense of “zealous” and “jealous,” both which are English forms of it. It denotes an emotion aroused in us by superior worth, whether it be earnest desire to gain for ourselves a like superiority, or a jealous care to keep for ourselves alone the object of desire, or mere idle vexation. Same word in 1 Corinthians 13:4; 14:1, 12, 39; 3:3; 2 Corinthians 7:7, 11; 9:2; 11:2; 12:20. The capacities for usefulness possessed by others ought to rouse us to seek the same.

Greater gifts: producing greater results. This exhortation implies that these gifts of God’s grace were to be obtained by human effort. How the extraordinary gifts were thus obtained, is not clear to us now, because of their cessation in the early dawn of church history. But we may suppose that the Spirit gave them only to those who had some natural and spiritual fitness for them as He now bestows His ordinary gifts. If so, by earnest desire to obtain and develop this fitness, men might ‘be emulous for the greater gifts.’ Their effort, for both ordinary and extraordinary gifts, would include cultivation of the corresponding natural powers, prayer and faith for the Spirit’s presence and activity, and use of the spiritual power already possessed. Paul goes ‘further’ than mere exhortation to pursue these gifts, and adds (in 1 Corinthians 13.) an indication of ‘a way’ along which his readers may find them, a way ‘surpassing’ all others.



Chap. 13: This better “way” Paul begins to point out by asserting abruptly and solemnly that even a combination of the most highly prized gifts, each in its highest degree, is worthless apart from love: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. The worth of love, he shows by describing its various manifestations in human conduct, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; and show its superiority to spiritual gifts, by proving that they will become worthless like the toys of childhood, whereas love abides, 1 Corinthians 13:8-13.

**Ver.** 1. The word rendered ‘love’ is unknown, as its significance was unknown, in classic literature. In a few places, oftener of things than men, its cognate verb is found. In the LXX. the verb is frequent, the substantive very rare. This word has the unique honor of being the only substantive noting a moral attribute which is predicated, simply and without explanation or limitation, of God Himself: for God is ‘Love.’ Paul here teaches that this unique attribute of God is also the one moral quality which is itself all we need to be. All this was obscured by the old rendering ‘charity,’ which cannot be predicated of God and has no corresponding verb, and conveys to most Englishmen a sense quite different from that intended by Paul. Of this a bad example is found in (A.V.) Romans 14:15 which receives its force from Romans 13:9, 10. Unfortunately, the word ‘love’ has with us lower associations from which the Greek word is quite free. But it is our best rendering.

From ‘the tongues of men and of angels’ we cannot infer anything about the nature of the gift of tongues. For these words refer, not to actual fact, but to mere supposition. Nor does the words ‘tongues’ necessarily denote “languages.” Paul means, “If I utter every kind of voice which rises from the lips of men and of angels.” So Homer ‘Iliad’ bk. ii. 489: “Not even if I had ten tongues and ten mouths.”

Of the angels: separated for emphasis from ‘of men,’ and making the summit of possibility in this gift.

Love: to our fellow-men, as proved by 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. So usually when not otherwise defined: 1 Corinthians 8:1; 16; 14; Romans 12:9; 14:15.

Bronze: a word denoting always in the Bible copper, either pure or containing as usual a small proportion of other metal generally tin. Just so,

with us “gold” denotes both the pure metal and the alloy used for jewelry and coinage. Copper was wrought (Genesis 4:22) in very early times, probably (Hesiod, ‘Works and Days’ 1. 151) earlier than iron; and for hardness and fusibility was alloyed with tin. Brass, i.e. an alloy of copper and zinc, has not, I believe, been found among the many metallic relics of the past.

Sounding bronze: pieces of metal, manufactured or crude, giving forth any kind of sound.

Cymbal: an instrument consisting of two half gloves, mostly of bronze which the performer struck together. Same word, (LXX.,) 1 Chronicles 13:8; 15:16; 2 Chronicles 5:12, etc.

Noisy: giving forth any loud unmeaning sound. Since those who spoke with a tongue merely gave forth, under impulse of the Spirit, a sound which in some cases (1 Corinthians 14:14ff) neither they nor any one else understood, they were, unless ‘love’ gave them moral worth, only like pieces of bronze, or at best instruments of music, struck by a player.

**Ver. 2.** Prophecy: the gift most like that of tongues, but (see 25) superior to it.

All the mysteries: see note, 1 Corinthians 3:4: all the truths revealed by God to man through the secret teaching of the Holy Spirit.

All the knowledge: evidently different from, and not implied in, ‘the mysteries;’ but not necessarily, or probably, superior. Probably ‘the mysteries’ and ‘the knowledge’ here correspond with “wisdom” (see 1 Corinthians 2:7) and “knowledge” in 1 Corinthians 12:8. If so, ‘all the knowledge’ denotes whatever the mind of man has acquired by ordinary methods of study, these not excluding (1 Corinthians 12:8) the special assistance of the Spirit. Such knowledge would neither include, nor be included in, ‘all the mysteries.’ Paul’s supposition is that all the secrets of the divine purpose and all the knowledge possessed by man were known to one person. That the conspicuous word ‘if’ (5 times in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3) is not put before ‘know,’ suggests that ‘mysteries’ and ‘knowledge’ were closely related to ‘prophecy;’ but does not prove that they were necessarily included in it. The prophet’s words always conveyed knowledge; and, since he spoke under impulse of the Spirit, his

words frequently announced (1 Corinthians 2:10) “the deep things of God.” But ‘prophecy’ was a voice caused apparently by an occasional impulse of the spirit: ‘mysteries’ and ‘knowledge’ were abiding intellectual possessions.

The faith: an assurance that through the believer’s agency God is about to work a miracle. Such faith arose “in the Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:9) and was a condition (Mr 11:22) of the exercise of miraculous power. The close coincidence of ‘faith so as to remove mountains’ confirms the testimony of Matthew 17:20; 21:21; Mark 11:22, that similar words fell from the lips of Christ. Notice that effective faith is a belief, not of anything, but of that which God has promised. It presupposes, and cannot extend beyond the word of God. Consequently, Mark 11:23f is limited, by the gospel use of the word “believe,” to benefits actually promised by God. And it has no other limit.

Nothing am I: (differently used, 2 Corinthians 12:11:) “my character has no real worth.” This suggests, (the hypothetical form of the sentence forbids us to say that it proves,) and the cases of Balaam and Samson prove, that a man may have superhuman gifts and yet be destitute of spiritual life. A solemn warning to the Corinthians, who (1 Corinthians 1:7) “fell short in no gift.”

**Ver. 3.** Give away as food: an action highly esteemed (Matthew 6:2) by the Jews.

Give up my body: same words in Josephus, ‘Wars’ bk. vii. 8. 7; where, by the example of the Indians who, “‘having given up their body’ to fire that most pure they may separate the soul from the body, die singing hymns,” Eleazar urges his companions besieged at Masada to a similar self-sacrifice. Dr. Lightfoot suggests (‘Colossians’ p. 394) that this highest possible grade of self-sacrifice and of supposed merit was suggested to Paul by a boastful inscription on a tomb at Athens (see Strabo, bk. xv. 1. 73) which he may have seen, in memory of a fanatic who in the time of Augustus publicly devoted himself to death there by leaping with a smile on the funeral pyre: “Here lies Zarmanochegas an Indian from Bargose, who according to the paternal customs of Indians immortalized himself.” Such cases enable us to conceive not only gifts to the poor but self-immolation without ‘love,’ and with real excellence.

Nothing profited: no reward from God, Matthew 6:1. By these extreme cases Paul makes us feel that actions have no intrinsic value, that their worth, both as manifestations of character and as spiritual gain to the actor, depends entirely upon their motive, and that the one motive essential to reward is love. On the variation 'that I may glory,' see Appendix B.

Notice in 1 Corinthians 13:2, 3 an appropriate change of expression. Without love, they who "have" prophecy and miracle-working faith "are" nothing: for these gifts do not of themselves enter into, and ennoble, the inner man. And, without love, they who give up not only their goods but their bodies are no gainers: for spiritual wealth cannot be purchased even at this price. (Cp. Galatians 5:6.) The supposed combination of various merits in one man is made conspicuous by the recurring words 'and if;' but is ruined by the melancholy refrain in each verse 'but have not love.'

In 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 love stands apart from all other virtues as an essential element of all human excellence. For Paul's words imply that without it, not only knowledge and almsgiving, but righteousness and truth are valueless, or cannot exist. With this unique dignity of love in man corresponds its unique position (1 John 4:8, 16) among the moral attributes of God. In other words, human excellence is not, as many think it is, composite; but, like all great principles and like the moral nature of God, absolutely simple. This Paul makes us feel by portraying a man in whom are accumulated all sorts of supposed excellences except love, and by placing beside him (in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7) a man whose whole being is an impersonation of love. The one portrait we recognize at once as the most perfect we have seen. From the other we turn in disgust as utterly worthless.

The assertion of 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 receive, if not complete proof, yet considerable support from the delineations of character therein contained. For absence of love implies selfishness; it may be an intelligent and respectable, or even spiritual, selfishness. But a selfish man, even though used by the Spirit as a medium of wonderful utterances, is morally no better than a trumpet giving forth an inarticulate sound. Nor does his knowledge or his liberality ever command real respect. For the one is used to advance, and the other is prompted by, unworthy purposes.

The above teaching guards from abuse, and is guarded by, the teaching of Romans 1:16; 3:22. We venture to believe that we are now forgiven, even though we be nothing and have no merit, simply because in the Gospel God proclaims righteousness through faith for all that believe. And, since love is the one measure of Christian stature, we venture to believe that God will work in us even this gift by revealing to us through the Spirit His own love to us and to all men. According to our faith it is done to us. And the love to our fellows which we find in our hearts confirms the faith with which, when conscious of nothing but sin, we dared first to believe the promise of God. But the ultimate ground of our confidence is our consciousness, not of our own love, but of God's love to us revealed on the cross, and in the words, of Jesus.

**Ver.** 4-7. The excellence of love, asserted negatively in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, will now be made apparent by a description of its various manifestations in human conduct: positive description, 1 Corinthians 13:4a; negative description, concluding with a positive contract 1 Corinthians 13:4b-6; final positive description 1 Corinthians 13:7. That these verses say nothing about spiritual gifts, and retain their full force even though gifts be absent, proves that, whereas gifts without love are worthless, love even without gifts retains its value undiminished. No stronger proof of the value of love can be given. Thus the contrast of 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 increases the force of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

**Ver.** 4a. Love is longsuffering: i.e. continues in spite of conduct likely to quench it. This continuance often, but not always, shows itself in restraining anger. Hence, in the Bible, the word is often (Romans 2:4; 9:22, etc.) used in this connection.

**Kind:** gentle in conduct, so that a man is pleasant to deal with. In both these qualities the man of love is like God, (cp. Romans 2:5,) who is an impersonation of infinite love.

**Ver.** 4b-6. Jealous: evidently an idle vexation at the superiority of others. See under 1 Corinthians 12:31. We are never vexed at the excellence or success of those whom we love. Nor do we 'vaunt' ourselves: i.e. parade before them any supposed superiority of our own. For boasted superiority separates; whereas love unites.

Puffed-up: as in 1 Corinthians 8:1. In view of those we love, we never indulge inflated opinions about ourselves. And we are thus saved, in reference to them, from ‘unseemly’ conduct.

Does not seek her own: exemplified in Paul himself, 1 Corinthians 10:33. Contrast Philippians 2:20f.

Anger: not here a simple purpose to punish, as in Ephesians 4:26, but the vindictiveness which so often accompanies it. To this, love never prompts; though it often compels us to punish.

Does not reckon, etc.: 2 Corinthians 5:19; Romans 4:8; Philemon 18: does not calculate injury as a debt to be paid off.

Does not rejoice in unrighteousness; reveals the moral worth of love. We are not pleased at the wrong-doing of those whom we intelligently love. For we feel instinctively that by wrong-doing they injure themselves. E.g., many a bad father is sorry to see his children walking in his steps.

Rejoices with the truth: similar to Romans 7:22, “I am pleased together with the Law.” The truth, (Romans 1:18,) here impersonated, rejoices when it realizes itself in human conduct, i.e. when men do that which corresponds with the eternal reality, viz. the nature of God. Now love is the essence of God: and truth is love manifested. Therefore, whatever conduct gratifies, i.e. agrees with, the one, gratifies also the other.

**Ver. 7.** Bears all things: is not shaken by any sort of ingratitude. And we are ever ready to ‘believe all things’ from those we love; and to cherish all sorts of expectations of good about them.

Endures: see Romans 2:7. Love prompts us to continue doing good to those we love in spite of difficulties and perils. Paul’s own example: 2 Timothy 2:10. The word ‘bear’ refers probably to ungrateful conduct in the person loved, and is thus parallel to “longsuffering” in 1 Corinthians 13:4; ‘endures’ refers to any hardship involved in helping those we love.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 define clearly Paul’s use in 1 Corinthians 13. of the word ‘love.’ It is a principle of action prompting us to use our powers and opportunities for the good of others, and to draw them to us that we may share, and thus remove, their sorrow, and that they may share our good. This principle appears, more or less perfect and intelligent, in all true

human love. It is the mainspring of the entire activity of God. And so far as it rules our conduct are we like God. Of this principle, these verses are the strongest commendation. For the man in whom these traits of character meet commands, even though he have no special gifts, our highest respect. And all these traits of character are a natural outworking of the one principle of love. For a lack of any one of them proves that love is deficient. This practical picture of love also makes us feel by contrast the worthlessness of the character described in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

For shorter, but similar, personifications of love, see 1 Corinthians 8:1; Romans 13:10. In Clement's Epistle, ch. 49, (see appendix A,) is an evident copy of these verses. Compare also the praise of "wisdom" in Prov. 8. and 9.

**Ver. 8-13.** After portraying in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 a man with various gifts in the highest conceivable degree but without love, and pronouncing him worthless, and portraying in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 the excellent practical outworking of love, even apart from gifts, Paul now shows that love surpasses gifts in that while they will pass away love abides.

Falls: as in Luke 16:17: loses its position of dignity, by ceasing to be an active principle ever working out fresh results. For this is implied in the contrast of 1 Corinthians 13:8b-12. The gifts so highly prized will all pass away.

**Ver. 8b-12.** Will-come-to-nought: become inoperative, cease to produce results. Same word in 1 Corinthians 1:28: see also Romans 3:3.

Knowledge: i.e. the special gift of knowledge, 1 Corinthians 13:2; 12:8. Notice that the gift of tongues 'will cease' absolutely, when the tongue is silent in death; the gifts of 'prophecy' and 'knowledge' will cease practically. Of this last assertion 1 Corinthians 13:9, 10 are a proof. That tongues will cease, needs no proof.

In part: in contrast to 'the fully developed.' Our knowledge now embraces only fragments. This is true universally; but refers here to the special gift of knowledge.

In part we prophesy: we announce under the special influence of the Spirit only a part of the truth.

The fully-developed: the complete or ‘full-grown,’ in contrast to the fragmentary. See note, 1 Corinthians 2:6. 1 Corinthians 13:10 states a universal principle; but refers specially to 1 Corinthians 13:9. It proves ‘will-come-to-nought’ in 1 Corinthians 13:8. ‘Knowledge’ and ‘prophecy’ are but torches giving amid general darkness a partial light. Therefore, when dawns the eternal Day they will become useless. They who now know most and speak most fluently will then have no advantage over others.

**Ver. 11.** Illustrates and confirms 1 Corinthians 13:8b-10.

I thought: formed conceptions.

I reckoned: drew inferences. The ‘child’ first speaks, then gives evidence of observation, and then of reasoning.

When I became: or “now that I-am-become,” “have-set-aside.” [The Greek perfects assert the permanence of the change from childhood to manhood, and the permanent dismissal of childish things.]

I-made-as-nought: as in 1 Corinthians 13:8, 10: laid aside as useless the toys or schoolbooks which once I prized and used. This comparison, suggested probably by the word “full-grown,” (cp. Ephesians 4:13,) is an argument from the greater to the less. For the things of eternity are much more completely above and beyond our present thought than are the things of manhood to a child. Yet the mature knowledge of manhood makes schoolbooks, etc. quite useless.

**Ver. 12.** Proof that the comparison of childhood applies to the matter of 1 Corinthians 13:8; and thus parallel to 1 Corinthians 13:9.

Mirror: James 1:23; 2 Corinthians 3:18: known in the earliest times, Exodus 38:8; Wisdom 7:26; Sirach 12:11. They were usually circular plates of metal, with a handle. Their imperfect reflection suggested this metaphor. The Gospel is a mirror (2 Corinthians 3:18) showing us as in a camera obscura, but imperfectly, the things of eternity.

Dark-saying: the Greek original of our word “enigma.” It explains the foregoing metaphor. Our knowledge of eternity comes through the Gospel, which is, compared with the full light of eternity, a riddle difficult to solve: in other words, ‘we see now through a mirror.’



Face to face: Genesis 32:30; cp. Numbers 12:8. We shall stand before God, and look upon His face; (Matthew 5:8; Hebrews 12:14; ) and, seeing Him, we shall see all things.

Now I know, etc.; continues the contrast, which is individualized and thus intensified by the change, as in 1 Corinthians 13:11, from 'we' to 'I.' The change was prompted by Paul's intense and personal conception of his own thought.

Understood: an intelligent comprehension which looks down upon and through a matter. Same word in 1 Corinthians 13:37; 16:18; 2 Corinthians 1:13f; 2 Corinthians 6:9; 13:5; Romans 1:28, 32; 3:20; 10:2.

I-have-been-understood: a silent reference to Him by whom all things are fully known. Cp. 1 Corinthians 8:3.

According as, etc.: corresponding with God's perfect knowledge of him. In other words, the light of eternity, which is the outshining of the mind of God, will reveal fully and accurately to each man his own inner self.

Those who now know most, and, moved by the Spirit, proclaim most fully the things of God, know and speak only a fragment of what will in that Day be known universally. Consequently, their gifts, so valuable now, will then be of no worth. For, compared with that time, our present life is but childhood; and the gifts we prize now will then be thrown aside as useless, like the toys we have already thrown aside. If so, knowledge and prophecy have only a passing value. And the gift of tongues will evidently cease soon in the silence of death.

From 1 Corinthians 13:12 it is quite clear that the light which will supersede the gifts of knowledge and prophecy is that of eternity. Consequently, 1 Corinthians 13:8 refers, not to the cessation of extraordinary gifts in the later ages of the Church, but to the end of the present life, either at death or at the coming of Christ. But it would be unfair to infer from this that Paul expected these gifts to continue till Christ comes. For, about this he says nothing; but declares only that sooner or later, to the individual and to the race, these gifts will pass away.

**Ver. 13.** But now, etc.: as contrast to 1 Corinthians 13:8b-12, as in 1 Corinthians 12:18. While prophecy, etc. will pass away, 'faith, hope, love,

remain.’ This is evidently equivalent to “never falls,” in 1 Corinthians 13:8; and therefore denotes continuance in the life to come. For it is a clear contrast to “will be set aside” in 1 Corinthians 13:8; which declares, as we have seen, that the partial knowledge of time will be displaced by the perfect knowledge of eternity.

**Faith:** assurance that God’s word will come true, as a general principle. This will remain, although the special application of it in 1 Corinthians 13:2 will pass away.

**Hope:** that which looks forward to, and grasps before hand, things to come. Paul leaves us to test for ourselves the assertion of 1 Corinthians 13:13a. But the contrast of knowledge and prophecy enables us to do so. For it is evident that the change which will make these valueless will not set aside faith, hope, love. That our happy state will continue for ever, we shall know simply because God has promised it, i.e. by a faith similar to our present belief of the Gospel. And we shall have the joy of looking forward to a further and ceaseless and infinite development of happiness and glory. Thus, amid glory already seen and possessed there will still be further glories not yet seen, (Romans 8:24,) and matter of continued ‘faith’ and ‘hope.’ And mutual ‘love,’ animating and binding together the many members of that glorified family, will shine through every face and breathe in a thousand ever recurring words and acts of heavenly kindness.

These three; seems to imply that these are in some sense a complete description of our abiding state. Among ‘these three’ continuing gifts ‘love’ stands out as ‘greater’ than the others. This is implied in “but have not love,” 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; and is proved by 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 which surpass anything that can be said of faith or hope. The passing mention of these strengthens the contrast between love and spiritual gifts. For these last, as passing away, are evidently inferior to faith and hope; which nevertheless are inferior to love.

The argument of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 involves the important truth that the continuity of human character is not broken either by death or judgment, any more than it is now broken by change of circumstances. For we are told explicitly that when human knowledge fades in the light of eternity even then love will abide. Now ‘knowledge’ refers, not to the abstract principle, which will never pass away, but to the superiority of

knowledge possessed now by an individual. And, to give force to Paul's argument, 'love' must refer to the degree of Christian love attained here by each individual. Only thus can the permanence of 'love' be a motive for the pursuit of it. Moreover, what is true of knowledge and prophecy is true of all other capacities for usefulness, wealth, rank, learning, eloquence, mental power. We learn, therefore that although before the gates of death we shall lay down for ever the various weapons with which God has armed us to fight for Him, we shall carry through those gates the moral character which the conflict of life has developed within us. And this gives to moral excellence an infinite superiority over the most brilliant powers for usefulness.

With love, which in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 had a place absolutely unique, are now associated, though in a subordinate place, faith and hope. Yet, though subordinate, they are here mentioned before love. Notice a similar association in Romans 5:1-5. All this suggests that 'faith,' the entrance (Romans 5:1) into the Christian life, and 'hope,' the immediate result (Romans 5:2) of faith, are designed to lead to 'love;' and that the degree in which they do this is the measure of their abiding and practical worth.

That Paul says nothing about the eternal results of a right use of knowledge and prophecy, results which seem at first sight to place these gifts on a par with love, suggests that these results will be of eternal worth to us only so far as they have been an outcome of Christian love. And if so they do not in the least degree lessen the superiority of love.

## SECTION 25

### PROPHECY IS MORE USEFUL THAN THE GIFT OF TONGUES

#### CHAPTER 14:1-25

*Pursue love. And be emulous for the spiritual gifts; but especially that you may prophesy. For he that speaks with a tongue speaks, not to men, but to God. For no one hears: but in spirit he speaks mysteries. But he that prophesies speaks to men edification and exhortation and consolation. He that speaks with a tongue edifies himself: he that prophesies edifies a church. I wish all of you to speak with tongues, but rather that you may prophesy. And greater is he that prophesies than he that speaks with tongues, except he interpret, in order that the church may receive edification.*

*Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless to you I speak either with revelation or with knowledge, or with prophecy or with teaching? Even the lifeless things when they give voice, whether pipe or harp, if they do not give distinction to their notes, how will that which is played with pipe or with harp be known? For indeed if an uncertain voice a trumpet give, who will prepare himself for war? So you also, if with the tongue you do not give a significant word, how will that which is spoken be known? For you will be men speaking to air. So many, it may be, kinds of voices there are in the world, and not one is voiceless. If then I do not know the force of the voice, I shall be, to him who speaks, a barbarian, and he who speaks a barbarian with me. So you also, since you are emulous for spirits, with a view to the edification of the church seek that you may abound.*

*For which cause, he that speaks with a tongue, let him pray in order that he may interpret. For, if I be praying with a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is without fruit. What then is it? I will pray with the spirit; and I will pray also with the mind. I will*

*sing a psalm with the spirit; and I will sing a psalm also with the mind. Else, if thou bless with the spirit, he that occupies the place of the private member, how will he say the Amen after thy thanksgiving, since he knows not what thou art saying? For thou indeed givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I give thanks to God that more than all of you I speak with a tongue. But in church I prefer to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, than ten thousand words with a tongue.*

*Brothers, do not become children in your minds. Yet in wickedness be infants: but in your minds become full grown men.*

*In the Law it is written “that in men of other tongues and with other men’s lips I will speak to this people: and not even thus will they hear me,” (Isaiah 28:11,) says the Lord. So that the tongues are for a sign, not for those that believe, but for the unbelievers. But prophecy, not for the unbelievers but for those who believe.*

*If then the whole church come together to the same place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in private members or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad? But, if all prophesy, and there come in some unbeliever or private member, he is convicted by all, he is placed under examination by all, the hidden things of his heart become manifest: and thus, having fallen upon his face he will worship God, announcing that in reality God is in you.*

**Ver. 1.** Pursue love: practical application of 1 Corinthians 13. It implies that love, like spiritual gifts, (1 Corinthians 12:31,) may be obtained by persistent effort; and thus only. We ‘pursue love’ by watching against and resisting everything contrary to it, by prayer and by the effort to believe that what we ask God will give, by pondering God’s love as manifested on the cross of Christ that thus we may experience its transforming power, and by endeavoring to (Romans 14:15) “walk according to love.”

Be emulous for, etc.; takes up 1 Corinthians 12:31.

But especially, etc.: specific matter of 25, viz. that prophecy is better than the gift of tongues.

In 1 Corinthians 12:31, after urging us to pursue the greater gifts, instead of saying which they are, Paul shows us a way (of pursuing them) surpassing all other ways. He then unfolds the exceeding worth of love, and exhorts us to pursue it. And that this is quite consistent with pursuit of spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy, he now proves by again urging us to pursue these gifts. It is therefore evident that to pursue love is the “excellent way” of 1 Corinthians 12:31. And this we can understand. For love prompts us to seek powers which will make us useful to others, and specially those powers which are most useful, rather than such as merely attract attention to ourselves; and quickens our intelligence to distinguish the more useful gifts, and prevents our pursuit of these from degenerating into self-seeking. To cultivate love is, therefore, the best preparation for a pursuit of the various gifts with which the Spirit is ready to enrich us.

**Ver. 2.** Begins a proof, occupying 25, of the just-asserted superiority of prophecy.

With a tongue: see note under 1 Corinthians 14:40.

But to God; suggests that the miraculous tongues were used chiefly in prayer or praise. So 1 Corinthians 14:13-16; Acts 2:11; 10:46.

For no one, etc.: proof of ‘not to men.’

Hears: as in Matthew 13:15; Mark 4:33. Others hear a sound: but they no more hear what is said than if they heard no sound. As Paul is here comparing only tongues and prophecy, he leaves out of sight the separate gift of interpretation which is mentioned expressly in 1 Corinthians 14:5. His words imply clearly that, apart from this additional gift, no one understood the speaker; and thus prove that to speak with a tongue was not to speak in a foreign language. For, in that case, the possible presence of some one who understood it could not be overlooked. The word “unknown” inserted in 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 27 (A.V.) is therefore altogether incorrect and misleading.

In spirit: in his own spirit, (cp. 1 Corinthians 14:14,) in that side of his being which is nearest to God and on which the Spirit of God directly acts. Cp. Romans 1:9.

Mysteries: see note, 1 Corinthians 3:4: here specially appropriate. For, in the inmost and uppermost chamber of his being, he speaks secrets understood only by those to whom God has revealed them.

**Ver. 3.** Prophecy, in contrast to the gift of tongues.

To men: emphatic, in contrast to “not to men” in 1 Corinthians 14:2.

Speaks edification: his words build up the spiritual structure God is erecting in their hearts. The added words ‘and exhortation, etc.’ limit the word ‘edification’ here to spiritual instruction.

Exhortation: Romans 12:1: words prompting to action.

Consolation: for the down-hearted. Same word in John 11:19, 31. Both words together in 1 Thessalonians 2:11.

**Ver. 4.** Develops, and sums up in compact form, the argument of 1 Corinthians 14:2, 3.

Edifies himself: constant result of “speaking to God,” 1 Corinthians 14:2. This implies, as do 1 Corinthians 14:5, 18, that to speak with a tongue was spiritually profitable to the man himself.

A church: in superior contrast to ‘himself.’ The one does good to a man; the other, to an assembly of men.

**Ver. 5.** Though God in His wisdom has allotted these various gifts to various persons, yet Paul, so far as he is concerned, would like all to possess this gift which he himself possesses in so great measure and for which in 1 Corinthians 14:18 he thanks God.

That you may prophesy; is not only Paul’s wish but the purpose for which he writes 25. Cp. 1 Corinthians 14:1.

And greater, etc.: adds to the just expressed preference the important lesson that usefulness to others is the measure of our real greatness. This

agrees exactly with 1 Corinthians 13:13: for love ever prompts us to do good to others. It also justifies 1 Corinthians 12:31a.

Except he interpret; implies that sometimes but not always the same man had the gifts of tongues and of interpretation. Notice that the repeated appeals, “speaks to men edification,” “edifies a church,” “the church receive edification,” gain great force from 1 Corinthians 13. For, if love animate us, we shall most desire that which will make us most useful to others. Thus, to pursue love, is the best way (1 Corinthians 12:31) to obtain “the greater gifts.”

**Ver. 6.** First proof of the uselessness of the public exercise of the gift of tongues. “Supposing I come to visit you, and in your midst do nothing but speak with tongues, what good shall I do you?” Paul’s pre-eminence (1 Corinthians 14:18) in this gift, so highly prized at Corinth, justified this personal argument: and its force is overwhelming.

Come to you, profit you, speak to you: emphatic repetition, giving prominence to the chief point in 1 Corinthians 14:6.

Profit; keeps before us the edification (1 Corinthians 14:3, 5) of others, as the only right aim of those who speak in church. So 1 Corinthians 14:12, 17, 19, 26, 31.

Speak with revelation: cp. 1 Corinthians 14:26: “unless I have some truth made known to me by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation,” Ephesians 1:17. Cp. Ephesians 3:3, 5.

With knowledge: with some truth acquired by ordinary methods. Probably it differs here from ‘revelation,’ as in 1 Corinthians 12:8 from “wisdom,” and in 1 Corinthians 13:2 from “mysteries.” For these last three are closely connected: Ephesians 1:17; 3:3, 5. We have here two pairs, the former giving the inner source, and the latter the outer form, of two kinds of profitable speaking. In each pair the first member denotes extraordinary, the second denotes ordinary knowledge and speaking. Paul might have said “except I interpret,” as in 1 Corinthians 14:5. But he prefers words which remind us that the gift of tongues, otherwise quite valueless in public, is when accompanied by interpretation only at best equal to the gift of prophecy, or even the lesser gift of knowledge. “Unless my words are accompanied by special inward enlightenment or acquired knowledge, i.e.



unless they assume the form of prophecy or teaching, what good shall I do you?"

**Ver. 7-9.** Second argument, supporting that of 1 Corinthians 14:6.

Voice: any kind of sound. Same word, Revelation 14:2; 18:22, etc. Chosen probably because Paul here compares musical notes to the human voice.

Pipe: a very common musical instrument. It was either a cane pierced with holes for notes, or wood, especially boxwood, bored out; and was played like a flageolet.

Harp: in Greek, 'Kithara,' from which we have "guitar": an instrument with not more than seven strings, and akin to the lyre.

Give distinction, etc.: i.e. notes such as can be distinguished from other sounds.

That which is played with pipe, etc.: the sense to be conveyed by the pipe; as proved by the 'trumpet' (1 Corinthians 14:8) quoted in addition to the 'pipe' and 'harp' in explanation and proof of 'how shall it be known, etc.'

Uncertain: not conveying clear thought to the hearer. Cp. 1 Corinthians 9:26.

Voice; keeps up the comparison with the human voice. Of all lifeless sounding bodies, a military trumpet is most significant. For, at its sound, armies march forth to battle. But this they would not do, as Paul's question reminds us, if the trumpet's note did not convey to them a clear meaning. And, for the meaning to be clear, the notes of the trumpet must be different from other sounds. Now 1 Corinthians 14:8 is given to explain 1 Corinthians 14:7. We must, therefore, think of the pipe or harp as used to convey intelligence, as in Daniel 3:5. In this case, unless the music had given a sound plainly understood, and different from other sounds floating over the plain of Dura, the multitudes would not, at its bidding, have bowed to the image of gold. Paul mentions the pipe and harp, instead of going at once to the war-trumpet, to remind us that this last belongs to a large class of sounds given by lifeless objects yet conveying intelligence. But in order to do this they must give a sound clearly distinguished from other sounds, and of which the meaning is known. The word 'distinction'

in 1 Corinthians 14:7 was chosen probably in contrast to the indistinguishable sounds uttered by those who spoke with tongues. We may extend the argument to any signal by sound. All such are useless unless the sound is different from others, and has a known meaning.

So you also: “your case is like that of the trumpet.”

With the tongue: graphic addition to ‘you,’ suggesting how superior is a man to a trumpet.

Significant: conveying a meaning, like a military trumpet.

How will be known: i.e. “your words will not convey knowledge.” So 1 Corinthians 14:7. The question of 1 Corinthians 14:9a is explained and justified in 1 Corinthians 14:9b, which tells what will be the actual state of things in the supposed case.

To air: cp. 1 Corinthians 9:26.

The argument of 1 Corinthians 14:7-9 would have much more force for Paul’s readers, who were practically familiar with the gift of tongues, than it has for us. But its general scope is evident. The sounds given forth even by lifeless bodies convey sometimes intelligence; it may be, of the utmost importance. Of this the military trumpet is a conspicuous example. But in these cases the sound must have a definite meaning; and must, therefore, be quite distinct from other similar sounds. Else it is useless. Now the gift of tongues (when not accompanied by the different gift of interpretation) gave forth only indistinguishable and unmeaning sound; and was, therefore, of no more use than a trumpet whose notes could not be distinguished from other sounds on the field, or than a toy blown by a child to make a noise.

**Ver.** 10-11. A third argument.

Kinds of voices: i.e. languages.

So many, suggests that the number is great; ‘it may be’ (cp. 1 Corinthians 15:37) implies that the precise number does not affect the argument.

Voiceless: without meaning, and therefore no language at all.

If then: i.e. since all the innumerable languages of men have a meaning.

The force of the voice: the meaning it is able to convey to those who understand it.

I shall be a barbarian: (see Romans 1:14:) words well understood by every one who has been in the company of men speaking a language unknown to him. The mixture of nationalities at Corinth would give great force to this argument. But these words do not imply that he who spoke “with a tongue” spoke in a foreign human language. The analogy of foreign languages, Paul adduces to dissuade his readers from a public exercise of the gift of tongues by reminding them that such exercise reproduces in the church the estrangement felt by men ignorant of each other’s language, an estrangement increased by their consciousness that the words which are to them unmeaning have nevertheless a meaning. Just so the words spoken “with a tongue” have a meaning, but one unknown to the hearers. Therefore, he who speaks in public with a tongue sets up between himself and his brethren a barrier similar to that of nationality.

**Ver. 12.** So you also; applies the argument of 1 Corinthians 14:10, 11, (as does 1 Corinthians 14:9 the argument of 1 Corinthians 14:7, 8,) but in a form applicable to all three arguments of 1 Corinthians 14:6-11 and leading up directly to the chief argument of 25 which is stated in 1 Corinthians 14:2-5. Although all these powers had one source viz. the One Spirit of God, yet, since they were various and each was evidently an outworking of an animating principle higher than man’s own spirit, Paul could for the moment leave out of sight the oneness of the origin and speak of those who desired these powers as ‘emulous for spirits.’ Similarly, the One Spirit is in Revelation 1:4; 3:1; 4:5 called “the seven Spirits which are before the throne.” The phrase is chosen here perhaps because the Corinthians, in their desire for mere supernatural inspiration, forgot sometimes that the various gifts had one source. Their aspiration was, therefore, only an emulation for spirits.

Emulous: as Paul wished them to be, 1 Corinthians 14:1; 12:31.

The edification of the church; brings the foregoing subordinate argument, and arguments, to bear upon the great argument of 1 Corinthians 14:2-5. For it is quite certain that a barbarian’s unknown words edify no one.

Abound: be rich in spiritual gifts. To this Paul exhorts his readers, thus sanctioning their acknowledged emulation; but bids them seek these gifts in order to help forward the spiritual life of their brethren. He is thus directing them to those “greater gifts” which are (1 Corinthians 12:31) most worthy of their emulation.

**Ver. 13.** A specific direction resulting from the general direction of 1 Corinthians 14:12. It also keeps before us 1 Corinthians 14:5 which completes the chief argument, viz. 1 Corinthians 14:2-5, to which argument those of 1 Corinthians 14:6-12 are subordinate.

Pray; denotes all speaking to God, and includes the blessing and thanksgiving of 1 Corinthians 14:16f. And, since 1 Corinthians 14:14 is given in proof of 1 Corinthians 14:13, the word ‘pray’ must have the same reference in both verses, viz. public prayer in church-meeting.

Consequently, ‘that he may interpret’ is not the matter of prayer but an end kept in view while praying in public. The word pray is therefore equivalent to ‘speak with a tongue;’ and reminds us that such speaking is speaking to God. Cp. 1 Corinthians 14:2. Since edification of the church is the purpose of all spiritual gifts, he who in an assembly prays with a tongue must do so with a purpose of afterwards ‘interpreting’ his own inspired but unintelligible prayer. If he be unable to do this, this verse enjoins him to keep silence in church, unless (1 Corinthians 14:28) an interpreter be present. This specific direction is thus a forerunner of 26. And, that the gift of tongues needed to be supplemented by interpretation, proves its inferiority to prophecy; which is the main thesis of 25.

**Ver. 14-15.** Proof that speaking with a tongue must needs be followed by interpretation.

My spirit: Paul’s own spirit, as in 1 Corinthians 2:11; 5:4; 16:18; 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:13; Romans 1:9; 8:16. Cp. 1 Corinthians 14:2.

Without fruit: good results which are the organic outworking of the mind. Cp. Matthew 13:22; Titus 3:14; 2 Peter 1:8. The ‘mind’ is the organ of perception and reason. So Romans 1:28. The ‘spirit’ is that inmost and uppermost chamber of our nature on which the Holy Spirit acts directly, sometimes, as this verse proves, exerting an influence which the mind cannot comprehend and therefore cannot transmit to others. In other

words, there may be operations of the Holy Spirit which reach only the highest element of man's nature and do not permeate and enlighten his intelligence.

What then is it? "Since this partial operation is possible, how do matters stand?" This question Paul answers by saying what he himself will do.

With the spirit; as in 1 Corinthians 14:14. His prayer shall be an outflow of the activity both of the highest element of his being and of his intelligence: i.e. the prayers he offers with a tongue moved by the Spirit of God, he will also interpret. In this way, both spirit and mind will be at work. And the contrast 'without-fruit' suggests that Paul's mental activity will be useful.

A psalm: Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16: a hymn of praise to God similar to the book of Psalms; Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33. It refers here probably to an impromptu utterance of sacred song under a special influence of the Spirit. The argument seems to be that the gift of tongues without interpretation is defective, because limited to a part of our being, a limitation which makes it not profitable to others. And this defect of the mere gift of tongues is a reason why its public exercise should always (1 Corinthians 14:13) be in view of subsequent interpretation.

The first person, I will pray, etc., directs our attention, as in 1 Corinthians 8:13, to Paul's own purpose which all must commend.

**Ver.** 16-19. Argument in support of the foregoing purpose; and a second argument (in addition to that of 1 Corinthians 14:14) in support of the direction in 1 Corinthians 14:13. Paul turns suddenly to his readers and shows the consequence if they do not follow his example.

Bless: speak good of God. See under Romans 1:25. It was suggested probably by the word "psalm." Cp. Pss. 144 — 150.

With the spirit: as in 1 Corinthians 14:14f: in the upmost element of their being, on which the Holy Spirit directly works.

Private-member: same word in 1 Corinthians 14:23, 24; 2 Corinthians 11:6; Acts 4:13. In Philo's 'Life of Moses,' bk. iii. 29, it denotes Israelites generally in contrast to the priests. It is opposed both to officers and to those who have special capacity or training. Since we have in this Epistle

no mention of church officers, it refers here probably to those not possessing the gifts of tongues or prophecy.

Occupies the place, etc.; vivid picture of the scene, where private members have a place apart from him who is speaking with a tongue.

The Amen: (see under Romans 1:25:) the well-known Amen, said by the assembly at the end of a public prayer. This is the earliest trace of something like Christian liturgical worship.

Thanksgiving: implied in 'bless.' To 'bless' makes prominent the good things we say about God: to 'give thanks' tells our gratitude.

Thy: emphatic. To the thanks of others the private member may assent: to 'thine' he cannot. For, that 'he knows not what thou sayest,' would make the customary 'Amen' an empty form. Thus the very saying Amen proves the need that what is said with a tongue be interpreted.

**Ver.** 17. An admission, in view of 1 Corinthians 14:16, of the real worth of the gift of tongues. Cp. 1 Corinthians 14:2b.

Gives thanks well: for he who speaks with a tongue, speaks (1 Corinthians 14:2) to God.

Edified: the purpose of public thanksgiving, as of all joint worship. For the thanks of others evokes our own gratitude to God. But the man who cannot say intelligently the customary Amen 'is' evidently 'not edified.' This last word, which leads up to the argument of 1 Corinthians 14:5, marks the completion of the argument of 1 Corinthians 14:6-16.

**Ver.** 18-19. Fuller development, in reference to Paul himself, of 1 Corinthians 14:17. His 'thanks' proves the real worth, to the possessor, of the gift of tongues, by revealing the spiritual gain derived therefrom.

More than all of you: a rebuke to boasters.

In church: as in 1 Corinthians 11:18.

With my mind: words which my mind understands; and in the utterance of which therefore, my mind is active.

Others also; as well as myself receive benefit. From 1 Corinthians 14:19 we infer that in words spoken with a tongue the mind is inactive, and that such words, be they ever so many, do not (apart from interpretation) ‘instruct others.’ Notice the force of Paul’s frequent appeal to his own purpose and practice. Cp. 1 Corinthians 6:15; 8:13; 10:33. As he speaks, we feel the attractive power of his moral earnestness and of his pure motive.

The argument subordinate to that of 1 Corinthians 14:5, “that the church may receive edification,” is now complete. Paul has proved that to speak with a tongue cannot edify, by referring (1 Corinthians 14:6) to himself visiting the Corinthian church, to (1 Corinthians 14:7-9) musical instruments used as signals, and to (1 Corinthians 14:10-12) foreigners who know not each others’ language. He therefore repeats in 1 Corinthians 14:13 the injunction implied in 1 Corinthians 14:5 that the public use of the gift of tongues be always with a view to subsequent interpretation. This injunction he further supports in 1 Corinthians 14:14, 15 by reminding us that without interpretation the gift of tongues does not permeate the entire man, and therefore cannot (1 Corinthians 14:16, 17) produce intelligent joint-worship. Consequently, in 1 Corinthians 14:18, 19, while acknowledging the worth of the gift of tongues, Paul expresses a preference which all will approve for five intelligible words rather than an infinite number which no one can understand.

Notice that, by dwelling upon and proving by argument after argument, the uselessness of a parade of the gift of tongues, Paul greatly strengthens our conviction of the folly of such parade.

**Ver. 20.** A sudden and brotherly appeal, suggesting that the Corinthians indulged in a childish parade of their gifts. Paul’s own previous argument against it forces him from this reproof.

Do not become: as though their folly were only beginning, but increasing.

But in wickedness, etc.: Not all the characteristics of childhood are inappropriate to the Christian life. Cp. Matthew 18:3.

Infants: Ephesians 4:14; Hebrews 5:13: stronger term than ‘children.’

Full-grown men: as in 1 Corinthians 2:6. The repetition of the exhortation of 1 Corinthians 14:20a suggests that Paul refers to the difficult Old Testament quotation of 1 Corinthians 14:21.

**Ver. 21.** Free quotation of Isaiah 28:11, suggested perhaps by “children” and “infants.”

In the Law: the Old Testament; see Romans 3:19.

Other: i.e. foreign. The people complained that Isaiah spoke to them in childish words. He declares that in men of stammering lip and in another language God will speak to them: i.e. by the presence of foreign soldiers, whose speech will seem to them nonsense, God will announce His anger against them. The form of the words ‘not even thus, etc.’ seems to be derived from the end of Isaiah 28:12: but their real justification is the entire context, which teaches that even the warning given by the invasion of foreigners will be in vain. In other words, to people who thought themselves too wise to need God’s plain and intelligible teaching, and who therefore disbelieved the prophet’s words, God declares that he will speak through the unknown language of foreign soldiers; and that even this mode of divine utterance will be neglected by them.

**Ver. 22.** A general principle inferred from Isaiah 28:11. That God speaks to men in an unknown language, is meant to be a sign, a sign given not to believers but to unbelievers; and therefore a mark not of the reward which follows faith but of punishment for unbelief. The correctness of this principle to the men of Isaiah’s day, is at once evident. For it was Judah’s disregard of the prophet’s plain words which moved God to send the foreign armies. And the stubbornness of this unbelief is seen in the people’s refusal to take even this new warning. Therefore, the foreign language heard in the land was a mark, given to unbelievers, of their coming punishment. Now, with the strange talk of the Assyrian soldiers the gift of tongues at Corinth had this in common, that it was not understood by those to whom it was sent. It was therefore a mark, not of God’s nearness, but of His distance; i.e. not of full favor, but of low spiritual life. Consequently, the gift of tongues unaccompanied by that of interpretation was no fit matter of boasting. It was a proof that the inward presence of the Spirit had not yet permeated their entire being. This is not inconsistent with Paul’s own thankfulness for the gift of tongues. For in his case (1



Corinthians 14:15) it was accompanied by interpretation. Moreover, as he admits, it brought spiritual profit to its possessor: and all such, even in its most undeveloped forms, is matter, not for boasting, but for gratitude. And it was a proof (Acts 10:46) that its possessor was accepted by God. That Paul does not mean that the gift of tongues was designed to lead unbelievers to faith, is proved plainly by the last words of 1 Corinthians 14:21; and by the contrast of 1 Corinthians 14:23 and 24.

But prophecy, etc.; leads us up, after abundant proof of the uselessness to others of the mere gift of tongues, to the chief matter of 25, viz. the greater value of prophecy.

Not for the unbelievers: suggested perhaps by Isaiah 28:11, which intimates that the prophet's voice will cease, to make way for the speech of the foreign soldiers.

**Ver.** 23-25. If then, etc.: accepting the general principle of 1 Corinthians 14:22, Paul proceeds to show its practical operation.

The whole church; implies that such united gatherings were usual at Corinth.

All speak with tongues: not necessarily all together. For this would cause confusion even in (1 Corinthians 14:24) the case of prophecy. Paul supposes that one after another speaks with a tongue, and no one speaks otherwise.

There come in; implies that the admission of strangers was allowed. Of this 1 Corinthians 14:25 shows a good and possible result.

Private-members: as in 1 Corinthians 14:16. perhaps from other churches. For all the church-members at Corinth are supposed to be present, all speaking with tongues.

Unbelievers: heathens or Jews.

Will they not say, etc.: cp. Acts 2:13. If so, the speaking with tongues would do them no good.

If all prophesy: one after another. The apparent contradiction of 1 Corinthians 14:22 suggests that the second 'unbeliever,' like many at

Corinth, had not heard in its power the word of God; whereas the first had heard and rejected it, like the Jews of Isaiah's day.

Some unbeliever; depicts the effect of prophecy in the heart of a solitary and casual stranger. In 1 Corinthians 14:23 several spectators express to each other their astonishment. There the private members are mentioned first, as noticing first the ridiculousness of a form of worship which separated them from their brethren in Christ. Here the unbeliever stands first: for the effect of the Gospel on him is specially depicted.

Convicted by all: each succeeding speaker, uttering the Spirit's words, increases his consciousness of guilt, sifts his inner life, and brings before him in their true character the secret thoughts and purposes of his heart. Thus: sifted by speaker after speaker.

Announcing: to any who may be within hearing. That your words reveal the secrets of his heart, proves to him 'that' your words come from 'God' dwelling 'in you.' And, that God is thus present in the hearts of men, fills him with awe of God, and moves him to worship. With such results of prophecy Paul's readers were probably familiar. Cp. Acts 2:37. And with this graphic description of the effects of prophecy even upon unbelievers, Paul concludes his proof of its superiority to the gift of tongues. Of this we have an illustration in Acts 2:13 and 37.

For the ARGUMENT of 25 Paul prepares us by proving in 1 Corinthians 13. that we are truly great (cp. 1 Corinthians 14:5b) in proportion as love is the mainspring of our life. Now love ever prompts us to seek the good of others; and will, therefore, prompt us to seek the gift of prophecy, which enables us to instruct, exhort, and encourage others, rather than the gift of tongues which does good only to our selves. The uselessness to others of the mere gift of tongues, he proves and enforces by suggesting that he might himself speak thus to the Corinthians, and by referring to musical instruments used as signals and to men speaking a foreign and unknown language. Therefore, after placing before us the good of others as the object of all speaking in church, he urges that the gift of tongues be used in public only with a view to subsequent interpretation. This he supports by a fourth and a fifth argument, viz. that, apart from interpretation, to pray with a tongue puts into activity only a part of our immaterial nature, and that it makes intelligent joint worship impossible.

Therefore, while admitting the real worth of tongues, Paul repeats in strong terms his preference for prophecy. The evident folly of preferring the gift of tongues calls forth a brotherly rebuke. And he reminds us that to speak with tongues in the midst of brethren is to play the part of the Assyrian soldiers through whom God declared His anger against ancient Judah. In contrast to the uselessness of an uninterpreted tongue, Paul depicts the value, even to heathens, of the gift of prophecy.

In 25 we learn, from Paul's frequent and emphatic repetition of the word 'edify,' that the purpose of church meetings is not so much an approach of the individual to God as the spiritual progress of hearers by means of the voice of a speaker. Consequently, in the mode of our services we shall do well to consider the impression they will make upon the least gifted and upon unbelievers. We learn also that the various extraordinary powers with which the Spirit enriched the early church might be obtained by human effort; i.e. that they were given by the Spirit to those who diligently sought them. This is illustrated by Daniel studying the writings of Jeremiah. Cp. Daniel 9:2; Jeremiah 25:12. Therefore, among the various gifts of the Spirit men could choose which should be their chief aim. And it was important to know which gifts were the most worthy of their pursuit. Since in this choice only Christian love can guide aright, Paul interposes between 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 1 Corinthians 14:1 a proof of its supreme excellence, and points to it as the best way to a correct choice.

This last lesson has, although these special gifts have passed away, an abiding and all-important bearing upon us. Now as then various powers may be obtained by human diligence; e.g. wealth, social influence, knowledge, eloquence, etc. Now as then we may choose whether we will pursue those powers which most benefit others or those which attract attention to ourselves. And the choice thus made is an almost infallible measure of spiritual stature. For both our aim and the strength of our preference and the intelligence of our selection will be determined by the degree of our Christian life, and by the brightness of that light which love sheds within and around its happy possessors.

Again, if Christian love animate us, we shall use in secret those gifts which, though useful to us, will not profit others by their public display. Otherwise we shall expose ourselves to arguments similar to those of 1

Corinthians 14:6-21. E.g., nothing is more helpful to the spiritual life than a knowledge of those languages in which God has been pleased, through the pen of the writers of the Bible, to speak to man. But we shall be kept back from parading such knowledge by remembering that to do so will make our hearers feel (1 Corinthians 14:11) like barbarians and that others (1 Corinthians 14:6) might treat us similarly. In our private communion with God we shall thankfully (1 Corinthians 14:18) use this precious gift that thus we may hear His voice as distinctly as possible. But to our brethren we shall speak in such words as they can best understand.

## SECTION 26

### THE EXERCISE OF GIFTS IS NO EXCUSE FOR DISORDER

#### CHAPTER 14:26-40

*What then is it, brothers? Whenever you are coming together each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If any one speaks with a tongue, let it be by two or at most three, and in turn; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him be silent in church. But to himself let him speak, and to God. Of prophets, let two or three speak; and let the others judge. But, if to another a revelation be given while sitting, let the first be silent. For you are able, one by one, all to prophesy, that all may learn and all may receive exhortation. And spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For not a God of confusion is God, but of peace.*

*As in all the churches of the sayings, let the women be silent in the churches-for it is not permitted to them to speak-but let them be in subjection, according as also the Law says. And if they wish to learn something, at home let them ask their own husbands. For it is shameful to a woman to speak in church. Or, was it from you that the word of God went forth? Or, to you only did it reach?*

*If any one thinks himself to be a prophet or a spiritual man, let him recognize the things which I write unto you, that they are a command of the Lord. But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant. So then, my brothers, be emulous to prophesy: and do not hinder speaking with tongues. But let all things be done becomingly, and according to order.*

After asserting, and applying to the case of prophecy and the gift of tongues, the general principle that we should prefer, and in public use only, those gifts which are profitable to others, Paul gives now specific

directions about the exercise of these gifts, and about another kindred matter. In view of the actual conduct of the Corinthians, he reasserts, in 1 Corinthians 14:26, the general principle; and applies it, in 1 Corinthians 14:27, 28, to the gift of tongues, and, in 1 Corinthians 14:29-33a, to prophecy. He then forbids (1 Corinthians 14:33b-36) women to speak in church. He concludes his specific directions by asserting in 1 Corinthians 14:37, 38 his apostolic authority; and in 1 Corinthians 14:39, 40 sums up 1 Corinthians 14. in two exhortations.

**Ver. 26.** What then is it? as in 1 Corinthians 14:15. “Admitting the foregoing, how do matters actually stand?”

Come-together: in an ordinary church gathering. Cp. 1 Corinthians 14:23; 11:17, 18, 20.

Each-one: every church-member. Cp. “all... all” in 1 Corinthians 14:23f.

Psalm: a hymn which he has composed or learned and wishes to have sung in church. Cp. 1 Corinthians 14:16; Ephesians 5:19.

Teaching: as in 1 Corinthians 14:6: some truth acquired by ordinary means which he wishes to put before the assembly.

Revelation: 1 Corinthians 14:6; 2 Corinthians 12:1, 7: a truth unveiled to his mind by an extraordinary influence of the Spirit.

A tongue: he comes into the assembly under an influence which prompts him to “speak with a tongue.”

An interpretation: 1 Corinthians 12:10, 30: he is ready to say in plain words what another has uttered with ‘a tongue.’ Notice that the ‘psalm’ and ‘teaching’ are ordinary, the ‘revelation, tongue,’ and ‘interpretation,’ extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. But the same principle applies to all. This description, perhaps specially (cp. 1 Corinthians 1:5) characteristic of Corinth, is a vivid picture of the free and spontaneous church life of the early Christians. The Holy Spirit given to all moved all to speak. Yet this new life must not be uncontrolled; but must be directed, according to 25, with a view to the ‘edification’ of the members of the church.

**Ver. 27-28.** Specific directions about speaking ‘with a tongue.’

Two or at the most three: at one meeting. In turn, suggests that sometimes many together begin to speak.

One-man interpret: for all three. A new interpreter for each would cause greater confusion. Paul takes for granted that he who could interpret for one could do so for all. This suggests that the gift of interpretation was a real power, similar to that possessed by ordinary interpreters, of giving the sense of the not-understood but significant words of him who spoke with a tongue. Perhaps (cp. 1 Corinthians 14:5, 13) one of the speakers with a tongue might himself interpret. Paul does not mention the case (perhaps because unlikely) in which each who spoke with a tongue had also the gift of interpretation.

Be silent, etc.: in agreement with 1 Corinthians 14:13, and with the general principle of 1 Corinthians 14:26b. 1 Corinthians 14:28b is a positive injunction and a corrective to 1 Corinthians 14:28a. Even without interpretation, to speak with a tongue is profitable (1 Corinthians 14:4) to the speaker; and must therefore not be forbidden because there is no interpreter, but done in private.

**Ver.** 29-30. In reference to the more valuable gift of prophecy, Paul does not add the strict limitation 'or' "at most" 'three,' as in 1 Corinthians 14:27.

Judge: cognate to "discernment of spirits" in 1 Corinthians 12:10. Same word in 1 Corinthians 11:29, 31. Cp. 1 John 4:1. It is quite uncertain whether 'the others' were the other prophets, or other church-members. Power to judge was a gift quite different (1 Corinthians 12:10) from prophecy; and may or may not have been usually associated with it. These words suggest that, although as a special gift this power was possessed only by some prophets or church-members, yet in a lower degree it was possessed by all. In our ignorance of exact details in the early church we may suppose that the members generally and especially those endowed with the gift of discernment were unitedly guardians of the correctness of the utterances of each individual. That the writings of the New Testament were then only in process of composition, and that false brethren (2 Corinthians 11:13) already existed, made such guardianship very important.

Revelation: closely connected here as in 1 Corinthians 14:6 with prophecy.

While sitting; implies that while speaking they stood. It also implies a sudden impulse of the prophetic Spirit. To such impulse Paul bids that precedence be given.

**Ver. 31.** Supports the last words of 1 Corinthians 14:30, by showing that they do not involve loss of what the interrupted one has to say.

All to prophesy: not necessarily at the same meeting. Paul means probably that the prophetic impulse was in no case so strong as to prevent this orderly and consecutive prophesying. Consequently, there was nothing to prevent every prophet from speaking in his turn to the church. The first 'all' is naturally limited to those who had the special gift without which none could prophesy. But no such limitation attaches to the second and third all. And the change from 2nd to 3rd person suggests a reference to all the church-members. While writing 1 Corinthians 14:29, 30, Paul thought only of prophets: but when coming to the beneficial purpose of prophecy he thinks naturally of the whole church.

May learn, receive exhortation; keeps before us the general principle of 1 Corinthians 14:26b. These purposes of prophecy are mentioned because they are also motives for following Paul's direction. For certainly the consecutive preaching of all the prophets is most likely to edify all who hear.

**Ver. 32-33a.** To the particular assertion of 1 Corinthians 14:31, 1 Corinthians 14:32 adds a general principle on which it rests.

Spirits of prophets: their own spirits, on which the Holy Spirit acts directly. Cp. 1 Corinthians 14:14, 15; and Revelation 22:6, "the God of the spirits of the prophets." The prophet's spirit, which is the source of all his ordinary activity and the medium of the extraordinary activity of prophecy, is even while under the special influence of the Holy Spirit still under his own control. In other words, prophets were not so carried away by the supernatural influence under which they spoke as to be unable to control themselves, and thus unable to take their turn in orderly consecutive prophesying. 'Confusion' is no attribute of God but its opposite, 'peace,' is. Notice that 'peace,' which is characteristic of whatever belongs to God, is secured by each man's self-control. Thus Paul



completes his direction about the exercise of spiritual gifts by leading us, as usual, into the presence of God. Notice that 1 Corinthians 14:30-33a correspond with, and develop, “in turn,” 1 Corinthians 14:27. The greater importance of the gift of prophecy suggested this fuller treatment. It is an application of the general principle of 1 Corinthians 14:26b.

1 Corinthians 14:30-33a teach us not to yield blindly even to influences which we know to be divine; but, while obeying them, to use our own judgment about time and manner, ever having in view the spiritual benefit of others, for which the influence was sent. In other words a consciousness that we are moved by God to do His work is no excuse for a disorderly way of doing it, or for a disregard of the work others are doing. For God loves harmony. And this can be obtained only by the intelligent self-control of Christian co-workers.

**Ver.** 33b-34. These go together. For, whereas 1 Corinthians 14:33b would add no force to the calm assertion of 1 Corinthians 14:33a, it introduces suitably, by making it valid for all churches everywhere, the strong and strongly confirmed injunction of 1 Corinthians 14:34. Similar references to other churches in 1 Corinthians 4:17; 7:17; 11:16.

Of the saints; reminds us that church-members stand in a special relation to God.

In the churches: general assemblies of men and women. Compare “over the man,” in the similar prohibition of 1 Timothy 2:12. Consequently, this verse is not inconsistent with 1 Corinthians 11:5 where women are tacitly permitted to “pray” and “prophecy;” but limits these exercises to more private meetings consisting chiefly or wholly of women. Notice the coincidence of 1 Corinthians 11:5. The women who were ready to speak in public would be also ready to lay aside their distinctive female head-dress.

It is not permitted, etc.: supports the prohibition by an appeal to a general law of the church of Christ.

In subjection: Ephesians 5:22. The contrast implies that to speak in church is to throw off their subordination to the other sex.

The Law says: probably Genesis 3:16. Paul supports his prohibition to speak in church by enjoining general subordination; and supports this by

appealing to God's words to the first pair. Compare carefully 1 Timothy 2:11-14.

**Ver. 35.** A possible excuse for speaking in church.

At home: emphatic. It is not wrong to wish to ask: but they must ask in the right place, and so as not to set aside the authority of the man to whom they are socially subject. The husband might, if needful, put his wife's question to the church. Even the wives of heathen husbands could, through female friends, obtain information in the same way.

For it is shameful, etc.: parallel to "for it is not permitted" in 1 Corinthians 14:34. These two general principles, of which the latter is a development of the former, make us feel the importance of the injunctions which they severally support.

Shameful: see under 1 Corinthians 11:5. A woman's position of subordination is her place of honor. To desert it is therefore a disgrace. This was probably a rebuke to some who gloried in their public speaking.

**Ver. 36.** Other appeals, giving additional weight to the prohibitions. By permitting (as 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 imply) women to speak, the church of Corinth was setting aside the practice of the other churches; and was thus acting as though it were the mother church of Christendom, or the only people whom had been preached the Gospel which went forth from Jerusalem.

Went-forth: cp. 1 Thessalonians 1:8.

**Ver. 37-38.** Prophet or spiritual-man; shows that Paul no longer refers exclusively to the women of 1 Corinthians 14:34ff. He now sets the seal of apostolic authority to DIV. VI., and specially to the injunctions of 26.

Spiritual-man: wider term than 'prophet,' denoting any one under a special influence of the Spirit. Paul's confidence that in writing these words he is guided by the Spirit, answers him that all others moved by the same Spirit will 'acknowledge' the binding authority of his words.

A command of the Lord: of Christ. Thus Paul claims for his own written words absolute and divine authority over the practice of his readers. Equal authority, in doctrine, he has already, in Romans 3:19, conceded to the

writers of the Old Testament. Their words, he calls “the Law;” his own, ‘a command of the Lord.’ The man who does not acknowledge Paul’s authority, 1 Corinthians 14:38 marks as incurably ‘ignorant.’ And incurable ignorance is always culpable. On the Revisers’ marginal reading, see Appendix B. Notice that, though 1 Corinthians 14:37, 38 do not refer specially to 1 Corinthians 14:34-36, yet, that Paul asserts his apostolic authority immediately after this express and emphatic prohibition, greatly increases the force of the prohibition.

**Ver. 39-40.** Summary of 1 Corinthians 14.

Be emulous; takes up 1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1, and marks the completion of the subject there introduced.

To prophesy; for reasons given in 1 Corinthians 14:3-5, 24f.

Do not hinder, etc.; repeats 1 Corinthians 14:5. The contrast of ‘be emulous and do not hinder’ reasserts the preference for prophecy which in 25 Paul justified.

Becomingly: in contrast to “they will say, You are mad,” in 1 Corinthians 14:23.

According to order: in an orderly manner, as enjoined in 1 Corinthians 14:26ff; and in obedience to the authority claimed in 1 Corinthians 14:37.

It may be questioned whether Paul’s absolute prohibition to women to speak in a church-meeting is binding now. It may be said that it was based on a position of woman in the ancient world which has passed away; and that the commands of the apostle, binding upon his original readers, are binding now only so far as the original circumstances remain or as the commands are expressions of great universal principles. But the solemn emphasis and the assertion of apostolic authority, (so unusual to Paul,) and the appeal to the parents of our race with which in two epistles the same prohibition sets forth a principle of universal and perpetual validity, and one resting upon the unchanging relation of the sexes. But this prohibition in no way touches the ministrations of women to women: and the gift in Paul’s day of the prophetic spirit to women proved plainly that there was evangelical work for them to do. And there is abundance of such work now.

PROPHETS were men who spoke in ordinary language, under a special influence of the Spirit of God; and who were thus a mouthpiece of God to men.

For the Old Testament, see Numbers 11:24-29; 1 Samuel 10:5-13; 18:10; 19:20-24; Joel 2:28; Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Jeremiah 1:4-2:2; Ezekiel 2:1-3:1; Acts 28:25; Hebrews 1:1. The prophet's words, as being a voice of God, were matter (1 Peter 1:11) for his own study. In Exodus 7:1f, Aaron was to be the mouthpiece, but Moses the real speaker. We read (e.g. Deuteronomy 18:20) of false prophets speaking in God's Name; and (1 Kings 18:19, 40) of prophets speaking in the name of false gods.

Similarly, in classic Greek, the prophet was an interpreter of the oracular voices of the gods.

In the New Testament, the Baptist, as being a "voice" of God is in Luke 1:76; 7:26 called a prophet. So also the Incarnate Word in Luke 4:24; 24:19. In the apostolic church, prophecy was (1 Corinthians 12:10f) on a special gift of the Spirit, which placed its possessors in the second rank (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11) of the servants of Christ. It was practically the same as "revelation." Cp. 1 Corinthians 14:6, 30. Ephesians 3:5. This latter word directs our attention to the inward "unveiling," by the Spirit, of truths before unknown: 'prophecy' is the "speaking forth" to others the revealed truths. The Book of Revelation is called in Revelation 1:3; 22:7, 10, 18f a 'prophecy.' It was needful for others to judge (1 Corinthians 14:29: cp. 1 John 4:1) whether the impulse under which professed prophets spoke was really divine. To what extent the impulse saved the speaker from error, and thus gave to his words authority, we cannot now determine. The New Testament prophets seem (1 Corinthians 14:24, 26, 29) to have been numerous. They are not mentioned (e.g. Philippians 1:2; 1Tim. 3, Tit. 1.) as a regularly constituted order of church officers; but were probably an extraordinary class of men specially endowed by God for the good of the churches they belonged to or might visit. Their words were designed (1 Corinthians 14:3, 31) to teach and encourage believers, and (1 Corinthians 14:24f) to lead sinners to repentance. Some women prophesied: Acts 2:17; 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5. Cp. Luke 2:36; Judges 4:4.

Since both Old and New Covenants ever point to the future, the prophets frequently spoke, especially in the old preparatory Covenant, of things to come. Of this in the New Testament Agabus (Acts 11:27f, 21:10f) is a good example. But foretelling is not implied in the meaning of the word.

The Cretan poet Epimenides, as a teacher of truth, is called in Titus 1:12 a prophet. By Plato ('Laws' p. 642d) he is called "a divine man," and is said to have foretold the invasion by, and defeat of, the Persians.

To SPEAK WITH TONGUES was, like Prophecy, a special and extraordinary gift of the Spirit. It is mentioned by Paul only in 1 Corinthians 12-14.; elsewhere in the New Testament only Acts 2:4-13; 10:46, (cp. 1 Corinthians 11:15ff; 15:8,) 19:6; Mark 16:17. That it was not a miraculous faculty of speaking one or more foreign languages, is made absolutely certain by Paul's taking for granted, (1 Corinthians 14:2-5, 13, 19, 28,) when comparing the gifts of prophecy and of tongues from the point of view of their practical utility, that apart from interpretation the gift of tongues is of no use whatever to any but the speaker: whereas ability to speak in a foreign language would be an invaluable means of spreading the Gospel. Nor was it a miraculous utterance, in moments of special inspiration, of prayer or praise in a human language unknown to the speaker. Else Paul could not have left completely out of sight the possibility of the presence, especially at Corinth where many nationalities met, of some one who understood the foreign language. Words spoken "with a tongue" were evidently intelligible to others only when interpreted.

Yet the exercise of this gift was (1 Corinthians 14:4) profitable to the speaker. The possession of it by Paul himself in large measure calls forth (1 Corinthians 14:18) his gratitude to God. And even while forbidding the public use of it when no interpreter is present he urges (1 Corinthians 14:28) that it be used in private. Probably its usual form was (1 Corinthians 14:2, 14ff; Acts 2:11; 10:46) prayer or praise. Although the words spoken with a tongue were (unless interpreted with the aid of another gift) altogether unintelligible, they nevertheless had a meaning for they were capable of interpretation. That the mind (1 Corinthians 14:14) had no part in the utterance, and that the speaker was sometimes unable (1 Corinthians 14:13, 28) to interpret to others his own words implies that,

unless he had also the gift of interpretation, he did not himself understand them.

Of all this the simplest explanation is that in the apostolic church there were men on whose "tongue" the Holy Spirit exerted a direct influence, moving it to speak words which were neither prompted nor understood by the speaker's own mind; and that, like (Romans 8:15, 26) the Spirit-prompted words were chiefly or wholly directed to God in prayer or praise. Such speaking might be called "with a tongue:" for only the tongue was at work, without conscious mental effort. But, since none but living tongues could thus speak, the man's own spirit, i.e. the principle of life within him, was an essential factor of the speaking: and Paul could say (1 Corinthians 14:14) correctly, "my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful." Moreover, the speaker "with a tongue" would (1 Corinthians 14:2) "speak mysteries." For his words contained the deep things of God, and truths known only by special revelation. Such speaking, though not penetrating the speaker's whole being and his consciousness, could not but be profitable, in a manner to us incomprehensible. For it came from the Spirit of God acting on man's spirit. And probably the spirit, as distinguished from the mind, is not only physiologically but morally that part of man which is nearest to the Great Source of animal and spiritual life. If interpreted, the words would give profit to others.

Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 14:27 imply that men under this influence of the Spirit could so restrain themselves as to speak in turn, or be silent till they were alone with God. And we can also conceive different modes of speaking, under the influence of the Spirit: hence one person might have (1 Corinthians 12:10) "kinds of tongues;" and (1 Corinthians 14:5f) speak "with tongues."

To "speak with a tongue," implies articulate utterance. But we have no means of knowing the relation, if such existed, of the words thus spoken to the speaker's mother tongue or to other languages known or unknown to him. No safe inference can be drawn from 1 Corinthians 13:1, which is given merely as the highest conceivable grade of the gift.

With the foregoing, Acts 10:46; 19:6 agree exactly. We have the same phrase, "speak with tongues," denoting again a manifestation of the Spirit, in the form of praise to God, and associated with prophecy. Cp. Mark

16:17; where “new” is probably spurious, and Mark 16:9-20 very doubtful.

With the same agrees Acts 2:4-13 in that the Spirit (Acts 2:4) gave the utterance, in (Acts 2:11) the form of praise to God. But in Acts 2:6, 8, 11 we are told explicitly that the assembled disciples spoke in foreign languages, recognized as such by natives who were present. Consequently, the gift of tongues at Pentecost was, according to Acts 2:4-13, different from that about which Paul wrote to the Corinthians. Yet, in Acts 11:15ff, the gift mentioned in Acts 10:46 in words the same as those in this chapter is said to have been “the equal gift... as on us at the beginning.” Now, so clear are the proofs that the gift at Corinth was not a speaking in foreign languages, that the very able and godly scholars, Neander and Meyer, with others, have supposed that the tongues at Pentecost were really the same as at Corinth, but that in the confusion of the hour they were mistaken for foreign languages by those who heard but did not understand them, and that in this form the tradition had reached Luke and had been recorded in the Book of Acts. But Luke claims (Luke 1:3) to have carefully investigated the facts he narrates: and he was (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24; see Dissertation II.) a “beloved” companion and fellow-worker of Paul, who was himself a colleague of the chief actors at Pentecost. Surely it is inconceivable that Luke would fall into so great an error about so conspicuous and well-known an event, during the lifetime of the chief actors in it. On the mere ground then of simple historic evidence, without reference to the authority of Scripture, (which is, however, seriously involved,) we are compelled to accept the narrative of Acts 2:1-13 as correct. Much easier is the supposition that the “tongues” at Pentecost were a higher grade, perhaps never repeated, of the gift spoken of by Paul. Not that the power to communicate thought in foreign languages was given. But God thought fit that His Spirit, the one source of human life and thought and speech, should inaugurate the Gospel dispensation by pouring through the lips of men words in human languages before unknown to them. This highest form of the gift was limited to the founding of the church. A lower form of the same lingered probably during the lifetime of those who witnessed its founding.

The similarity of phrase suggests that the “tongues” of Acts 10:46; 19:6 were the same as in 1 Corinthians 14, and different from those of Acts

2:4-13. But in each case the significance of the gift was the same, viz. a proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit to be henceforth, in those who receive Him, the animating principle of a new life, a witness of reception into the family of God, and an earnest of an eternal inheritance. This Spirit, not the transient form of His manifestation was "the equal gift" (Acts 11:17) alike to Jews and Gentiles. Consequently, without thought of the unimportant difference of mode, Peter could correctly say in 1 Corinthians 14:15: "The Holy Spirit fell upon them, as also upon us at the beginning." Cp. Ephesians 1:13f. DIVISION 6: gives us the noblest ideal of a Christian church, viz. a human body, 1 Corinthians 12; the one great principle which ought to animate all church life, viz. love, 1 Corinthians 13; and a valuable glimpse (in addition to those in 1 Corinthians 11) into the actual meetings of the apostolic church, 1 Corinthians 14.

In accordance with the liberty which permitted each member to take for himself (1 Corinthians 11:21) the sacred bread and wine, we find each member ready to speak in public, and many moved by the Spirit to speak, and permitted to do in an orderly way. Even women, probably after laying aside (1 Corinthians 11:5) their distinctive head-dress, were eager to address a promiscuous assembly. And we find traces of an empty and useless parade of influences flowing from the Spirit of God. All this agrees with the spiritual childishness of 1 Corinthians 3:1-4. Very remarkable, amid this confusion, is the absence of all reference, especially in 1 Corinthians 5, 11, 14, to church officers. These doubtless existed: cp. Acts 14:23; 20:17; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3: They are unmentioned perhaps because in a church consisting only of new converts, they were probably in knowledge or experience little above the rest; and therefore not conspicuous. The absence of all reference to them, and the complete contrast of the church life depicted here and that depicted in the earliest sub-apostolic writings and even in the later epistles in Paul, are indisputable marks of the very early date, and therefore of the genuineness, of this Epistle. The whole chapter teaches clearly that church life was earlier than church order.



## DIVISION VII

### ABOUT THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

#### CHAPTER 15

#### SECTION 27

#### *THE GOSPEL PREACHED BY PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS PROCLAIMED THAT CHRIST HAS RISEN*

#### CHAPTER 15:1-11

*I make known to you, brothers, the Gospel which I announced to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, by means of which you are also being saved, if you are holding fast the word by which I announced the Gospel to you, except in vain you believed. For I delivered to you among the first matters, which I also received, that Christ died on behalf of our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He is risen the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then He appeared to above five hundred brothers at once, of whom the more part remain until now, but some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James; then to the apostles all. And, last of all, just as if to the untimely one, He appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not sufficient to be called an apostle, because that I persecuted the Church of God. But by grace of God I am what I am. And His grace towards me did not prove vain, but more abundantly than they all I have labored: yet not I, but the grace of God with me. Whether then I or they, thus we preach, and thus you believed.*

**DIVISION. VII.**, embracing 1 Corinthians 15, introduces suddenly a topic altogether new, viz. the resurrection of the dead. This is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that at Corinth some were saying “that there is no resurrection.” And the tone of surprise of Paul’s question in 1 Corinthians 15:12 suggests (cp. 1 Corinthians 6:1) that this matter was not mentioned in the letter (1 Corinthians 7:1) he had received. He prepares the way for his question in 1 Corinthians 15:12 by asserting in 27 that the resurrection of Christ was proclaimed in that Gospel which was saving his readers, and in the ancient Scriptures, and that it was vouched for by a large number of witnesses of whom the more part were still living. In 28 he reminds his readers that to deny the resurrection of the dead is to deny that Christ has risen; and gives various proofs that there is a life beyond death, assuming that this implies a resurrection of the dead. In 29 he uncovers and overturns a foundation of the denial of the resurrection, viz. the unfitness of our present bodies for the life to come; and concludes the whole matter in 30 with a shout of triumph.

**Ver. 1-2.** Make known to you the Gospel: as though they needed to be told (cp. 1 Corinthians 12:3; Galatians 1:11) what it was they had already believed. Of this virtual promise, 27 is a fulfillment. Cp. 1 Corinthians 15:11.

The Gospel, etc.: “the good news which as good news I announced to you.”

Also... also... also: proof after proof, from their own experience, of the worth of the Gospel. Long ago it so commended itself to them that they ‘received’ it: today they find ‘in’ it a firm ground on which morally and spiritually they ‘stand’ (1 Corinthians 10:12) erect; and by its means they day by day experience deliverance (1 Corinthians 1:18, 21; Ephesians 1:13) from sin and its consequences. (Notice that we stand also (Romans 5:2; 11:20) in the grace of God and by faith: for by faith we receive the good news, which reveals God’s favor towards us.)

Holding-fast, etc.: condition on which hangs the truth of the words ‘you stand, are being saved.’ It is therefore a warning suggesting self-examination; and is an appeal to the readers; inner consciousness that their spiritual erectness and victory are in proportion to the firmness with which they hold fast Paul’s teaching.

The word with which, etc.: the verbal form in which Paul preached the Gospel to them.

Except, etc.; supports the assertion that, unless they have relaxed their hold upon Paul's teaching, they now stand firm and are now in the way of salvation: for otherwise, the faith they formerly exercised is an empty thing. And, that it is not such, their inmost heart proclaims. This argument is developed in 1 Corinthians 15:17.

Believed: as in Romans 13:11.

**Ver.** 3-4. Reason for the broad statement of 1 Corinthians 15:1, 2, showing its bearing on the matter in hand. Paul appealed to the effect of the gospel he preached because the resurrection of Christ was a part of it.

Delivered: as in 1 Corinthians 11:2; see note.

The first things: first in importance probably. For this is the chief point: and in what follows there is no reference to time. Paul 'received' the historic details, some of which he gives here, doubtless from the apostles (e.g. Galatians 1:18) and other human witnesses; the spiritual meaning of the great facts, from (Galatians 1:12) Christ Himself. But of all this he says nothing here; except that his teaching was no invention of his own, that he was but the channel through which it came to the Corinthians.

On-behalf-of our sins: i.e. to save us from them. Same preposition in Hebrews 5:1; 7:27; 9:7; 10:12. See under 1 Corinthians 15:29. Cp. "because of our trespasses," Romans 4:25. Each of these passages is meaningless unless we accept the great doctrine of the Atonement as I have endeavored to expound it under Romans 3:26. Cp. Hebrews 9:26ff; 10:12.

According to the Scriptures: e.g. Isaiah 53:9-12

Buried: the link between Christ's death and resurrection. These words suggest that the historic details of the death of Christ were put prominently forward by the early preachers, as we find them made prominent in the four Gospels.

[Is-risen: the Greek perfect as in 1 Corinthians 15:12. The addition 'the third day' is no incongruity. See 'Expositor,' vol. xi. p. 301.]

Whether 'according to the Scriptures' refers also to 'was buried,' (cp. Isaiah 53:9,) is unimportant. It probably does not refer to the 'third day:' for this is not clearly mentioned in the Old Testament, and is an unimportant detail. But Isaiah 53:10-12 implies fairly the resurrection of Christ. The words 'according to the Scriptures,' which receive emphasis from their repetition, support strongly the teaching of Paul. For they show that it was not only a means of salvation to the Corinthians but was in harmony with the very ancient books held sacred even by the enemies of the Gospel. We have here an important coincidence with the Epistle to the Romans, which we may take to be an epitome of Paul's teaching, and in which he shows that the Gospel is through-out in harmony with the Old Testament.

**Ver. 5.** Further statement of what Paul had said to them.

To Cephas: a very important coincidence with apparently casual words in Luke 24:34; Mark 16:7.

To the twelve: further coincidence with Luke 24:36ff, which is confirmed by John 20:19ff. 'The twelve' had so thoroughly become a technical term for the original apostles both before and after (Acts 6:2) the death of Christ that it is used here although one had fallen from the ranks. This makes it possible and likely that Paul refers to the appearance in John 20:19 when Thomas also was present.

**Ver. 6.** The change here from indirect to direct narration is no proof that Paul had not spoken at Corinth about the facts which follow. For he must have spoken of (1 Corinthians 15:8) Christ's appearance to himself. The change was prompted by the number of the facts mentioned; and gives reality to the narration by pointing us to the facts themselves rather than to Paul's mention of them. This gathering of 'above five hundred brethren' and Christ's appearance to them are not mentioned elsewhere, and the circumstances are quite unknown: but it is easily conceivable, and Paul's word is sufficient evidence of the fact. (The 120 names of Acts 1:15 were but the enrolled disciples at Jerusalem.) It may have been in Galilee, (cp. Matthew 28:7, confirmed by John 21:1,) where Christ had labored long; or near to Jerusalem before the Passover pilgrims went home. The size of the assembly, however called together, and the appearance of Christ to so many 'at once,' each of whom would compare his view of the Risen One,

made this event an indisputable and conspicuous proof of the resurrection of Christ. Its omission from the Gospels is no more remarkable than the silence of the first three about the raising of Lazarus; and is in harmony with John 20:30. That after the lapse of about twenty-five years 'the more part' were still living, seems to imply that Christ chose young men chiefly to be witnesses of His resurrection, who might live long to testify it to others. That Paul knew that the majority were still alive, proves that those who had actually seen the risen Lord were marked men in the early church. Cp. Joshua 24:31, "the elders that overlived Joshua."

**Ver. 7.** James: "the Lord's brother;" who when these epistles were written had a position so prominent that in Galatians 2:9 he is mentioned before Peter and John. He was probably not the same as "the son of Alphaeus" in Matthew 10:3. See further under Galatians 1:19. This appearance is not mentioned elsewhere. That in the autumn before His death (John 7:25) the brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him, and yet were found with His disciples immediately after His ascension, suggests that this appearance to His oldest brother (probably, see Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3) led to the conversion of him and perhaps of the others. This verse is thus a link between John 7:5 and Acts 1:14.

All the apostles; seems at first sight to have a compass different from "the twelve" in 1 Corinthians 15:5. But this would involve difficulties nearly or quite insuperable. The apostles held (1 Corinthians 12:28) the first rank in the church. During our Lord's life this title belonged specifically to the twelve; and in the Gospels is given to none else: see Matthew 10:2; Mark 6:30; Luke 6:13; 22:14. Only Luke 17:5 is open to doubt. And the presence of the twelve only at the Last Supper implies that they held a rank shared by no others. In Luke 24:10, referring to the day of the Resurrection, "the apostles" are evidently "the eleven" of Luke 24:9. Now if 'to all the apostles' be not equivalent to "the twelve" in 1 Corinthians 15:5, we must suppose that during the forty days Christ added to the first rank of His official servants a definite number of new members, and that He appeared to these, either singly or together. And since 'all' is a definite term, we must suppose either that He then appeared to 'all' who afterwards were called 'apostles,' (yet Paul would be an exception,) or that He first called these additional ones to be apostles and then appeared to all whom He had thus called. Both these suppositions are very unlikely.

Moreover, after the ascension we find the Eleven still occupying a unique position in the church: as is proved by the record of their names in Acts 1:13, and by the formal addition (Acts 1:26) of Matthias to their number. This makes it still more unlikely that during the forty days Christ had given to some others the name and rank of Apostle. He did this, however, in later days to Paul; and perhaps to Barnabas, Silvanus, James, and others. Acts 14:4; Galatians 1:19, and especially 1 Thessalonians 2:6. In view of all this it is perhaps least difficult to suppose that 1 Corinthians 15:7 refers to the eleven surviving original apostles, and possibly to the appearance narrated in John 20:26. If this latter supposition be correct, “the twelve” in 1 Corinthians 15:5 would be a general term for the apostolic band, consisting in this case of only ten persons: whereas ‘all the apostles’ in 1 Corinthians 15:7 would denote the entire eleven.

Notice Paul’s accuracy in stating even the order of these appearances. The exact details were evidently known to him. Of the appearances mentioned, the first (Luke 24:34) was to Peter; the second (Luke 24:36) to the assembled apostles; the third, to a gathering of 500 persons; the fourth, to His brother James; and the fifth (perhaps John 20:26) to the entire apostolic band. To all these well-known persons Paul appeals as witnesses that Christ has risen.

**Ver. 8.** Last of all: of all the apostles, probably; or of those persons to whom the Risen One showed Himself. At the time of the above-mentioned appearances Paul was an enemy. But that he might take rank equal with the rest, long after appearing to the others, Christ ‘appeared also’ to him.

The untimely-one, in LXX., Numbers 12:12; Job 3:16; Ecclesiastes 6:3: an abortive offspring born at the wrong time and not reckoned among the children. With deep humility Paul says that among the apostles he was the untimely birth: not that his apostolic birth was a failure, but abnormal in its circumstances. That Paul does not speak between 1 Corinthians 15:7 and 1 Corinthians 15:8 of the ascension, is no proof that he did not believe that it occurred as narrated in Acts 1:9. For he speaks here simply of the fact of the resurrection, of which the appearances to others and to himself were clear proof, a proof not strengthened by Christ’s departure to heaven.

**Ver. 9-10.** 1 Corinthians 15:9 justifies “the untimely one.”

The least, etc.: cp. Ephesians 3:8.

Sufficient: same word in Matthew 3:11; 2 Corinthians 2:16; 3:5.

To be called: to bear the honored name of Apostle. Although pardoned by God, Paul evidently felt deeply and constantly how sinful, and how perilous to himself, was his former war against Christ; and wondered that such a rebel should be permitted to take any place among the servants of Christ. And he felt that among these, and especially in the apostolic band, such a one must ever put himself in the lowest place. Cp. 1 Timothy 1:13-16. It would be well if similar humiliation were manifested by all who after notorious sin have become Christian workers. In 1 Corinthians 15:10, after speaking of himself as the least of the apostles, Paul remembers that in labors and success he is the greatest of them. And for the glory of Him who has conferred such honor on one so unworthy he cannot pass over this in silence.

What I am; sums up Paul's entire toil and success: all this he says he owes to the undeserved favor of God. These words all Christians can use touching all that belongs to them except the consequences of their own unfaithfulness.

And His grace, etc.: an addition to the foregoing which both explains and proves it.

Did not become vain: so literally; in colloquial English, "did not turn out vain."

But more, etc.: the exact opposite of being 'vain' i.e. without result.

All of them; may, but does not necessarily, mean "all put together." How far his own labors surpassed those of others, Paul leaves his readers to judge.

The grace of God with me. Although the results were wrought altogether by God, in undeserved favor, yet they were wrought through the instrumentality and 'with' the concurrence of Paul. Now, what a man has done determines his spiritual stature. Therefore, since all that Paul had done had been wrought in and through him by the favor of God, he could say, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.'

**Ver. 11.** Summary of 27, in a form prompted by Paul's comparison of himself with the other apostles. Although he was the untimely birth and they were born in due time, and although he labored more than they, yet he and they were alike in that all proclaimed that Christ had risen. And what he and they proclaimed his readers had accepted; with what results, they knew.

Preach: see under Romans 2:21.

Thus we preach; recapitulates 1 Corinthians 15:3-10, and corresponds with "I make known... preached to you" in 1 Corinthians 15:1.

Thus you believed; corresponds with "which also you received... in vain believed." Paul thus prepares the way, by stating well-attested facts which his readers had themselves accepted, for the argument of 28.



## SECTION 28

*SINCE CHRIST HAS RISEN, HIS PEOPLE WILL RISE*

### CHAPTER 15:12-34

*But if Christ is preached, that He is risen from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of dead men? But if there is no resurrection of dead men, not even Christ is risen. And if Christ is not risen, empty then is our preached word, empty also your faith. And we are found to be also false witnesses of God, because we have born witnesses against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, we should infer, if dead men are not raised, For if dead men are not raised, not even Christ is risen. And if Christ is not risen, vain is your faith; you are still in your sins.*

*We infer then that they also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we are only men who in this life have hope in Christ, more pitiable than all men are we.*

*But now Christ is risen from the dead, a firstfruit of the sleeping ones. For since through man is Death, also through man there is Resurrection of dead ones. For just as in Adam all die so also in the Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order. As firstfruit, Christ; then they that are Christ's, at His coming. Then the end, when He gives up the Kingdom to the God and Father, when He shall have brought to nought all principality and all authority and power. For it must needs be that He reign as king till when He have put all the enemies under His feet. As a last enemy, Death is brought to nought. For, all things He has made subject under His feet. But whenever He shall say that all things are made subject, it is evident that it is with the exception of Him who made all things subject to Him. And, when all things have been made subject to Him, then also the Son will be made subject*

*to Him who made all things subject to Him; that God may be all things in all.*

*Else what will they do who are being baptized on behalf of the dead ones? If, to speak generally, dead men are not raised why are they being baptized on their behalf? Why do we also incur danger every hour? Day by day I am dying; as witness, the exultation about you, brothers, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord. If with human aim I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what is the gain to me? If dead men do not rise, "Let us eat and let us drink: for tomorrow we die." (Isaiah 22:13.) Be not deceived. "Bad companionships corrupt good dispositions." Rouse up righteously: and do not sin. For, ignorance of God some have. To awaken shame, to you I speak.*

By a question Paul now reveals his reason for stating the facts of 27, viz. that at Corinth some were saying 'that there is no resurrection of dead men.' The precise intention and ground of this last assertion are discussed at the end of 28 and of DIV. VII. In 1 Corinthians 15:12-17 Paul refutes it by developing the facts of 27 and then refuting a necessary, though not expressly asserted, consequence of it. viz. that Christ has not risen: in 1 Corinthians 15:13-34 he refutes a second and avowed inference from the same chief error, viz. that there is no life beyond death. Thus, by refuting two necessary logical consequences, Paul overthrows the error itself. And in 29 he dispels a misconception on which in part the chief error rests.

**Ver.** 12-13. Preached; takes up the same word in 1 Corinthians 15:11, which recapitulates 1 Corinthians 15:3-10. Paul does not assume here that Christ is actually risen, but merely that this is proclaimed, as described above. From this proclamation and its results he will prove the fact of the resurrection. 'Christ is preached.' To proclaim that He rose is to proclaim HIM as Prince and Savior. [The conspicuous perfects in 1 Corinthians 15:12-14, 16, 17, 20 call attention to the abiding effect of Christ's resurrection.]

How say, etc.: question of astonishment, like 1 Corinthians 6:1. The present tense implies that they continued to spread their opinions.

Some among you: evidently church-members. Yet instead of requiring their expulsion as in 1 Corinthians 5:4f, Paul reasons earnestly with them.

That the inference ‘neither is Christ risen’ is stated, and in 1 Corinthians 15:16 repeated, without proof but with perfect confidence, implies that it was unmistakably involved in the assertion ‘there is no resurrection of dead men.’ Consequently, this assertion must be taken as denying in the widest sense that a departed spirit can return to the body. For, in a narrower sense we might deny that a body dissolved in the grace can rise without denying that He rose Whose “flesh saw no corruption.” But the argument implies that no such limited denial was intended by the men referred to here.

**Ver. 14-17.** Proof, from the facts of 27 summed up in 1 Corinthians 15:11, that the concluding words of 1 Corinthians 15:13 are false. ‘Our preached-word’ (developed in 1 Corinthians 15:15) takes up “we preached” in 1 Corinthians 15:11: ‘your faith’ (developed in 1 Corinthians 15:17) takes up “you believed.” Both the word preached by Paul and the assurance with which the Corinthians received it would, if Christ had not risen, ‘be empty,’ i.e. destitute of reality. Of these two assertions, the former is developed in 1 Corinthians 15:15. If Christ be not risen, the apostles are ‘found’ out to be acting under false pretenses and giving ‘false testimony’ even about God.

Because we, etc.; proves this, and carries it a step further. Since God has done all that is wise and good, to say that He has done what He has not done, is to ‘bear witness against God.’

Whom He did not raise... not even Christ is risen: forceful repetition of the argument of 1 Corinthians 15:13.

**Ver. 17.** Develops “empty also is your faith” in 1 Corinthians 15:14. For a belief which is “empty,” i.e. destitute of reality, must also be vain, i.e. barren of results.

In your sins: your former sins, as the element in which you still live and walk. Cp. Ephesians 2:2; John 8:24. This is better than to expound “under the penalty of sin.” For Paul evidently supposes that, without further disproof from him, these words will be at once contradicted by his reader’s inner consciousness, which would testify that they are no longer

committing their own former sins. To the same conscious victory over sin he appeals in Romans 8:13f. His readers knew well that they were no longer in their former bondage to sin. Consequently, their faith was not without result. And, if so, it could not be empty credulity; nor could the men whose word they had believed with results so good be false witnesses against God. Yet these men had proclaimed as an essential element of the Gospel that Christ had risen. Therefore, the inward deliverance from sin enjoyed by the Corinthians was itself a proof that Christ had risen. Notice that here, as in Romans 6:17ff; Ephesians 2:2f, Paul assumes that all men have been sinners; and with great confidence and courtesy assumes that his readers have been saved from sin.

That Paul took so much pains to prove the first link of the argument of 1 Corinthians 15:13, viz. that Christ has risen, and no pains at all to prove the second link, viz. that His resurrection disproves the assertion that there is no resurrection, shows that the second point was so clear that it would be admitted at once, whereas the former might be doubted. But, that no mention is made of denial that Christ had risen, suggests that, though some at Corinth had denied the resurrection in a sense which, as they could hardly fail to see, excluded the resurrection of Christ, yet they had not thought fit to express their denial to its logical issue. Notice that Paul does not speak directly to the deniers, but to the members generally whom he wishes to protect against error taught in their midst, and with whom he reasons from spiritual facts of their own inner life.

**Ver. 18.** Another inference, in addition to that of 1 Corinthians 15:13, logically involved in the assertion “that there is no resurrection.” The mere statement of this inference proves it to be false; and thus disproves the statement which involves it. If the dead are not raised, then not only are you in your sins but ‘also they who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.’

Fallen-asleep: frequent metaphor of death, 1 Corinthians 7:39; 11:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:13ff; Matthew 27:52; John 11:11; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Kings 11:43; 2 Macc. 12:45. So Homer, ‘Iliad’ bk. xi. 241: “He fell down and slept a sleep of brass.” It is specially suitable here: for we expect sleepers to awake. The metaphor is suggested so naturally by the

appearance of the dead that it is utterly unfair to infer from it that they are unconscious. See 2 Corinthians 5:8. But they are at rest.

Fallen-asleep; directs attention to the event of death.

Perished: hopelessly ruined. Same word as ‘destroyed,’ and ‘lost:’ see Review of DIV. 7:and note under Romans 2:24. If dead men do not rise, and if consequently our hope of eternal happiness depends upon our surviving till Christ comes, then our departed brethren have lost their share in that happiness, and have thus lost everything and lost themselves. That this is absolutely impossible, Paul leaves his readers to judge. For it could not be conceived that they who had lived in Christ and gone down to the grave trusting in Him, whose very death had been an evident victory over death, had by the hand of death been separated from Him.

Grammatically we might connect 1 Corinthians 15:18 with the foregoing words, and take it as proof that we are not “still in our sins.” But to a Christian man this needs no proof. And, as expounded above, 1 Corinthians 15:18 is a complete and additional argument in support of the main thesis of 28, viz. that there is a resurrection of the dead. A similarly abrupt argument in support of this thesis, we find in 1 Corinthians 15:29.

**Ver. 19.** An argument supplementary to the last. It implies that some who denied the resurrection were, or might be, nevertheless looking forward with hope to the coming of Christ and to the endless happiness He will bring. Now, if dead men be not raised, i.e. if they “who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished,” the realization of these hopes depends upon our surviving till Christ comes. And, if so, we and all our hopes are at the mercy of death: for they may be overturned at any moment by its approach. Our hopes, like worldly hopes, depend upon continuance ‘in this life.’

We are only men who in this life have hope of Christ. If so, men like Paul, whose life was one long peril of death, are in a position most pitiable: and their conduct in braving such perils (1 Corinthians 15:30) is inexplicable. For hopes most glorious hang upon a thread most slender. The correctness of the foregoing exposition is confirmed by an important coincidence in 1 Thessalonians 4:13ff, where we learn that similar doubts existed at Thessalonica.

**Ver. 20.** Triumphant assertion ‘that Christ is risen,’ prompted by a deep consciousness how far from true were the suppositions involved in a denial of it; followed by an assertion that His resurrection is a pledge of ours.

But now: as in 1 Corinthians 12:18: “as things actually are.”

First-fruit: Romans 8:23; 16:5: the first-ripe ears, which are a pledge and a part of the coming harvest. Cp. Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5; and, in Appendix A, the Epistle of Clement, ch. 24.

**Ver. 21.** Justifies the expression ‘first-fruit,’ by explaining the connection therein implied between Christ’s resurrection and ours.

Through man, death: explained in Romans 5:12.

Through; denotes constantly Christ’s relation to us and our salvation. See under Romans 1:5. The conspicuous repetition ‘through man... also through man,’ embodies an important principle. God has linked men together so closely that each one receives good and ill through his fellows. This abiding relation revealed itself first in the father of our race, ‘through’ whom comes ‘death’ to all. And, that this relation might be a channel not only of ill but of surpassing good, Christ became man and made His humanity a channel of life to all who receive Him.

**Ver. 22.** Explains and develops 1 Corinthians 15:21, thus continuing the justification of 1 Corinthians 15:20b. The whole race and its fortunes were so wrapped in the one father of the race that the punishment inflicted upon him falls upon us: and ‘all’ of us ‘die’ because ‘Adam’ died. We die now in virtue of our relation to one who died long ago.

So also, etc.: triumphant parallel.

In Christ: in virtue of our relation to Christ. Since never once are unbelievers said to be in any sense ‘in Christ,’ since the future state of the lost is never once called ‘life,’ and since in the foregoing (“firstfruit of the sleeping ones”) and following (“they that are Christ’s”) verses Paul limits his view to believers, we must understand the words ‘all... all’ in this limitation. Only within these limits is 1 Corinthians 15:43 true. See note under Romans 5:18. That ‘made-alive’ is perhaps sometimes used in the simple sense of “restore to natural life,” does not weaken this proof. For

all men on earth are said to be ‘alive:’ but never those who are dead and lost. [Hence the absence of *ἄνθρωποι*, a word conspicuous in Romans 5:12, 18, which refer (Romans 5:14) to the whole race.] It is true that “all men” die in Adam. But in this chapter Paul thinks only of believers. Similarly, he leaves out of sight, as not affecting the argument, those who survive till Christ comes. In consequence of his readers’ relation to Adam, every one of them will be laid in the grave: in consequence of their relation to Christ they will all be raised from the grave.

This doctrine rests, as do all the great doctrines of the Gospel (see under Romans 3:22, and Dissertation i. 3) simply and only on the authoritative word of God. That both good and bad will rise from the dust of death, was revealed to Daniel (Daniel 12:2) in his last prophetic vision. It was solemnly announced by Christ, John 5:28: and the resurrection of believers is announced by Paul to the Thessalonians “in the word of the Lord,” 1 Thessalonians 4:15. The abundant teaching of the New Testament makes us absolutely certain that it was taught by Christ. Our belief of it rests therefore upon the sufficient authority of Him Who will judge the world. Therefore, to deny the general resurrection, is to dispute this authority and thus practically to deny that God raised Christ from the dead.

Consequently, we believe that we shall rise because we believe that He rose. And the connecting link between these beliefs is the express word of Christ. But to this express teaching Paul does not refer in this chapter. For he is dealing with an objection so sweeping that it includes a denial that Christ has risen. Perhaps also Paul knew that this objection to the resurrection of believers was really a covert attack on the resurrection of Christ.

**Ver. 23-28.** The words “will be made alive” open to Paul’s gaze a vision of the future consummation he now describes. In doing so he traces further the relation between the resurrection of Christ and our own resurrection; and thus supports his assumption in 1 Corinthians 15:20 that the one is a pledge of the other.

**Ver. 23.** Each in his own order: found twice word for word in the Epistle of Clement, chs. 37, 41; in reference to military array, and to church order. In the ‘order’ in which the army of the redeemed marches forth from the

gates of death each one keeps the place appropriate to his rank, i.e. the Captain marches first and His followers afterwards.

They that are Christ's: 1 Corinthians 3:23; Galatians 5:24: evidently the saved, including those of the Old Testament and of the heathen world. These last, Christ claims expressly in John 10:16, "Other sheep I have;" and declares that they shall be brought into the "One flock." Cp. Romans 2:26. That we are Christ's, confirms the teaching that Christ's resurrection is a pledge of ours.

At His coming: 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13; 4:15. It gives vividness to the picture by pointing to its most conspicuous feature, the visible return of Christ. This verse does not contradict John 5:28f, viz. that good and bad men will rise together. For throughout 1 Corinthians 15, (cp. 1 Corinthians 15:43) Paul speaks only of the saved. Here, without denying that all the dead will rise at the same time, he says that Christ's people will rise later than Himself; as in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 that dead believers will rise before the living ones are caught up to Christ. Revelation 20:4 refers only to the martyrs, who for Christ's sake went down into the grave before their time, and who will have the honor of rising before the rest of the people of God.

**Ver. 24.** The end: of the redemptive reign of Christ, as suggested by the words immediately following, and proved by the emphatic and prolonged reference in 1 Corinthians 15:25-28 to the 'end' of Christ's reign and to His submission to the Father. It is the "completion of the age," Matthew 13:39; 24:3; 28:20. Meyer's exposition, that 'the end' is the resurrection of the unjust, cannot be allowed. For this, not being referred to in the whole chapter, would require specific mention. The word "each" in 1 Corinthians 15:23 does not necessarily imply more than two orders, i.e. Christ and His people. Of a third order, viz. the unsaved, not a word is said.

Gives up: as though Paul, in prophetic vision, saw Christ 'giving up the Kingdom.'

When He gives up; expounds 'the end.' After raising His people from death and thus completing their deliverance, Christ solemnly presents His finished work to the Father, the work which the Father gave Him to do:



and this presentation will be the last act, ‘the end,’ of His redemptive reign.

The God and Father: of Christ and of us. He is the Supreme Ruler of the universe and the Loving Parent of the whole family of heaven.

Brought to nought: same word in 1 Corinthians 2:6; Romans 3:3.

Principality, authority, power: Ephesians 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Colossians 1:16; 2:10, 15; Titus 3:1: evidently hostile powers (“enemies,” 1 Corinthians 15:25) human and superhuman. To the men of Paul’s day the hostile human powers were a terrible reality: the hostile spiritual powers are terrible now. ‘Principality,’ suggests the first rank; ‘authority,’ control over others; ‘power,’ ability to produce results. The rank, as the most conspicuous feature, is mentioned first: from this flow the authority and power. 1 Corinthians 15:24b suggests that till these exalted adversaries are overthrown the Son cannot give up the kingdom to God.

**Ver. 25.** Proof that the giving up of the kingdom will be preceded by the overthrow of all hostile powers, by an appeal to a necessity resting on the immovable purpose of God as revealed in ancient prophecy.

Must-needs: same word in Matthew 16:21; 17:10; 24:6; 26:54; Luke 24:7, 26, 44; John 3:14; 20:9; Acts 1:16; 3:21; 17:3, etc.

Reign-as-king: in contrast to “give up the kingdom.”

He have put, etc.: viz. Christ. For nothing suggests a change of subject.

All the enemies: of him and us. This is an almost exact quotation of Psalm 110:1. The similar quotations in Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34; Hebrews 1:13, prove how familiar it was to the early church, as a prophecy about Christ, from the lips of David. And to Christ, Psalms 110 certainly refers. For it speaks of One who is both David’s king and a priest of an order of Aaron. Now this prophecy declares that on the right hand of God Christ shall sit, ruling among His enemies, until their power shall be utterly destroyed. Therefore, not till then can He give up to God His redemptive reign. For not till then will His redemptive work be complete, or this prophecy fulfilled.

**Ver. 26.** This simple assertion unfolds a truth implied in the just quoted prophecy.

Is-brought-to-nought; portrays the overthrow of death as though now taking place. "All the enemies" in 1 Corinthians 15:25 certainly includes death. For death silences lips which once gave praise to Christ, and binds hands which gladly did His bidding. And, if an enemy, death must, according to the prophecy, be conquered. To Paul's eye of faith the conquest is already taking place. And when this foe is conquered, all are conquered. It is therefore the 'last enemy.'

**Ver. 27a.** Another proof, viz. an exact quotation of Psalm 8:6 (quoted also in Hebrews 2:6,) that 'death is set aside.' In the creative purpose of God, the entire universe was put under man's power. By man's sin this has been reversed: and man is now in some sense at the mercy of material forces over which he was originally destined to rule. But the purpose of the Creator cannot in the end be set aside. It will be accomplished through Christ; who became man that He might claim its accomplishment, and recover for Himself and for His brethren their lost rule over the universe. And, therefore, until all things are put under the feet of Christ and of His people, His work will not be complete. Now, of all forces in the world, material and spiritual, least under the control of man is death. Before that dread conqueror all men bow. Therefore, the original creative purpose of God, which Christ came to accomplish, implies the overthrow of death.

He has put, etc.: probably God, as in the passage quoted, and in Ephesians 1:22. For in 1 Corinthians 15:27b God is said to put all things under Christ. But Paul is not careful to specify this: for it is a victory equally of the Father and the Son. Cp. Philippians 3:21. It is, however, better to attribute the victory to the Son in 1 Corinthians 15:25 and to the Father in 1 Corinthians 15:27, because of the prominence given to each in each of these verses respectively.

Both Psalm 110:1 and 8:6 are virtually proofs that the people of God will rise from the dead. Cp. Philippians 3:21. For their death is death's victory over them, and in some sense over Christ, whose they are. As long as their bodies are in the grave the temple of God is a prey to corruption; and their souls are exiles from the world which God created to be their dwelling and their throne. Now this thwarting of the purpose of God cannot be for ever.

The grave must give up its prey: and man clothed once more in a body, human though glorified, must reign over a renewed world. And all this will be Christ's work, and a result of His resurrection. Thus, from ancient prophecy, Paul has made good his assertion that Christ is risen as a first-fruit of the sleeping ones.

**Ver. 27b.** After justifying "when He have brought to nought, etc.," Paul now develops "when He gives up, etc.," in 1 Corinthians 15:24. Thus, as usual, he rises from the Son to the Father. And, in doing so, he strengthens, as we shall see, the argument involved in 1 Corinthians 15:25ff that Christ's people will rise.

When He shall say: when God shall declare that the ancient prophecy is now accomplished, and that all things are at length put under the dominion of man as represented in, and united with, Christ. [The Greek perfect, 'are-made subject,' directs our attention to the abiding effect of God's subjecting all things to Christ.]

It is evident, etc.: conspicuous declaration that when the universe will bow to Christ there will be One who will not bow, one exception to the universal homage. This is 'evident' from the words "Thou has put," (as quoted by Paul, "He has put,") which are solemnly and conspicuously repeated at the end of 1 Corinthians 15:27, and which imply that the subjection of all things to Christ is a work, not of Christ, but of One other than He.

**Ver. 28.** Having thus prepared the way, Paul now states in another form what he has already stated in 1 Corinthians 15:24, viz. that in the moment of His supreme triumph the Son will bow to the Father.

Will-be-made-subject: a suitable expression; for the Son's submission, though embraced willingly and cordially by Him, does not originate in His will, but is obedience to the law of His own eternal existence and corresponds with His essential relation to the Father. This verse suggests that Christ will then become subject to the Father in a sense in which He is not now; and in this it is confirmed by 1 Corinthians 15:24a. We are also told that 'the Son will be made subject' to the Father 'in order that God may be all things in all.' This suggests that the Son's submission is needful for the complete restoration (cp. Colossians 1:20) of the universe to its

right relation to the Father. 'All things in all' persons, probably: i.e. in the inner subjective life of each one, God is to fill up the whole place and be recognized as the one source of all we have and are, the one ruler directing our entire conduct, and the one aim of our entire activity. Cp. Colossians 3:11.

The bearing of these last words on the final destiny of those who die unsaved, I hope to discuss elsewhere. That Paul does not say "all men," (as in Romans 5:12, 18,) and does not refer in 1 Corinthians 15 to those who die without Christ, warns us not to assume that this purpose embraces them.

In this view of the mysterious words of 1 Corinthians 15:24, 28 touching the relation of the Eternal Son to the Eternal Father, rather than speak, the expositor would prefer to bow in silent adoration. But what God has spoken we cannot forbear to re-echo. These verses teach the absolute and eternal submission of the Son to the Father. And, even when receiving the homage of the Son, the Father is spoken of by Paul, not as we should say God the Father as distinguished from God the Son, but simply as 'God.' And to Him the Son bows with the express purpose that thus the Father may be everything in the eyes and thought of all His servants. This absolute subordination of the Son has been already clearly marked in 1 Corinthians 3:23 and 8:6; and is recognized throughout the New Testament. But its most complete expression is in this verse.

That from the moment of His final triumph the Son will bow to the Father in a sense in which he does not now, must be expounded in harmony with Luke 1:33, "Of His kingdom there will be no end;" and with Revelation 11:15, "The kingdom of the world has become our Lord's and His Christ's: and He will reign for ever and ever." In this latter passage the united reign of the Father and Son is described by the remarkable words, "He will reign." Perhaps the following imperfect human comparison may help to harmonize these apparently contradictory assertions. Conceive a king who never leaves his palace, but commits all public acts of royalty to his son, who performs them in the name, and at the bidding, and according to the will, of his father, whose will his son always approves. Such a son we might call a sharer of his father's throne; and, in another sense, the sole ruler of his father's realm. Conceive now that a province is in rebellion, and

that, to bring it into submission, the king invests his son, for the time of rebellion with full royal authority. The son begins in person the war against the rebels; but before its completion he returns to the capital in which his father reigns and directs thence the way until order is completely restored. Even in the presence of his father he exercises the full regal authority given to him for the suppression of the revolt. While the rebellion lasts he seems to be an independent ruler; though really ruling only at the bidding, and to work to the will, and restore the authority, of his father. But, when order is restored, the son gives back to the father this delegated royalty: and even the apparent independence of the son's rule ceases. Henceforth the father reigns with undisputed sway.

The difference between the special authority delegated to the Son for the suppression of the revolt and afterwards laid down and the abiding authority of the Son as the Father's representative, I cannot define. Probably it is connected with the fact that in consequence of sin the Son did what the Father never did, viz. became man and died. May it not be that in consequence of this he exercises now an authority which is specially His own, and which will continue only for a time?

In 1 Corinthians 15:25-27a we found an argument for the resurrection of the people of God. Of this argument Paul has now shown the full force by setting it in the light of that day when Christ will give up to the Father His finished work. For that work cannot be pronounced complete while bodies which were once the temple of God are still held fast by the grave and while the spirits of the saved are still exiles from the world which was created to be their home.

**Ver. 29.** Another argument against the teaching (1 Corinthians 15:12) "that there is no rising up of dead men." Since it deals with the chief topic of 28, we need not suppose any special reference to the foregoing words. The force of this argument, we cannot now reproduce with certainty. For, not only is it directed against an error unknown to us except through Paul's refutation, but it rests upon a custom also unknown. We may provisionally accept the hypothesis that the opponents referred to taught that there is no life beyond the grave and that the hope of immortality rests upon the hope of surviving the coming of Christ. See end of 28. And we can only guess at a custom in the Corinthian church which might be

described by the words being baptized on behalf of the dead ones, and to which Paul could point as a witness against the teaching he combats.

Chrysostom tells us in his homily on this passage that the followers of the heretic Marcion, “when a catechumen dies among them, hide a living man under the bed of the dead one, and come to the dead man and ask whether he wishes to receive baptism. Then, when he answers nothing, the hidden man says from beneath, instead of him, that he wishes to be baptized. And so they baptize him instead of the deceased.” Epiphanius says (‘Heresies’ xxviii. 7) that the followers of Cerinthus “baptized others in the name of those who died without baptism, lest when they rose in the resurrection they should be punished for not having received baptism.” Now we can well conceive that this custom, which lingered only in small sects, was a perversion, both in practice and doctrine, of an innocent and appropriate custom existing at Corinth in Paul’s day. We may suppose that, for those who died in faith but not yet baptized, others, either baptized members or catechumens, received the rite, perhaps in some cases at the request of the dying man, as a testimony to the church of his faith; that thus he might have, though dead, a name and a place in the church. If death-bed baptism were not practiced in the apostles’ days, (and we have no proof that it was,) this custom of vicarious baptism might easily arise; and would naturally fall into disuse as death-bed baptism became common. Such a custom might easily be described, without supposing any spiritual benefit to the dead man from the rite, as ‘being baptized on behalf of the dead ones.’ For the rite was performed to supply an omission on their part; and sometimes at their request. And it would be a strong testimony on the part of the dying man, of those who took part in the rite, and of those who approved it, that a happy life beyond death awaits those who died in Christ. For if, as some (1 Corinthians 15:12) said, a place in the future kingdom of God depends on surviving to His coming, the dead believer’s faith is made vain, and himself destroyed, by his death. For one who has thus failed by the failure of his earthly life surely no sacred rite would be performed. Such a rite might easily degenerate into the foolish form ridiculed by Chrysostom, and into the false teaching mentioned by Epiphanius. But in itself it would be innocent and appropriate; and might be mentioned by Paul without disapproval. If it was sanctioned by the

church at Corinth generally, Paul's argument would be an appeal to the faith of the whole church, as against a minority probably small.

Else; introduces a *reductio ad absurdum*, as in 1 Corinthians 5:10; 7:14. In thought Paul sees men receiving the rite, 'being baptized on behalf of the dead ones;' and asks what they are going to do, what result they will obtain. He gives force to his question by repeating it.

If dead men are not raised, states in full what is implied in 'else.'

To-speak-generally declares (cp. 1 Corinthians 5:1) that the words following state a universal truth. Paul asks why men go so far as to be baptized for dead men if these do not rise. No reason can be given. For, as Paul and his readers assume, (see review of DIV. VII.,) if dead men do not rise there is no life beyond death. Consequently, the dead are lost. And their faith has been vain: for by death they have been (1 Corinthians 15:18) separated from Christ. But, if so, to commemorate their faith by receiving baptism for them, is absurd. Thus the custom in question, sanctioned probably by the whole church, attests the faith of the church that their departed brethren are safe and that the dead in Christ will rise. Similarly, Cicero appeals ('Tusculan Disputations' bk. i. 12) to funeral rites as proof of the general belief of mankind that there is a life beyond the grave.

[Canon Evans, in the 'Speaker's Commentary,' denies to ὑπερ any meaning more definite than that conveyed by περι; giving to these words practically the same sense. But this is very unlikely, especially as in the N. T. we never find the local sense of ὑπερ with genitive. He confuses the matter by combating in the same breath the wholly different meanings "on behalf of" and "instead of." This latter sense, I believe, in the N.T. the word never has. But it is always associated with the idea of assistance or benefit or furtherance, an idea suitably conveyed by the rendering 'on behalf of,' cognate with "help." This idea distinguishes the prepositions. In the N.T. the "mental bending over" is never "mere contemplation and nothing more," but has always reference to benefit or furtherance.

This ever-present idea accounts for the much greater frequency of this preposition with persons than with things or abstract of this preposition with persons than with things or abstract terms. But even with these last the same idea is easily traceable. So in 1 Corinthians 15:3; where Canon

Evans has no right to impute inconsistency to Meyer, who renders “on account of our sins, i.e. in order to atone for them.” For Christ thus renders us infinite benefit, by saving us from our sins. (So we sometimes say “Do my cough good,” to denote relief from it.) In Romans 4:24 our sins are differently represented, viz. as a motive **διὰ** with acc.) prompting God to surrender His Son. The idea of assisting and promoting is prominent in 2 Corinthians 12:15, “on behalf of your souls,” i.e. to save them; 2 Corinthians 12:19, “of your edification;” 2 Corinthians 1:6, “of your exhortation and salvation”; 1 Thessalonians 3:2, “of your faith,” i.e. to strengthen and widen it; Romans 1:5, “of the Name of Christ,” i.e. to make it honorably known; John 11:4, “of the glory of God” explained by the following words. Hence we have thanks on behalf of (2 Corinthians 1:11) benefited persons, or of (1 Corinthians 10:30) benefits received: and hope (2 Corinthians 1:6) for benefits to come. Paul’s boasting on behalf of his readers (2 Corinthians 7:4, 14) is represented as a tribute of honor to them. In Philemon 13 Paul courteously suggests that by caring for him in prison at Rome, Onesimus would carry out the wishes of Philemon. And in 2 Corinthians 13:8 **ὑπερ** is itself a sufficient contrast to **κατα**. The constancy of this idea compels us to interpret 1 Corinthians 15:29 as meaning that in some way the persons referred to rendered service to, or carried out the wishes of, the dead ones on whose behalf they were baptized.

Canon Evans, following Chrysostom and the Greek Fathers, supposes that **ὑπερ τῶν νεκρῶν**, ‘on behalf of the dead ones,’ means **ὑπερ** *anastatewv nekrown*, ‘on behalf of resurrection of dead ones;’ and that in baptism express confession was made of the resurrection of the dead. If Paul meant this, these very words would have been the most appropriate, and a very crushing, mode of stating it. The repetition ‘on behalf of the dead ones, of them,’ makes very conspicuous the persons in whose interest, in contrast to those upon whom, the rite was performed. Whereas, practically, the exposition before us makes these identical. For, the hope of resurrection was primarily a hope that the baptized will themselves rise. Moreover, as thus expounded, this would be an appeal to the whole church: for all had been baptized. The third person suggests that Paul refers only to a part of the church. Lastly if there had been, as Chrysostom says, an express confession at baptism of belief in the resurrection, it is not likely that



those who denied it would retain their place in the community of the baptized. For their denial would be an explicit disavowal of their baptism.

The exposition of the Greek Fathers does not seem to me to account for, and justify, Paul's words. My own exposition is, in the absence of historic proof, simply a suggestion which would account easily for all the facts of the case. Among these last must be counted the customs ridiculed by Chrysostom and Epiphanius. For they must have had an origin. And it is much more likely that heretics would pervert an existing custom than invent a new one. If the custom in question was suggested by the words before us, this would only prove that, in the mind of Greek-speaking Christians of the second century, the words were not fairly accounted for by the existing and ordinary rite of baptism. And this I now say. Certainly the many-sided and far reaching heresy of Marcion cannot be said to have been "founded on this text!"

The exposition I have given is slightly modified from one found in Ambrosiaster. Tertullian twice ('Against Marcion' bk. v. 10, and 'On Resurrection' ch. 48) quotes this verse; but does not expound it.

**Ver.** 30-31. Why do we also: in contrast to "why are they also baptized, etc.," introducing a new appeal, viz. to the conduct of Paul and his colleagues, in proof of life beyond death. He thus appeals to the respect for himself, which, he knows, still lives, in spite of a factious minority, in the hearts of his readers.

We; cannot be exactly defined. It simply indicates that what Paul says applies to others besides himself. Cp. Romans 1:5. If there be no resurrection of the dead, and therefore no life beyond death, Paul's exposure of himself to peril is infinite folly. For he thus risks in the same moment both the present life and the life to come. If eternal happiness depends upon living till Christ comes, then deadly peril must above all things be avoided.

Every hour: vivid picture of the apostle's constant danger. Cp. Romans 8:36. This danger, 1 Corinthians 15:31 depicts in still darker colors.

I-am-dying: same as "we are always being given up to death," in 2 Corinthians 4:11. Not that each day he actually dies, but that the process of death is ever going on; as though every day the executioner were already

at work putting him to death. In proof of this he appeals to his own 'exultation' (see under Romans 2:17) about the Corinthians. The very joy and gratitude evoked by his thought of them recalls the peril he has endured for their salvation.

Which I have: as though his exultation about them were an enrichment to himself.

In Christ Jesus: only in the inner spiritual life which he lives in contact with his Master Christ, does Paul exult above the Corinthians. Notice the force of this appeal to the heart of his 'brethren.' In spite of many defects, they are precious to him. As he stands before his Master, the thought of them gives him joy. And this joy reminds him, and will remind them, of the peril with which it has been purchased.

**Ver.** 32a. Another question parallel to, and supporting, that of 1 Corinthians 15:30.

With human aim: taking as a standard of conduct men with their purposes and practices. Same words in 1 Corinthians 9:8; 3:3; Romans 3:5; Galatians 3:15. If Paul had ever been cast into the arena to fight with actual 'wild beasts,' his deliverance must have been little less than a miracle; and so terrible an event would not have been omitted in 2 Corinthians 11:23ff. We therefore infer, as would his readers unless they knew he had actually fought in the arena, that these words describe deadly enemies encountered during Paul's long sojourn at Ephesus. They are a terrible picture of the perils which culminated in the uproar of Acts 19:23. He was surrounded by men thirsting for his blood, men against whose fury he was as powerless to defend himself as were the captives thrown to lions in the amphitheater. Cp. Titus 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:17. So Polycarp, ('Ep. to the Romans' ch. v.,) after speaking of being literally thrown to wild beasts, says: "From Syria to Rome I am fighting with wild beasts, by land and by sea, night and day, being bound to ten leopards, i.e. a band of soldiers." Also 'Ep. to the Smyrnans' ch. iv.: "Guard against the wild beasts in human form." Notice the climax, "incur danger," "die," and the most terrible kind of death, hopeless conflict with lions or panthers. Paul asks "If my voluntary exposure to this deadly peril be from the worldly motives common to men, what is the worldly 'gain' for which I look?" No such gain can be conceived. Consequently, his self-exposure was not from

worldly motives. In other words, it was a proof that he believed in a life beyond death. And, that this belief was correct, the admiration which his heroism evoked bore strong testimony. The force of the argument that unless there be a life beyond death moral heroism has often no reward has been felt in all countries and ages.

**Ver. 32b.** In contrast to his own conduct which is reckless folly if there be no resurrection, Paul now depicts conduct which a denial of the resurrection would justify. And, to reveal the gross impropriety of such conduct, he puts it in the form of advice. "If this teaching be true, it would be right for me to advise you to enjoy the present: for the present is all we have to enjoy." And the readers would recognize in the words 'Let us eat... we die' an exact quotation of Isaiah 22:13, a description of conduct in Jerusalem which, the prophet declares will be punished with death. That the teaching Paul combats is utterly destructive of a heroism which claims our admiration, and that it prompts to conduct condemned by both man's moral instinct and by the Scriptures, proves the teaching to be untrue.

**Ver. 33-34.** Be not deceived: in a similar connection, 1 Corinthians 6:9. The solemn earnestness of these words suggests that some at Corinth actually accepted, though perhaps unconsciously, the foregoing practical and immoral inference from this false teaching.

Excellent dispositions, bad companionships corrupt: a line of poetry found in the surviving fragments of the Athenian comic dramatist Meander, who died B.C. 291. Paul rebukes the immoral inferences from the false teaching at Corinth by quoting the words of a pagan. He thus confirms the voice of God (in Isaiah 22:13) by the general moral sense of man. Whether he had read the comedies of Meander, or only quoted this line, as many quote Shakespeare now, from hearsay, we cannot determine. An important coincidence is found in Acts 17:28, where a similar quotation is attributed to Paul. So Titus 1:12.

Bad companionships: intercourse from time to time with bad men. He refers probably, as 1 Corinthians 15:32 suggests, to those who denied the resurrection.

Rouse-up: as though overcome by sleep or intoxication. Same word in Joel 1:5, "Rouse up, drunken ones." Like 'be not deceived,' it is an appeal to the whole church, whose spiritual sense had become stupefied.

Righteously: in a manner corresponding with the principles of right.

Sin not: result of rousing thus.

For some, etc.; justifies the exhortation by pointing to the need for it.

Some: evidently church-members. Otherwise the mention of them would not put the church 'to shame.'

Ignorance of God: interesting coincidence with Matthew 22:29. It leads both to a denial of the resurrection and to practical immorality. 'Arouse righteously' is parallel to 'be not deceived; ignorance of God, etc.,' to 'bad companionship.' Paul wishes his readers not to be deceived: and then, fearing that deception has already begun, he urges them to arouse from its influence. The men against whom he warns are bad company; because they know not God.

To awaken shame: that they have such men in their midst. This suggests that they ought to be expelled from the church.

The earnestness of 1 Corinthians 15:33, 34 implies that the denial of the resurrection was already producing immoral results. There were men in the church whose presence was a shame to it, because they knew not God. Paul therefore exhorts his readers sharply to arouse from stupor and avoid sin, and warns them that bad company injures even the well-disposed. The immoral maxim in 1 Corinthians 15:32 suggests that the false teachers were bad men. And Paul's concluding rebuke implies that they ought to be no longer in the church. He does not command their expulsion; but leaves this to the Christian sense of the community.

SECTION 28 presents special difficulties. Like all refutations, it can be understood only by understanding first the teaching refuted: but this is known to us only through the arguments we are now seeking to understand. We will therefore attempt to gather from 28 itself all indications about the false teaching it combats: and we will then build up in our own words its various arguments.

We notice that, although Paul proves at great length that Christ has risen, he simply asserts, and asserts twice, with perfect confidence but without proof, that Christ has risen. From this we infer with certainty that the denial at Corinth was an absolute denial of the possibility of bodily life for those who have died. For, a denial merely based on the dissolution of the body would not cover the case of Christ. The argument of 29 suggests that some denied the resurrection because our present bodies are unsuitable to the future life. That Paul contents himself with simply asserting that the Corinthian denial involves a denial that Christ has risen, suggests that this logical consequence must have been so clear that it could not escape the deniers themselves; and that, at least in their hearts, they were prepared to accept it. But Paul's silence about any express denial that Christ had risen suggests that this consequence had not been formally stated. That Paul meets the denial by arguments of which some do not prove expressly that the dead will rise, implies that both he and the false teachers held that without resurrection there can be no abiding life beyond death. With this agrees Luke 20:37, where Christ disproves the Sadducean denial of the resurrection by proving that the dead servants of God still live. Contrast the 'Phaedo' of Plato and the 'Tusculan Disputations' of Cicero, where life beyond death is strongly asserted but no hint given of resurrection. Paul and his readers evidently assumed that for beings consisting of spirit and body and created to dwell on earth there could be no abiding future life without a return to earth and a reclothing of the spirit in a human though glorified body. That Paul does not speak expressly of denial of life beyond death, but only of denial of the resurrection, suggests that the former denial was based upon the latter, in some cases probably upon the essential unsuitability of our present bodies for a future life. The assertion that dead men cannot rise, and that therefore there is no life beyond death, Paul meets in 28 by proving that Christ has risen and by direct proofs that there is a future life; and by showing in 29 that future bodily life does not imply bodies exactly like we now wear. Probably many Corinthians believed, as did some Greeks in Plato's day, (see quotation in Review of DIV. VII.,) that at the moment of death the spirit ceases to be.

Since the deniers of the resurrection were members of a Christian church, we must suppose that, just as the Sadducees of Luke 20:27 were followers of Moses, so they believed in part the Gospel of Christ. We may conceive

that they believed that God accepts as righteous through the death of Christ all who believe and gives to them His Holy Spirit, and that Christ will return to judge the world and to receive His people into glory; but that, since resurrection is inconceivable, our hope of glory depends upon surviving to the coming of Christ. Thus they had (1 Corinthians 15:19) hope in Christ, but a hope contingent on present bodily life. That these were their views is made probable by 1 Thessalonians 4:13ff, where we find similar views prevalent in another Gentile church. In this latter case, however, the doubts about the resurrection of dead believers did not involve (see 1 Corinthians 15:14) doubt that Christ had risen: nor had it led to immoral consequences. It was honest doubt, producing sorrow; not confident and outspoken denial, as at Corinth.

That the denial we are studying was perilous to morals, suggests that in the deniers even the expectation of Christ's coming had lost power. For this expectation was itself a sufficient motive for sobriety; and is so used in 1 Thessalonians 5:4ff. Probably, they were Christians only in name.

In disproof of teaching which clearly involves a denial that Christ has risen, Paul expounds the significance of the facts, historical and spiritual, stated in 27. He and others had asserted that Christ has risen: and their preaching had been the means of saving many at Corinth from the dominion of their former sins. If Christ had not risen, their testimony was a lie against God. And it could not be conceived that a lie would save men from their sins. Again, the Corinthian denial involves, as all admitted, a denial of life beyond death. Therefore, if true, it implies that those who have died trusting in Christ have, by their peaceful and heroic death, lost all; and that the men who cherish hopes of endless glory, hopes liable to be at any moment destroyed for ever by the hand of death, are indeed to be pitied. Since death is evidently an enemy to the Christian, it is destined by ancient prophecy to be trampled under the feet of Christ. And till this enemy is compelled to give up its prey the Son cannot present to the Father His finished work. The church at Corinth has itself condemned this error, by favoring the vicarious baptism of those who have died unbaptized. And the perils to which the apostle daily and willingly exposes himself are a loud expression of his own belief. In absolute contrast to these perils, a denial of the resurrection would justify immoral maxims condemned both by the Old Testament and by heathen writers. In

view of this, Paul bids his readers examine whether the presence in their midst of deniers of the resurrection is not already producing immoral results.

## SECTION 29

### OUR RESURRECTION BODIES WILL BE QUITE DIFFERENT FROM OUR PRESENT BODIES

#### CHAPTER 15:35-53

*But some one will say, How are the dead ones raised? and with what kind of body do they come? A senseless man! Thou, that which thou sowest is not made alive unless it die. And that which thou sowest, not the body which will come into being dost thou sow, but naked grain, of wheat it may be, or of some of the others. But God gives to it a body according as His will was; and to each of the seeds a body of its own. All flesh is not the same flesh. But there is one of men, and another flesh of cattle, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes. And heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. But of one kind is the glory of the heavenly ones, and of another kind that of the earthly ones. One glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars. For star from star differs in glory.*

*So also the resurrection of the dead ones. It is sown in corruption: it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor: it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness: it is raised in power. There is sown a soul-governed body: there is raised a spiritual body. If there is a soul-governed body, there is also a spiritual one. So also it is written, "The first man Adam became a living soul," (Genesis 2:7.) The last Adam, a life-giving Spirit. But not first is the spiritual, but the soul-governed, then the spiritual. The first man is from earth, a man of dust: the second Man is from heaven. Such as the man of dust, such also the men of dust and such as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones. And according as we have worn the image of the man of dust, let us wear also the image of the heavenly one.*



*I mean this, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. See, a mystery I tell you. All of us will not sleep: but all of us will be changed; in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For, one will blow a trumpet: and the dead will be raised incorruptible; and we shall be changed. For it must need be that this corruptible thing put on incorruption, and this mortal thing put on immortality.*

**Ver. 35.** Adverse questions which Paul knows 'some one will ask.'

With what-kind-of body: expounds 'how are the dead ones raised,' by giving the special point of difficulty in the process of the resurrection.

Are raised, do they come: vivid description, as though we saw them now rising and coming out of the grave.

They come: from the standpoint of living men, of those who are coming back to the land of the living. "A senseless one!" in 1 Corinthians 15:36 suggests that these questions are not for information but to raise an objection. That the objection is made, not to Paul's proofs, but to the doctrine proved, viz. that the dead will rise, suggests that this objection had been actually brought and was perhaps one ground of the assertion that there is no resurrection. The objectors evidently thought that resurrection implies that our present bodies or others like them will continue into the future life. This they could not conceive; and therefore said that "dead men do not rise." But Paul, after disproving this denial in 28 by proving that Christ has risen and that there is a life beyond death, truths inconsistent with the denial, will now show that the just uncovered ground of the denial is itself a misconception of the nature of the resurrection.

In Matthew 22:23ff we have a similar objection to the fact of the resurrection, based on the same crude notion, common even in Christian ages, that the raised bodies will be exactly the same as those laid in the grave. Our Savior, like Paul, meets it by proving that there is a life beyond the grave, assuming that this implies a resurrection of the dead; and by showing how incorrect are the common ideas about the life of the risen ones.

**Ver. 36-38.** A senseless one! Thou, etc.; rebukes the folly of the objection underlying these questions by pointing the man to a matter belonging to his own daily life.

Made-alive, die: appropriately chosen to suggest the analogy between the dead Christian and the seed hidden from sight in the ground and there perishing as a seed that it may pass into a more abundant life. This analogy teaches that there may be a continuity and a development of life in spite of the dissolution of its outward form; and that death may itself be the only possible way to a higher life. Thus in the very plants under our feet we have a pattern and a prophecy of our own resurrection, and a rebuke to those who deny its possibility. 1 Corinthians 15:37 adds to the analogy pointed out in 1 Corinthians 15:36 a proof from it that continuity of life does not imply continuity of bodily form.

Body; keeps before us the analogy of a dead man.

Naked grain: in contrast to the beautifully clothed plant which will grow from it.

Wheat, or some of the others; suggests the variety of seeds, thus preparing the way for 'to each of the seeds' in 1 Corinthians 15:38. Verse 38 solemnly introduces God as the Maker of the body which will grow.

His-will-was: literally, 'has-willed:' same words and teaching in 1 Corinthians 12:18.

According as, etc. The purpose of God, formed in the eternal past, is the eternal archetype with which correspond even the plants growing today. That God 'gives' to the wheat from His Own infinite resources 'a body' corresponding to the mystery of His Own eternal will, is the strongest contrast to 'sowing the body which will come to be.'

Each of the seeds; suggest the immense variety of seeds. Each of these will have 'a body of its own,' a body appropriate to itself. Consequently the variety of vegetable bodies is as great as the variety of seeds.

**Ver. 39-41.** Paul now develops a thought suggested by "each of the seeds," viz. the immense variety, and variety of kinds, of living bodies.

Cattle: useful domestic animals, horses, oxen, sheep, etc. Same word in Acts 23:24; Revelation 18:13; Luke 10:34.

Heavenly bodies; might denote in itself, the glorified bodies of the inhabitants of heaven. But here it can only denote the 'sun, moon,' and 'stars.' For 'the glory of the heavenly ones' can be no other than the 'glory of the sun, etc.' Thus Paul himself defines the 'heavenly bodies.' As in English so sometimes in classic Greek inanimate substances are called bodies. And the vegetable "body" given in 1 Corinthians 15:38 to a grain of wheat opens the way for inorganic 'bodies' here.

Earthly bodies; may, in itself, include all material objects. But 1 Corinthians 15:39 directs and confines our attention to living bodies: just as 1 Corinthians 15:41 limits 'heavenly bodies' to the stars, etc. The word 'bodies' puts in comparison the objects which live and move on earth with those brilliant objects which move or seem to move above our heads and infinitely beyond our reach. Paul thus reminds us that not only is there an infinite variety of material and living forms around us but that far above us there are other bodies; and then goes on to say that these heavenly bodies, which by their splendor awaken our rapt admiration, are 'of' altogether 'another kind,' differing entirely from every one of the endless varieties of earthly bodies.

Glory: admiration, or the objective quality which evokes it; see under Romans 1:21. The splendor which excites our admiration of the sun, moon, and stars, is altogether different from the manifold beauty which evokes our admiration of the works of God on earth.

One glory of the sun, etc.; carries the proof of variety still further. Not only is there infinite variety in the objects which surround us on earth, and not only are all these entirely different from those which shine in the canopy of heaven, but even in these latter the law of variety is seen. All are glorious: but their glories differ. One step further. If the 'stars' were all alike Paul would probably have written, according to Greek idiom, "another glory of the star," naming one as representative of all. He therefore justifies the plural 'stars,' by saying that the law of variety holds good even to the utmost limit of the visible creation, and that even stars differ among themselves. This is much better than taking the word 'stars' to include 'sun' and 'moon.' Thus by a graphic delineation Paul has taught

us that endless variety is a law of creation; and that amid this endless variety there is nevertheless an infinite distance between the endless varieties around us and the endless varieties above us.

**Ver. 42a.** Applies the foregoing facts to the matter in hand. Cp. Daniel 12:3.

So also, etc.; refers only to the difference between earthly and heavenly bodies. Of differences among resurrection bodies, we have no mention in 29. The endless variety of earthly bodies is mentioned only to show that this variety does not preclude the possibility of an altogether different order of risen bodies, in which all will be glorious but infinitely diverse. At the same time, the careful assertion of the difference between star and star suggests, perhaps with design, different degrees of heavenly brightness.

**Ver. 42b-44a.** Expounds “so also,” by four powerful contrasts between the body laid in the grave and that raised from it.

It is sown; recalls the metaphor of 1 Corinthians 15:37f, which overthrew the objection that our present bodies are unfit for the world to come. Conversely, the word “body” in 1 Corinthians 15:37f kept before us the matter for which the metaphor was used.

In corruption: dissolution actually going on while the body is being laid in the grave.

Incorruption: a state which abides undimmed for ever; see under Romans 2:7.

Dishonor: as if of no value. It was a technical term, in the days of free Athens, for a kind of outlawry involving loss of the rights of citizenship and of state protection. And this meaning would doubtless occur to Paul’s readers and was perhaps designed by him. Funeral pomp is but a mask hiding the truth that the body carried to the grave has lost the rights of humanity. Instead of the kind attentions rendered to it a few days ago, it is left alone in the dark and silent grave, as the meanest living body would not be. In absolute contrast to this is the splendor, exciting universal admiration, in which Christ’s people will rise from the dead.

In glory: see Colossians 3:4.

Weakness: the absolute powerlessness of the corpse, so that the once powerful arm can no longer do the slightest work.

In power: the wonderful and various capacity of the resurrection body.

Soul-governed: literally ‘soulish,’ an adjective bearing the same relation to “soul” as ‘Spiritual’ to “spirit.” Cp. 1 Corinthians 15:45. Same word in 1 Corinthians 2:14. See note below. Paul no longer contrasts the conditions ‘in’ which the body is buried and raised, but the constitutions of the dead and the rising bodies, derived from the first and the Last Adam. He thus introduces new ideas which he at once develops.

**Ver. 44b.** Soul-governed; describes the human body not only when dead but, as the quotation from Genesis 2 proves, as it sprang from the Creator’s hands. It is therefore independent of man’s conduct, and even of sin. Our present bodies and their action are subject to the laws of the ‘soul,’ i.e. of bodily or animal life, which in turn depends upon food, temperature, etc., and is exposed to disease and mechanical injury. We are therefore not absolute masters of our own bodies. At least physically our animal nature rules us, i.e. determines what we shall do. And such a body, ruled by forces he could neither control nor fully understand, was given to Adam in Paradise. Our future bodies will be entirely permeated and controlled by our spirits, the seat of our intelligence. Consequently, the resurrection body, instead of limiting the spirit, will be a perfect manifestation of its nature and a passive instrument of its will. Then will our deliverance from, and conquest of, the material world be complete. And our submission to God, complete. For the human spirit, while ruling with undisputed sway over the body and the emotions, will itself be animated wholly by the Spirit of God. The body to be laid in the grave is subject to the laws of animal life: the raised body will be subject only to spirit.

There is also: in the unchangeable purpose of God.

**Ver. 44b** repeats for emphasis the assertions of 1 Corinthians 15:44a, in a form which declares that the former assertion implies the latter. The soul-governed body is imperfect: and in the works of God all imperfection is a prophecy of its own consummation. Again, although our ‘body’ is ‘soul-governed, we ourselves are spiritual:’ 1 Corinthians 2:14, 15;

contrast Jude 19. And the soul-governed body of those set free from the moral sway of the animal life reveals the change awaiting their body.

**Ver. 45.** So also, etc.; adds to the assertion of 1 Corinthians 15:44b a quotation from Genesis 2:7 in harmony with it.

First: inserted by Paul to give prominence to the fact that Adam was the beginning of the human race.

Adam: the Hebrew word rendered man in Genesis 2:7. It is added here to direct attention to him who bore it as his proper name. By God personally inbreathing the principle of life into a lifeless but organized body, 'the man,' who before was only a lifeless body, became a living soul. The soul was a result of the entrance of the principle of life into a mortal body. That the word 'soul' is used in Genesis 2:7 to designate the entire man who thus sprang into being, implies that of man thus created the soul, i.e. the animal life, was the distinctive name-giving element. This designation therefore proves that the body of man as first created was a soul-governed body.

The last Adam: Christ, as being, like Adam, head and representative of the race, on whom hang the fortunes of the whole. Ancient Jewish writers give the same title to the expected Messiah. See quotations from Schoettgen given on page xix. Its use here is explained and justified by Romans 5:12-19, with which it is a remarkable coincidence.

The last: because after Him there will be no other head of the race; or, more probably, because Paul has in view the final appearance of Christ.

Life-giving: an attribute of 'spirit,' the principle of life; as is 'living' of 'soul,' an individual manifestation of life. We may supply either "has become" or "will become:" for the 'life' which Christ will 'give' results from His death and resurrection which have already taken place. 1 Corinthians 15:45b is but a repetition of 1 Corinthians 15:22b. For 'spirit' is the one and only principle of "life." Therefore, that Christ's return to earth will clothe us in living bodies, proves him to be a 'life-giving spirit.' And the body He will give can be no other than spiritual. For a soul-governed body is imperfect; and therefore inconsistent with final victory.

Genesis 2:7 was quoted to prove, by his very designation, that Adam as created was imperfect. This imperfection, by its contrast with what we know will be a perfect state, proves the difference asserted in 1 Corinthians 15:44a between the body laid in the grave and that to be raised from it. Hence, after the quotation Paul simply adds an assertion of his own.

**Ver. 46.** The spiritual: wider than “spiritual body.” Paul asserts a principle, possibly as broad as creation, viz. that God does not begin by creating matter completely under the control of spirit, but under control, more or less, of natural forces and animal life. To conquer matter thus swayed by other forces, and to bring it under its own absolute rule, is the task set before spirit. It was Adam’s work to bring into subjection to his own spirit not only (Genesis 1:28) the world around him but his body and its appetites.

Then the spiritual: emphatic statement of the true order.

This verse casts important light on the story of Paradise. Adam was not created full-grown in moral and spiritual life, so that all he had to do was to retain his position. He was fully equipped for conquest: but the victory was not yet won. Paul tells us that it is so always. The task of our life is to gain complete control of our bodies and bodily life. Our reward will be to have resurrection bodies completely controlled, physically and morally, by the spirit within.

**Ver. 47-48.** Further contrast of the two heads of the race, determining the nature of the bodies we receive from them respectively.

From earth, a man of dust: so Genesis 2:7, literally rendered, “formed man dust from the earth.” “Dust” is the finest inorganic material. Adam was a man of dust.

From heaven: whence Christ will come (Philippians 3:20) with all the powers of heaven to be Head of the glorified human race; in contrast to Adam who came from the earth beneath us, with all material infirmities, to be the beginning of a race which could not of itself rise above its source. What Adam was, ‘a man of dust,’ they are who live a life inherited from him. And what Christ is, such are they who partake His life. This comparison pertains only to those elements which come from the heads of

the race. Because Adam's body was soul-governed, so are ours. Christ's glorified body, which will some day return to earth, is purely spirit-governed. And since He, equally with Adam, is Head of the race, we shall have bodies like His.

**Ver. 49.** Image of the man-of-dust: our present human body.

Image of the heavenly one: our resurrection body, which will "be conformed to the body of His glory," Philippians 3:21.

Let us wear: so read by all recent editors, except that 'we shall' (A.V. and R.V. text) is in Westcott's margin: a various reading similar to Romans 5:1. The change is in a single letter. In both cases the subjunctive reading is the more difficult, but is supported by preponderate documentary evidence. "We shall wear" would simply announce the coming glory. 'Let us wear,' (or better, 'let us put on for wear, ') reminds us that it depends upon ourselves whether we share that glory, and exhorts us so to act now as to obtain it. Such exhortation is an appropriate corrective to the absolute assertions of 1 Corinthians 15:43-48. 'The image of the heavenly' cannot be the moral image of Christ. For, 'the image of the man-of-dust' can be no other than bodily likeness to Adam: and the whole context refers to the resurrection.

**Ver. 50.** I mean, or 'assert': same word in same sense in 1 Corinthians 10:19. Paul now puts into plain words the practical meaning of his teaching in 1 Corinthians 15:44-49 about the soul-governed body of dust, etc.

Flesh and blood: Matthew 16:17; Galatians 1:16; Ephesians 6:12; Hebrews 2:14. Bodies such as we now have, consisting of 'flesh and blood' and therefore subject, to the laws of animal life, 'cannot inherit the kingdom of God:' i.e. while wearing them we cannot obtain the royal inheritance (see 1 Corinthians 6:10) belonging to us as sons of God.

Cannot; marks the absolute incompatibility of a natural body with the kingdom in which matter is wholly controlled by spirit. After the concrete, 'flesh and blood,' Paul mentions the abstract quality, 'corrupting,' (never absent now where flesh is,) which prevents our present bodies from entering the kingdom of God; in absolute contrast to 'incorruption,' (1 Corinthians 15:42,) which marks all that pertains to that kingdom. Thus 1



Corinthians 15:50b gives a reason for the fact asserted in 1 Corinthians 15:50a.

**Ver. 51.** Mystery: something unknown had not God revealed it. See note under 1 Corinthians 3:4; cp. Romans 11:25; also 1 Thessalonians 4:15, “This we say to you by the word of the Lord.” This ‘mystery,’ contained in 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52, explains how we who now dwell in flesh and blood may, in spite of 1 Corinthians 15:50, “inherit the kingdom of God.”

All of us will not sleep; (see Appendix B) cannot mean that ‘all’ will live till Christ comes. For, with death all around, Paul certainly could not say this. Had he meant this, the error at Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 4:13) would have been his own express teaching. The word ‘not’ negatives ‘all,’ not ‘shall sleep.’ [See Moulton’s good note in Winer’s ‘Grammar’ p. 695.] Paul denies that ‘all,’ an ‘all’ including himself and his readers, will die; but asserts that, although some will escape death, not one will escape a total bodily change.

All of us; covers in both places the whole race; as suggested by the general term “flesh and blood.” The repetition lays emphasis on the absolute universality of the change.

**Ver. 52.** In a moment, etc.: cp. 1 Thessalonians 5:3; Matthew 24:44; Luke 17:26ff.

Twinkling of an eye: dwells upon, and intensifies, the idea of suddenness. In the midst of the world’s busy life and without any previous warning, Christ will lay His hand upon the wheels of time and they will stop at once and for ever. This warns the readers that the absence of all signs of Christ’s coming is no proof that it is not near.

Trumpet: so 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 24:31. As at Sinai (Exodus 19:16) so the last coming of Christ will be announced by an appeal to the ears of men.

The last trumpet: the last of the many signals during the present age of probation, marking the end of the age. This mention of a trumpet Paul supports, in face of those who denied the supernatural, by declaring that ‘one will blow’ it, and that then ‘the dead ones will rise’ and the living ‘be changed.’

Incorruptible; keeps before us the difference (1 Corinthians 15:43) between our present and future bodies.

We: 1 Thessalonians 4:15: the living, in contrast to ‘the dead ones.’ It implies clearly that Paul did not know that long ages would pass before Christ’s coming. But, that he confidently expected to survive the Day of Christ, we cannot fairly infer. For, in rhetorical figure he frequently identifies himself with that which he describes: so 1 Corinthians 6:15; 10:22, 29; Romans 3:7; 7:14ff: cp. James 3:9. Probably, in this matter hope and fear alternated with his circumstances and his frame of mind. In 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 he certainly ponders the possibility of his own death. Still, finding himself preserved from day to day amid peril, and not knowing how soon Christ will appear, he would naturally look upon himself as “being left for the coming of Christ,” in contrast to those who had fallen asleep; and might speak of himself, as here, in contrast to those who will die before Christ comes.

Shall-be-changed; refers here only to the survivors: for the dead are already mentioned. But it is true (cp. 1 Corinthians 15:51) of all, both dead and surviving. For the word simply denotes ‘change,’ whether by death and resurrection or without them. It is used here because ‘change’ is all that can be asserted of those who will not die. This change is the chief part of the “mystery” which harmonizes 1 Corinthians 15:50 with our entrance into the kingdom of God.

**Ver. 53.** Must-needs: since “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

This corruptible thing: the body. Cp. 1 Corinthians 15:43.

Put-on: clothe itself as with a garment. So 2 Corinthians 5:3f. The contrast of ‘corruptible’ and ‘incorruption’ marks the greatness of the needed change.

This mortal: so 2 Corinthians 5:4: more definite, and therefore more forceful, than ‘corruptible.’ Paul lingers, in repetition, over the coming change. The body doomed to decay will clothe itself with absence of decay: and the body doomed to death will clothe itself in deathlessness. He thus concludes 29 with its chief thought, viz. the necessary difference between our present and future bodies.

SECTION 29 is introduced by a question uncovering an objection to the teaching in 28 that the dead will rise, an objection based on the supposed impossibility of the process of resurrection. The objection was perhaps prompted by the crude teaching of some Jews that the resurrection body will be exactly the same as that laid in the grave. This objection Paul rebukes by pointing to God's works in nature, to the difference between the seed sown and the plant which perpetuates its life, and between the endless variety of living bodies on earth and the objects which shine and move above us in the sky. He declares that there is a similar difference between our present and future bodies, a difference of which he gives four powerful parallel descriptions. He thus shows that against his teaching the objection of 1 Corinthians 15:35 has no force. The story of Genesis tells us that the human body, even as at first created, and according to a constant divine order, is imperfect. But through our relation to Christ we shall receive bodies like His. In other words, a change is absolutely necessary before we can attain the goal of our being. And it will come. Though all will not die, every one will pass through the needful change from mortality to immortality. Of this teaching Philippians 3:21 is an epitome.

This section rebukes the teaching, common in all ages, that our future bodies will consist of the same material particles as those we now wear; and thus removes the objection to the resurrection based on this error. In harmony with this section we must interpret Romans 8:11. Yet our future bodies will have some definite ("each his own body") but now inconceivable relation to our present bodies. We learn also that Adam as he sprang from the Creator's hands, although unstained by sin, was not, even touching his body, perfect. With him as with us maturity of manhood is the prize of battle and victory.

The word SOUL now claims attention. For the argument of 1 Corinthians 15:44-46 turns evidently upon the difference between 'soul' and "spirit." (see note under Romans 8:17.) These verses teach that 'soul' is inferior to "spirit," and bears to our present mortal bodies received from Adam a relation similar to that of spirit to the resurrection body we shall receive from Christ; and that the order in time of our present and future bodies accords (1 Corinthians 15:46) with the nature of soul and spirit

respectively. Unfortunately the true sense of the word 'soul' is much obscured by the necessity of rendering it by various English words.

In both Testaments and in classic Greek the word 'soul' denotes usually that in which a lifeless object differs from a living one. It is the 'life;' not as a life-giving principle (the spirit) but as that which itself lives. It is rendered 'life' in Matthew 16:25; 2:20; 6:25, and numberless cases. Consequently, the various manifestations of life are attributed to the soul, especially in the Old Testament; e.g. hunger, thirst, need and satiety of food, sensation, desire, and all kinds of emotion. Cp. Proverbs 10:3; 27:7; 25:25; Psalm 31:10. It also denotes living creatures, as themselves manifestations of life. This use is conspicuous in Genesis 1:20-30, where the words "living soul" (A.V. "living creature") designate the lower creatures, especially fishes and quadrupeds. Similarly, as being the basis of individual life, human as well as animal, it denotes an individual man: Genesis 2:7; 46:18. Very strangely it is used for a corpse: Numbers 6:6. In Revelation 6:9 we have the disembodied souls of murdered men.

We may therefore define the 'soul' to be the life common to men and animals; the "spirit," in contrast to the soul, that which is very rarely (e.g. Isaiah 1:14) used of God and the word "spirit" very rarely (Ecclesiastes 3:21) of animals, Spirit is declared to be the essence of God. Spirit is that principle which, entering into an organized material form, gives it life; and thus itself assumes an individual, and in man a personal, existence: the soul is the actual individual life resulting from the entrance of the life-giving spirit into a material form, a life conditioned in its nature and its development by the material form it animates. Hence the order in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The soul is that which is nearest to the body and in great part ruled by the body, the seat of bodily emotions, sensations, desires. The spirit is that which is nearest to God, and which thinks and knows. On man's spirit the Spirit of God, Himself the bearer of the mind of God, directly acts. The spiritual man is he who obeys the influences which through his own spirit the Spirit of God exerts upon him. The soul-governed man (1 Corinthians 2:14, Jude 19) is he who obeys the emotions which the material world, acting on him through his body, evokes in his soul. So far as we obey the Holy Spirit, He imparts to our own spirit (which in the unsaved is very weak) power to control the emotions which arise in the soul, and thus to rule our own body and defy the

influences of the world. Thus our whole being becomes spiritual and holy. But, so far as we obey the emotions of the soul, our own spirit, the seat of thought and knowledge, falls under their sway, which is practically the sway of the body, and under subjection to the material world around us. Cp. James 3:15. Animals are altogether soul-governed. For their entire action is determined by emotions excited either by simple sensation, or sensation joined with something like memory. And so far as man is soul-governed does he sink towards the level of animals.

Of the use of the word “spirit” to denote the highest part in man only faith traces (e.g. Aristotle, ‘On the World’ ch. iv.) are found in classic Greek. Consequently, the word ‘soul’ there covers the entire domain of man’s immaterial nature. But Aristotle, in a most instructive passage, ‘Nic. Ethics’ bk. i. 13, distinguishes three elements in the human soul, of which the first two and the third correspond very nearly to the soul and spirit in the New Testament. The lowest of these elements man has in common with vegetables, viz. the life which is nourished and grows. Similarly and popularly, in the New Testament “body and soul” denotes sometimes the entire man: Matthew 10:28. In these cases the soul is the whole immaterial part of man, including the spirit. But this popular use does not set aside the plain distinction, here, and 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12, of soul and spirit.

The clumsy rendering “soul-governed” is due to our lack of an adjective corresponding to ‘soul,’ as “spiritual” corresponds to “spirit.” the control of the soul over the body justifies the imported idea “governed.”

## SECTION 30

### VICTORY!

#### CHAPTER 15:54-58

*And when this corruptible thing shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal thing shall have put on immortality, then will take place the word that is written, “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” (Isaiah 25:8.) Where, Death is thy victory? where, Death, thy sting? The sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the Law. But to God be thanks who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, my beloved brothers, become firm, immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord always, knowing that your labor is not vain in the Lord.*

**Ver. 54.** And when, etc.: full and majestic reiteration of the change described in 1 Corinthians 15:53, as of something on which Paul loves to linger.

Then; gives definiteness to the hoped-for moment.

Will-take-place: what is now a ‘written word’ will ‘then’ become fact.

Swallowed-up: put completely out of sight.

Into victory: when the victory has come, death will have disappeared. This is a quotation, exact in senses. from Isaiah 25:8: “He has swallowed up death for ever.” The word ‘victory’ was suggested to Paul by an Aramaic word of that meaning similar to the Hebrew word rendered “for ever.” It also recalls 1 Corinthians 15:26. In this quotation lies an argument. For Isaiah’s words imply clearly a complete and eternal undoing of the work of death: and this can be only by resurrection of the dead. In the moment when the change from mortality to immortality is complete, and not till then, will Isaiah’s words be fulfilled. The latter part of the same prophecy is also quoted in Revelation 7:17, with a similar reference.

**Ver. 55.** A shout of victory evoked by the just quoted prophecy, which to Paul's faith is already accomplished.

Where? as though looking round for something which has disappeared. So 1 Corinthians 1:20; Romans 3:27.

Death: vivid personification.

Thy victory: once apparently so complete and universal, and so universally acknowledged and dreaded.

Sting: of an animal, Revelation 9:10; 4 Macc. 14:19: also a human weapon, especially (Acts 26:14) an ox- or horse-goad. The once deadly serpent has lost its sting; and is therefore harmless. These words were evidently suggested by Hosea 13:14, which in LXX. reads "From the hand of Hades I will rescue, and from death I will redeem them. Where is thy righteous claim, O Death? Where is thy sting, O Hades? This ancient prophecy foretells complete deliverance from death. Thus, in what seems to be merely a shout of victory, Paul adds another Scripture proof to the arguments of this chapter. The passage in Hosea accounts for the mistaken reading of the Authorized Version.

**Ver. 56-57.** Thoughts suggested by the sting and the victory. Sin is 'the sting of death' in that but for sin even death (the abstract power personified) could not have pierced us. For death is the punishment of sin. By committing sin we gave our enemy a weapon with which he slew us. But death cannot hurt those saved from sin. For to them death is gain. To them, therefore, death is a serpent which has lost its sting, retaining its outward form but powerless to injure.

Power of sin: interesting coincidence with Romans 7:7ff. But for the Law sin would have been powerless to pierce us. For, had there been no law, the abstract power of sin could not have compelled us to break it and thus to incur its penalty. That the mention of 'death' recalls 'sin' and 'the Law,' shows how deeply woven in the mind of Paul was the teaching of Romans 7. In the moment of victory he remembers that death's terrible weapon came from man's sin, and that but for the Law, in which many Jews trusted for salvation, the power of sin would have been unknown.

**Ver. 57.** To God be thanks: sudden transition (cp. 2 Corinthians 2:14; 1 Timothy 1:17; Romans 9:5; 16:25, etc.) from things around to “God who is over all.” As usual, the divine Name is placed first, to make the transition.

The victory: the last victory over death. But this implies all earlier victories. For, only those who conquer sin and the world now will “attain to the resurrection from the dead,” Philippians 3:11.

Gives the victory, over death, by giving us day by day victory over sin and the world. For the one victory implies the other.

Through our Lord, etc.: Romans 1:5. In 1 Corinthians 15:56, 57 we have an epitome of the Gospel: sin, the Law, death, the gift of salvation from God, through Christ. Similar shout of victory in Romans 8:37ff, summoning up the result of the whole chapter.

**Ver. 58.** Practical bearing of the results summed up in 1 Corinthians 15:57.

Firm: better, ‘firmly-seated.’

Immovable; suggests forces tending to carry them away. These words refer to unshaken belief of the Gospel, without which there can be no stable Christian character. A close parallel in Colossians 1:23,

Work of the Lord: 1 Corinthians 16:10: the work given us by Christ to do.

Abound: Romans 15:13; 2 Corinthians 8:7. Christ’s servants must be always at work.

Knowing, etc.: motive for Christian firmness and for abundant work. It thus expounds ‘so then.’

Labor; suggests the weariness frequently involved in work for Christ.

Vain: empty of results.

In the Lord; supports ‘not in vain.’ For Christ is the element in which we toil: and nothing done in Him can be without result. This verse reminds us how often doubts about doctrine lessen the abundance and the constancy of gospel work. For such work appears useless to those who are not firmly convinced of the truth of the Gospel. All Christian activity flows



from fully believed Christian doctrine. Of this, negative proof had probably been already given by the church at Corinth.

The ERRORS at Corinth about THE RESURRECTION, and Paul's ARGUMENTS against them, we will now try to reproduce.

The opinions of the Pagan Greeks about the dead are known to us by various allusions in classic writers.

HOMER, ('Odyssey' bk. xi. 489,) in a graphic picture of the departed, which doubtless helped to perpetuate the opinions therein embodied, describes the dead as leading a worthless shadow life, which the greatest of the heroes, Achilles says he would change for the very meanest place on earth. PLATO teaches again and again the endless existence of all souls, in happiness or misery according to their action on earth. See, especially 'Apology' p. 40, 'Phaedo' p. 108, 'Georgias' p. 523. But he says expressly, and the seriousness of his argument implies, that very many around him disbelieved in a future life, while others believed that although the soul might survive the body yet it would ultimately cease to be. So 'Phaedo' p. 70a: "Touching the soul men have much unbelief; fearing lest when it has left the body it is no longer anywhere, but in that day it corrupts and perishes whenever the man dies; and as soon as it is removed from the body it goes forth, scattered like breath or smoke, and goes away flying in different directions and is no longer anywhere." CICERO ('Tusculan Disputations' bk. i.) argues at length, but with less confidence than Plato, that the soul exists for ever; yet admits that many believed it to be extinguished at death, and that the Stoics taught its final extinction. Cicero, however, only faintly indicates, while Plato teaches most explicitly, that a man's future happiness or misery depends upon his present conduct. Cp. also Josephus, 'Wars' bk. ii. 8. 11. The arguments both of Plato and Cicero suggest that the common people believed that death was either an extinction of the soul or an entrance into a worthless shadow life. And these views were probably current at Corinth in Paul's day.

The Greek and Roman writers seem to have had no conception whatever of a resurrection of the body. Plato taught that sometimes departed spirits return to earth to animate other human or animal bodies. See his 'Phaedo' p. 81, etc., 'Timaeus' p. 42, etc. But this he regarded as but a lengthening

of their bondage, and taught that at death the purer spirits were free for ever from material clothing. Of a spiritual body, i.e. one over which the spirit will have complete control and which will be a perfect organ for self-manifestation of the spirit, he had no conception. So complete a victory of spirit over matter was utterly beyond his thought.

From Mark 12:18 we learn that the Sadducees, though followers of Moses, denied the resurrection of the dead. In reply to them Christ proves from Exodus 3:6, as Paul proves here, that the dead servants of God still live. That a denial of this was implied in the Sadducean denial of the resurrection, we are told expressly in Acts 23:8; in Josephus, 'Antiq.' bk. xviii. 1. 4, "The souls disappear with the bodies;" and 'Wars' bk. ii. 8. 14.

A very instructive parallel to 1 Corinthians 15 is 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Paul's earnest announcement that the dead believers, raised from the dead, will in company with the survivors meet Christ in the air, implies that his readers feared that their dead brethren had by their death lost their share in the kingdom Christ was coming to set up, and had fallen into non-existence or into a worthless shadow life. Yet of the piety of the Thessalonians he speaks in highest terms. Their ignorance is just what we might expect in a church from which Paul was suddenly torn (Acts 17:2, 9) after less than a month's teaching; and is therefore a valuable mark of genuineness. In their case all that was needed was "to supply the deficiencies of their faith," 1 Thessalonians 3:10. The argument in 1 Thessalonians 4:14 is practically the same as in 1 Corinthians 15:13; except that to the Thessalonians Paul had no need to adduce proof that Christ had risen.

That in reply to men denying the resurrection Paul brings arguments proving for the more part only that there is a life beyond death, shows that this denial was meant to be a denial of future life. For against Plato's teaching that all souls will exist in happiness or misery without bodies, the arguments of 1 Corinthians 15:19, 29-34 have no force. We must therefore suppose that these Corinthians denied, like the Sadducees, all future existence; or, like Homer, all existence worthy of the name.

Yet they were members of the church. Perhaps, like the Thessalonians, they were looking (1 Corinthians 1:7) for the return of Christ, and thought that their share in the happiness to come depended on their surviving to His coming. At the same time, the warnings of 1 Corinthians 15:32ff seem

to imply that even their expectation of Christ's return was losing its moral influence over them. For, even if death were extinction, the prospect of His early appearance was a motive sufficient to restrain men from sin. As such it is used in 1 Thessalonians 5:4ff; Matthew 24:44. The men referred to here were, probably, (cp. 1 Corinthians 15:34,) Christians only in name, ignorant of God, and a disgrace to the church.

That Paul speaks of them as denying, not a future life, but resurrection of the dead, suggests that they assumed, as Paul did, that without resurrection there could be no future life worthy of the name; and that they denied a future life because to them resurrection was incredible. They seem to have had no conception of Plato's doctrine of a bodiless but blessed life to come.

Again, that Paul meets their denial of the resurrection by proofs that Christ has risen and by saying that if He has risen so shall we, implies that their denial of the resurrection was so broad that it involved clearly a denial that Christ has risen. Paul's long proof that He has risen suggests that these skeptics, though they had not expressly denied the resurrection of Christ, (else Paul would certainly have said so,) were not unprepared for this logical result of their own denial. This is another indication that they were Christians in little more than name.

The argument of 1 Corinthians 15:35ff suggests that some denied that God's people rise again because they supposed that, if so, they would rise in bodies exactly the same as those laid in the grave, and because the present body seemed to them utterly unfit for the life to come.

These denials and objections Paul meets, not by excommunication, but, for the sake of honest doubters, by careful argument. He adduces abundant proof that Christ has risen; leaving his readers to perceive that the presence in heaven of the now glorified bodies cannot pass into the life to come. And he proves by various arguments that there is a life to come. He then cuts away one ground of the denial at Corinth by declaring that the Christian doctrine is, not that our present bodies pass unchanged into endless life, but that in every case, whether or not we survive the coming of Christ, our bodies must be completely changed before they can put on immortality. The completeness and the glory of this change, and the complete victory over death which it implies, force from the apostle a

shout of victory. But this gives place at once to practical exhortation to do, unmoved by doubt or contradiction, the work of Christ.

## DIVISION VIII

### PERSONAL MATTERS

#### CHAPTER 16

#### SECTION 31

#### *THE CONTRIBUTION FOR JERUSALEM, AND PAUL'S OWN MOVEMENTS*

#### CHAPTER 16:1-9

*About the gathering for the saints. Just as I gave direction to the churches of Galatia, so do you also. Each first day from the Sabbath let each of you lay by him, treasuring up whatever success he may have; in order that when I come there may not then be gatherings. And whenever I arrive, whomever you may approve, these with letters I will send to bear your favor to Jerusalem. And if it be worth my going also, with me they shall go.*

*Moreover, I will come to you whenever I have gone through Macedonia. For, Macedonia I go through: but with you perhaps I shall remain, or shall even spend winter, that it may be you who send me forward wherever I be going. For, you I do not wish to see now in passing. For, some time I hope to spend with you, if the Lord permit. But I shall remain at Ephesus till Pentecost. For, a door has been opened for me, great and effective: and there are many adversaries.*

**Ver. 1.** This cursory mention of ‘the gathering for the saints’ suggests that it was already understood at Corinth. And this suggests that Titus, whom Paul sent (2 Corinthians 12:17f) on this business and who began it (2 Corinthians 8:6) at Corinth, was to arrive there before this letter. See under

2 Corinthians 9:5. It may or may not have been referred to in the letter from Corinth. In any case its immediate and pressing importance sufficiently accounts for its mention here.

For the saints: “for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem,,” Romans 15:26. See note. But this does not imply that to the Christians at Jerusalem the title ‘saints’ was specially given. For Paul’s readers knew to what saints he referred. Whether Paul ‘gave direction’ personally on the journey of Acts 18:23 or on a journey during his sojourn (Acts 19:10) at Ephesus, or by messengers, or by letter, we have no means of knowing. He refers apparently to the direction recorded in 1 Corinthians 16:2. The mention of ‘Galatia’ would remind the Corinthians that other churches were joining in the collection, and that whatever Paul said about it to them he said also to others.

**Ver. 2.** First day from the sabbath: a Jewish mode of describing the day. For the week was unknown to the early Greeks. In Greece now Saturday is called ‘the sabbath,’ Sunday, the Lord’s day; Monday and Tuesday, etc., the second, third day, etc.

Each of you: supposing that all will give something.

Lay by him: at home. Consequently, this was no public offertory.

Whatever success he may have: whatever surplus money he may have. This Paul asks them to retain so that they will not need to go after debtors or turn goods into cash, thus causing delay, when he comes. Consequently, this is not a general principle for all Christian giving, but a special “direction” for this present matter.

This verse (important coincidence with Acts 20:7) suggests that already special importance was given to this day; as is plainly implied in the title “the Lord’s Day” in Revelation 1:10. A century later Justin (‘Apology’ i. 67) wrote: “On what is called Sunday there is a coming together of all who live in cities or country places.” The day which recalls Christ’s love was specially suited for this work of mercy to fellow Christians.

**Ver. 3.** You may approve: pays respect to the rights and judgment of the church by leaving to it the choosing of the messengers.

Approve: discover excellence by testing. For such proving of men living at Corinth, no 'letters' would be needed. These must therefore (R.V. margin) have been written by Paul. How many such there must have been!

I will send; asserts Paul's apostolic authority, but declares that it shall be used according to the choice of the church. Their delegates shall have Paul's written sanction.

Letters: probably to different persons at Jerusalem.

Your favor: literally 'grace,' (see under Romans 1:5,) and therefore illustrative of the grace of God. The contribution for Jerusalem is represented here (contrast Romans 15:27) as an act of undeserved favor. Cp. 2 Corinthians 8:4, 6, 19.

If it be worth, etc.: if the collection be large enough to make a personal journey desirable. Paul's apostolic self-respect forbade a special journey for a small contribution. But, even if he go, the chosen messengers shall go also. An important coincidence is found in Acts 19:21, where Paul at Ephesus contemplates a journey to Achaia and then to Jerusalem. See further about the collection under 2 Corinthians 9:15.

**Ver. 5-7.** Further information about Paul's purpose of coming to Corinth.

When I have passed, etc.: He had formerly intended (2 Corinthians 1:15) to go direct to Corinth, then to 'Macedonia,' and then back to Corinth. But, for the reason given in 2 Corinthians 1:23, he changed his plan. In 1 Corinthians 16:5b, 6 Paul contrasts with his passing visit to Macedonia his intended longer sojourn at Corinth. This whole purpose was accomplished: see Acts 20:2f.

Send me forward: give the help needed for the journey. Cp. 1 Corinthians 16:11; 2 Corinthians 1:16.

That it may be your, etc.: an end to be gained by, and therefore a reason for, Paul's purpose to come to the Corinthians last. It was a courteous acknowledgment of their ability and readiness to help him for the longer journey he had in view.

Wherever I be going. Perhaps his mind fluctuated between Jerusalem and Rome; Acts 19:21. In 1 Corinthians 16:7 he lingers upon, and thus

emphasizes, his intended longer stay at Corinth, revealing a special wish for it and suggesting there were special reasons. Hence the prominent position of 'you' in 1 Corinthians 16:7a. It is unsafe to infer from the word 'now' that Paul had already once seen them 'in passing,' e.g. in his unmentioned journey during (Acts 19:1) his sojourn at Ephesus. The word was perhaps suggested by the present state of the Corinthian church, which made an immediate visit undesirable. And his 'hope' to 'remain some time' was a reason for his not wishing to come at once.

The Lord: Christ. Cp. James 4:15; Romans 1:10.

From 2 Corinthians 1:15f, 23 we learn that Paul's original purpose was to come first to Corinth, then go to Macedonia, and back to Corinth; and the reason of the change, viz. to avoid the severity with which, if he came at once, he would be compelled to act towards some of the Corinthians. To avoid this he wrote the letter before us. 1 Corinthians 4:18 suggests that his change of plan was already known and misunderstood. A bold misinterpretation of it evoked 2 Corinthians 1:15ff.

**Ver. 8-9.** But I remain, in contrast to future journeys.

At Ephesus; indicates that there he wrote this letter.

Till Pentecost: suggests that it was written in the spring; and that the tumult (Acts 19:29) was not later than Pentecost. With this Acts 20:6 agrees well. We may suppose that during the summer, after passing through Troas, Paul was travelling about in Macedonia, that in the autumn he arrived at Corinth where he remained most of the winter, and that after again passing through Macedonia he sailed for Troas the following Easter.

A door great and effective: 2 Corinthians 2:12; Colossians 4:3; Acts 14:27; Revelation 3:8: opportunities for great usefulness, already fruitful in results. An important coincidence with Acts 19:10. That Demetrius found it so easy to gather (Acts 19:24) a tumult against the Christians, proves how large an entrance Christianity had made, and that there were 'many adversaries.' To Paul no motive for prolonged sojourn could be so strong as great opportunities, actual results, and many opponents.



## SECTION 32

### SUNDRY DIRECTIONS AND SALUTATIONS

#### CHAPTER 16:10-23

*If Timothy come, see that in his intercourse with you he may be without fear. For, the work of the Lord he works, as I also do. Then let not any one despise him. And send him forward in peace, that he may come to me. For I wait for him with the brothers.*

*About our brother Apollos: much have I exhorted him that he might come to you with the brothers. And not at all was it his will to come now: but he will come whenever he have a good opportunity.*

*Keep awake: stand in the faith act like men: become strong. All your matters, let them be done in love.*

*Moreover, I exhort you, brothers-you know the house of Stephanas; that it is a firstfruit of Achaia, and that for ministry to the saints they set themselves- that also you may submit to such persons, and to every one that joins in the work and labors.*

*I rejoice at the presence of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaia; because the lack of you they supplied. For they gave rest to my spirit, and to yours. Recognize then such.*

*The churches of Asia greet you: Aquila and Prisca greet you much in the Lord, with the church in their house. All the brothers greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.*

*The greeting by the hand of me Paul. If any one does not love the Lord, let him be Anathema Maran atha. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. My love is with you all in Christ Jesus.*

**Ver. 10-11.** If Timothy come: see under 1 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Corinthians 1:1. Why Paul was uncertain about this, and whether Timothy actually arrived before Paul, we do not know. He started from Corinth with Paul (Acts 20:4) on the return journey. This verse suggests that this letter was likely to arrive before Timothy. Perhaps the bearers went direct by sea from Ephesus to Corinth: whereas Timothy went first to Macedonia.

Without fear: a coincidence with 2 Timothy 1:7, suggesting that Timothy was of timid disposition. But that to this was joined real worth, is proved by the commission (1 Timothy 1:3) afterwards entrusted to him. Paul bids his readers not to give him, by rude resistance, occasion for fear; and supports his warning by reminding them that to make Timothy afraid is to embarrass and hinder one who is doing (1 Corinthians 15:58) the work of Christ, the great work in which Paul is himself engaged. For the same reason ('then let not') they must not 'despise' him. Many are ready to despise the timid. This warning not to terrify or despise men who are doing God's work is needed today. That some six years later Paul urges (1 Timothy 4:12) Timothy so to act that no one will despise him because he is young, suggests that this was one possible cause of his 'fear.'

Send him forward: as in 1 Corinthians 16:6.

In peace: the opposite of fear and contempt.

That he may come, etc. "That Timothy is to 'come to me,' and that 'I am waiting for him,' is a reason why you should give him the help needed for the journey."

With the brothers: probably companions of Timothy on this mission. That he had at least one companion, we learn from Acts 19:22.

**Ver. 12.** This mention of 'Apollós' proves, and was perhaps designed by the apostle to prove to the Corinthians, his perfect accord with Paul. And, if so, the faction called after Apollós was without his sanction. This supports our inference from 1 Corinthians 4:6 that the real leaders of the factions were men at Corinth whose names are unknown to us.

Exhorted him much: thinking perhaps that his presence in company with Paul's beloved companion Timothy would be a strong rebuke to those

who wrote the names of Paul and Apollos on the banners of contending parties.

With the brothers: those mentioned in 1 Corinthians 16:17, who had brought the letter from Corinth and were now returning with the letter before us.

Now: emphatic. For reasons unknown to us, either the state of things at Corinth or his own circumstances, Apollos did not consider the present a 'good opportunity.' When such arises, he will come. This verse suggests that Apollos, who was at Corinth when (Acts 19:1) Paul arrived at Ephesus, was not living at Ephesus. That there is no greeting from him, suggests that he was temporarily absent when Paul wrote.

**Ver. 13-14.** Parting exhortations, as though the letter were finished.

Keep awake: in contrast to sleep, Matthew 26:40; 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 10, i.e. spiritual insensibility. Let your spiritual senses be in full exercise, lest the enemy surprise you unawares. So 1 Thessalonians 5:6; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 3:2f. Another motive for watchfulness is the coming of Christ: Matthew 24:42; Luke 12:37.

Stand: as in 1 Corinthians 10:12; Romans 5:2; 11:20.

In faith: practically the same as "stand in the Gospel, 1 Corinthians 15:1. Belief of the good news is the element 'in' which, (and the means by which, Romans 11:20; 2 Corinthians 1:24,) we maintain spiritual erectness.

Act like men: so 1 Macc. 2:64, "And you, children, be strong and act like men touching the Law."

Become strong: receive strength which (Ephesians 3:16) the Spirit is waiting to impart from time to time.

Notice the military tone of these words. We are sentinels on guard, and must not yield to sleep. In face of the enemy we must maintain our position: and we do so by abiding in faith. We must show moral courage. To this end we must accept the strength provided for us. This fourfold description of our attitude towards spiritual foes is followed by a description in one word of our attitude towards our fellow-Christians and fellow-men. Love must be the one element of our entire activity.

**Ver.** 15-16. After what seemed to be a parting exhortation, 1 Corinthians 16:13, 14, Paul remembers other matters which claim mention. Cp. Romans 16:17. In 1 Corinthians 16:10ff he spoke of his own associates, Timothy and Apollos. He now commends to the Corinthians some members of their own church.

I exhort, etc.; betrays something which, not knowing the circumstances, we cannot now understand. Apparently, the church members had failed to treat this worthy family with due respect.

You know, etc.; breaks off the exhortation, to give a motive for acceding to it.

Firstfruit of Achaia: cp. Romans 16:5. The conversion of this family was doubtless an important step in the founding of the church at Corinth. Perhaps it was for this reason that Paul, deviating from his usual custom, baptized (1 Corinthians 1:16) them personally. Since the province of Achaia included Athens, this conversion must have been earlier than (Acts 17:34) that of Dionysius and Damaris, i.e. than Paul's first arrival at Corinth. See Introd. v.

Ministry: Romans 12:7. There is nothing to limit 'the saints' to those at Jerusalem, as in Romans 15:25. Probably it refers chiefly to members of their own church, with whom they would come most in contact. Stephanas and his family deliberately resolved to render what service they could to their fellow-Christians.

That you may submit, etc.: both purpose and contents of the exhortation.

That also: to the service rendered by Stephanas must be added due recognition of it by the church.

To such; raises this exhortation into a universal principle for all men.

Submit: Ephesians 5:21. Not that they are to have their will in everything, but that we yield them the deference which befits their services to the church.

And to every one, etc.: To those who, like Stephanas, render help to their fellow-Christians, Paul now adds every one who joins with others in Christian 'work.'

And labors; suggests the weariness which frequently accompanies Christian work. To every toiler for Christ we must give the deference due to his work.

**Ver.** 17-18. The presence: or 'arrival.' In 1 Corinthians 15:23 and often the same word denotes the second coming of Christ. We cannot doubt that these men brought to Paul the letter from Corinth, and took back the Epistle before us, which was Paul's reply to it.

Stephanas: the good man mentioned above.

Fortunatus. A man of this name was one of the three bearers of the epistle of Clement of Rome (ch. 65) to the Corinthian church. He and Achaiacus are quite unknown.

Because, etc.: special cause of Paul's joy.

The lack of you: your absence. By coming as delegates, and expressing the feelings, of the whole church, they in some measure made up for the absence of those they represented. In them Paul seemed to welcome the whole church. Cp. Philippians 2:30. Had they come only as private persons, his joy in receiving them would not have been so great. This cause of Paul's joy is further explained in 1 Corinthians 16:18a.

Rest to my spirit: 2 Corinthians 7:13; cp. Philemon 7, 20.

My spirit: Romans 1:9: the noblest element of his being. These words suggest that before the coming of these men Paul was in restless anxiety about the Corinthian church, perhaps because of the very bad news brought by the household of Cloe and by others. This anxiety would seem to have been somewhat allayed by the more exact information given by these messengers. But the letter before us was, nevertheless, written (2 Corinthians 2:4) with "many tears." The words 'and yours' suggest that as Paul was anxious about the Corinthians so they were anxious to communicate to him; and that it was a relief to them to be able, through the coming of these men, to express to the apostle their feelings. The journey of the messengers was therefore a service both to Paul and to his readers. This suggests that underneath the factions there lay genuine loyalty to the apostle. Of this we shall find abundant proof in the Second Epistle.

Recognize, etc.: similarly, 1 Thessalonians 5:12: “take note of the service they have rendered.”

Such: as in 1 Corinthians 16:16.

**Ver.** 19-20. Asia: the Roman province, as in 2 Corinthians 1:8; Romans 16:5; Revelation 1:4; Acts 2:9; 16:6. Its capital was Ephesus, whence (1 Corinthians 16:8) Paul wrote this letter. That there were other ‘churches’ in ‘Asia,’ agrees with Acts 19:10, 26. And a few years later we find (Colossians 4:13) churches at Hierapolis, Laodicea, and Colosse, in the extreme east of the same province. These churches were probably a result of Paul’s labors during the three years preceding the writing of this letter, although at least two of them (Colossians 2:1) had not been visited by him personally. In Revelation 1:11 we find other churches in the same province, which may have been founded at the same time. We can well conceive that, as suggested in Acts 19:10, men from all parts of the province heard Paul preaching at Ephesus, and thus various churches were formed, which kept up communication with the great apostle. And in writing to the Corinthian church, he conveys, in accordance probably with the expressed wish of some churches and with the known sentiment of all, this brotherly greeting. That ‘Aquila’ and ‘Prisca’ (see Romans 16:3) were now with Paul at Ephesus, accords Acts 18:19. And their ‘much greeting’ accords with their long connection (Acts 18:2, 11, 18) with Corinth.

In the Lord.: This greeting was an outflow of their union with the one Master.

Church in their house: interesting coincidence with Romans 16:5.

Holy kiss: 2 Corinthians 13:12; Romans 16:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14. Cp. Justin, ‘Apology’ i. 65: “We salute one another with a kiss when we have concluded the prayers.” The kiss is still retained in the worship of the Coptic church.

**Ver.** 21-23. By the hand of me Paul: Colossians 4:18: a mark of genuineness, 2 Thessalonians 3:17. It implies that the earlier part was not by his own hand. So Romans 16:22. Doubtless he wrote also 1 Corinthians 16:22, 23. The words “Jesus Christ” in A.V. of 1 Corinthians 16:22, but not in the four oldest MSS., are a good example of a correct explanatory

gloss which was very early copied into the text and thus found its way into many MSS., and Versions.

Does not love, etc.: an appeal to the conscience of many church members at Corinth, revealing the hidden source of the various misconduct (cp. John 14:23) which in this letter Paul has condemned. Against this root of all the disorders, viz. absence of love to the common Master, he now pronounces his most tremendous sentence, a sentence the more emphatic because written by his own hand.

Anathema: as in Romans 9:3.

Maran atha: "our Lord has come;" in Aramaic, the vernacular of Palestine. See 'Romans,' Introd. iii. 5. Of the word 'Maran,' the chief part, 'Mar,' "Lord," is found in Daniel 2:47; 4:19, etc., written in the same language; and is now used as a title of dignity by the Nestorians. In Daniel 7:22 the exact word 'Atha' is used, as here, for the second coming of Christ. The presence of these Aramaic words here implies that they were understood by the readers. And this suggests that they were common among the mother churches in Palestine, and thus passed in their original form to Gentile Christians. That these words are used as a warning implies that 'has come' refers to Christ's coming in judgment. In prophetic vision the church looked upon the moment of His appearance as though it had already come. This anticipation of the coming of Him who comes to destroy (1 Thessalonians 5:3) those who love Him not, Paul uses to support the curse just pronounced.

My love, etc.: suitable conclusion of a letter containing so much reproof and ending with so tremendous a curse. For every word had been prompted by genuine love for every one of the readers. Thus Paul is himself an example of that which in 1 Corinthians 16:14 he prescribed for others. His affection goes out after, and rests upon, and remains 'with, all' of them. And it is no worldly affection, but an offspring of his union with 'Christ Jesus.'

## REVIEW OF THE EPISTLE

During the latter part of his sojourn at Ephesus, a sojourn marked by great opportunities, great success, and the hostility of many foes, Paul was filled with anxiety by tidings about the church at Corinth. He heard from reliable persons that the whole church was divided into parties; and that of these parties the two largest had inscribed on their respective banners the names of himself and of his friend Apollos, while another made use of the name of Cephas, and a fourth used the sacred name of Christ. A case of incest worse even than heathens committed had occurred among them: and the offender was tolerated by the church. Christians not only quarrelled but brought their disputes into heathen lawcourts. The Lord's Supper was made an occasion of ostentatious display and of revelry. And some church members asserted that resurrection of dead men is impossible, some on the ground that bodies of flesh are not fitted for the world to come; meaning by this assertion to deny that there is a life beyond the grave, regardless of the immoral practical consequences of such denial. It had also, apparently, been reported to Paul that some female members, casting aside their distinctive and modest head-dress, ventured to speak in the assemblies. Probably also, in spite of an earlier, but now lost, letter from the Apostle, some taught that the Gospel which broke down the Mosaic restrictions about food had also removed all restrictions on the intercourse of the sexes.

Amid the anxiety caused by this sad news, arrived at Ephesus three members of the Corinthian church, bearing to Paul the greeting of the whole church and a letter asking for information on sundry matters. He welcomed them with joy; and found in them some alleviation of the anxiety the rumors had caused him. The letter they brought asked whether Paul would advise or dissuade from marriage; what was to be done about food offered in sacrifice to idols; and sought information, probably, about the exercise of spiritual gifts. Possibly, it also contained a reference to the public speaking of women.

Paul writes in reply. In spite of their gross disorders he remembers that his readers are a church of God, men whom God has solemnly claimed to be His own. And he recognizes their firm belief of the gospel and their general



knowledge and intelligence. But before he can answer their questions he must deal with the far more serious matters which have come to his ears. Of these, the factions claim first attention, as being a universal disorder and one which was sapping the life of the entire church: Paul deals next with the case of incest and its toleration by the whole church; and with the lawsuits, and the grasping spirit which they revealed: he then refers generally to the matter of sensuality, a sin for which some endeavored to find excuse. After these more pressing matters, the apostle answers his readers' questions about marriage, and about meat sacrificed to idols. Improprieties among women next receive attention; and then the disorders at the Lord's Supper. After these matters Paul treats at length the whole subject of spiritual gifts, thus answering his readers' last question. He discusses next the false teaching about the resurrection put forward by what was probably a small minority of the church. In view of his purposed visit, he gives directions about the collection for Jerusalem, and speaks of his own movements. Sundry directions about his colleagues, Timothy and Apollos, and about the family of Stephanas and the deputation from Corinth, with salutations and a final warning, close the Epistle.

Throughout the whole we notice that Paul traces each matter of detail to some broad principle from which he deduces a rule of conduct. He thus gives to passing details an abiding worth as illustrations of principles bearing upon all men in all ages and all circumstances. Of this method, Romans 14 furnishes another example. It is the only correct method of Christian ethics.

The effects of the letter we have just studied, we shall be able to trace in the second letter, which now lies open before us.

# EXPOSITION OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

## DIVISION I

### REVIEW OF RECENT EVENTS

#### CHAPTERS 1-7

#### SECTION 1

#### *SALUTATION, PRAISE TO GOD FOR ENCOURAGEMENT AND DELIVERANCE IN GREAT PERIL*

#### CHAPTER 1:1-11

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which there is at Corinth, with all the saints which there are in the whole of Achaia. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the compassions and God of every encouragement, who encourages us about all our affliction, that we may be able to encourage those in every affliction, by means of the encouragement with which ourselves are encouraged by God: because, according as the sufferings of Christ abound toward us, so through Christ abounds also our encouragement. And, both if we are afflicted, it is on behalf of your encouragement and salvation: and, if we are encouraged, it is on behalf of your encouragement, which is effective in endurance of the same sufferings which we also suffer.*

*And our hope is firm on your behalf: knowing that as you are sharers of the sufferings so also of the encouragement.*

*For we do not wish you to be ignorant, brothers, about our affliction which took place in Asia, that exceedingly beyond our power we were burdened, so that we came to be without way of escape even for life. But ourselves within ourselves we have had the sentence of death, that we should not be trusting upon ourselves but upon God who raises the dead ones; who out of so great a death rescued us, and will rescue, in whom we have set our hope that He will also still rescue, while you also are working together with us on our behalf by prayer, that from many faces for the gift of grace to us by means of many, thanks may be given on our behalf.*

Paul's salutation, 2 Corinthians 1:1, 2: an outburst of praise amid affliction, 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; prompted by recent peril and deliverance, 2 Corinthians 1:8-11.

**Ver.** 1-2. Cp. 1 Corinthians 1:1f. The movements of Timothy during the three months between the writing of the First and Second Epistles are uncertain. Not later (see 1 Corinthians 4:17) and perhaps rather earlier than he wrote the First Epistle, Paul sent (Acts 19:22) Timothy to Macedonia; with instructions to go on to Corinth if he could, of which however (1 Corinthians 16:10) Paul was uncertain. We now find Timothy with Paul in Macedonia. But Paul's anxiety (2 Corinthians 1:13; 7:5) makes us quite certain that before his own arrival in Macedonia and his meeting with Titus, Timothy had not brought him tidings about the reception of the First Epistle by the church at Corinth. Now the warmth of the Second Epistle suggests that it was written very soon after the arrival of Titus; and its silence about the coming of Timothy makes it unlikely that he arrived from Corinth with Titus or between the arrival of Titus and the writing of this letter. Consequently, either, contrary to Paul's expectation, Timothy arrived at and left Corinth before the First Epistle; or he was, for reasons unknown to us but easily conceivable, unable to go there. In either case, we have no certain indication whether Timothy remained in Macedonia till Paul's arrival; or returned to Paul before he left Ephesus,

was with him there during the tumult, and went with him to Troas and to Macedonia. But the latter supposition would more easily account for the absence (except 2 Corinthians 1:19) of any further reference to Timothy in this Epistle. Doubtless he was with Paul when Titus arrived. And his close connection with the founding of the church at Corinth (2 Corinthians 1:19; Acts 18:5) accounts sufficiently for the presence of his name here, supporting the apostle's earnest pleading.

The church: see 1 Corinthians 1:2.

Of the saints which there are, etc.; asserts the existence of Christians in various parts of 'Achaia.' See Romans 15:26.

In the whole of Achaia: parallel with "every place belonging to them and to us," 1 Corinthians 1:2.

Grace, etc.: Romans 1:7.

**Ver.** 3-4. This Epistle, which more than any other bears marks of heavy trial, begins (cp. Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3) with an outburst of praise. For the trials did but reveal the 'compassions' of 'God.' Moreover, Paul writes under influence of the good tidings which had just relieved his anxieties about his readers.

God, the Father, etc.: Romans 15:6.

The compassions: as in Romans 12:1. Instead of speaking, as we should, of "the compassion of God" as an abstract principle, Paul speaks of its various concrete manifestations. These reveal the essential nature of the great Father and are therefore taken up into His Name. So also the 'encouragement' (see under Romans 12:1) which 'God' ever gives. Cp. Romans 15:5.

Every encouragement: meeting us whenever our hearts would sink or our ardor flag. Touching every element of 'our affliction' God speaks to us from time to time words of exhortation and comfort, with the definite purpose 'that we may' have words of encouragement even for those weighed down by 'every' kind of 'affliction.' Cp. "in everything afflicted," 2 Corinthians 4:8; 7:5.

By means of, etc.; states in full, for emphasis, a truth already implied in the foregoing words, viz. that the comfort we receive from God is specially designed to be in our lips a means of comfort to others.

**Ver. 5.** ‘Cause’ of the encouragement, and of the affliction which made it needful. The latter is in essential relation to the agony ‘of Christ’ on the cross; and the former comes ‘through Christ.’

Abound: Romans 3:7. In consequence of ‘the sufferings of Christ’ similar sufferings fall in abundance upon Paul and his companions, arising from the same causes and working out the same glorious purposes. Cp. Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:24; Mark 10:38. Had not Christ died, Paul would not now be in constant deadly peril.

Us: Paul, Timothy, and perhaps others. In his sufferings Paul was not alone.

Through Christ: Romans 1:5. This remarkable verse teaches emphatically that the pain inflicted upon Christ’s people for His sake is a natural and necessary outflow of His own painful death. And this mysterious relation of us and Him implies that through Christ comes our encouragement also. Our sorrow and our joy have thus their ‘cause’ in His death and resurrection.

**Ver. 6.** Not only is encouragement given to Paul in order that thus he may be able to ‘encourage’ others; but for this very end, and for the consequent ‘salvation’ of those whom he encourages, come both his affliction and his encouragement.

On behalf of your encouragement: “in order that by suffering we may learn, as none but sufferers can, the worth of that consolation which God provides for all who suffer; and may convey this consolation to you.” This implies that Paul’s hardships were not mere inevitable results of blind forces or of the malice of bad men, but were sent by God with a definite purpose of blessing. Cp. John 11:4. All Christian ‘encouragement’ is designed to lead to the ‘salvation’ (Romans 5:9) of those encouraged, by prompting them to persevere to the end. Without such encouragement they might fall and perish. This reveals the greatness of the purpose, viz. his readers’ eternal life, for which the afflictions were sent to the apostle and his companions.

2 Corinthians 1:6b repeats the teaching of 2 Corinthians 1:4, to develop it.

On behalf of your encouragement: exactly as above.

Which is effective: literally “which inworks itself.” It produces results.

In endurance, etc.: The encouragement works out ‘perseverance,’ (see under Romans 2:7), and ‘amid’ this produces the further result of salvation.

The same sufferings: and therefore needing the same encouragement. They suffered, or were exposed to, persecution and other hardships arising from ‘the same’ causes and working out the same purposes as the ‘sufferings’ of Paul. Cp. 1 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4. And, in order that he might prepare them to endure these afflictions, Paul received encouragement from God. Ability to encourage and thus save others, though not the only purpose, is a real and definite and very glorious purpose, of suffering. By it we become, through the encouragement God gives, able to bless and perhaps to save others.

**Ver. 7.** A result of Paul’s affliction and consolation. He is quite sure that his good hope of his readers’ final salvation will be realized.

Knowing that, etc.: Romans 5:3: good reason for this confidence.

As... so: cp. 2 Corinthians 1:5: ‘sufferings’ and ‘encouragement’ go together. Paul’s readers suffer, as he does, for Christ’s sake: accordingly, the encouragement he has, belongs equally to them. For them as for him are all the truths which lift him above the hardships of his lot and give him courage and perseverance in Christian enterprise. And ‘knowing’ this, he has a ‘firm hope’ that they, supported by the encouragement which gives him daily victory, will themselves persevere and be finally saved.

Thus Paul explains 2 Corinthians 1:4, which prompted the shout of praise in 2 Corinthians 1:3. Both his sufferings and his consolation come through Christ, who Himself suffered. His affliction is designed to enable him to comfort and save others: his encouragement is designed not only for himself but for others who suffer as he does. And a result of his affliction and consolation is that he has a firm hope that his readers will, in spite of all enemies, obtain final victory. For, though they suffer as he does they

have the help in suffering which he has proved to be sufficient. Thus, as in Romans 5:3f, affliction works out endurance and hope.

**Ver. 8-9.** Paul now accounts for his exultant praise and for the mention of his affliction, by telling of a deadly peril from which he has been lately rescued. It is to sympathizing 'brothers' that he tells the story.

Asia: the Roman province of which Ephesus was capital, 1 Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:5. A burden was crushing them immeasurably 'beyond' their 'power' to bear.

So that we, etc.: measure of the greatness of the burden. They were brought into a position in which their path was so completely hedged up that there was, to human sight, no way of escape 'even for life.' 2 Corinthians 1:9 is the very opposite of having a way of escape. [The perfect tense, poorly rendered 'we have had,' recalls the abiding effect of the inward sentence.]

The sentence: more correctly 'the answer.' Contemplating their circumstances they asked themselves whether life or death stood before them. And 'the answer' they were compelled to give in the inmost chamber of their hearts the sentence touching their own prospects which in that inner court they were themselves compelled to pronounce, was that 'death' was before them.

That we should not be, etc.: purpose of God in bringing them into this position of utter helplessness, viz. that they should have no confidence in themselves, but should put their trust in Him. And so terrible was their position that no power could save them but that of Him (cp. Romans 4:17) 'who raises the dead.' Henceforth they were to lean only upon the arm of omnipotence.

**Ver. 10-11.** Out of the hand of death: who stood before them in so 'great' power. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:23.

Rescued us: by some human instrumentality, or concurrence of events, unknown to us.

And will rescue: confident hope in face of many perils still threatening them.

In whom, etc.; dwells upon and develops 'will rescue.' Paul's expectation of a deliverance is trust in God.

Will still rescue: all future deliverance being a continuation of that already experienced.

While you also, etc.: ground of Paul's hope, and a condition of future rescue, viz. that his readers pray for him. "by joining with us in our 'prayer' for our deliverance, 'you' are 'working' both 'with us' and for us. And 'while' you do this, we expect deliverance."

You also; suggests that others are doing the same.

That from many, etc.: purpose to be attained by rescue in answer to these many prayers. 'From many' upturned 'faces' of those who have prayed for Paul's deliverance and whose prayer has been answered, will praise be given to God.

Faces: a graphic picture of men in prayer looking up to God.

Gift-of-grace: Romans 1:11. Paul will be rescued by the undeserved favor of God, 'by means of' the 'many' of whose prayers his rescue is the answer. Consequently, 'from many' upturned 'faces' of those who have prayed, will 'thanks be given on behalf of' Paul. "God will save us because you are praying for us. and He makes our deliverance conditional on your prayers in order that the favor shown to a few men may call forth gratitude and thanks from many by whose prayers this favor has been obtained." This is a courteous acknowledgement that the Corinthian Christians are praying for Paul, that their prayers have power with God, and that his deliverance will evoke their praise to God. It is also a covert request for their prayers. Cp. Romans 15:30; Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:3; Philippians 1:19; 2 Thessalonians 3:2. All this is the more appropriate because of the reproof in the First Epistle.

These verses reveal not only the terrible peril to which Paul had been exposed but its very deep impression upon him. In them we trace a dark shadow of death cast over him, a strong natural recoil from death, and firm confidence in God for future deliverance developed by this unexpected deliverance. It would seem that even in a life of peril this peril in Asia had marked an era.



It is impossible now to determine the connection between the tumult of Acts 19, and the peril recorded here: nor are we quite sure that the latter was at Ephesus. But each account confirms the other. For the selfish hostility of Demetrius and his companions, prompted as it was by monetary interests at stake, and the ease with which the mob was collected, are enough to account for the deadly peril referred to here. This hostility would be not appeased but exasperated by the dispersal of the mob. And we can well conceive it prompting some immediate and desperate and well-planned attempt to kill the apostle and his colleagues. That Paul felt his danger, is proved by his sudden departure (Acts 20:1) from Ephesus; whereas, a short time earlier, the number of his opponents had been (1 Corinthians 16:9) a reason for remaining.

We have seen that it is not unlikely that Timothy was at this time with Paul, and shared his peril. If so, the word 'us' would (cp. 2 Corinthians 1:1) include him; and possibly other companions of Paul. It reminds us that in these perils the apostle was not alone. Possibly it was at this time that Aquila and Priscilla (1 Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:4) saved his life at the risk of their own.

## SECTION 2

### PAUL'S REASON FOR NOT COMING TO CORINTH

#### CHAPTER 1:12-2:4

*For this our exultation is the witness of our conscience that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have behaved ourselves in the world and especially towards you. For no other things are we writing to you except what you read, or indeed acknowledge, and I hope that to the end you will acknowledge, according as also you have acknowledged us in part; because a ground of exultation to you we are, as also you to us, in the day of our Lord Jesus.*

*And with this confidence I wished to come first to you, that you might have a second grace; and through you to pass on into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and by you to be sent forward to Judaea. While wishing this then, do you infer that I acted at all with levity? Or, the things which I purpose, is it according to flesh that I purpose them, that there may be with me the Yes yes and the No no? But faithful is God that our word to you is not Yes and No. For, God's Son, Christ Jesus, who among you through us was proclaimed, through me and Silvanus and Timothy, did not become Yes and No, but in Him there has come to be Yes. For, so many promises as there are, in Him is the Yes, for which cause also through Him is the Amen, for glory to God through us. And He who confirms us with you for Christ, and has anointed us, is God, who also sealed us, and gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

*And for my part I call upon God as witness upon my soul that it was to spare you that I did not come again to Corinth. Not that we are lords of your faith: but we are joint-workers of your joy. For by faith you stand. But I determined this with myself not again with sorrow to come to you. For, if it is I that make you*

*sorrowful, who then is it that makes me glad, except he that is made sorrowful through me? And I wrote this very thing, lest having come I should receive sorrow from those from whom I must needs rejoice; being confident about all of you that my joy is that of you all. For out of much affliction and constraint of heart I wrote to you amid many tears, not that you may be made sorrowful, but that you may know the love which I have the more abundantly towards you.*

From 2 we learn that at first Paul intended to go direct by sea from Ephesus to Corinth, then to Macedonia and back to Corinth, and then to Judaea. This purpose he had already abandoned when he wrote 1 Corinthians 16:5ff. And the earnestness of his self-defense in 2 Corinthians 1:23 suggests that its abandonment had been quoted against him by enemies at Corinth as a mark of levity or guile. For his defense against this charge, he prepares the way by appealing in 2 Corinthians 1:12-14 to his conduct at Corinth: he then meets it expressly by appealing in 2 Corinthians 1:15-22 to the Gospel he preached; and by explaining in 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:4 his real motive.

**Ver. 12.** Ground of Paul's confidence that he shall have the effective prayers of his readers, viz. his conduct towards them.

This our exultation: the joyful expectation just expressed.

Is the witness, etc.: the strongest possible way of saying that Paul's joyful confidence is an immediate outflow of his 'consciousness' (see 1 Corinthians 8:7 and Romans 2:15) of having lived a holy and pure life at Corinth. 2 Corinthians 1:11, in which this confidence found utterance, is a voice of his 'conscience' bearing 'witness.'

In holiness: with a constant aim to work out the purposes of God. See note, Romans 1:7.

Sincerity: as in 1 Corinthians 5:8.

Of God: wrought and given by God. Cp. "peace of God," Philippians 4:7.

Fleshly wisdom: a faculty of choosing the ends and means best fitted to satisfy the desires, and supply the needs, of the body. Cp. James 3:15. See

note, 1 Corinthians 3:4. Such wisdom takes into account only those ends and means which the eye can see and the hand can grasp.

In the grace of God; expounds of God above. Paul's heart tells him that he has acted with pure loyalty to God, not on principles which are wise from the limited point of view of the present bodily life: but he remembers that his 'holiness' and 'sincerity' are gifts to him of the undeserved favor of God. Cp. 1 Corinthians 15:10. And he has acted thus even 'in the' present wicked 'world.'

Especially to you: giving them during his long intercourse (Acts 18:11) abundant proof of the principles which guide him.

**Ver.** 13-14. No other things: in 'writing' 2 Corinthians 1:12 he means nothing more than they 'read' in the plain meaning of his words, or than they already 'acknowledge' to be true. His words have no hidden meaning.

To the end: as in 1 Corinthians 1:8.

As also, etc.: courteous acknowledgment that all the recognition Paul hopes for in the future he already has.

In part: either a partial recognition by the whole church, or a recognition by a part of the church. Probably the latter, in accordance with the severe censure of DIV. 3

Because a-ground-of-exultation to you, etc.: a fact justifying the foregoing words. Just as the Corinthian Christians, who are a result of Paul's toil and a proof of the power of the Gospel, call forth in him joyful confidence in God, so Paul, as a great monument of the grace of God, calls forth in their hearts a similar confidence.

In the day, etc.: 1 Corinthians 1:8: suggested probably by 'you to us,' (Philippians 2:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:19,) but embracing also 'we are to you.' They who save a soul from death lay up for themselves joy in that Day when the light of eternity will reveal the true value of a soul. And the same light will reveal the true grandeur of the heroes of the church, and thus increase the joy of those who have been associated with them on earth. Paul declares that, just as he already possessed in his readers that which would be a joy to him in the day of Christ, so they regarded him. This justified him in saying that they had already recognized the truth of

his words about himself in 2 Corinthians 1:11. Thus 2 Corinthians 1:12, 13 support 2 Corinthians 1:11.

Notice how wisely and lovingly Paul approaches his defense of himself in 2 Corinthians 1:15-22. He appeals to his readers' sympathy, by speaking of his great peril and its effect upon him. He wins their confidence by saying that he expects to be saved from future peril because they are praying for him. This reliance upon their prayers he justifies by saying that it is the voice of his conscience, of that faculty in man which knows the secrets of man's heart, declaring that he has acted towards the Corinthians as a man of God. For such a one, and one intimately associated with themselves, they cannot but pray. This testimony about himself Paul supports by saying that he means only what he says, and that his readers' exultation about him, an exultation which looks forward to eternity, is a proof that they recognize the truth of his words.

**Ver.** 15-16. The change from "we," "us," to 'I' (to be noted carefully throughout the Epistle) marks a transition to matters pertaining only to Paul after matters pertaining to his helpers, especially Timothy who joins in this letter and who shared his labors at Corinth and his perils in Asia.

First to you: before going to Macedonia. 2 Corinthians 1:17 suggests that the apostle's change of purpose had brought against him a charge of carelessness or vacillation, against which in 2 Corinthians 1:15 he begins to defend himself.

Grace, or 'favor,' i.e. from God: cp. "gift-of-grace," Romans 1:11; also Romans 15:29. Through Paul's visit God's favor will reach and bless his readers.

A second grace: a second visit, i.e. one visit on the way to Macedonia and one on the return journey.

And through you, etc.: continuation of Paul's wish.

To be sent forward, etc.: the same wish is expressed in 1 Corinthians 16:6. This purpose to go to Judaea agrees with Acts 21:15. To this plan of travel Paul was prompted by his 'confidence' that he is to his readers a ground of exultation and that to the end they will recognize the godliness

and purity of his conduct. He wished to see them as often as possible, and to have their assistance for his journey to Judaea.

**Ver. 17.** Paul comes now to the charge against himself based on the foregoing purpose. Consequently, this purpose, afterwards abandoned must have been in some way, possibly in the lost letter, (1 Corinthians 5:9,) made known to the Corinthians.

With levity: hastily forming a purpose, and caring little whether it was accomplished.

Or, etc.: another possible supposition. Paul answers his first question touching one special case in the past, 'I acted,' by asking a second question about an abiding principle of his life, 'I purpose.'

The Yes, yes and the No, no: emphatic assertion and emphatic denial of the same thing, of which one or other must necessarily be deliberate falsehood.

According to flesh: see Romans 1:4. If Paul makes directly contrary statements about his own purposes, his purposes must, since the Spirit of God is the Spirit of the Truth, be prompted by considerations drawn from the present bodily life. But, of such considerations, his whole career of hardship and peril was an evident and utter trampling under foot. It was therefore impossible for him to say one thing and mean another; and equally impossible to form a careless purpose.

May be with me: graphic picture of the inconsistency of 'Yes' and 'No' dwelling together in a man like Paul. This inconsistency is represented as an aim which Paul is supposed deliberately to set before himself, and for which he sinks down to worldly motives. For without such motives he could not be guilty of the insincerity with which he was charged.

**Ver. 18-20.** Solemn answer to the foregoing questions, followed by proof.

Our word: of Paul and his colleagues, for all whom holds good Paul's reply to a charge made against himself alone. 'Our word,' not "words"; puts together in one category all they say and write, including the Gospel. This all-embracing 'word' is not contradiction, but harmony. Of this, the trustworthiness of 'God' is a pledge. Cp. 1 Corinthians 1:9. For we cannot conceive that God who claims implicit belief would send, and attest by

miraculous powers, untruthful ambassadors. Of 2 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 1:19 is proof. See under 2 Corinthians 1:22.

God: placed before 'Son' for emphasis, and taking up 'faithful is God.' The full title of 'Christ' is emphatic.

Among you through us: by the agency of Paul and his colleagues the incarnate Son of God was first proclaimed at Corinth.

Through me, etc.: exact specification of 'us.' Notice the agreement with Acts 18:5.

Silvanus: in Acts, Silas: a prophet, and leading man in the church at Jerusalem, sent by that church to Antioch as bearer, in company with Paul and Barnabas, of the decree. After preaching for a time at Antioch and then returning to Jerusalem, he went with Paul on his second missionary journey. He and Timothy remained behind when Paul left Berea suddenly, but rejoined him at Corinth. See Acts 15:22, 32, 40; 18:5. With this last verse agrees 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1. Whether 1 Peter 5:12 refers to the same man, we do not know: or why he disappears so suddenly and at the same time both from the Book of Acts and from the Epistles of Paul.

Did not become; i.e. prove itself to be.

The Son of God, whose advent as Jesus, the 'anointed' King, Paul proclaimed at Corinth, and who is Himself the Word of God, did not prove Himself to be a self-contradictory word.

In Him there has come to be, in a sense unknown before, assertion; viz. the unwavering promise of God. This is explained and proved in 2 Corinthians 1:20.

In Him is the Yes. Christ incarnate was a solemn and costly declaration by God that He will fulfill every one of the ancient promises, a declaration not admitting denial or doubt.

The Amen: Romans 1:25: the expression of man's faith that the promise will be fulfilled. Since 'in' Christ God reasserts the old promises, 'also through' Christ men believe them, and shout 'Amen.'

Through us: by whose preaching 'the Amen' has risen from the lips of many who never spoke it before. And this has been in order that 'glory' may come 'to God,' i.e. that His grandeur may shine forth and thus elicit admiration for men. Cp. Romans 15:7, 9.

Through us; keeps up the connection between the Gospel and Paul, and it thus parallel to the same words in 2 Corinthians 1:19.

**Ver.** 21-22. The source in God of that stability of Paul's character which excludes the possibility of levity or deception. We are thus led back to the faithfulness of God (2 Corinthians 1:18) with which the argument began.

Confirms us: gives to us an immovable Christian character. So 1 Corinthians 1:8; Colossians 2:7; Hebrews 13:9. Of such character trustworthiness is an essential element.

With you: courteous recognition that the readers have or may have the same stability.

For Christ; who is the aim of all Christian excellence. In all our relations to Christ God makes us stable.

And has anointed us: formal installation into a sacred office. So Luke 4:18; Exodus 28:41; 1 Samuel 10:1; 16:13; 1 Kings 19:16. It recalls the divine authority of these heralds of Christ. 'With you' is not repeated: for the readers did not hold the same sacred office.

Sealed us. See Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 9:2; Revelation 7:3; John 6:27. God had not only formally installed them in the office of herald but had also put a visible mark upon or in them as specially His own. What the 'seal' was, he need not say. The following words sufficiently suggest it. Cp. Ephesians 1:13; 4:30. The Holy Spirit given to Paul and his colleagues was a divine mark, visible to himself and in some measure to those who knew him, that they belonged to God. Nay more. 'The Spirit in their hearts' was an 'earnest' of the good things for which they were sealed.

Earnest: English rendering of a Hebrew word (used in Genesis 38:17) which through Phoenician sailors passed into Greek and Latin, denoting a sum of money paid at the time of purchase as a pledge of the whole price. 'The Spirit in the hearts' of believers is the beginning and pledge of future blessedness. Cp. "first-fruit of the Spirit," Romans 8:23. Day by day God



‘confirms’ them, ever increasing their firmness: once for all He ‘anointed’ and ‘sealed’ them, and ‘gave’ to them ‘the Spirit.’

Review of 18-22. The questions of 2 Corinthians 1:17 were their own answers. For, evidently, Paul’s purposes were not prompted by the present bodily life. But he thinks it fit to record an emphatic denial followed by proof. And his denial covers everything said to his readers from time to time by himself and his colleagues. In proof that their word was not contradictory Paul reminds his readers that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who had become known to them through the agency of himself and his helpers, was Himself the solemn and unwavering voice of God to man, and had proved Himself to be such to the Corinthians. In Him every one of the old promises was reaffirmed, in a manner which called forth the response of faith. And at Corinth this response had been elicited by Paul’s agency, for the glory of God. To the office of herald he and his companions had been anointed by God and in their hearts they bore the proof and pledge that they belong to Him and are heirs of infinite blessing. And Paul acknowledged that the unwavering stability which gave them a right to claim the confidence of their converts was God’s work in them day by day. Now, could it be supposed that heralds, to whom had been committed the proclamation of this unfailing word of God, could themselves be guilty of vacillation and deception? The dignity of the office in which God has placed them forbids the thought.

This argument warns us not readily to charge with frivolous or selfish motives those who bear, in the success of their Christian work a visible mark of God’s approval and support. And it is a warning to all engaged in such work, to speak and act, by exact truthfulness and by fulfilling all their promises as far as they can, worthily of Him whose sure word they proclaim as the ground of all our hope and the source of our life.

**Ver. 23.** After showing in 2 Corinthians 1:18-22 how inconsistent with the Gospel he preached amid God’s evident approval and help would be a worldly change of purpose, Paul will explain in 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:4 his real motive for the change.

I for my part: about Paul alone, in contrast to the foregoing general statements. See 2 Corinthians 1:15. The solemn earnestness of the appeal implies that on the ground of his delay in coming to Corinth a serious

charge had been brought against the Apostle. Cp. 2 Corinthians 1:17; 1 Corinthians 4:18.

Upon my soul: as in Romans 2:9. Laying open the seat of life to be smitten if he speak falsely, Paul appeals to God. In delaying his visit he was 'sparing' them the punishment which, had he come, he would have been compelled to inflict. Cp. 1 Corinthians 4:21. Instead of punishing, he wrote (2 Corinthians 2: 3) the First Epistle.

Come again: implies, taken with 2 Corinthians 2:1, that between the departure recorded in Acts 18:18 and the writing of the First Epistle Paul had visited Corinth; and places the unrecorded visit in some relation to that which Paul now proposes. See under 2 Corinthians 2:1.

**Ver. 24.** A corrective to 2 Corinthians 1:23. By using the word "spare," which implies authority to punish, Paul does not mean that he can control their 'faith,' and thus cut them off from Christ. In spite of all he can do, his readers may still take hold of Christ by faith and thus obtain eternal life. This ought never to be forgotten by those who pronounce an ecclesiastical sentence.

But joint-workers, etc.: Paul's true relation to his readers and a reason for "sparing" them. He was working with them and was thus working out 'joy' for them. For all growth in the Christian life in both individuals and communities, is an increase of joy. Only as a means of greater joy ought Christ's servants to inflict pain; and therefore as little pain as possible to attain this end. This being Paul's mission, he delayed his visit to Corinth. For, had he come sooner, he would have been a messenger of sorrow. And he preferred to give pain by a letter rather than by a personal visit.

By faith you stand; justifies 'not lords, etc.' Open as they were to censure, they yet maintained, though imperfectly, their Christian position; and this by their belief of the words of Christ. And the dignity of their position he cannot forget, even while using words of authority.

**Ver. 1-2.** Paul will now show how his delay was designed to spare his readers.

I determined: as in 1 Corinthians 2:2.

For myself: i.e. saving himself sorrow by sparing them.

With sorrow: which he will inflict, as proved by 2 Corinthians 2:2.

Again with sorrow; can only mean a second painful visit. For this only will account for the prominent and emphatic position of 'again.' Otherwise this word is quite needless. For, since Paul has already been at Corinth, to go there now is necessarily to go again. Whereas 'again with sorrow' has almost tragic force. Paul remembers a former sad visit, and fears that his next will be the same. This former visit cannot have been his first, recorded in Acts 18:1: for then there was no church at Corinth to whom or from whom he could give or receive sorrow. It must therefore have been a visit not mentioned in the Book of Acts. See further under 2 Corinthians 13:2. For the foregoing decision 2 Corinthians 2:2 is a reason, betraying Paul's earnest love for his readers. To give them sorrow, is to inflict sadness upon the only persons who are a joy to himself. In other words, he has no human joy except the fellowship and love of his converts; and therefore cannot lightly make them sad.

**Ver.** 3-4. To Paul's resolve (2 Corinthians 2:1) 2 Corinthians 2:3a adds what he actually did to accomplish it.

This very thing: his First Epistle, which in thought now lies before him.

Lest having come: he wrote instead of coming.

I should have sorrow: in contrast to "makes you glad" in 2 Corinthians 2:2.

I must needs, etc.: To rejoice in his converts was to Paul an absolute necessity. Cp. 1 Thessalonians 3:8, "we live if you stand in the Lord."

Being confident, etc.: a confidence which moved him to write instead of incurring the risk of a painful visit. To avoid what his confidence in his readers tells him would be sorrow to them as well as to himself, he wrote instead of coming.

All of you: even the erring ones, who in their heart of hearts loved Paul.

Out of much affliction, etc.: state of mind which moved him to write, given in support of the just mentioned aim of his letter. His sorrow and tears prove the purity of his motive.

Constraint: cognate with "holds fast" in 2 Corinthians 2:14. A great burden resting upon his heart, and holding him as if in bonds, forced him to write.

There is nothing to suggest a reference here to anything except the First Epistle. For its tone is condemnatory almost throughout. Would that all Christian reproof had a similar motive!

Amid many tears: interesting mark of the intensity of the apostle's feelings, and a close coincidence with Acts 20:19, 31.

That you may be made sorrowful: an evitable and foreseen result of the letter, but 'not' its aim. Love to the Corinthians moved him to write and guided his pen. And he wrote that his love might reveal itself to them.

Specially towards you: as in 2 Corinthians 1:12. As he writes to, and thinks of, them, he feels how specially dear to him are his converts at Corinth.

With 2 Corinthians 2:1-4 agrees 1 Corinthians 16:5, which shows that while writing the letter Paul had already given up his purpose of coming direct to Corinth.

From 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:4, and from this whole epistle more than any other, we gain an insight into the inner life of Paul. Little did we think as we read his former letter and felt the severity of its indignant reproofs that it was prompted by deep sorrow and moistened with tears.

While purposing to come direct to Corinth Paul received bad news about the state of the church. Perceiving that to come now would be a visit of sorrow, not to himself only but to them, he resolved to delay his visit. And, while thinking of punishment, he remembers that, apart from anything he can do, his converts at Corinth can and do take hold of Christ by faith, and thus maintain, in spite of many imperfections, their place in the family of God. His work is simply to increase their joy. Already he has come once to Corinth as a bearer of sorrow; and he does not wish to do so again. And for this he has a personal motive. To grieve them is to cast a shadow on the only earthly source of joy to himself. To avoid this he wrote to them, moved by an assurance that in writing he was seeking the joy both of himself and them. The burden of heart which moved him to write and the tears which fell as he wrote testify that he had no other motive, and that his letter was an outflow of his special love to his converts at Corinth.

## SECTION 3

### *HE REQUESTS THEM TO RECEIVE BACK THE EXCOMMUNICATED PERSON*

#### CHAPTER 2:5-11

*Moreover, if any one has caused sorrow, not to me has he caused sorrow, but (in part, that I may not press heavily) to all of you. Sufficient for the such man is this punishment, that inflicted by the more part: so that on the contrary for you rather to show favor and encourage, lest by his more abundant sorrow the such man be swallowed up. For which cause I exhort you to confirm towards him love. For to this end also I wrote, that I may know the proof of you, whether in reference to all things you are obedient. And to whom you show any favor I also do. For I also, the favor which I have shown, if I have shown any favor, it is because of you, in the presence of Christ, that we may not be over-reached by Satan: for of his thoughts we are not ignorant.*

In saying (2 Corinthians 21:23) that he delayed his visit to Corinth in order to spare his readers, Paul doubtless thought chiefly of the immoral man whom in 1 Corinthians 5:3f he bids them hand over to Satan, and of their guilty toleration of his sin. For to this case refers the severest passage in the First Epistle. Cp. 2 Corinthians 7:12. About this man Paul has now something more to say.

**Ver. 5.** If any one: delicate allusion to the excommunicated man.

Not to me. The bitterness of spirit resulting from the spiritual injury caused by this man's sin fell not upon Paul but upon every member of the church. For all tolerated the offense (1 Corinthians 5:2) and were therefore damaged by it. It is true that it gave Paul holy grief: but this, as not implying the deeper bitterness of spiritual injury, he leaves out of sight.

In part; i.e. not quite full of sadness. This modifies 'sorrow to all of you.' These words Paul inserts that he 'may not,' by what he says here, 'press

heavily,' i.e. upon the guilty man. The strong words of 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 might lead some to suppose that Paul looked upon the offense as a special sin against himself. He reminds them that the real injury was inflicted not upon himself but upon those who tolerated the crime. That he needs, in mercy to the guilty man, to modify these words, reveals how great was the injury inflicted by this one man upon the whole church.

**Ver. 6.** The such man; points to a definite man, and takes into account all that he has done and is.

By the more part; implies a dissenting minority.

This punishment, was doubtless in obedience to Paul's command in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. Apparently, some deliberate opponents of the apostle had refused to concur in, and execute, the sentence. But the rest had in some way punished the offender. What 'this punishment' actually was, and how far it went towards that prescribed by the apostle, viz. surrender to Satan, we do not know. But it was followed by genuine and overwhelming sorrow in the guilty man: and, this being taken into account, it was considered by the apostle to be 'sufficient.' Probably, by quick and full repentance the sinning one saved himself from the full mysterious penalty.

So that, etc.: result and measure of this sufficiency.

On the contrary: his total change calling for corresponding change in the action of the church.

Show-favor: by forgiving him. Same word in 2 Corinthians 2:10 three times, also Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; in the same sense of forgiveness, i.e. favor towards those who have injured us.

More abundant sorrow: which he will have if you refuse to forgive and encourage him.

The such man: again substituted, in kindness, for the man's name.

Swallowed up: nothing left of him. Same word in 1 Peter 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:54.

For which cause: because the punishment already inflicted is sufficient, and to avoid this more abundant sorrow.

I exhort: Laying aside his apostolic authority, he begs them to do it, that thus it may be their act as well as his.

To confirm: to declare formally and authoritatively that he is an object of their 'love:' same word in Galatians 3:15, and (LXX.) Genesis 23:20.

**Ver. 9.** Motive for "confirming love."

I also wrote: viz. the First Epistle, as in 2 Corinthians 2:3.

The proof of you: as in 2 Corinthians 8:2; 9:13; 13:3; Romans 5:4.

Whether in reference to all things you are obedient: an element of character which Paul wished to test. Notice the apostolic authority here assumed. To evoke, for his own satisfaction, his readers' loyalty to his authority, was one purpose of his former letter. To say this is a quiet assertion of authority; and therefore supports the exhortation of 2 Corinthians 2:8.

**Ver. 10-11.** Paul supports his request still further by saying that if his readers in their favor forgive anything he seals their forgiveness with his own authority; thus expressing his confidence in their judgment. And this he confirms by saying that the pardon he has already granted was for their sakes, in the sight of Christ, and to save both himself and them from the greed of Satan.

Favor-I-have-shown: viz. in 2 Corinthians 2:7 towards the excommunicated man.

If I have, etc.: modifies the foregoing words. Paul hesitates to say that he has forgiven. For this would imply an offense against himself; whereas he has said in 2 Corinthians 2:5 that the real injury was done not to himself but to those who tolerated the offender.

Because of you: moved by desire for your good.

In the presence of Christ: before whom, and to please whom, Paul acts and speaks. He forgives the excommunicated man and wishes to save him, lest Satan gain a victory, by robbing the church of a member and the apostle of a child in the Gospel. Thus 'that we may not, etc.' (cp. Ephesians 11f; 1 Peter 5:8) expounds because of you. And while expounding it Paul puts himself among his readers as one who will suffer loss if the man be not saved.

Of his thoughts: viz. his purpose to overreach the people of God. Paul's knowledge that Satan was planning their injury, a knowledge shared by others, moved him to take steps to guard against such injury. Of these steps, pardon of the notorious offender was one.



## REVIEW

Paul's mention of the tears amid which he wrote his First Epistle prompts him to speak further about the saddest matter it contained. He reminds us that the injury which caused his tears was done, not to him, but to the whole church. The punishment inflicted, though all did not concur in it, is nevertheless sufficient; so that now it may give place to public and formal pardon and encouragement. Indeed, the erring man's deep penitence calls for this. While begging mercy for him, Paul reminds us of his apostolic authority. He also expresses confidence in his readers' judgment by saying that he is ready to endorse at any time their forgiveness by his own authority, and that the forgiveness he has just pronounced is for his readers' good, to save them from the wiles of that enemy who, as all know, ever seeks to defraud the people of God.

Of the light shed by this section on the effect at Corinth of the First Epistle, further use will be made under 2 Corinthians 7:16.

## SECTION 4

### PRAISE FOR GOD'S MANIFEST APPROVAL OF HIS LABORS

#### CHAPTER 2:12-3:6

*Moreover, when I came to Troas for the Gospel of Christ, and a door was open to me in the Lord, I had no relief for my spirit, through my not having found Titus my brother: but I bade farewell to them and went forth into Macedonia. But to God be thanks who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and makes manifest through us in every place the odor of the knowledge of Him. Because a perfume of Christ we are to God, among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing to these, an odor from death for death; but to those, an odor from life for life.*

*And for these things who is sufficient? For we are not, as the many are, huckstering the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, before God in Christ we speak.*

*Are we beginning again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some do, commendatory letters to you or from you? Our letter you are, written in our hearts, known and read by all men: being made manifest that you are a letter of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not in stone tablets but in tablets which are fleshen hearts. A confidence of this kind we have through Christ in reference to God. Not that of ourselves we are sufficient to reckon anything, as from ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God. Who also has made us sufficient to be ministers of a New Covenant, not of Letter but of Spirit.*

**Ver.** 12-13. Further proof, after the necessary digression of 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 of Paul's deep interest in his readers, shown in his movements after writing his First Epistle. This is followed by an assertion and proof and

defense of the grandeur of his ministry, occupying 2 Corinthians 2:12-6:10. See under 2 Corinthians 6:10.

Having come to Troas; agrees with Acts 20:1, which says that after the tumult Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia.

Troas: now Eski Stamboul or Old Constantinople, where there are considerable ruins: an important Roman colony on or near the site of ancient Troy, on the coast of Asia Minor and near the entrance of the Dardanelles. It was the chief landing place for those coming by sea from Macedonia to western Asia. Cp. Acts 16:8; 20:6.

For the Gospel: Romans 1:1: i.e. to proclaim it.

Door being open, or 'standing opened': as in 1 Corinthians 16:9. The opportunity afforded at Troas was 'in the Lord:' i.e. in relation to the Master Christ. Notice an important coincidence with Acts 20:7ff, where, though we have no account of Paul's previous preaching at Troas, (cp. Acts 16:8; 20:1), yet on his return after visiting Macedonia and Corinth we find Christians at Troas with whom he celebrates the Lord's Supper. These were probably, in whole or part, a result of labors at the time referred to here. We must therefore suppose that after the tumult at Ephesus Paul went to Troas with a view to preach the Gospel there; and found an abundant opportunity of doing so.

To my spirit: as in 2 Corinthians 7:13; 1 Corinthians 16:18.

Had no rest: cp. and contrast 2 Corinthians 7:5.

Titus my brother; suggests the special relation of Titus to Paul as colleague in apostolic work. This trouble at not finding Titus suggests that he had been directed to rejoin Paul at Troas; and implies clearly that Paul expected him to bring news about the Corinthians. See note under 2 Corinthians 9:5. The expected meeting at Troas was prevented either by Paul's earlier arrival owing to the tumult, or by some delay of Titus.

Bid farewell: suggests reluctance to leave Troas.

To them: to the converts at Troas. All details about them are unknown to us.

Notice the vivid picture in 2 Corinthians 2:12, 13 of Paul's deep anxiety about his readers' spiritual welfare. He has come to the important city of Troas to proclaim there the good news about Christ; and finds a way open to do so. But he cannot preach. For his spirit is ill at ease, waiting eagerly for tidings about his beloved children at Corinth. Drawn by this intense desire he bids adieu to some at Troas who would gladly keep him, and once more crosses the blue Aegean to Europe. This anxiety suggests the greater importance, recognized by all true evangelists, of securing old converts than making new ones.

**Ver.** 14a. In Macedonia Paul met Titus, (2 Corinthians 7:6f,) and received from him most gratifying news about the effect of his First Epistle. And we cannot doubt that this caused really the joy which finds utterance here. But instead of mentioning these tidings Paul begins a long digression (2 Corinthians 2:14-6:10) about the grandeur of his work. This suggests that the good news received in Macedonia revealed to Paul's mind and heart the success and grandeur of his work as a whole, and thus called forth his thanks to God. Hence the word 'always,' in emphatic prominence. The Greek word 'Thriambos,' rendered here 'triumph,' denoted originally a hymn sung in those festal processions to the honor of the God Dionysius which were so common in ancient Greece. But in this sense it is found, in all extant Greek literature, perhaps only once. It is, however, found some four times as an epithet of the God to whom the hymns were sung. It was also the usual Greek equivalent for the Latin word 'triumph,' the technical term for the military processions in which illustrious conquerors, accompanied by their soldiers, captives, and booty, entered in state the city of Rome and marched to the Capitol. Cp. Polybius, bk. vi. 15. 8, iv. 66. 8 xvi. 23. 5; Plutarch, 'Pompey' xlv. 14, subst. six times, verb three times; Josephus, 'Wars' bk. vii. 5. 3, 4, 7. This use of the word suggests that it had been used not only for the hymn sung to Dionysius but for the procession in which it was sung. But of this use no example is extant. In later ages, when both pagan festivals and Roman triumphs had passed away, the word was used for any public procession. It is difficult to say to what extent details of a Roman triumph or of a pagan festival (See an interesting paper by G. G. Findlay in *The Expositor*, vol. x. p. 403.) were present to Paul's mind when writing these words. But in any case the two kinds of triumph had enough in common to link with these words a

definite idea. And the Roman triumph suggests a good meaning here. Paul thinks of his life of wandering and hardship, driven from Ephesus by a tumult and from Troas by anxiety about the Corinthians. But he remembers that, just as in Roman triumphs the long and sad train of captives and booty revealed the greatness of the victory and the victor, so his own long and weary wanderings over sea and land revealed the grandeur of God. Cp. Polybius, bk. xvi. 23. 5: "And, when he entered the city in triumphal procession, then even still more, being reminded of their former dangers by sight of those led along, their emotions were aroused both of thanks to the gods and of goodwill towards the cause of so great a change." Perhaps Paul's words were suggested in part by remembrance, ever present to him, of his former hostility to God. As a captive he is led along. And his absolute submission, shown in his apostolic work, reveals the completeness of the victory of Him against whom Paul once fought. That his march in the train of his conqueror was with a song of praise to the conqueror, is explained in the words which follow.

In Christ: as the cause, the aim, the director, and the encompassing element, of all his journeys.

**Ver. 14b.** Explains "leads in triumph," and accounts for Paul's "thanks to God."

Odor: John 12:3; Ephesians 5:2; Philippians 4:18: any kind of scent.

Manifest: set conspicuously before men. See under Romans 1:19.

Knowledge of Him: of Christ, as proved by "perfume of Christ" in 2 Corinthians 2:15. This 'knowledge' of Christ is an 'odor' which, by leading Paul along in triumph, God 'manifests,' i.e. presents to men's minds. We may conceive the triumphal procession accompanied by incense-bearers, and revealing its approach by the perfume scattered around. So Paul's presence, wherever he went, made Christ known, as it were silently and invisibly but pervasively, to those among whom he moved. And that he was a means 'through' which God made Christ known to men to be their eternal life, filled his lips, even amid weariness and anxiety, with "thanks to God."

The two parts of this verse present two aspects of Paul's life. He was both well known and unknown. Before the eyes of men the once proud

Pharisee walked, a conspicuous token of the victory and majesty of God; meanwhile imparting unobtrusively to those ready to receive it, the life-giving knowledge of Christ.

**Ver. 15-16.** A fact which explains and justifies the assertion of 2 Corinthians 2:14b.

Perfume of Christ: something revealing, as perfumes do, the nature of that from which it proceeds; and therefore practically the same as “odor of the knowledge of Him,” but adding to it the idea of pleasantness ‘to God.’ Similarly, the self-sacrifice of Christ (Ephesians 5:2) and the money given by the Philippians to Paul (Philippians 4:18) were “an odor of perfume.” Same words in Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17, etc. Wherever Paul went he presented unobtrusively to men around the knowledge of Christ, and thus pleased God. He was, therefore, himself ‘a perfume of Christ to God.’ For through his life and work shone the glory of Christ. And this, both when surrounded by those who accept Christ and are thus in the way of salvation and by those who reject Him and are thus perishing. See under 1 Corinthians 1:18. For in each case his word is acceptable to God, as accomplishing a divine purpose. In 2 Corinthians 2:16 Paul lingers on these contrasted cases, and explains more fully the meaning of his solemn words.

Odor: more appropriate to the word ‘death’ than is “perfume.”

From death for death: (cp. Romans 1:17:) a scent proceeding ‘from,’ and thus revealing the presence of, ‘death;’ and, like malaria from a putrefying corpse, causing ‘death.’ Paul’s labors among some men revealed the eternal death which day by day cast an ever deepening shadow upon them; and, by arousing in them increased opposition to God, promoted the spiritual mortification which had already begun. But even among such he was nevertheless a revelation of Christ, acceptable to God, i.e. “a perfume of Christ to God.” For it pleases God, the righteous Judge, that the foundation Stone crushes to death (Luke 20:18) those who refuse to build upon it. Among those who believed, Paul’s labors both gave proof of the eternal life they already possessed, and strengthened it. Thus, through the apostle and his colleagues, driven rudely from place to place, revealing and causing among different men different moral states and different results, God was spreading, unobtrusively yet pervasively, the knowledge of

Christ. And for this honor Paul cannot forbear to give exultant “thanks to God.”

**Ver. 17.** A question suggested by the solemnity of the position just described, before Paul passes to God’s commendation of his work by the conversion of the Corinthians; and a reason for this question, viz. that Paul is very far from looking upon the Gospel as mere merchandise for self-enrichment.

Huckster: one who bought from the merchants and sold by retail. Same word in Sirach 26:29; Isaiah 1:22 “thy hucksters mix the wine with water.” Cp. Plato, ‘Protagoras’ p. 313d: “They who carry about education from city to city and sell and ‘huckster’ it.” Not thus did Paul with the Gospel, making gain of it.

As the many are: a terrible charge. It does not necessarily mean the greater part of Christian teachers; but implies a large and definite number present to Paul’s thought. Sincerity was the human source or motive of his words, as it was (2 Corinthians 1:12) the element of his whole behavior. The original source was ‘from God.’

As from (cp. John 1:14)... as from: his words correspond with their human and divine source.

Before God, etc.: completes the inward picture of Paul’s preaching; his words spring not from selfish, but from genuine purposes, and from God; and are such words as men speak when sincere and when moved by God. They are spoken in the presence of God and in union with Christ as their encompassing element. Cp. 2 Corinthians 12:19.

**Ver. 1.** Paul now proceeds to recall plain proof (in 2 Corinthians 3:2, 3) of the dignity claimed by him in 2 Corinthians 2:14f. But he remembers that his words above may be thrown in his teeth by opponents at Corinth as mere self-commendation. This hostile reply he anticipates by the first question of 2 Corinthians 3:1; and overthrows it by a second question, which compels his opponents to admit that he has no ‘need’ to commend himself. Then as an answer to the second question he gives proof of his divine mission.

Commendatory letters: containing credentials needful for those who go among strangers. Such letters Apollos brought (Acts 18:27) to Corinth. But Paul did not ‘need’ them either ‘to’ the Corinthians or ‘from’ them to others.

As some do: probably Jewish or Judaizing teachers who came with letters from known Jewish teachers in other places. The mention of such letters reveals the infinite difference between the great Apostle who came alone to Corinth and founded the church and these unknown teachers.

**Ver. 2-3.** Our letter: practically the same as “the seal of my apostleship,” 1 Corinthians 9:2. Both to themselves and to others, “to you” and “from you,” the Christians at Corinth were a proof that God sent Paul. “Others bring letters in their hands: but ‘in our hearts’ you ever are as a plain declaration to ourselves of our divine mission.” This shut out all need for commendatory letters. These words are forerunners of “confidence” in 2 Corinthians 3:4 and “hope” in 2 Corinthians 3:12.

Known and read. The Corinthian church was not only in the heart of the apostle but was also visible to ‘all men,’ as a proof of Paul’s divine mission. His credentials were so conspicuous that all saw them; and so plain that all read their significance.

All men: believers and unbelievers: for in their hearts even enemies knew the work Paul had done at Corinth.

Being manifested that you are, etc.: since you stand before the eyes of the world as ‘a letter’ written by ‘Christ’ and therefore carrying His authority.

Ministered (see under Romans 12:7) by us: by Paul and Timothy, who, as servants of Christ, founded the Corinthian church, which is here described as a letter written by Christ. These words correspond with “through us” in 2 Corinthians 2:14. Not “written by us”: for the writer was Christ, whose helper Paul was. The Holy ‘Spirit’ dwelling in the hearts of the Christians at Corinth through the agency of Paul and Timothy was an abiding divine testimony to them, to their converts, and to others that they were sent by God. To the converts, the presence of the Spirit was known directly by the new cry Abba, Father, put into their hearts and lips, and by victory over sin given to them day by day; and to others, by “the fruit of the Spirit” in their holy lives. Cp. Romans 8:13-16; Galatians 5:22.



Living God: in contrast to lifeless ‘ink’ or ‘stone.’ Cp. 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 1 Timothy 3:15; 4:10; Acts 14:15; Hebrews 9:14; Deuteronomy 5:26; Joshua 3:10; Psalm 42:2, etc. It suggests the activity of God, ever blessing, protecting, or punishing. After placing in contrast to the letters ‘written with ink’ brought by his opponents the gift of the Holy Spirit, Paul places this gift in further contrast to the ‘stone tablets’ received by Moses on Mount Sinai. And very suitably. For these tablets of stone, preserved during long ages, were an abiding and visible and famous witness of the divine authority of Moses and of the Covenant of which he was minister. No human hand, but the Hand which made Sinai and the world, traced those venerable characters. But they were written only on lifeless stone, on material apparently the most lasting yet doomed to perish. But the divine writing of which Paul had been the pen was on living human hearts, destined to retain and show forth in endless life the handwriting of God.

Flesh: the visible and controlling embodiment of human life, and a conspicuous contrast to ‘stone.’ Same contrast, and same phrase, in Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26f. Paul’s commendation was engraved on the flesh and blood walls of the inmost chamber of his readers’ being.

By the second contrast of 2 Corinthians 3:3 Paul opens a way for important teaching to follow. And this second contrast increases immensely the force of the foregoing rebuke to his opponents. Amid much affliction but in words of glowing gratitude to God Paul has been speaking (2 Corinthians 2:14f) about his own ministry. To this some might object as being self-commendation. The apostle asks whether he has any need for commendation. The absurdity of this suggestion, and the infinite difference between himself and his detractors, he reveals by asking whether when he came to lay the foundation of the church at Corinth he brought commendatory letters with him, or had ever asked his readers for such. Yet he has a letter of commendation, not in his hand but in his heart. His readers themselves are a divine commendation of himself and his fellow-laborers. Others brought letters written in characters of ink. His commendation was the presence of the life-giving Spirit in his readers’ hearts. Nay more. Not only were Paul’s credentials of a kind quite different from those of his opponents, but they were infinitely superior even to the venerable credentials with which God confirmed the Covenant made amid the thunders of Sinai and confirmed the authority of the great

Lawgiver of Israel. For Moses brought down from the mountain a testimony written by God on blocks of silent stone. But Paul could point to a testimony written also by God, in the hearts of living men. On Jewish opponents glorying in Moses, this argument would fall with overwhelming force.

**Ver.** 4-6a. A comment on 2 Corinthians 3:2, 3.

Confidence: an idea recurring throughout 5, 6.

Of this kind: viz. grounded on the fact that through his agency God had written His name by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of living men.

Through Christ: "through whom we received grace and apostleship," Romans 1:5.

In reference to God; as in Romans 4:2. Paul's confidence took hold of God and came through the work and death of Christ. For it rested on what God had wrought through Christ. To 2 Corinthians 3:4; 2 Corinthians 3:5 is a corrective: cp. 2 Corinthians 1:24.

Reckon: the mental process resulting in Paul's confidence. See under Romans 6:11.

Of ourselves: apart from influences from without or from above. (Similar words convey important truths in John 5:30; 16:13.) Paul's confidence just expressed, is not a result of mere human reasoning. For confidence referring to God, mere mental powers are not 'sufficient.'

As from ourselves: i.e. looking to our own powers as the source of success. Had Paul's confidence been a result of mere human calculation, it would have looked for results from his own unaided powers.

Our sufficiency: our ability to make the reckoning which results in the confidence of 2 Corinthians 3:4. Of this confidence 'God' is the source. And He 'has also' given us spiritual powers fitting us to be 'ministers of a new covenant.' These last words take up again, in order to develop it fully, the contrast introduced for a moment in 2 Corinthians 3:3.

A New Covenant; implies a complete difference between the gospel dispensation and the older one: for it implies a new engagement of God with men. These words confirm Luke 22:20, (which, supported by all the

oldest Greek MSS., I cannot doubt to be genuine,) where, as in 1 Corinthians 11:25, similar teaching is attributed to Christ; teaching from which Paul's words here were doubtless derived. Cp. also Hebrews 8:6ff; 9:16. Christ, and, taught by Him, Paul, thus proclaimed that in the Gospel the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31 was fulfilled.

Ministers of a New Covenant: whose work it is to make known and carry out a new agreement of God with men. So "ministers of righteousness," 2 Corinthians 11:15; "of the Gospel," Ephesians 3:7; Colossians 1:23, 25; Galatians 2:17.

Not of letter, etc.: in apposition to 'new covenant,' and describing its nature. As minister of the New Covenant it was Paul's work to convey to his hearers an indwelling 'Spirit;' not a written 'letter,' like that given to Israel through Moses and engraved on tablets of stone or written on the pages of a book. Similar contrast, in the lips of the Baptist: John 1:17. This contrast Paul expounds in 2 Corinthians 3:6b-11; and shows in 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:6 that his conduct corresponds with it.

## REVIEW

After speaking about his former letter and the man whom in that letter he excommunicated, Paul speaks in 4 of his movements after writing the letter. He came to Troas to preach the Gospel. But, drawn by intense anxiety about the Corinthian church, he abandoned the favorable opportunity there presented and came at once to Europe. At this point, without assigning any cause, he bursts into a song of praise to God. The state of mind which made this outburst of praise easy was doubtless prompted, though Paul does not say so, by his joyful meeting with Titus. But the matter of his praise is his entire apostolic work. His sad and weary journeys are a triumphal procession revealing the greatness of God his conqueror, a procession which makes Christ known everywhere, as by the silent perfume of incense. A perfume to God is Paul's whole life, both among those who receive and those who reject his word. The responsibilities of his work well-nigh appall him. For to him the preaching of the Gospel is no cloak for self-seeking; but is intense reality. This is not self-commendation. For such is needless. While others bring letters of commendation he merely points to God's evident work in the hearts of his readers, an evidence treasured in Paul's own heart. The presence in them of God's Spirit is a nobler testimony than the letters brought by his adversaries, or even than the tablets of stone brought by Moses from Sinai. The confidence in God which moves him to speak thus is no mere human interference, but a gift of that God who has also given him ability to do gospel work, and has made him a minister of a Covenant nobler than that established through the medium of Moses.

Notice that Paul's appeal in support of his apostolic authority is a courteous recognition of the genuineness of the religion of his readers. They cannot deny the one without denying the other.

## SECTION 5

### THE MORE GLORIOUS COVENANT

#### CHAPTER 3:6-11

*Ministers of a New Covenant, not of Letter but of Spirit. For the Letter kills: but the Spirit gives life. Moreover, if the ministry of death, engraven on stones, in letters, became glorious, so that the sons of Israel were not able to gaze at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, the glory which was coming to nought, how shall not the ministry of the Spirit be the more in glory. For indeed the glorified is not glorified in this matter, because of the surpassing glory. For if that which comes to nought was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.*

*While giving proof that he is a minister of God Paul has incidentally given proof of the exceeding greatness of the ministry commended to him. For he has said that his credentials are written, not like those of Moses on tablets of stone, but on human hearts; and that as minister of the New Covenant he imparts, not a written word, but a living Spirit. This contrast of the Old and New Covenants he will now develop.*

**Ver. 6b.** Reason why God has made Paul a minister of Spirit not of Letter, a reason revealing the essential and infinite superiority of the New Covenant.

The letter: the written word which Moses, as minister, and mediator, of the Old Covenant, gave to Israel and to the world. Cp. John 1:17.

The letter kills: exactly parallel to Romans 7:10ff. Had there been no commandment, sin would (Romans 4:15) have been impossible: and had there been no sin, death, its punishment, would never have been. Thus death was an inevitable consequence of the Law. For man born in sin could not obey it; and therefore could not escape the condemnation it pronounced and the penalty it threatened. Moreover, to bring men under

condemnation to death was a specific and immediate aim of the Law: Romans 3:19; 5:20; 7:9ff. In this sense 'the Letter' of the Law 'kills.' The written command causes first sin, then (Romans 6:16, 23; 7:5, 9) death. And of this condemnatory and destroying letter Moses was the minister. For through his agency it was given. This does not imply that there was no disobedience before Moses. For the Law was written from the beginning in every man's heart. And by this inward law they who have not heard of Moses will be judged: Romans 2:12. But at Sinai this universal law took visible and historic form. Consequently, what is true of the Law as a universal principle may be said of its historic form. For the historic form was in harmony with the inward reality of the Law. Moses gave to Israel a written embodiment of a command which, instead of saving, could of itself only destroy. Paul was an agent through whom his readers received 'the Spirit,' i.e. the Holy Spirit, whose presence in the heart 'gives life,' and his a pledge of life eternal.

**Life:** the normal state of intelligent creatures, viz. union with God, an immediate outworking of the Spirit in the heart developing into eternal life; in absolute contrast to that separation from God which is an immediate result of sin, and which, unless arrested by Him who raises the dead, will develop into eternal death. See under Romans 7:9.

Notice carefully the infinite superiority which Paul claims for the New Covenant. It brings life; whereas the Old Covenant brought death. This contrast is not obscured by the truth that the death brought by the Law is designed by God to be the way to life. See under Romans 7:14. For, had not the Law been followed by the Gospel, it could not, even indirectly, have led to life. And that the Old Covenant was preparatory to, and receives its entire value from, the New which gives life at once to all who accept it, proves the infinite superiority of the latter.

**Ver. 6a** would be utterly meaningless to us if we had not the Epistle to the Romans. It is therefore a mark that the two epistles came from the same pen, and that Paul had spoken at Corinth the truths afterwards embodied in his letter from Corinth to Rome.

**Ver. 7-8.** Argument based on the foregoing contrast.

The ministry of death: that of Moses who gave to Israel the death-bringing Law. It is explained by “ministry of condemnation,” 2 Corinthians 3:9.

Engraven on stones with letters: a full and graphic delineation of the ministry of Moses. The whole Law was but an amplification of the words brought down from the mountain. Consequently, in the ‘letters engraven on the stones’ the whole work of Moses found visible and conspicuous embodiment.

Became glorious: literally, in glory. In the course of its development it became surrounded with glory.

So that... could not, etc.: proof and measure of the glory. This is implied clearly in Exodus 34:30. [The distinction between *ὥστε* with infinitive and with indicative is rightly given by Canon Evans in the ‘Expositor,’ and series vol. iii. p. 3; but cannot here be reproduced in English. The infinite presents the inability to behold, not as simple fact, but as giving to the reader a measure of the greatness of the ‘glory.’ Cp. 1 Corinthians 1:7; 5:1; 13:2; 2 Corinthians 1:8; 2:7; 7:7.]

Glory of his face: its supernatural brightness. This illustrates the central idea of the word ‘glory.’ See under Romans 1:21. The word “shone” in Exodus 34:29, 30, 35, the LXX. render “glorified,” the exact word and tense used here in 2 Corinthians 3:10. This may have suggested the words before us.

Coming-to-nought or ‘passing-away’; (see 1 Corinthians 1:28; ) suggests in anticipation the argument of 2 Corinthians 3:11 and of 2 Corinthians 3:13-18. Without doubt the brightness on Moses’ face did not continue, but gradually and totally vanished. This is very suggestive. Though the brightness was more than Israel could bear, it was nevertheless a fading glory.

How shall not, etc.: same form of argument as Romans 8:32.

The ministry of the Spirit: the ministry of the Gospel, which conveys the Spirit to those who believe. Cp. Galatians 3:4: “he that supplies to you the Spirit.”

Shall be in glory: inference from the splendor of the ministry of Moses. From the supernatural brightness which encompassed Moses as he gave to

Israel the death-bringing letters, Paul infers that a still greater splendor awaits those through whom is imparted the life-giving Spirit. And, since no such splendor surrounds them now, he speaks of it as something which ‘shall be.’ He refers (cp. “hope” in 2 Corinthians 3:12) to the brightness in the world to come of those who (Daniel 12:3) now “turn many to righteousness.”

**Ver. 9.** Develops and thus supports the argument of 2 Corinthians 3:7, 8.

Condemnation: the link connecting “letter” with “Kills” in 2 Corinthians 3:6. The Law pronounces the condemnation (Deuteronomy 27:26) of all who disobey it; and therefore of all men. For none can obey it. Consequently, the only immediate effect of the Law is that just so far as we know it we are condemned by it. For “through law comes understanding of sin”: Romans 3:20. By conveying to men such a law Moses was a minister of condemnation. Cp. “minister of sin,” Galatians 2:17.

Of righteousness: manifested in the Gospel by faith for all who believe, Romans 1:17; 3:21f. As minister of the Gospel Paul was a means of imparting to men this righteousness. It is the link connecting the Gospel preached by Paul and the Holy Spirit received by those who believe it. The immediate effect of the Law is to bring men under God’s frown: the immediate effect of the Gospel is that they rejoice in the smile of God. And Paul argues that if, as recorded in Exodus 34:29, glory pertains to the former then more abundant glory pertains to the latter.

**Ver. 10.** Supports 2 Corinthians 3:9 by a statement which goes beyond it, and which we are compelled to admit.

In this matter: in the comparison of the two Covenants.

The glorified: general term including any glorious object. The Old Covenant belongs to the category of objects glorious in themselves which lose their glory by the ‘surpassing’ splendor of some brighter object. Just so the moon is as bright after sunrise as before: but, practically, its brightness is completely set aside by that of the sun. It is so ‘in the matter’ of the Old Covenant. In it is illustrated the general principle, ‘the glorified is not glorified because of the surpassing glory.’ The brightness of Moses’ face revealed the splendor of his ministry. And while we look at his ministry



alone, amid the darkness of surrounding night, it is in our eyes covered with glory. But when we compare it with the ministry which proclaims righteousness for men whom the Law condemned, and which imparts, not letters graven on stones, but the abiding presence of the life-giving Spirit, the glory of the former covenant fades utterly; and we think only of the greater splendor of the ministry of the New Covenant. This strengthens immensely the argument of 2 Corinthians 3:7, 8. If a supernatural brightness attested the grandeur of the Old Covenant, and if the Old Covenant now sinks into insignificance in presence of the New, surely an infinite splendor belongs to, and therefore awaits, the ministry of the New Covenant. For nothing less than infinite splendor can throw into the shade the splendor of the Old Covenant.

**Ver. 11.** A reason of this greater splendor, suggested at the end of 2 Corinthians 3:7, and supporting the argument of 2 Corinthians 3:7f. It also prepares the way for 6.

That which is coming to nought: the ministry of the Law, which is valid only till (Galatians 3:22ff; Romans 10:4; 6:14) the Gospel comes.

That which remains: i.e. the Gospel. In the history of the world, as in the experience of each individual God speaks first in the form of Law, "Do this or die." When we hear the good news, "He that believes shall not die," the voice of condemnation loses its dread power, and comes to nought. But the good news of life will remain sounding in our ears for ever. Paul argues, "If the temporary dispensation was accompanied by splendor, of which splendor the brightness on Moses' face was a conspicuous example, surely the abiding voice of the Gospel is or will be surrounded by still greater splendor." [Notice the appropriate use of **δια** and **εἰς**, as in Romans 1:2, for the temporary and the permanent.] With the passing nature of the Covenant of which he was Mediator, the passing brightness of Moses' face was in beautiful though incidental agreement. Even the little outward details of the two Covenants were in harmony with their inward essence. SECTION 5 proves how infinitely superior is the New Covenant to the Old; thus increasing Paul's claim, as a minister of this Greater Covenant, to his readers' respect. At the end of 4 he asserted the contrast of the Covenants in the contrasted words "letter" and "spirit," which he gave as their characteristics. This contrast he develops forcibly by stating the

reason of it, viz. that the letter works death, the Spirit works life. In other words, God has made him minister of a New Covenant because the Old one could not attain His purposes of mercy. Whereas the Old Covenant consisted only in letters graven in stones, and in words of condemnation, words producing death, (for none can obey them, and death is the penalty of disobedience,) the New Covenant conveys righteousness, and the Holy Spirit, and life. The Old Covenant set up a relation between God and man destined to be only for a time: the New Covenant sets up a relation destined to continue for ever. When placed in contrast, the grandeur of the Old Covenant fades utterly before the infinitely greater brightness of the New. Nevertheless, the Old Covenant was accompanied by splendor so great that the Israelites could not look on the face of Moses: and that splendor bore witness to its real worth. From this Paul argues triumphantly that to the New Covenant, before whose greatness the Old Covenant sinks into insignificance, belongs a splendor infinitely surpassing that which dazzled the eyes of Israel. And of this splendor he is content to speak as a thing of the future

Under the above argument lies an important principle, viz. that with inward reality outward manifestation must always eventually correspond; that power, however veiled for a time, must sooner or later clothe itself in appropriate glory. The Old Covenant was at once surrounded by splendor appropriate to its importance. The New Covenant was not. The appearance neither of Christ nor of His servants revealed the grandeur of the kingdom they were setting up. And the contrast between what they were and what they seemed to be proclaimed unmistakably the glory awaiting them.

Although Paul's relation to the Gospel is shared by no one living now, yet the glory of the better Covenant remains; and gives infinite importance to the work of every one who, officially as preacher or teacher, or casually, announces the good news of salvation. In a true sense the humblest Sunday School teacher who tells with effect the story of the cross is greater, i.e. in privilege, than Moses. For his word imparts at once the Spirit of eternal Life for which the words of Moses did but prepare the way.

These arguments are quite consistent with the infinite importance of the Law as the absolutely necessary preparation for the Gospel. As

subordinate to the Gospel the value of the Law cannot be overestimated. Apart from the Gospel it has no value. Paul has really in view, men who set up the Law as independent of, and greater than, the Gospel. Against such, his argument has full force. And, that the one is preparatory, the other final, proves, from every point of view, the infinite superiority of the Gospel.

## SECTION 6

**THAT, IN SPITE OF PAUL'S UNRESERVED PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL, SOME MEN REJECT IT, DOES NOT DISPROVE ITS SUPERIORITY**

### CHAPTER 3:12-4:6

*Having then such a hope we use great openness of speech. And not as Moses used to put a veil upon his face, that the sons of Israel might not gaze at the end of that which was coming to nought. But their thoughts have been hardened. For until this day the same veil remains upon the reading of the Old Covenant: it not being revealed that in Christ it is coming to nought. But until today whenever Moses is read a veil lies upon their heart. But whenever it may turn to the Lord the veil is taken away. Moreover, the Lord is the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, is freedom. But we all with unveiled face beholding reflected in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being transformed to the same image, from glory to glory, as from the Lord of the Spirit.*

*Because of this, having this ministry as we have received mercy, we do not fail. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor using with guile the word of God, but by the manifestation of the Truth commending ourselves to every conscience of men before God. And our Gospel, if indeed it is veiled, among those that are perishing it is veiled; in whom the God of this world has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers, that there may not shine forth the light-giving of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For not ourselves do we proclaim, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves your servants because of Jesus. Because God, who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, it is who has shined in our hearts, to bring to light the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

After proving in 5 the superiority of the New Covenant, Paul shows in 6, keeping before us and making use of the idea of glory introduced in 5, that his conduct corresponds with this superiority; and explains the rejection by the Jews and others of so great a blessing. In 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 he speaks of the rejection of the Gospel by Jews; in 2 Corinthians 4:1-6, of its rejection by unbelievers generally.

**Ver. 12.** Sums up 5, and shows its bearing on Paul's conduct.

Such a hope: viz. that glory awaits the New Covenant and its ministers, a hope based on the glory of the Old Covenant and the superiority and permanence of the New. In 2 Corinthians 3:4 Paul expressed "confidence" that by God's grace he was a minister of God. This confidence the argument of 5 has developed into a "hope of glory." This 'hope' prompts him to proclaim without reserve the Gospel on which it rests.

Openness-of-speech; 2 Corinthians 7:4, Ephesians 6:19; Philippians 1:20; Acts 2:29; 4:13, 29, 31: literally 'saying-everything,' without fear, or, as here, without concealment.

**Ver. 13.** Paul does 'not' act 'as Moses' did. See Exodus 34:29-35. This contrast, suggested by the contrast developed in 5, both puts Paul's conduct in a very clear light and prepares the way for an exposition of the conduct of some who rejected his plainly spoken words.

Used-to-put a veil; agrees with Exodus 34:34, which seems to imply that Moses habitually wore a veil.

That which was coming-to-nought: probably the fading brightness (2 Corinthians 3:7) of Moses' face, which was the immediate object hidden from the gaze of Israel. But this fading brightness reminds us that the covenant it certified was itself transitory. The radiance on Moses' face as he came down from the mountain testified that he had been with God, and revealed the grandeur of the work given him to do. He spoke to Aaron, to the elders, to the people. And when he had finished speaking he put a veil over his face until he went again into the presence of God. [The word "till" in Exodus 34:33 (A.V.) should be "when."] And this he seems to have done constantly. Moses' purpose in putting on the veil is not stated in Exodus. But we are here taught that it was that the Israelites might not see 'the end' of the splendor upon his face, that their peering eyes might not

find out that the glory ‘was passing away.’ And these words suggest that had they seen this they might have inferred that the Mosaic Covenant was itself only temporary. This explanation of Moses’ motive, though not even suggested by the story of Exodus, yet agrees with it remarkably well. For we cannot doubt that the glory was not permanent but passing. And it may be that a half consciousness of this moved Moses to hide his waning glory. Certainly, both the fading of the brightness and its concealment were in harmony with the temporary nature and the partial revelation of the Old Covenant. We need not discuss the source of Paul’s explanation of Moses’ motive. For it is given not as argument but only to illustrate by contrast his conduct in preaching the Gospel and to explain Israel’s rejection of the word so plainly preached. Since the New Covenant is abiding (2 Corinthians 3:11) Paul has no need to do ‘as Moses’ did.

**Ver. 14.** But, etc.: i.e. in spite of Paul’s openness of speech, so different from the conduct of Moses.

Hardened: become insensible to divine influences. See Romans 11:7; Ephesians 4:18. This hardening is the work both (2 Corinthians 4:4) of Satan and (see under Romans 9:18; 11:8) of God.

Their thoughts: 2 Corinthians 4:4: nearly but not quite the same as “minds.” It denotes the mind active, i.e. producing thoughts, purposes, etc., but such as could not receive divine impressions. [The Greek aorist leaves quite indefinite whether Paul refers to the hardening of ancient Israel or of the Jews in Paul’s day. It combines the sense of ‘have been hardened’ and “were hardened.” Since the story of Moses is introduced merely to illustrate the rejection of the Gospel it is best to refer these words to the Jews who rejected Christ. I have therefore chosen the former rendering. So R.V. in 2 Corinthians 4:2, 4. See ‘The Expositor,’ First Series vol. xi. pp. 299, 380. This is one of the many passages in which the difference of the Greek and English tenses compels the translator to become also an expositor.]

This hardening of the Jews, 2 Corinthians 3:14b accounts for in a way which links their state in Paul’s day with the story of Moses’ veil.

Until today the same veil remains; makes very conspicuous the continuity of their spiritual position. In “the Book of the Covenant,” Exodus 24:7,

‘the Old Covenant’ itself was ‘read.’ By a strong figure Paul says that, just as a veil covered Moses’ face, hiding from Israel the face that its glory was fading, so the open page of the Old Covenant, even while being read, was veiled.

Inasmuch as it is not revealed, etc.; justifies the assertion that ‘the same veil remains.’

Revealed: made known, as only God can make it known, to the consciousness of those who hear the Old Covenant read. See under Romans 1:17. The Jews did not know that the Old Covenant was only preliminary, ‘that in Christ it comes to nought,’ i.e. its validity passes away. As a guide of conduct, the Law was not annulled but established (Matthew 5:17) by Christ. For, in Christ, whatever the Law bids we do. But as a covenant between God and man, and as a basis of approach to and intercourse with God, the Old Covenant, “Do this and live,” has utterly passed away. So Galatians 3:19, 25; Romans 8:4; 10:4. Now, just as the brightness of Moses’ face was actually waning, but Israel could not see this because though present among them his face was veiled, so the transitory nature of the Old Covenant was written plainly upon the pages of the Book of the Covenant (cp. Jeremiah 31:31ff), but the Jews did not know it though the book lay open before them. In other words, the book was veiled.

**Ver. 15.** But until today, etc.: in contrast to “revealed that in Christ it comes to nought; expounding still further and from another point of view the hindrance which prevents Israel from knowing the true nature of the Old Covenant.

Until today: graphic repetition, fixing attention upon the still unchanged state of Israel.

Moses is read: more forceful than “the reading of the Old Covenant.” Cp. Acts 15:21. In the Book the veiled Lawgiver was still present.

A veil: not “the same veil”: for the metaphor is changed, to show that the real hindrance is not in the book but in ‘their heart.’ The book is veiled, inasmuch as only God can reveal its mysteries. The veil was ‘upon their heart,’ inasmuch as in themselves was the reason why the mysteries were not revealed to them.

Heart: the seat of the intelligence and the source of action. See under Romans 1:21.

Such is Paul's explanation of the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews. Just as their fathers could not see that the brightness of Moses' face was fading and that the Covenant of which he was mediator was itself destined to pass away, because his face was hidden from sight by a veil, so even now, after the lapse of many centuries, the Book of Moses, which would tell them if they understood it that the Mosaic dispensation was destined to pass away, is not understood, although read to them every Sabbath. Like its author at Sinai, the book is veiled. Or, rather, on the readers' hearts a veil lies. For the hindrance is in themselves.

**Ver.** 16. Paul cannot leave his people in their darkness without expressing a hope that they will some day come to the light. The form of his words was suggested apparently by Exodus 34:34, LXX.: "whenever Moses went in before the Lord the veil was taken away."

To the Lord: to Christ, from whom Israel now turns away.

It may turn: viz. the heart of Israel. The word 'it' suggests a general conversion: cp. Romans 11:26. But 2 Corinthians 3:16 is true of each individual who turns to Christ.

Is taken away: a fixed unchangeable principle of the kingdom of God. So surely as one turns to Christ, the veil is removed. It also expresses confidence of Israel's salvation. Cp. Matthew 3:10. That by God the veil is removed, Paul leaves his readers to infer.

**Ver.** 17. Two truths, which taken together prove and explain 2 Corinthians 3:16.

Is: practical identity, as in 1 Corinthians 10:16; Romans 1:16. To "turn to the Lord," i.e. to receive Jesus as Master, is to receive the Holy Spirit as the animating principle of our life. By receiving the one we receive the other. Hence the coming and the presence of the Spirit are spoken of as the coming and presence of Christ: John 14:18; Romans 8:9f; Galatians 2:20. This intimate and essential relation between the Son and the Spirit, amounting to practical identity of these Two Divine Persons, Paul asserts by the strong words 'the Lord is the Spirit.' (Similarly, in John 10:30



Christ says, “I and my Father are one” in proof that none can pluck His sheep from His hands because to do so would be to pluck them from the Father’s hand.) In virtue of this essential relation of the Son and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, sent by Christ (John 15:26) and the bearer of Christ’s presence, is called ‘the Spirit of the Lord,’ and Christ is, in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “the Lord of the Spirit.”

Freedom: in the widest sense possible. The Holy Spirit is absolutely ‘free,’ i.e. unrestrained by any will or force external to Himself. For the entire universe is under His control. And this freedom He gives to those in whom He dwells. Nothing can hinder them; not even the necessary limitations of life. For, taught by the Spirit, they look upon these limitations as affording opportunities of working out their most deeply cherished desires. They are in harmony with the all-controlling Spirit and are therefore free indeed. Cp. John 8:36; 1 Corinthians 7:22. Now the veil of 2 Corinthians 3:14-16 is a restraint hindering spiritual vision. By it Israel’s heart is bound. It will therefore be removed when Israel turns to the Lord. For, to receive the Lord is to receive the Spirit. And such a hindrance to spiritual vision the Spirit cannot tolerate: for where the Spirit is ‘is freedom.’

**Ver. 18.** But we: emphatic contrast. From the general principles of 2 Corinthians 3:17 Paul turns to himself and his readers as exemplifications of it; and places them in express contrast to those whose hearts are still veiled.

All; marks a blessing common to all believers: for (Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6) all have the Spirit.

With unveiled face: from which a veil has been taken away: put forward in conspicuous contrast to the veiled heart (2 Corinthians 3:15) of Israel.

Face: not “heart” as in 2 Corinthians 3:15. For Paul pictures them not as comprehending but as looking.

The glory of the Lord; denotes in Exodus 16:10; 24:17; Numbers 14:10; Luke 2:9; John 12:41; Acts 7:55; 22:11, a visible and supernatural brightness revealing the presence and grandeur of God: it is here the outshining, through His works and words, of the moral grandeur of Christ;

an outshining far more wonderful than any visible brightness. Cp. John 1:14; 2:11; 11:40; Romans 6:4.

Beholding reflected in a mirror: i.e. in the Gospel, where the words and works of Christ are recorded. So 1 Corinthians 13:12, where the Gospel mirror is contrasted unfavorably with direct vision in the world to come. And in this glass we behold, not mere abstract moral grandeur, but moral grandeur combined into an 'image,' into a picture of a living man, even Jesus. The early disciples saw Him face to face, and as they heard His words and watched His works they (John 1:14) beheld His glory. But we can do so only by pondering the Gospel. We thus see His image and behold His glory.

Behold: very appropriate for the continued contemplation of Christ as portrayed in the Gospel.

Are being transformed: gradually, day by day, as we continue gazing: wonderful result of our contemplation of Christ. Same word in Romans 12:2; Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2: cognate word in Romans 8:29; Philippians 3:21. 'The image' reflected in the Gospel mirror reproduces itself in those who gaze upon it. This agrees with Romans 6:10f; 1 John 4:17, which teach that what Christ is we are to be. This effect of our vision is similar to, but infinitely more glorious than, that (2 Corinthians 3:7) of Moses. Notice here a gradual development of the Christian life and character; one practically the same as that in Romans 12:2. This change is inward and spiritual resulting from inward and spiritual vision of Christ. Soon we shall see Him face to face: and so wonderful will be the effect of that vision that even our bodies (Philippians 3:21: cp. 1 John 3:2) will be changed and made glorious like His.

From glory to glory: the change proceeds from the moral splendor reflected in the Gospel, and results in splendor imparted to us. Cp. Romans 1:17.

The Lord of the Spirit: the divine Master at whose bidding (John 16:7) goes forth the Holy Spirit, who is therefore "the Spirit of the Lord," and (Romans 8:9) "of Christ."

As from the Lord of the Spirit: the result produced by the image of Christ in those who contemplate it corresponds with the dignity of Christ as the Master who sends forth the Spirit. Earthly beauty, however skilfully

portrayed, cannot reproduce itself in the beholder. But from Christ, and therefore from the image of Christ reflected in the Gospel, go forth life-giving spiritual influences which stamp His moral image in and on those who behold it. Similarly, in photography the silent and mysterious power of the light stamps on the prepared plate an image of the object. Thus the glory received comes ‘from’ the ‘glory’ reflected in the mirror, ‘from the Lord of the Spirit,’ and is such ‘as’ we might expect ‘from’ Him who sends forth the Spirit.

This verse reveals the infinite value of persevering Christian contemplation. As we continue looking into the gospel mirror there rises before us with increasing clearness an image in which are combined every element of moral grandeur in its highest degree, the image of the God-Man. As we contemplate it we feel its power: (for it is a living and life-giving image of the Lord of the Spirit:) and ourselves are changed, in a manner corresponding with Christ’s gift of the Spirit, into a likeness of Him at whom we gaze.

The word I have rendered ‘beholding-reflected-in-a-mirror’ is derived from the common Greek word for ‘mirror;’ and is found in the active voice in Plutarch, ‘Morals’ p. 894d, meaning to “show reflected in a mirror.” The middle voice, in the sense of seeing oneself in a mirror is found in a few places. It is also found, in the sense of seeing an object in a mirror, in Philo, ‘Allegories’ bk. iii. 33: “Let me not see Thy form mirrored in anything else except in Thyself, even in God.” This passage, like that before us, refers to Moses talking with God at Sinai. A cognate and equivalent verb is found in Clement’s epistle, ch. 36 (see Appendix A,) in the same sense. In all these cases the middle voice denotes, as frequently, the effect of the vision on him who beholds it. [This is confirmed by Philo, ‘Migration of Abraham’ ch. 17, where to denote seeing oneself in a mirror the middle voice ἐνοπτρίζονται is followed by εαυθους. Cp. also Plutarch, ‘Morals’ pp. 696a, 141a.]

Chrysostom, followed by Theodoret, and by the Revised Version (text,) expounds the word to “reflect like a mirror.” But this sense was probably suggested to Chrysostom only by this verse. It is not found in any Greek writer. The word is never predicated in the middle voice of the reflecting mirror, but always of him who sees reflected in a mirror either himself or

some object beneficial to himself. Moreover, if the unveiled ones already reflect 'the glory' of Christ, it is needless and meaningless to say that they 'are being transformed into the same image:' for the change would be already effected, especially as an image is outward form, not inward essence. The exposition adopted above gives the cause of the change, viz. contemplation of the reflected glory; and thus supplies the connection between the unveiled face and the progressive change into the same image. It also keeps up the contrast, suggested by we all, of the unveiled Christians and the veiled Jews; while the word transformed reminds us of Moses returning unveiled into the presence of God and thus rekindling his fading brightness.

The last words of 2 Corinthians 3:18 refer certainly to 2 Corinthians 3:17. But Paul's reference is, I think, sufficiently conveyed by the rendering 'the Lord of the Spirit;' the genitive simply implying, as always, a relation between the governed and governing nouns leaving the nouns themselves and the context to determine exactly what the relation is. That Paul wished to put 'the Lord' and 'the Spirit' in apposition, (as the R.V. does,) is the less likely because the identity asserted in 2 Corinthians 3:17 is administrative, and not personal. In virtue of this identity both is Christ 'Lord of the Spirit' and the Holy Spirit is 'the Spirit of the Lord.' See further in 'The Expositor,' 2nd series vol. iii. p. 384.

**Ver.** 1-2. Parallel to 2 Corinthians 3:12, 13; as are 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 to 2 Corinthians 3:12-18.

Because of this: viz. the wonderful change in 2 Corinthians 3:18.

This ministry: that of 2 Corinthians 3:6ff. As in 2 Corinthians 3:12, Paul now shows the bearing of his foregoing teaching upon his own conduct.

According as we have received mercy: stronger than 1 Corinthians 15:10. It is a humble acknowledgment of helplessness, unable to do any good to himself or others, and of the pity shown to him by God in making him a minister of the more glorious covenant. Whatever position we hold in the church is by the compassion of God. Cp. Exodus 33:19.

Fail: turn out badly in something, to lose heart and give up through weariness or fear.

Hidden things of shame: the many and various things which shame compels us to hide, especially all unworthy motives and means. To these we shall turn if we become weary or timid in our work. But Paul, brave and persevering, had ‘renounced’ them. He did so ‘because’ he remembered the wonderful effect of the image reflected in the gospel glass, which in his ‘ministry’ he held before men. Paul’s actual conduct, in accord with ‘we have renounced, etc.,’ is portrayed in the rest of 2 Corinthians 4:2.

Walk: as in 1 Corinthians 3:3; Romans 6:4.

Craftiness: 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Corinthians 3:9: literally, ‘doing anything’ to gain our ends. So Plato, ‘Menexenus’ p. 247a: “All knowledge apart from righteousness and other virtue is craftiness, not wisdom.”

Using with guile the word of God: cp. “huckstering the word of God,” 2 Corinthians 2:17: using the Gospel as a means of working out our own secret and unworthy purposes. To do this, is to ‘walk in craftiness.’

Manifestation of the truth: exact opposite of the foregoing.

Manifestation: see under Romans 1:19; Colossians 4:4. The truth is made manifest to all, but not revealed to all.

The truth: including (Psalm 119:142, 151) the Law and (Colossians 1:5) the Gospel; as being words which correspond with reality. See note, Romans 1:18.

Conscience: see notes, 1 Corinthians 8:7; Romans 2:15.

Every conscience of men: more forceful than “every man’s conscience.” Cp. Romans 2:9. Each individual conscience is to Paul a definite object of thought. The truth appeals to every conscience, however wicked and ignorant. For it sets forth, and agrees with, the spiritual realities of every man’s own heart, and proclaims that which every man’s heart knows to be true. For the written Law accords with the law written in the heart; and the Gospel accords with man’s need of salvation. Otherwise there would be no hope for the unsaved. And, by its appeal to each man’s conscience, the truth claims respect for those who announce it. Indeed, the preacher’s words will come with authority in proportion as they agree with the facts of his hearers’ inner life. And this will be in proportion as he makes ‘manifest the’ whole ‘truth.’ He who does this has therein sufficient

commendation, and has no need for ‘craft’ and ‘guile.’ While speaking to men Paul stood ‘before God:’ cp. 2 Corinthians 2:17; 5:11. And in His presence ‘guile’ can find no place. This verse expounds, and accounts for, the “much openness of speech” in 2 Corinthians 3:12.

**Ver. 3-4.** Parallel to 2 Corinthians 3:14, 15. Paul cannot forget that, although by manifesting the truth he recommends himself to every conscience, yet many reject his words.

My gospel: as in 1 Corinthians 15:1; Romans 2:16.

In (or ‘among’) them that are perishing; recalls 2 Corinthians 2:15. They are pictured as standing round the Gospel, but unable, because it is veiled, to see the glory therein reflected. That the Gospel, like the Law, is veiled, Paul must admit. But it is so only among those in the way to destruction. The veiled Gospel is therefore a proof of their deadly peril.

In whom, etc.; says that the hindrance is in themselves, in a form which proves the assertion of 2 Corinthians 4:3.

In whom: graphic picture of the locality of the blinding, viz. that inmost chamber whence come their ‘thoughts.’

This age: as in Romans 12:2.

God of this age: the most tremendous title of Satan, as a supreme controlling power using for his own ends the men and things belonging to the present life. Him the men of this age (1 Corinthians 2:6ff) worship and serve. Cp. John 12:31; 14:30; Ephesians 2:2; 6:12; also Philippians 3:19.

Blinded: John 12:40; 1 John 2:11.

Blinded the thoughts: cp. 2 Corinthians 3:14. Their thoughts have no intelligence, and cannot see the gospel light.

Of the unbelievers: not needful to complete the sense, but added to point out the cause of their surrender to the cruelty of Satan. Paul refers only to those who heard and refused the Gospel. For this blinding was a punishment for rejecting the light. And rejection of the light of nature (Romans 1:21) would not make them ‘unbelievers.’ Because they turned away from the glory reflected in the gospel mirror, God permitted Satan to destroy, in whole or in part their capacity for spiritual vision.

That there may not shine, etc.; cruel purpose (and inevitable result) of this blinding. It reveals the loss sustained by the blinded ones. It is as though, in the wilderness, that he might not look at the brazen serpent and live, one put out the eyes of a bitten man.

The glory of Christ: same as “glory of the Lord” in 2 Corinthians 3:18.

The Gospel of, etc.: the gospel mirror in which the ‘glory’ is reflected.

The light-giving: “lest the Gospel shine upon them and give them light.”

Image of God: 1 Corinthians 11:7; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3. Cp. Wisdom 7:26: “An outshining is (wisdom) of everlasting light, a spotless mirror of the energy of God, an image of His goodness.” And Philo (‘On Monarchy’ bk. ii. 5, ‘On Dreams’ bk. i. 41, etc.) speaks often of “the Word” [ὁ λόγος] as an “image of God.” See Lightfoot’s valuable note on Colossians 1:15. These words set forth an important relation of the Son to the Father. Of the invisible Father the Son is a visible manifestation and outshining, visible once on earth, though veiled in human flesh, and visible now to those who surround His throne. We know, in part, what God is because we have seen Christ reflected in the gospel mirror. That Christ is the ‘image of God,’ reveals the greatness of His glory and of ‘the light’ which proceeds from ‘the Gospel’ in which His ‘glory’ is reflected, and the infinite loss of those whose blinded thoughts cannot see this glorious light.

Many of those to whom Paul preached had evidently never seen the image of Christ portrayed in the Gospel. For they were unmoved by it. To them, therefore, the Gospel was veiled. And, since the truth was set plainly before them, the hindrance to sight was not in the Word but in the hearts of those who did not believe it. By not seeing the image set before them they proved themselves incapable of seeing it. And their blindness was so unnatural that it must have been inflicted. And it could be a work only of the enemy of the race. Since the blinded ones were wholly occupied with things of the present life and were thus prevented from beholding the Gospel light, Paul says that they were blinded by the God of this age. And, since the inevitable result of their blindness was that they were unable to see the light which shines forth from Him who reveals to men the

face of God, he properly speaks of this as the dire purpose of the blindness inflicted by their foe.

This blindness was wrought, not only by Satan, but by God: as is taught expressly in 2 Thessalonians 2:9ff; Romans 11:8; John 12:40. In just punishment God surrenders to the cruelty of Satan those who reject the Gospel, that He may destroy their capacity for receiving it. This dual source of spiritual insensibility is illustrated in 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 21:1. The blindness is also attributed to the word, and to those who preach it: Isaiah 6:10; Mark 4:11f. For, by God's ordinance, the Gospel hardens those whom it fails to soften.

This blindness, though terrible, is not necessarily final; any more than is the death described in Romans 7:9ff. For Christ, who raises the dead, gives sight (Luke 4:18) to the blind. But the blindness and death are such as no earthly power can save from. Yet in our deepest darkness we know the direction of the light. And, as we turn towards it, the light of life by its creative power gives eyes to the blind.

Notice that, as in 1 Corinthians 3:23; 8:6; 11:3, the Father is called 'God' even in distinction from the Son.

**Ver. 5-6.** These verses justify by contrasted denial, the foregoing description of the Gospel preached by Paul. Its grandeur moves him to rebut a possible or actual insinuation against himself.

Proclaim: as heralds, Romans 2:21.

Ourselves: i.e. our own authority, skill, power, etc.

As Lord: as claiming the homage and obedience of all, and claiming to be the aim of their life and effort.

Servants: see under Romans 1:1.

Ourselves your servants, or 'slaves': strange proclamation. Cp. 1 Corinthians 9:19; 2 Corinthians 1:24. As a servant or slave toils not for his own profit, except indirectly, but for his master's, so Paul puts forth all his powers, forgetful of himself, to advance the highest interests of his readers.



Because of Jesus: constrained (2 Corinthians 4:14) by His love to men. This proclamation reveals “the glory of Christ” who has gained over Paul a victory so complete.

Because God, etc.: a fact which moved Paul and his companions to become ‘servants because of Jesus.’ Cp. “because of this” in 2 Corinthians 4:1.

Who said, etc.: the first word of creation, Genesis 1:3. ‘Out of’ the bosom of ‘darkness, light’ sprang at the bidding of God: graphic picture.

Who has shined: has irradiated by His own light, i.e. by a display of Himself. The creative power which at the first changed darkness into light by a word is at work again in the word of the Gospel. Thus the grandeur of the Old Creation reveals that of the New.

To-bring-to-light, etc.: great purpose of the shining forth of this divine light in the heart.

Bring to light: same word as light-giving in 2 Corinthians 4:4.

The knowledge of the glory of God: to make known the grandeur of God, as the shining forth of light makes an object known.

In the face of Christ: from which shines forth the light which reveals the glory of God. While we gaze upon that face as reflected in the gospel mirror, i.e. while we contemplate His character as portrayed in the Gospel, we behold ‘in the face of Christ’ the greatness of God. That the light which filled Paul’s heart was an outshining of God in creative power, and that it had shone forth in him that men might know and wonder at the grandeur of God, moved him to devote himself to the service of men by proclaiming this glorious Gospel.

Notice the three steps of 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; viz. 1, 2: 3, 4: 5, 6; each culminating in a description of the Gospel. In the 1st and 3rd Paul explains his own conduct; in the 2nd, that of the unbelievers. Also the close connection of 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 with 2 Corinthians 4:1-6. Each begins with the practical effect on Paul with the grandeur of the Gospel; then passes on to treat of its rejection by some; and concludes with a still nobler description of its purpose and efficacy. And they are introduced by similar words. Prompted by the reference to Moses in 5, 2 Corinthians

3:12-18 deals with the Jews: 2 Corinthians 4:1-6, with unbelievers generally. A link binding the whole together is the conspicuous word 'veil.'

## SECTION 7

***PAUL PROCLAIMS THE GOSPEL AMID DEADLY PERIL, WHICH  
HOWEVER REVEALS THE POWER OF GOD; AND CANNOT  
DETER HIM, FOR IT WILL BE FOLLOWED BY ENDLESS LIFE***

### CHAPTER 4:7-5:10

*We have, however, this treasure in earthenware vessels, in order that the excess of the power may be God's and not from us: in everything being afflicted, but now helpless, perplexed, but not utterly perplexed, pursued, but not deserted, thrown down, but not perishing: always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus, that also the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our body. For always we who live are being given up to death because of Jesus, in order that also the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death is at work in us, but life in you.*

*But having the same spirit of faith according as it is written, "I have believed: for which cause I have spoken," (Psalm 116:10,) also we believe: for which cause we also speak. Knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sake, that grace, having multiplied, may by the greater number cause the thanksgiving to abound for the glory of God. For which cause we do not fail. For if indeed our outward man is corrupting nevertheless the inward man is being renewed day by day. For the momentary lightness of our affliction is working out for us exceedingly to excess an eternal weight of glory; while we do not look at the things seen, but at the things not seen: for the things seen are temporary; but the things not seen, eternal.*

*For we know that, if our earthly house of the tent be taken down, a building from God we have, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For indeed in this tent we groan, longing*

*to put on as overclothing our dwelling-place which is from heaven. If, at any rate, also clothed, not naked, we shall be found. For indeed we who are in the tent groan, being burdened: because we do not wish to lay aside our clothing but to put on overclothing, that the mortal may be swallowed up by life. And He who has wrought in us for this very thing is God, who has given to us the earnest of the Spirit. Being then of good courage always, and knowing that while at home in the body we are away from home from the Lord- For by faith we walk, not by appearance. But we are of good courage, and are well-pleased rather to go away from home from the body, and to go home to the Lord.*

*For which cause we also make it a point of honor, whether at home or away from home, to be well-pleasing to Him. For all of us must needs be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may obtain the things done through the body, in view of the things he has practiced, whether good or bad.*

The grandeur of the Gospel, expounded in 5, 6, Paul now reconciles with the unfavorable circumstances of those who proclaim it, by giving in 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 the purpose of their afflictions, viz. to reveal the power of God; and sets forth in 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:10 the motives which prompt and enable him to speak amid hardships and perils so great.

**Ver. 7.** This treasure: the life-giving Gospel of the glory of God.

Earthenware vessels: human bodies, liable to be destroyed in the confusion of the world and the storm of persecution.

In order that, etc.; implies that the earthenware vessels are part of a deliberate purpose of God.

The excess of the power: which preserves unbroken these fragile vessels, thus proving that it exceeds the force of the storm around.

May be God's. God designed that the vessels should be preserved by His own power; 'and not' by a power inherent in, and proceeding 'from' the vessels, as would have been had they consisted of material strong enough to resist the storm. And for this end He committed the gospel treasure to

men whose bodies were liable to be destroyed by the foes whose fury He foresaw the Gospel would arouse.

From us: as if we were the source of power.

**Ver. 8-9.** Description of the weakness of the earthenware vessels, and of their preservation.

Helpless: confined in narrow space. Same word in 2 Corinthians 6:12; Romans 2:9. See notes. This verse proves that it denotes something worse than ‘afflicted.’ At every point difficulties press upon them: but they are not without way of escape.

Perplexed: not knowing which way to go, seeing no way open to them.

Utterly-perplexed: same word as “without-way-of-escape” in 2 Corinthians 1:8. Although there seemed to be no way open to them, they were not absolutely without a way. This is not contradicted, but confirmed, by 2 Corinthians 1:8. From their own point of view there was then no way of escape: but God made one.

Pursued: as in Romans 12:14.

Not deserted, or ‘not left behind in’ peril: not abandoned to their pursuers. Cp. Hebrews 13:5.

Thrown down: as if in their flight.

Not perishing: a last triumphant denial. Notice the climax. At every step they are heavily pressed: but their path is not hedged up. They do not know which way to go: but they are not altogether without a way of escape. Enemies pursue them: but they are not left alone in their flight. They fall: but even then they survive.

**Ver. 10.** While apparently continuing the description of his hardships Paul now explains their relation to the sufferings of Christ, and then states their divine purpose. Thus 2 Corinthians 4:10a is parallel to 2 Corinthians 4:7a, which is developed in 2 Corinthians 4:8, 9; and 2 Corinthians 4:10b to 2 Corinthians 4:7b.

Always: parallel to “in everything,” 2 Corinthians 4:8.

The putting to death: the whole process which ended in the death of Christ.

Carrying about, etc.: explained in 2 Corinthians 4:11, “given up to death because of Jesus.” Paul’s hardships and deadly peril arose from the same cause as those which led Christ to the cross; and were therefore in some sense a repetition and reproduction of them. Cp. 2 Corinthians 1:5, “sufferings of Christ”; Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:24. Thus in his own ‘body’ Paul was carrying about wherever he went, so that many could see it, a picture of ‘the putting to death of Jesus.’

In order that, etc.; lays stress on the divine purpose of these perils.

Also the life: the resurrection life, placed in conspicuous contrast to the death, of Christ.

Made manifest. Paul’s body, rescued by God’s power from deadly peril, was a conspicuous picture of Jesus alive after He had been put to death. For the miraculous power which raised Christ from the grave saved Paul from going down into it. Cp. 2 Corinthians 13:4. It was a picture of Christ’s death that it might be also a picture of His ‘life;’ in order that thus the power (2 Corinthians 4:7) of God might be manifested.

**Ver. 11.** Explains and justifies 2 Corinthians 4:10.

We who live: in contrast to Christ who died, and to the death into which day by day they are being given up. They were living victims of death.

Given-up: as in Romans 1:24.

Are given-up: each day death was there and then claiming them for its prey. Cp. 1 Corinthians 15:31; Romans 8:36.

Because of Jesus: because they obeyed Him by proclaiming the Gospel. Since this moved the enemies to persecute, by them probably Paul looks upon himself as ‘given-up.’ By taking steps to kill him, his enemies were practically handing him over to the king of terrors. But the purpose which follows reminds us that even the purposes of bad men were used by God to work out His own purposes. Cp. Acts 2:23.

That also the life, etc.: emphatic repetition of 2 Corinthians 4:10b, fixing our attention upon the divine purpose of these perils.

Mortal flesh: more vivid picture than “our body” in 2 Corinthians 4:10. That Paul’s body was flesh and blood, and thus by its very nature exposed to death, revealed the greatness of the power which preserved it safe even in the jaws of death. Notice the name ‘Jesus’ four times in 2 Corinthians 4:10, 11; as though Paul loved to repeat it.

**Ver. 12.** Inference from 2 Corinthians 4:7-11.

Death: the abstract principle personified. In the plots and attacks of enemies ‘Death’ was active, stretching out its hand to take them. And in their spared life, preserved by God’s power and spent in proclaiming the Gospel, the abstract principle of ‘Life’ was at work among their hearers. The preachers daily felt themselves sinking into the grave: and their daily deliverance was daily working eternal life among their converts.

Review of 2 Corinthians 4:7-12. Although a bearer of treasure so great, Paul was in momentary peril of destruction. His wonderful preservation day by day was evidently wrought by divine power greater than the destructive forces around, even by the power which raised Jesus from the grave. He therefore cannot doubt that it was in order to manifest this power to men around, and thus make him wherever he went a visible picture of the resurrection of Christ, that he was permitted to be exposed to perils so tremendous. Thus even the perils of the apostles advanced, and were designed to advance, the great purpose of their lives. If in themselves death was at work, consuming their life, yet the very life they lived, unconsumed in fire, was working out eternal life for those around. How terrible a picture does this give of the greatness and constancy of their perils! Their spared life was an ever recurring miracle.

Just as the death of Christ, which at first seemed to disprove His Messiahship, gave occasion for the great proof of it, viz. His resurrection; so the apostles’ perils, which seemed to be inconsistent-with their claim to be ambassadors of God, really supported this claim by giving occasion for display of the preserving power of God.

**Ver. 13-5:10.** Having explained the purpose and result of the perils around, Paul now gives the motives which enable him to continue his work in spite of them. He can do this because, led by the Spirit, he believes the promises of God. By faith he knows (2 Corinthians 4:14) that God will

raise him from the dead in company with his converts; that (2 Corinthians 4:1-4) if his present body die a better one awaits him; that (2 Corinthians 4:6-8) death will but remove him to the presence of Christ; and that (2 Corinthians 4:10) from Him he will receive due reward for his work.

**Ver. 13.** A new branch of the subject.

Spirit of faith: the Holy Spirit moving men to believe the promises of God, especially the promise of resurrection and of life with Christ. Cp. 1 Corinthians 4:21; Ephesians 1:17. Although faith is the condition (Galatians 3:14) on which we receive the Spirit, yet, when received, by revealing to us (Romans 5:5) the love of God, He works in us a firmer and broader confidence in God. The assurance which enabled Paul to pursue his apostolic path, he felt to be a work of the Spirit.

The same Holy Spirit: who moved the Psalmist to write.

I believed: for which cause I spoke: word for word from Psalm 116:10, LXX. The original Hebrew is very difficult. It may perhaps be rendered "I have believed when I say, I have been much afflicted:" i.e. "I tell the story of my affliction with faith in God." But the words quoted, though not an exact rendering, sum up accurately the sense of the whole Psalm. Like Paul, the writer has been in deadly peril; and has been delivered by God, in answer to his prayer. His deliverance has given him strong confidence in God, a confidence which finds expression in this Psalm.

Also we believe: as did the Psalmist.

Speak: viz. the Gospel which Paul, rescued from peril, preaches. The Psalmist's faith, strengthened by peril and deliverance, moved him to song: Paul's faith moves him to proclaim the Gospel, undeterred by the prospect of future perils. But it was the same faith, wrought by 'the same Spirit.' And in each case faith found suitable utterance. As usual, the real reference is not so much to the words quoted as to their entire context.

The rest of 7 is an exposition of the faith which moved Paul to speak even amid deadly peril.

**Ver. 14-15.** Knowing that, etc.: parallel with "we believe," giving the assurance which moves him to speak. Cp. 1 Corinthians 15:58; Romans



5:3. By faith he knows. So 2 Corinthians 5:1. For he believes, on sufficient grounds, that which will come true. Such belief is knowledge.

Raised the Lord Jesus: the divine act on which rests Paul's assurance that he will himself be raised. Cp. 1 Corinthians 6:14; Romans 8:11.

With Jesus. Since our resurrection at the last day is a result of Christ's resurrection, wrought by the same power, in consequence of our present spiritual union with Christ, and is a part of that heritage which we share with Christ, Paul overlooks the separation in time and thinks of his own resurrection and Christ's as one divine act. Cp. Colossians 3:1; Ephesians 2:5f.

Will present: before the throne amid the splendors of that day. Cp. Colossians 1:22.

With you: Amid perils Paul is encouraged by knowing that in glory he will be accompanied by those whom he is now laboring to save. These words keep before us the thought of "at work with you" in 2 Corinthians 4:12. They are also a courteous recognition of his readers' true piety. 2 Corinthians 4:15 develops 'with you' in 2 Corinthians 4:14, thus leading the way to 8.

All things, or 'all these things': all Paul's hardships and perils. Cp. 2 Corinthians 5:18.

That grace having, etc.; expounds 'for your sake.' All these perils Paul endures in order that the pardoning favor of God may 'multiply,' i.e. may shine on a larger number of persons; that thereby the favor of God may increase abundantly the thanksgiving which from this larger number will go up to God, and may thus manifest the grandeur of God. Cp. 2 Corinthians 1:11; Romans 3:7.

**Ver. 16.** We do not fail: as in 2 Corinthians 4:1. Paul there said that because of the grandeur of the Gospel he does not turn out badly in the day of trial as he would do if through craft he concealed it. He now says that because he knows that God will raise him from the dead, and knows that in the resurrection he will be accompanied by his readers and that his hardships are increasing the praises which will for ever go up to God, for this cause he does not lose heart in face of peril and forbear to proclaim the

Gospel. 'For which cause' thus corresponds inversely to "knowing that, etc." in 2 Corinthians 4:14; and is practically parallel to "for which cause, etc." in 2 Corinthians 4:13.

But if indeed, etc.: contrast to losing heart in the conflict; and the secret of not doing so.

The outward man: the body, which alone is visible.

Is corrupting: wearing out and being destroyed by hardships.

Nevertheless: conspicuous contrast.

Inward man: same words in same sense in Romans 7:22. It is the invisible and nobler part of the man.

Is renewed; denotes in Colossians 3:10 gradual restoration to the primeval image of God lost by sin. But here since we have no reference to sin or imperfection, it denotes probably the healing 'day by day' of the wounds inflicted upon Paul's own spirit by personal peril and by anxiety for the churches. Of such wounds we find abundant marks on the pages of this epistle. They were gradually wearing out his body. But the daily application of healing balm kept them from injuring his real inner life. Consequently, he does not grow weary in his work.

**Ver. 17-18.** Explains 2 Corinthians 4:16, by stating a truth which daily restores Paul's inner man; and which teaches him to "exult in afflictions," thus saving him from the injuries these might otherwise inflict on his spirit.

Works out for us glory: viz. his reward for preaching the Gospel, (cp. Daniel 12:3,) which could not have been his had he not exposed himself to the hardship and peril involved in his work. In this sense the glory was a result of 'the affliction,' which compared with it was 'momentary' and 'light.' Or, in more forceful words, 'the momentary lightness' itself 'works out, etc.'

Exceedingly, to excess: the manner and the extent of the working out of glory.

Eternal weight: in strong contrast to the momentary lightness. In a manner and to an extent passing all comparison Paul's present hardship and peril are producing for him a glory which by its greatness and endlessness make

them appear both light and momentary. He thus heaps word on word to convey a truth passing all human language or thought.

While we look, etc.: Paul's state of mind while writing 2 Corinthians 4:17. It explains, and nothing else can, his foregoing words. Only to those whose eyes are fixed on the unseen can hardships like his appear momentary and light.

Looking: more fully looking with a purpose, especially with a view to avoid, imitate, or obtain. Same word in Romans 16:17; Philippians 3:17; 2:4. We fix our eyes on things beyond mortal vision and make them the objects of our pursuits. For this, 2 Corinthians 4:18b gives a good reason. 2 Corinthians 4:17 accounts for the daily inward renewing by pointing to the coming glory: 2 Corinthians 4:18 notes the subjective condition (which Paul proves to be reasonable) of the present effect of this coming glory.

**Ver.** 1. Supports the reason just given and its practical influence on Paul, by declaring that in "the things not seen" he has a share and that he 'knows' this. He thus supports the argument of 2 Corinthians 4:13-18 by proving that future glory is not dependent on rescue from bodily death.

For we know: words of confidence, calling attention to the effect of this knowledge on Paul.

Tent or 'booth': not else in the New Testament; but akin to the word used in Matthew 17:4; Luke 16:9; Acts 7:43, 44; Hebrews 8:2, 5; 9:2, 3, 6, 8, 11, 21; and to another in Acts 7:46; 2 Peter 1:13f: used in classic Greek only as a metaphor for the body of men or animals. Same word in Wisdom 9:15: "A corruptible body weighs down the soul; and the earthen tent burdens the much-thinking mind."

Our earthly house of the tent: the body belonging to the present world, looked upon as fragile and easily 'taken down,' by death. This suggests, but hardly proves, that Paul was in doubt whether he would survive the coming of Christ.

Building: a permanent abode, in contrast to 'the tent.'

Building from God: the resurrection body. It is 'from God,' as being an immediate outworking of His miraculous power.

Not made with hands: in contrast to other buildings. It is parallel to ‘from God,’ keeping before us the supernatural origin of the resurrection body.

Eternal: in contrast to ‘be taken down.’

In the heavens: secure place in which the saved dead ‘have,’ though they do not yet wear, the resurrection body. Cp. Philippians 4:20; 1 Peter 1:4. It is practically in heaven: for the power which will raise it is there. When Christ appears from heaven we shall receive our permanent bodily abode. Hence it is also “our dwelling place from heaven,” 2 Corinthians 5:2. Consequently, this building is completely beyond reach of the uncertainties of earth.

**Ver. 2-4.** Appeal to present yearnings in proof that there is a resurrection body.

Even in this tent: before it is taken down.

Groan: as in Romans 8:22f; where we have the same argument. The burdens of the present life force from us a cry.

Longing to clothe ourselves: the cause and meaning of the cry.

Our dwelling-place, etc.: the risen body which we shall receive when Christ returns ‘from heaven’ to earth.

To clothe: new figure, viz. the risen body looked upon now as a garment.

Put-on-as-overclothing, or ‘overclothe-ourselves’: i.e. without taking off our present mortal garment, without passing through death. In other words, Paul longed to survive, in his present body, the coming of Christ. In that case there would be (1 Corinthians 15:51) change, but no disrobing. 2 Corinthians 5:3 gives a supposition necessarily implied in this yearning for a heavenly body.

We shall be found: by Christ at His coming, when we shall stand before Him.

Clothed: in bodies, ‘not naked’ disembodied spirits. This conditional clause uncovers the argumentative point of 2 Corinthians 5:2 in proof of 2 Corinthians 5:1. See below. Perhaps it is also a reference to some of those who denied the resurrection, suggesting how inconsistent is such denial

with the Christian's aspirations. 2 Corinthians 5:4 supports 2 Corinthians 5:3, which is really a restatement of 2 Corinthians 5:1, by restating more fully the argument of 2 Corinthians 5:2.

For even we who are in the tent: parallel with 'for even in this tent.'

Even we who are: in contrast to 'we shall be found.' The perils and hardships of life were a 'burden' forcing from them a cry for deliverance.

Inasmuch as we do not wish, etc.; explains this cry by pointing back (2 Corinthians 5:2) to the longing, intensified by present adversity, which prompted it.

Swallowed up: caused to vanish completely out of sight, as in 1 Corinthians 15:54. Paul did not wish to lay aside his mortal raiment, i.e. to die, but without dying to receive his immortal body. In that case 'the mortal' body would 'be swallowed up by the' endless resurrection 'life.'

Argument of 2 Corinthians 5:2-4. By Christians now death is looked upon without terrible recoil, as being the only entrance into Life. We bow to the inevitable. But in the early Christians the possibility of surviving the coming of Christ woke up with new intensity man's natural love of life, and made death seem very dark. They therefore longed eagerly for Christ's return, hoping thus to clothe themselves with immortal raiment without laying aside their mortal bodies. This yearning for an immortal body, Paul felt to be divinely implanted; (for it was strong just so far as he was full of the Holy Spirit,) and therefore not doomed to disappointment. But the possibility of death was to Paul too real to be ignored. Therefore, in view of it, his yearning for an immortal body assured him that if his present body be removed by death a heavenly body awaits him. For, otherwise, he will stand before Christ as a naked spirit, in utter contradiction to yearnings which he felt to be divine, and of whose realization he had a divine pledge. In other words, his instinctive clinging to his present body was to him a divine intimation that when Christ comes we shall not be naked spirits, but spirits clothed in bodies; and was, therefore, a proof that if our present body be removed by death a heavenly and eternal body awaits us. Thus a purely human instinct, not weakened but intensified by Christianity, and sanctified by the felt presence of the Holy Spirit, is seen

to be a prophecy of God's purpose concerning us. Similar argument in Romans 8:23.

**Ver. 5.** A statement of what is the real force of the foregoing argument.

Wrought in us, or, 'wrought us out': same word in 2 Corinthians 4:17. They were material in which God had worked out results.

For this very thing: the aim of this divine working, viz. either the heavenly clothing or Paul's yearning for it. Probably the latter: for the yearning itself is the basis of the argument. If so, 'this very thing,' viz. this yearning for an immortal body, is both a result, and the aim, of God's working in Paul.

Wrought in us denotes a result; for this very thing, the aim.

Who has given, etc.: a fact which proves the foregoing statement.

Earnest of the Spirit: as in 2 Corinthians 1:22. Practically the same as "the firstfruit of the Spirit" in the similar argument of Romans 8:23. The Holy Spirit in Paul's heart was a pledge that the promise he had believed would be fulfilled; and was thus an earnest of the coming inheritance. Cp. Ephesians 1:14. Since Paul's clinging to his present body while yearning for a better is introduced merely in proof that if he die there awaits him a body from heaven, the words 'this very thing' refer probably only to the yearning for the heavenly body, without reference to his reluctance to die. For he could not say that this reluctance was God's work, nor that the Spirit was a pledge that he should not die. These verses warn us to distinguish carefully between a divinely breathed yearning and the purely human longing which often accompanies it. The latter is frequently disappointed, as Paul's was; the former never.

**Ver. 6-8.** Practical effect upon Paul of the assurance of 2 Corinthians 4:14, which was developed and justified in 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:5; and therefore parallel with "for which cause we do not fail" in 2 Corinthians 4:16.

Always; corresponds with "in everything... always... every" in 2 Corinthians 4:8, 10, 11.

And knowing: also a result of the foregoing argument. This knowledge prompts and justifies the 'courage.'

Away from home; points to our other home, from which we are absent so long as our 'home' is 'in the body.' To justify this mention of another home, 2 Corinthians 5:7 breaks off the foregoing sentence. It is completed, in a slightly changed form, in 2 Corinthians 5:8. Cp. Romans 5:12. As we pursue our path the objects before our eyes are those seen only 'by faith:' the keynote (cp. 2 Corinthians 4:13, 18) of 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:10.

Not by appearance: The objects which direct our steps do not yet appear. We walk amid eternal realities, now unseen, but known through the word we have believed. Chief among these is our home in the presence of Christ. Hence we speak of a home unseen by mortal eye. Same thought in same connection in Romans 8:24.

But we are of good courage: although our home is as yet seen only by faith.

Well-pleased: not only brave in presence of death, but content to die.

Rather: in preference to remaining in the body. Same thought in Philippians 1:23.

To go away from home from the body: to die before Christ's coming, and thus to be for a time without a body. They who survive His coming will at once receive the body "from heaven" by undergoing instant change.

To go home; implies that dead believers go at once, even while disembodied, into the presence of Christ. Paul's own clinging to his present body, even while looking for a better, assures him that even if he die this better body awaits him. This implies, since death rends the only veil which separates the believer from Christ, viz. his mortal life that even while waiting for the resurrection body his spirit will be with Christ. And, therefore, he is willing to die; and is brave in face of deadly peril. Notice that Paul's sure confidence that death will take him at once to Christ rests upon his assurance that a glorified body awaits him at the coming of Christ. This agrees with 1 Corinthians 15, where future happiness is assumed to be conditional on resurrection of the body.

These verses shed light on a matter of which the Bible says little, the state of the unsaved between death and resurrection. For Paul evidently thinks of no alternative except to be 'at home in the body' and 'at home with the

Lord.’ Therefore departed believers are with Christ; and, if so, not unconscious: for the unconscious are practically nowhere. Their nearness to Christ is such that compared with it their present spiritual union with Him is absence. And, although they have not yet entered their “eternal house” and put on their heavenly clothing, yet in the presence of Christ they are ‘at home.’ And their eternal intercourse with Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:17) has begun. Same teaching in similar circumstances in Philippians 1:20ff. Cp. Luke 23:43; 16:23.

**Ver. 9.** Further result of Paul’s joyful confidence that there is a life beyond death.

We make-it-a-point-of-honor: same word in Romans 15:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:11. This is the only ambition worthy of Christians.

Whether at home: in the body.

Away from home: from the body. That these words have the same reference, the alternative implies. That they refer to the body, is suggested by ‘well-pleasing to Him:’ for our conduct on earth is our first matter of present solicitude.

Well-pleasing to Him: at the judgment day (2 Corinthians 5:10) and in reference to actions done on earth. Paul was emulous, whether the coming of Christ find him in the body or away from it, to be approved by Him. To him, life and death are, in agreement with the scope of the whole section, of secondary importance; the approval of Christ is all-important. That the former is of secondary importance, results (‘for which cause’) from the confidence expressed in 2 Corinthians 5:8. That the latter is all-important, will be proved in 2 Corinthians 5:10.

**Ver. 10.** All of us: even Christians.

Must needs: marks the inevitable.

Be-made-manifest: 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 3:3; 4:10, 11; 5:11; see Romans 1:19: our inmost nature and most secret actions will be set before the eyes of all.



Judgment-seat of Christ: practically the same as “of God” in Romans 14:10. For the Father “has given the whole judgment to the Son,” John 5:22.

That each one, etc.: definite purpose for which our lives and characters will then be brought to light.

May obtain: to be his abiding possession. It is a graphic picture of exact retribution. Each man will receive back, by seeing their true nature and results, his own past actions to be themselves his eternal glory or shame. So Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:25. Cp. 1 Thessalonians 2:19f.

Through the body: as the channel by which purposes pass into actions.

In view of, etc.: action the measure of recompense. [Cp. Romans 8:18.]

Good or bad. To both kinds of actions this principle will be applied, in contrast to human tribunals which deal only with crime; as well as to all kinds of persons.

That both saved and lost will receive recompense proportionate to the good and bad actions of each, is quite consistent with forgiveness of sins by God’s undeserved favor. Entrance into eternal life is God’s free gift to all who believe and who abide in faith. But the degree of our glory will be measured by the faithfulness of our service; and the punishment of the lost, by their sins. Moreover, a man’s good actions are God’s work in him by the Holy Spirit. And unless we yield to the Spirit, and thus bear the fruit of the Spirit, we cannot retain our faith. Consequently, without good works we cannot enter heaven. The good actions of the lost, which we need not deny, will lessen their punishment: the sins of the saved, before or after conversion, will lessen their reward. Thus, although salvation is entirely the free gift of God, each man will receive an exact recompense for his entire conduct. Cp. Romans 2:5f; 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:8, 13f. A remembrance of this exact recompense will make us comparatively indifferent about life or death, and emulous so to act as to please our Judge. SECTION 7 accounts for the perils amid which Paul proclaims the Gospel, 2 Corinthians 4:7-12; and explains the motives which raise him above them, 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:10. By the design of God the gospel treasure is entrusted to fragile vessels, that the preservation of the vessels may be a manifestation of the power of God. The apostles are thus a

moving picture of Him who gave up Himself to death for the world's salvation, and who was rescued from the hand of death by the power of God. He braves these perils simply because, like the Psalmist in similar circumstances, he believes the word of God. He knows that God will raise him from the dead, and that by exposing himself to these dangers he is increasing the song of praise which will go up to God for ever. And this assurance restores his wearied spirit. His very clinging to life, while yearning for immortality, assures him that if his body perish a nobler body awaits him. And, if so, separation from the body must be immediate entrance into the presence of Christ. His one thought is, not about life or death, but to stand the approval of that Judge before whom all must soon stand, and in the light of whose appearing the inmost secrets of the present life will be made visible to all

This section confirms the teaching of 1 Corinthians 15:51f and 1 Thessalonians 4:15 touching Paul's expectation about the second coming of Christ. That he speaks of resurrection from the dead, does not imply an expectation that His coming will be long delayed. For every day death threatened him. But fear of it was removed by joyful confidence that it would but take him to the presence of Christ. Whereas the alternative mentioned in 2 Corinthians 5:9, and perhaps the word "if" in 2 Corinthians 5:1, suggest that he was not sure that he would die.

## SECTION 8

### THE LOVE OF CHRIST AND PAUL'S COMMISSION FROM GOD MOVE HIM TO ACT AS BECOMES AN AMBASSADOR OF GOD

#### CHAPTER 5:11-6:10

*Knowing then the fear of the Lord we persuade men, but to God we have been made manifest. And I hope also in your consciences to be made manifest. Not again are we recommending ourselves to you, but I write this giving occasion to you for matter of exultation on our behalf, that you may have it in view of those who exult in appearance and not in heart. For both if we have gone out of our mind, it is for God; and if we have sound sense, it is for you. For the love of Christ holds us fast, we having judged this, that One died on behalf of all, therefore all died, and on behalf of all He died in order that they who live may no longer live for themselves but for Him who on their behalf died and rose. So then we henceforth know no one according to flesh. If even we have known Christ according to flesh, nevertheless now no longer do we know men thus. So that if any one be in Christ he is a new creature: the old things have gone by; behold they have become new. And all things are from God who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave to us the ministry of the reconciliation. Because that God was, in Christ, reconciling to Himself the world; seeing that He is not reckoning to them their trespasses and has put in us the word of the reconciliation. On behalf of Christ then we are ambassadors, as though God were exhorting through us: we beg, on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God. Him who knew no sin, on our behalf He made to be sin, that we may become righteousness of God in Him. And working together with Him we also exhort that not in vain you accept the grace of God. For He says, "At an acceptable season I have listened to thee: and in a day of salvation I have helped thee." (Isaiah 49:8.) Behold now is the well-accepted season, behold now is the day of salvation.*

*And this we do, in nothing causing stumbling, that the ministry be not blamed: but in everything recommending ourselves as God's ministers, in much endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in positions of helplessness, in beatings, in prisons, in tumults, in toils, in watchings, in fastings; in purity, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love without hypocrisy, in the word of truth, in the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, with glory and dishonor, with bad report and good report; as deceivers and true, as unknown and becoming well-known, as dying and behold we live, as being chastised and not being put to death, as being made sorrowful but ever rejoicing, as poor but enriching many, as having nothing and possessing all things.*

In 7 Paul explained why a ministry so glorious was surrounded by constant and deadly peril, viz. because this peril gave opportunity for a constant manifestation of divine power; and stated the motive which led him forward even in face of such peril, viz. his belief of God's word that He will raise the dead, that death leads at once to the presence of Christ, and that in the Day of Judgment due recompense will be given. Having thus told us the power which saves him from fear of death he now tells us the motive of his efforts to save men, viz. the love of Christ who died for them and his own divine commission to be an ambassador for Christ; and concludes his exposition, begun in 4, of the apostolic ministry, its credentials, its grandeur, its perils, its hopes, and its recompense, by a graphic picture of the circumstances and the spirit in which he discharges it.

**Ver. 11.** Then: in view of the judgment-seat of Christ.

Fear of the Lord: cp. Romans 3:18. Reverent fear of Christ is a state of mind familiar to Paul. Cp. "know sin," 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 7:7; "know grief," Isaiah 53:3.

Persuade men: to "be reconciled to God," 2 Corinthians 5:20. This was his chief work. The persuasion denied in the question of Galatians 1:10 had a different motive, as is implied in the following words. This persuading of

‘men’ was prompted by remembrance of the great assize and by desire to please the Judge. ‘But,’ although ‘men’ are the direct objects of his persuasion, yet in persuading them he stands before the eye of God.

Manifest: as in 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Made-manifest; more vivid than “manifest,” picturing the act of God setting us permanently under His own eye.

And I hope, etc.; reminds us that 4-8 were written in self-defense. [There is nothing to demand the rendering (A.V. and R.V.) “that we are made manifest.” For the aorist after *ἐλπίζω* always refers in the N.T. to something future. And the perfect tense (cp. 1 Timothy 6:17) merely adds to the aorist the idea of permanent results. Paul does not say whether the manifestation he hopes for is present or future. But the word ‘hope’ suggests the latter.]

Your consciences: the faculty which contemplates a man’s inner life. See under Romans 2:15. Paul hopes that through his labors spiritual results have been attained in his readers, results which will appear to them as they contemplate their own inner life. Cp. 2 Corinthians 4:2. Such results will thus be a proof, clearly visible to the eye of conscience, of Paul’s divine commission. These words recall the argument of 2 Corinthians 3:2f.

Paul’s mention of the judgment-seat reminds him that to the eye of God the real worth of his apostolic service lies open. And he hopes that it will lie permanently open also in the heart of hearts of those among whom he has labored. He thus suitably introduces a further exposition of the motives of his work.

**Ver. 12.** Like 2 Corinthians 2:17; 2 Corinthians 5:11b might seem to be self-recommendation. With delicate tact Paul says that he is only giving his readers an argument with which they may defend him; thus implying that they are not his opponents, but are ready to defend him.

Again recommending ourselves: as in 2 Corinthians 3:1. The repetition suggests that these were words of his opponents.

Occasion: or “starting point,” as in Romans 7:8.

Giving you, etc.: while speaking about being made manifest in their consciences, Paul was really putting them on a track towards a matter of exultation in his favor which they might remember and use against his opponents. These last he designates as exulting ‘in appearance’ (or ‘in face’) ‘and not in heart.’ What our ‘face’ is, we seem to be: what our ‘heart’ is, we are. For the heart is the inmost center of our real life.

**Ver. 13.** Paul’s real motives, which are a matter of exultation for his readers.

Gone-out-of-our-mind: become mad. These strange words can be accounted for only as being actually spoken by his enemies. The relatives of Christ said (Mr 3:21) the same of Him. We can well conceive that Paul’s ecstatic visions, (2 Corinthians 12:2ff,) his transcendental teaching, which to many would seem absurd, his reckless daring in face of peril, and his complete rejection of all the motives which rule common men, would lead some to say and even to believe that he was not in full possession of his senses. The same has been said in all ages about similar men.

For God: to work out His purposes.

Of sound mind: exact opposite of madness. Same contrast in Mark 5:15; Acts 26:25.

For you: to do you good. “If, as our enemies say, we are mad, we have become so in order to serve God and do His work. And, therefore, our very madness claims respect. If we are men of sound sense we use our sense, not, as most others do, to enrich ourselves, but to do you good.” Paul thus appeals to his readers’ observation of his conduct. They knew that where human prudence might condemn his recklessness his purpose was to serve God; and that whatever mental power he possessed was used for the good of others.

**Ver. 14-15.** The motive of this unsparing devotion to God and to the interests of his readers. “‘The love of Christ’ towards men, revealed in His death for them, ‘holds us’ so ‘fast’ that we cannot forbear to devote ourselves to the service of God, even to an extent which some call madness, and to use all our powers for your good.”

Having judged this: practically the same as “reckon” in Romans 6:11. Since this judgment rests solely on the word of God, it is an expression of faith. And only so far as it is firm and broad do we feel the binding influence of the love of Christ.

One on behalf of all: conspicuous contrast. A name written on every heart, it was needless to mention. To this statement of the purpose of the death of Christ Paul gives emphasis by the change from ‘us’ to ‘all,’ thus directing attention to a general truth. But, since he does not say “all men,” we cannot appeal to this verse in proof that He died for all men. This, Paul asserts elsewhere in plainest terms. See notes under Romans 5:18, 19. Therefore, although the compass of this verse is indefinite, each one may place himself within it, and pronounce this judgment about himself.

Therefore all died: Paul’s inference from one died on behalf of all. Virtually they for whom He died themselves died in His death. For the full result of His death belongs to them. This inference rests upon the broad truth that Christ died that we may be so united to Him as to share all that He has and is. Cp. Romans 6:3. Now Christ by His death escaped completely from the burden and curse of sin. Paul reckons therefore that the former life of sin of those for whom Christ died has come to an end on His cross, and that, like Him, they too are dead to sin. See Romans 6:10f. Objectively and virtually they died to sin when Christ died: they died subjectively and actually only when and so far as in faith they pronounced touching themselves the judgment of this verse, i.e. when they reckoned themselves to be dead to sin. Paul says that ‘all died,’ because the subjective and actual death to sin of those who dare pronounce this judgment is a direct outworking and communication of the objective and historic death of Christ and of our divinely ordained union with His death.

The rest of 2 Corinthians 5:15 is a further inference, expounding ‘one on behalf of all.’

Who live: not needful to complete the sentence, but thrust in conspicuously to tell us that though their old life of sin has ceased they are not lifeless but are living a new resurrection life.

No longer for themselves; implies that apart from the death of Christ self is the aim of life to all men; and that therefore all men need a radical change.

Who on their behalf, etc.: emphatic repetition of the chief idea of 2 Corinthians 5:15. Christ died in order that we may live a life in which every thought and purpose and effort point to Him, and all our powers and opportunities are used to please and exalt Him and to do His work. Thus Christ will be, what self once was, the one aim of life.

And rose: i.e. on our behalf. It is expounded in Romans 4:25.

He died for all, i.e. to reconcile their salvation with (Romans 3:26) the justice of God: He 'rose for all,' i.e. to give them ground for the faith which saves. At the beginning of the sentence His death only is mentioned, to confine our attention to the costliness of the means used to secure our devotion to Himself.

2 Corinthians 5:14, 15 are a close parallel to Romans 6:10, 11. In each passage the historic fact of Christ's death and His abiding devotion to the Father produce their counterparts in us. In each the counterpart is produced by the mental reckoning or judgment of faith.

This judgment Paul and his colleagues had pronounced. They knew that they were among the 'all' for whom Christ died. They therefore ventured to believe that in His death their own former life of sin and self had died, and was therefore a thing of the past. They knew that He died in order that they might live a life of absolute devotion to Him. And, as they contemplated the infinite cost of the means used to secure their devotion, and the love thus manifested, they felt the power of that love; and felt themselves compelled to serve, with a self-abnegation which some called madness, the God who gave His Son to die for them, and to toil for those He died to save.

That to secure our devotion to Himself Christ must needs die, proves how completely selfishness is inwoven into human nature; and proves the earnestness of His purpose to destroy it. The need of so costly a means can be explained only on the principle that surrender to selfishness is a punishment of sin, and that the punishment cannot be remitted without a corresponding and adequate manifestation of divine justice. If so, 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15 imply, and thus support the great foundation doctrine of Romans 3:24-26. Moreover, that our life of devotion to Christ is stated



here to be an aim of his death, implies that only in proportion as we thus live do we and shall we obtain the blessings which result from His death.

**Ver. 16.** Result of Paul's judgment that Christ died that men may live a life altogether new.

We: emphatic. Paul returns now, after the foregoing general statement, to himself and his colleagues who have pronounced the judgment of 2 Corinthians 5:14 and have felt the constraining power of the love of Christ.

Henceforth: from the time of this judgment, which was an era in their lives, an era ever present to their thought.

According to flesh; may refer either to the persons known, i.e. to the appearance and circumstances of their bodily life, as in 2 Corinthians 11:18; Philippians 3:4; or to those who know them with a knowledge determined and limited by their bodily life, as in 2 Corinthians 1:17; 1 Corinthians 1:26. These senses coalesce here. For they who look at others from the point of view of their own bodily life, with its needs, desires, and pleasures, see them only as men of flesh and blood like themselves. But to Paul the former life has so completely ceased that to him men around are no longer judged of thus. He sees them not as rich or poor, Jews or Gentiles, enemies or friends, but as men for whom Christ died.

If even we have known, etc.: a conspicuous contrast to the foregoing, from Paul's own past life.

Known Christ, etc.: an extreme case of knowing men 'according to flesh.' At one time Paul was so accustomed to look upon men according to bodily appearance and surroundings that even upon 'Christ' he looked thus: he thought of Him as a mere Jew from Nazareth, a feeble man of flesh and blood. This does not imply that he had actually seen Christ. For, while persecuting Christians, Christ was present to his thought, but only as a mere man whose teaching he could crush out. And all the disciples knew Christ first as a man; till through the veil of flesh they saw His real dignity.

Nevertheless: in spite of having gone so far in knowing men according to flesh as to know even Christ thus.

Now no longer: emphatic note of change.

We know: without saying whom they know. Paul cannot refer to his no longer knowing Christ (so A.V. and R.V.) according to flesh. Surely this would not need emphatic and contrasted assertion. He simply repeats the general assertion which is the chief matter of this verse. In consequence of Paul's judgment about the death of Christ he no longer looks upon men according to their appearance in flesh and blood. Yet he admits that he did so once, even in the case of Christ. But so completely is he changed that, in spite of this aggravated case in his past life, he no longer knows men according to flesh.

**Ver. 17.** A logical result, or inference, from 2 Corinthians 5:16. Nothing less than 'a new creation,' and a passing away of old surroundings, is implied in the new light in which we now see our fellow-men.

In Christ: see under Romans 6:11. Christ is Himself the life-giving element in which His people are and live and think and act.

New creature, or 'creation': Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:10; 4:24. To those who are 'in Christ,' the power of the Creator has wrought a change analogous to the creation of Adam out of dust of the earth.

The old things: everything around and within us. Through our union with Christ, and so far as we live in spiritual contact with Him, the world in which we live, and we ourselves are altogether changed. For to us the world has lost its power to allure and terrify and control. The old multifarious influence which our surroundings once exercised over us, an influence which ruled our entire life, has altogether passed away. Consequently, 'the old things,' in the widest sense possible, 'have gone by.'

Behold: as if a sudden discovery. The old things have gone by; but not in every sense. For they are still here, but completely changed. The world with its men and things is still around us: but in its influence upon us it is 'become' entirely 'new.' Our fellowmen are objects now for Christian effort: wealth is but an instrument with which to serve God: and the world is a school for our spiritual education, a place in which we may do God's work, and a wisely chosen path to heaven. Thus inward contact with Christ changes completely our entire surroundings in their aspect, and in their influence upon us. This change is therefore a measure of our spiritual

life. And it is a logical result of our deeper knowledge of our fellow-men, a knowledge no longer determined by their outward appearance. We see them as they really are; powerless to injure us, in peril of eternal death, but within reach of the salvation which God has bidden us proclaim. All this is a result of the power of Christ's love over those who have comprehended the purpose of His death. And it explains (2 Corinthians 5:17) Paul's unreserved devotion to God's work and to the welfare of men.

**Ver.** 18-19. After explaining the motives stated in 2 Corinthians 5:13, by tracing them to their source in the death and love of Christ, Paul now traces them further, as his wont is, to their source in God.

All things: the complete change wrought through the death of Christ. That this change has its origin in 'God,' and how He wrought it, the rest of 2 Corinthians 5:18 proves and explains.

Reconciled to Himself: see under Romans 5:1. By means of the cross and word of Christ, God has removed the hostility between Himself and us, so that there is now "peace with God through Christ."

Us: true of all believers; but Paul thinks specially of himself and colleagues, as the following words show.

The ministry of the reconciliation: same as "the ministry of righteousness, of the Spirit," in 2 Corinthians 3:8f. The whole difference between Saul of Tarsus and the character described in 2 Corinthians 5:14ff results from two facts, viz. that God has reconciled an enemy and has given him the office of conveying to others the reconciliation he has received. Consequently the whole change just described is 'from God.'

Through Christ: as in Romans 5:1. While rising from the Son to the Father Paul keeps the Son still before us.

**Ver.** 19. Lends importance to the foregoing facts in the life of Paul, by tracing them to their source and cause in a world-embracing purpose of God. [The word **ως**, which cannot here be reproduced in English, represents this fact in a subjective aspect, i.e. as contemplated in its bearings by the mind of Paul.]

Reconciling the world: not "reconciled," which would not be true. Paul tells us the work in which God was engaged when He gave Christ to die.

Similarly, in Romans 2:4, God “is leading” all men “to repentance.” For although, as this verse implies, reconciliation is entirely God’s work, its accomplishment depends entirely upon each man’s acceptance of it. [The absence of the article before ‘world’ leaves us to contemplate the abstract significance of this word. It was ‘a world’ that God was reconciling to Himself.]

In Christ: as in Romans 3:24. It keeps before us “through Christ” in 2 Corinthians 5:18.

Was; refers to the past event of Christ’s death. The emphatic words of this clause are ‘God’ and ‘world;’ the former keeping before us “from God” in 2 Corinthians 5:18, and the latter revealing the wide bearing of God’s action.

Seeing that, etc.: double proof of the foregoing. [A similar construction in 2 Corinthians 3:3, 14.]

Not reckoning trespasses: forgiving them, as in Romans 4:8.

To them: a general expression. That it refers only to believers, to whom alone God forgives sin, Paul leaves his readers to observe. That through the death of Christ God forgives men’s sins, a fact of constant occurrence, is proof that in giving Christ to die God was at work making peace between Himself and mankind.

And has put, etc.: another proof of the same, viz. that God has bid Paul proclaim peace for all who believe. Notice that he assumes that the forgiveness which already from time to time takes place and which he is commissioned to proclaim is designed for all men. Else it would not be proof that in Christ God was reconciling the ‘world.’ See note, Romans 5:19.

The word of the reconciliation: like “word of the cross” in 1 Corinthians 1:18: the word announcing reconciliation by faith. To proclaim this word is “the ministry of the reconciliation,” 2 Corinthians 5:18. Notice the importance with which Paul invests these two facts by appealing to them twice in argument, once to prove that the change in himself was wrought by God, and then to prove the world-embracing purpose of this divine activity. As usual, the second statement is fuller than the first. “Us” is

widened into ‘world:’ and “ministry of reconciliation” is explained by its great instrument, ‘the word of the reconciliation.’

**Ver. 20.** Inference from 2 Corinthians 5:19, showing its bearing on Paul’s work. Since he has received “the word of reconciliation,” he is an ‘ambassador:’ since the reconciliation is “in Christ,” his embassy is ‘on behalf of Christ.’

We are ambassadors: Ephesians 6:20: messengers sent formally by a king, especially to make peace. Very appropriate to apostles sent formally and personally by Christ: John 17:18; 20:21; Acts 26:17, Galatians 1:1.

On behalf of Christ: to do the work in which He is so deeply interested.

As though God, etc.: another view of the same embassy.

God exhorting through us. The earnest entreaty of an ambassador is ever received as the earnest entreaty of the king he represents. [ως, as in 2 Corinthians 5:19. We must remember that in the earnest pleading of Paul God Himself is pleading.]

On behalf of Christ: emphatic repetition.

We beg; develops the word exhort with pathetic emphasis. For to ‘beg’ is usually a mark of the earnestness of an inferior. Cp. Acts 21:39; 26:3.

Be reconciled to God: accept by faith the offered reconciliation. We cannot reconcile ourselves: this is God’s work. But this exhortation implies that it rests with us whether we are reconciled. Notice the double parallel in this verse, keeping before us the relation of Paul’s ministry to Christ and to God. He is an ambassador, sent to do Christ’s business: his earnest voice is therefore the voice of God, who gave Christ to die and sent Paul to proclaim reconciliation through Christ. The ambassador almost prostrates himself before those to whom he is sent and begs them to accept peace. And in this self-humiliation he is doing Christ’s work, and seeking to lead men to peace with God. To reject such an embassy, is to set at nought the mission of Christ, the earnest entreaty of God, and the tremendous power of Him with whom the unsaved are at war.

**Ver. 21.** Paul’s comment on his own entreaty, “Be reconciled to God”; giving a strong reason for yielding to it. As in 2 Corinthians 5:19, he goes

back to the great historic fact on which our reconciliation rests, and to its meaning and purpose.

Him who knew, etc.: with emphatic prominence.

Knew no sin: as in Romans 7:7. He had not the acquaintance with sin which comes from committing sin.

On our behalf: in emphatic prominence: see under Romans 5:6.

Made to be sin: in some sense, an impersonation and manifestation of sin. Cp. Galatians 3:13. Practically the same as, but stronger than, “made to be a sinner.” By laying upon Christ the punishment of our sin, God made Him to be a visible embodiment of the deadly and far-reaching power of sin. Through God’s mysterious action, we now learn what sin is by looking at the Sinless One. Cp. Romans 5:19: “through one man’s sin, the many were constituted sinners” inasmuch as they suffer the threatened punishment of his sin. But the cases differ in that the many received in themselves the moral and spiritual effects of the one man’s sin; whereas, even while revealing in His own sufferings the awful nature of sin, Christ remained unstained by sin. Augustine (In Sermons 134, 155.) and others expound ‘sin’ to be “sin-offering. This use of the word is found in the Hebrew text of Leviticus 6:25: “this is the law of the sin... the sin shall be slaughtered before Jehovah”; Leviticus 6:30, “every sin whose blood shall be brought, etc.” But it is not found in the LXX. or in the New Testament; is in no way suggested here; and is forbidden by the contrast of ‘sin’ and ‘righteousness.’ Rather, the sacrificial use of the word is explained by, and is an anticipation of, this verse. The sacrificed animals were embodiments of sin.

That we may become, etc.: expounds ‘on our behalf.’ This purpose is accomplished as each one receives “the righteousness which is from God by faith,” Philippians 3:9.

Righteousness of God: see under Romans 1:17. By accepting us as righteous, God makes us an embodiment of divinely-given righteousness. By looking at us men learn what it is to enjoy the approval of the great Judge.

In Him: as in 2 Corinthians 5:19. In virtue of Christ's death, and by spiritual contact with Him, we have the righteousness which God gives.

This verse asserts in plainest language that God gave Christ to die in our stead. For the Sinless One was put so completely in the sinner's place and thereby delivered us so completely from our position as sinners that He is said to have been 'made sin in order that we' who have no righteousness of our own 'may become' an impersonation of 'righteousness.' So Galatians 3:13: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become on our behalf a curse." Cp. Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24; John 1:29. All this is explained in Romans 3:26. For if Christ died in order to make our justification consistent with the justice of God, and thus possible, his death was the price of our forgiveness. And, since death is the threatened punishment of sin, it may be correctly said that God laid on Christ our punishment that we may escape from it. In this sense He died, by God's ordinance, in our stead.

**Ver. 1.** After saying what God has done for man's salvation, Paul adds what he and his colleagues are doing for the same object.

Working together with Him: not with Christ, but with Him who gave Christ to be sin for us. So 1 Corinthians 3:9. For in 2 Corinthians 5:18ff we read of the activity of the Father rather than of the Son. Paul works with God by urging men to accept, and make good use of, the favor of God.

Accept the grace of God: claim by faith the various spiritual benefits which God in undeserved favor offers us.

Not in vain, or 'not for an empty thing': Galatians 2:2; Philippians 2:16: put prominently forward as the special matter of Paul's exhortation. If we fail to put to practical use in the details of life the spiritual benefits received by the favor of God, even His favor becomes to us a useless and empty thing. An unread Bible, a wasted Sunday, and such knowledge of the truth as does not mold our life, are the grace of God received in vain. Paul bids his readers so to lay hold of the grace of God that it shall not be in vain. He thus sums up the whole matter of his teaching to believers.

**Ver. 2.** A quotation of Isaiah 49:8, word for word from the LXX., supporting the exhortation of 2 Corinthians 6:1. The prophet says, "Thus

says Jehovah, in a time of favor I have heard thee: and in a day of salvation I have helped thee”; and thus proclaims a definite time coming when God will listen with favor to His people and save them. His words are evidently fulfilled in the Gospel. The change from “time of favor” to ‘acceptable season,’ is unimportant. And the Gospel was announced to the world at a time which God thought fit to ‘accept’ for this purpose. Cp. Isaiah 59:2, quoted in Luke 4:19.

Behold now, etc.: Paul’s comment on the words of Isaiah.

Well-accepted: stronger than ‘acceptable.’ Paul supports his exhortation in 2 Corinthians 6:1 by reminding his readers that they lived in a time looked forward to by the ancient prophets with bright expectation. The quotation was prompted by a consciousness of the great privilege of living in gospel days, in that time which from the beginning of the world God chose for His great salvation.

**Ver. 3-10.** Graphic description of the manner and circumstances in which Paul and his companions give the exhortation of 2 Corinthians 6:1. It concludes his long exposition and defense, occupying 4-8, of his ministry.

**Ver. 3-4a.** No cause of stumbling: Romans 9:32; 1 Corinthians 8:9: anything which might overthrow a man’s faith.

In nothing: in no part of his work and life so acting as to cause others to fall. For an example, see 1 Corinthians 9:12.

The ministry: the important office held by Paul and his companions. See under Romans 12:7. He felt that the influence of Christianity upon the world depended very much upon the collective impression made by its prominent advocates; and that this impression would be determined in no small measure by his own personal conduct. He was therefore careful so to act in everything as to cause no spiritual injury to any one, lest such injury might lessen the collective influence of the leaders of the church.

But in everything: positive counterpart of ‘in nothing giving, etc.’ In everything they so act as to claim respect; remembering that they are God’s ‘ministers.’

**Ver. 4b-5.** In much endurance: see under Romans 2:7: amid much hardship they pursue their course, and thus claim respect.



In afflictions, etc.: nine points, describing the variety of these hardships.

Helplessness: as in 2 Corinthians 4:8.

Necessities: as in 1 Corinthians 7:26.

Beatings, prisons, tumults: three specific cases all coming under each of the three foregoing general descriptions, and caused by enemies. Examples are found in Acts 16:19-23; 21:28-32, etc. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:23ff.

Toils, watchings, fastings: three more specific hardships, not necessarily caused by enemies.

Toils: 2 Corinthians 11:23: in preaching the word; and in Paul's labor to support himself and his companions, 1 Corinthians 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8; Acts 20:34.

Watchings: absence of sleep, through bread-winning or evangelical labor continued into the night.

Fastings: 2 Corinthians 11:27: want of food, as in Matthew 15:32. For it is unlikely that Paul would enumerate voluntary abstinence for his own spiritual good among the apostolic hardships mentioned here: whereas want of food is naturally suggested by want of sleep. Cp. 1 Corinthians 4:11. By the accidents of travel or through sheer want Paul may have been occasionally without food: and, if so, this was the climax of his hardships.

**Ver.** 6-8. Further specification of matters in which Paul claims respect, viz. four personal characteristics, followed by their divine source and their one foundation excellence.

Purity: absence of sin and selfishness.

Knowledge: acquaintance with the things of God.

Longsuffering, kindness: as in 1 Corinthians 13:4.

The Holy Spirit: whose presence was revealed in his conduct.

Love-without-hypocrisy: Romans 12:9: the human, as the Holy Spirit was the divine, source of his actions. After these delineations of personal character, the 'word of truth' and 'power of God' direct us to his work as an evangelist. By speaking words which men felt to be true, (2 Corinthians

4:2,) and which were accompanied by the power of God sometimes working miracles to confirm them and always working results in men's hearts, Paul and his colleagues claimed respect and acted as ministers of God.

With the weapons, etc.: further description of the apostle's work, looked upon as a warfare. So 2 Corinthians 10:3.

The righteousness: in Paul's usual sense of righteousness by faith, as in 2 Corinthians 5:21. Cp. Ephesians 6:14, "breastplate of righteousness." This great doctrine gave to Paul, as to Luther, powerful weapons with which to fight for God.

On the right hand and left: complete equipment on both sides. With a sword in his 'right hand' the soldier struck his foe: with a shield in his 'left' he defended himself. Justification by faith is to the preacher both sword and shield.

With (or 'amid') glory, etc.: see under Romans 1:21; 3:23. Both by the approbation which his conduct evokes in good men, and by the dishonor it provokes from the bad, Paul recommends himself. For the approval of the good and the hostility of the bad alike proved that he was doing God's work. This last point, Paul develops into the climax of 2 Corinthians 6:9, 10; for which he prepares a way by the exact antithesis 'good report and bad report.'

**Ver.** 9-10. Exposition of this antithesis. After developing in 2 Corinthians 6:4b-7a "in everything" of 2 Corinthians 6:4a, Paul now develops "as God's ministers." Between these, 2 Corinthians 6:7b, 8 are a connecting link. In the evil report of their enemies they are 'deceivers: and' good men know that they are 'true.' It is objected that they are obscure and 'unknown.' 'And' really they are daily becoming 'well-known,' and the principles of their conduct are day by day better understood. So great is their peril that they seem to be actually falling into the grave. Cp. 2 Corinthians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 15:31; Romans 8:36. Yet, in the moment of apparent destruction, suddenly comes deliverance.

And behold we live: graphic picture, retaining even the exclamation of wonder at unexpected rescue.

As chastised: to some men they seem to be put by God under special discipline. So seemed a more illustrious Sufferer: Isaiah 53:4. But the chastisement does not come to the extreme form of 'death.'

As sorrowful: examples in 2 Corinthians 2:4; Romans 9:1. This sorrow might be made a reproach, as though their lot were wretched. But under their sorrow shone a changeless 'rejoicing,' kindled by the brightness of the coming glory and the brightness of their Father's smile.

Poor: toiling for a living and sometimes (2 Corinthians 11:8) in want.

Enriching many: by making them heirs of the wealth of heaven. Thus Paul followed the example of Christ: 2 Corinthians 8:9.

Having nothing: stronger than 'poor.'

All things: as in Romans 8:32; 1 Corinthians 3:22. The whole wealth of God is theirs, and will be their eternal enjoyment. Wonderful climax, and counterpart to the picture in 2 Corinthians 6:4, 5.

Each side of these contrasts commends the apostles as ministers of God. That men whom some decry as deceivers are found to be true, that men set aside as unknown become day by day more fully known, that men who seem to be in the jaws of death are rescued and men apparently smitten by God live still, that underneath visible sorrow there is constant joy, and that utter poverty is but a mask hiding infinite wealth, is abundant proof that they in whom these contradictions meet are indeed servants of God. Thus amid many and various hardships, in a spotless and kindly life animated by the Holy Spirit and by sincere love to men, and armed with a word which commends itself as the truth and is confirmed by the manifested power of God, in everything Paul and his companions claim respect and act as becomes ministers of God.

FROM THIS POINT we will review 4-8, which contain Paul's exposition and defense of his apostolic ministry, and are thus the kernel of DIV. 1 and of the whole Epistle. This exposition was suggested by thoughts about his deadly peril in Asia and about the anxiety which drove him from Troas and gave him no rest even on his arrival in Macedonia. But it was written under the influence of a wonderful rescue from peril, and of his joyful meeting with Titus who brought good news about the Corinthian church.

Consequently, the exposition begins and ends with an outburst of triumph. Paul praises God that his weary toil, among both good and bad men, makes Christ known and is a pleasant perfume to God. His readers' spiritual life proves to them that he is a servant of God. And, as imparting a life-giving Spirit instead of a death-bringing Law, his ministry is more glorious than that of Moses. Yet, in spite of Paul's unreserved proclamation of it, the Gospel remains hidden to many, both Jews and Gentiles. But this only proves that their hearts are veiled or blinded. The grandeur of the Apostle's work is not lessened by the deadly perils amid which it is performed, and which are every moment ready to destroy him. For these perils do but reveal the power of Him who ever provides a way of escape. And they cannot silence the preachers: for moved by the Spirit, they believe God; and therefore know that death will be followed by resurrection, and indeed by immediate entrance into the presence of Christ, and that beyond death due reward awaits them. Their efforts to save men are prompted by the love manifested in the death of Christ, and by their commission as ambassadors of God. With this commission their whole life accords.

More than once (2 Corinthians 3:1; 5:12) Paul tells his readers that it is not they whom he seeks to convince-for this is needless: they are themselves as proof of what he says-but that he is giving them a weapon which he takes for granted they will use to defend him against others. Also, throughout the whole, the words 'we' and 'us' imply that his dignity, peril, and faithfulness, as ambassador for Christ, are shared by others. He certainly includes Timothy, his fellow-laborer in founding the church at Corinth and a faithful companion in peril and toil, and joint-author of the Epistle; and probably Titus (Titus 12:18) and other similar helpers.

## SECTION 9

### **PAUL BEGS THAT HIS LOVE TO THE CORINTHIANS BE RETURNED: AND EXHORTS THEM TO SEPARATE THEMSELVES FROM ALL DEFILEMENT**

#### CHAPTER 6:11-7:1

*Our mouth is opened to you, Corinthians; our heart is enlarged. You are not narrowed in us: but you are narrowed in your hearts. The same recompense-as to children I say it, be you also enlarged.*

*Do not become differently yoked to unbelievers. For what partnership is there for righteousness and lawlessness? Or, what fellowship for light with darkness? And what concord of Christ with Beliar? Or, what portion for a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement for God's temple with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, according as God said, "I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people." (Leviticus 26:11.) For which cause "Come forth out of the midst of them and be separated," says the Lord, "and touch not an unclean thing" (Isaiah 52:11). And I will receive you and will be to you for a father and you shall be to me for sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. These promises then having, Beloved ones, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of spirit, accomplishing holiness in the fear of God.*

After completing his long exposition of his apostolic work, its credentials, grandeur, encouragements, and motives, by a graphic picture of the circumstances in which he performs it, Paul turns suddenly to his readers and addresses to them a tender (2 Corinthians 6:11-13) and solemn (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1) appeal.

**Ver. 11-13.** Our mouth: of Paul and Timothy, writers of the Epistle.

Is opened: Ezekiel 33:22; Matthew 13:35; Acts 18:14; Ephesians 6:19, etc.: more graphic than “we have begun to speak to you.” It is Paul’s contemplation of his own bold words. Cp. Genesis 18:27.

Corinthians: a loving appeal, like Philippians 4:15. The ‘heart’ is enlarged when its thoughts, emotions, purposes, increase in depth and breadth and height. Cp. Psalm 119:32; Isaiah 60:5. Paul refers evidently to his great love for his readers. While speaking to them he has become conscious of its intensity.

Narrowed: cognate to the word I have rendered “helplessness” in 2 Corinthians 4:8; 6:4; 12:10; Romans 2:9; 8:35; and used here in its simple sense of being shut up in narrow space. From this is easily derived its frequent sense of being in extreme difficulty and almost without way of escape. It is the exact opposite of enlargement. No narrow place in the hearts (2 Corinthians 7:3; Philippians 1:7) of Paul and Timothy do the Corinthians occupy.

But you are narrowed, etc.: sad and earnest rebuke. The word rendered in the A.V. “bowels,” in the R.V. “affections,” denotes, not specially the lower viscera, but (cp. Acts 1:18) the inward parts generally, heart lungs, etc. It is used for the seat of the emotions, and in the Bible especially for love and compassion. Cp. 2 Corinthians 7:15; Luke 1:78; Philippians 1:8. We have no better English rendering than ‘heart.’ The Corinthians were thrust into a narrow place, not in Paul’s affection for them which was deep and broad, but in their own affection for him. They were narrow-hearted. For littleness of love towards those who deserve our love is a mark of a defective nature. Paul asks for ‘the same’ affection, as a ‘recompense’ for his affection towards them.

As to children: 2 Corinthians 12:14; 1 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 2:7.

Be you also enlarged: make a large place for me in your hearts, and thus yourselves become nobler.

As Paul speaks to his readers, he feels how great is his love to them. Not in this do they fall short; but in their own affection to him. He asks therefore as a recompense, speaking to his own children in Christ, that

they will cherish for him a love like his for them, and thus themselves be ennobled.

**Ver.** 14-7:1. Do not become: milder than “be not,” as suggesting that they are not yet joined to unbelievers. Cp. 1 Corinthians 7:23.

Differently-yoked to unbelievers: like an ass joined to an ox by being put under its yoke. It recalls the prohibition of Deuteronomy 22:10. The suddenness of this warning, and the earnest questions and quotations supporting it, prove that Paul had in view real defect or danger at Corinth. And the question of 2 Corinthians 6:16, following a question equivalent to this warning, proves that Paul refers here specially to participation in idol rites; as in 1 Corinthians 10:14ff, where we have similar words. And this agrees with the worldly spirit betrayed in 1 Corinthians 3:3; 6:1; 8:10. But his words simply forbid such alliances with unbelievers as imply common aims and sympathies. There is no hint that Paul refers here specially to marriage. But this most intimate of all human alliances is certainly included in his prohibition. Those already married to heathens, Paul deals with in 1 Corinthians 7:12, as a special case: and he does not forbid (1 Corinthians 5:10) all intercourse with bad men. The practical application of his words must be left to each man’s own spiritual discernment.

**Ver.** 14b-15. Two pairs of questions, suggesting an argument in support of the foregoing warning.

Righteousness, lawlessness: practical conformity to the Law and practical disregard of it. Same contrast in Romans 6:19. The former is a designed consequence of the righteousness reckoned to all who believe, and a condition of retaining it.

Light, darkness: Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:12f; Ephesians 5:8ff; 1 Peter 2:9.

Light: a necessary condition of physical sight, and of spiritual insight.

Darkness: causes ignorance of our surroundings, physical or spiritual. Cp. 1 John 2:8ff. This second contrast makes us feel the force of the first. All who keep the Law are in the light; all who disregard it, in the dark. And these cannot go together.

Beliar: evidently a name of Satan, the great opponent of ‘Christ.’ Same word probably as “Belial,” 1 Samuel 1:16; 2:12, etc., a Hebrew word

denoting apparently “No-good.” From the abstract contrast of light and darkness Paul rises to the personal contrast of the Sun of righteousness and the Prince of darkness. Same argument in Matthew 6:24. The 4th question brings questions 1, 2, and 3, of which no. 3 is a climax, to bear directly on the matter in hand. If conformity to the Law and disregard of it are as incompatible as light and darkness, and as utterly opposed as Christ and Satan, what in common can there be to one who by faith accepts Christ and one who tramples His word under foot? This conclusion comes to us with sudden force, because it is put in the same form as the argument from which it is drawn. The inference is treated as itself the climax of the argument.

Unbeliever; denotes here one who rejects the Gospel: for his supposed alliance with a believer implies that he has heard of it.

**Ver. 16.** Reveals the special reference of the general warning of 2 Corinthians 6:14; which, after being supported by questions 1, 2, and 3, has just been repeated in question 4. From the general matter of “unbelievers” Paul comes now to the specific matter of idolatry. Against this he warned the Corinthian Christians in 1 Corinthians 10:14ff, by referring to the Lord’s Supper: he warns them now by the great truth that believers are the temple of God. Similar argument with other purposes in 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19. See notes. The word we puts Paul among those he warns. They share with him this great dignity; and he with them the duty it involves.

Living God: in contrast to lifeless idols, as in 1 Thessalonians 1:9. See under 2 Corinthians 3:3. The words temple of God bring before us the inviolable sanctity of the Old Testament sanctuary, which was strictly separated from whatever was not sanctified. This absolute separation every Jew was eager to defend, even at the cost of life. Paul now says that his readers are themselves the sanctuary of Him who dwelt of old in the Tabernacle. And, that they may feel the force of this reference, he supports it by a free quotation giving the exact sense and scope, and in part the words, of God’s solemn summing up, in Leviticus 26:11 of the blessings of the Mosaic Covenant. Notice especially Leviticus 26:1. With God’s words to Israel, the words of Paul to the Corinthians ‘accord.’



I will dwell among them; implies that the essential idea of a temple is, the Dwelling-Place of God. That God might dwell in the midst of Israel, i.e. in order that day by day He might reveal Himself among them, He bade them erect the Tabernacle. Cp. Exodus 29:44-46. He was thus fulfilling His ancient promise (Genesis 17:7f) to stand in special relation to Abraham's children as their God. Notice carefully that Paul assumes that the ancient promise, fulfilled in outward and symbolic form in the ritual of the Tabernacle, is valid now; and assures believers of the inward and spiritual presence of God in themselves. For the entire ritual was an outward symbol of the spiritual realities of the better covenant.

**Ver.** 17-18. For which cause: Paul's own words, introducing a quotation from Isaiah 52:11, as an appropriate practical application of the truth asserted in the foregoing quotation. He gives the sense, and in part the words, of Isaiah.

From the midst of them: of the heathens. Isaiah says "from the midst of her," i.e. of Babylon, the place of bondage to idolaters.

Be separated; i.e. from idolaters: LXX. rendering for "be cleansed." In prophetic vision Isaiah beholds the sacred vessels given back (by Cyrus, Ezra 1:7) to Israel; and bids the Levites lay aside the ceremonial defilement of Babylon and fit themselves to bear the vessels back to Jerusalem.

Touch not an unclean thing: Isaiah's warning to the returning exiles not to take with them anything belonging to the idols of Babylon; repeated by Paul to those who had escaped from the idolatry of Corinth. An appropriate quotation: for all idolatry is bondage.

And I will receive you: not found in Isaiah. But the sense, viz. that those whom God leads out of the land of bondage He will Himself receive to be His own, is frequent in the Old Testament. Cp. Ezekiel 11:17-21: "And I will receive them from the nations.... and I will give them to the Land of Israel."

And I will be to you: not found word for word in the Old Testament, but reproducing the sense of many passages. It may have been suggested by 2 Samuel 7:8, 14, "These things 'says' the 'Lord Almighty,' (LXX.,)... 'I will be to' him 'for a Father, and he shall be to me for a son'"; Jeremiah 31:9. "I have become a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn";

Isaiah 43:6, “Bring ‘my sons’ from far, ‘and’ my ‘daughters’ from the ends of the earth.” The last two passages refer specially to return from captivity. The words ‘sons and daughters’ in Isaiah 43:6 point specially to the equality of the sexes in the family of God: cp. Galatians 3:28.

Almighty: and therefore able to perform His promises. Cp. Genesis 17:1.

**Ver.** 1. Practical application of these quotations, in harmony with 2 Corinthians 7:14a and 16a. Notice carefully that God’s words to Israel in the wilderness and through Isaiah are ‘promises’ now possessed by Christian believers. For God acts always on the same principles: and therefore His words to one man are valid for all in similar circumstances. Moreover, the Mosaic ritual and the Old Testament history are symbolic of the Christian life. God’s visible presence in the midst of Israel was an outward pattern of His spiritual presence in the hearts of Christians: and the obligations which His presence laid upon Israel were a pattern of those resting upon His people now. And when, through the pen of Isaiah, God called the exiles returning from the dominion of idolaters His sons and daughters, He taught plainly that in days to come He would receive as such those whom He rescued from sin. Indeed, the universality, to believers, of the favor of God in gospel days makes His promise to David a promise of adoption for all believers.

Let us cleanse ourselves; (cp. 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:3; ) refers probably to abstinence from the outward corruptions of idolatry. It is justified by the truth that deliverance from sin, although it is God’s work in us, is yet obtained by our own moral effort and our own faith. It therefore depends upon ourselves whether we are made clean. [The aorist subjunctive exhorts us, not to a gradual and progressive, but to a completed, cleansing ‘from all defilement.’ So Ephesians 4:22, 25; Colossians 3:5, 8; 1 John 1:9.] Our ‘flesh’ is defiled when our hands and feet and bodies do the bidding of sin; our ‘spirit,’ when we contemplate sin with pleasure. ‘Flesh’ rather than “body,” because the defilement comes from desires belonging not so much to each individual organized body as to the common material and nature of all living bodies. Even the ‘spirit,’ that part of us which is nearest to God, is capable of defilement. Cp. 1 Corinthians 8:7; Titus 1:15. Perhaps Paul had in view the sensuality always and specially at Corinth, connected with idolatry. He warns his readers, not only against all actual contact with

sensuality, but also against that consent of the spirit which often defiles the inner life even when there is no outward sin.

Accomplish: to perform a purpose, or complete something begun. Same word, 2 Corinthians 8:6, 11; Romans 15:28; Galatians 3:3; Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 8:5; 9:6; 1 Peter 5:9.

Holiness; brings to bear on the foregoing exhortation the teaching in 2 Corinthians 6:16 that we are the temple of God. Cp. 1 Corinthians 3:17.

Accomplishing holiness: not identical with ‘cleanse yourselves;’ or it would be needless. It denotes everything involved in being “the temple of God”; viz. absolute reservation for God alone. See note under Romans 1:7. For God claimed that none set foot in the temple except to do His work. Now this devotion to God implies cleansing from all sin. For all sin is opposed to God. Therefore, that God has given us the honor of being his temple and has promised to receive us as His children, is a strong motive for cleansing and consecrating ourselves. For only thus can we be His temple.

In the fear of God: cp. Ephesians 5:21. It brings before us the dread presence and power of Him who slew Nadab and Abihu, and the company of Korah: Leviticus 10:2; Num. 16. Cp. “Living God” in 2 Corinthians 6:16. All contact with impurity is in us a defilement of the temple of God and an insult to the majesty of Him who dwells therein. Therefore ‘fear’ as well as hope should prompt us to abstain from all sin.

The argument of this verse is akin to that of Leviticus 11:43ff; Leviticus 20:1ff, 25ff. God has promised to dwell in our midst. And, since He can tolerate no rival, His presence in us requires absolute devotion to Him: and this involves separation from whatever, in symbol or reality, is opposed to Him. Therefore, that God has promised to dwell in us as His temple and receive us as His children, ought to move us to turn from all sin and to claim by faith that complete purity (cp. Romans 6:11) which He is ready to work in us. This reference to the Old Testament also teaches that the service of Christ is quite incompatible with that of Satan; and that therefore there is no true harmony between believers and unbelievers.

Paul’s appeal in 2 Corinthians 7:11-13 was prompted naturally by his foregoing defense of his apostolic work, which was really throughout an

appeal to his readers. But the reason of the sudden transition in 2 Corinthians 7:14 is not so evident. It may be that he knew that the disaffection towards himself of some at Corinth arose from their tolerance in some measure of the corruptions of idolatry. Or, the warning may have been prompted simply by the greatness of the peril. Certainly, of the exhortation in 2 Corinthians 6:1 this is a practical application.

## SECTION 10

**PAUL IS FILLED WITH JOY BY GOOD NEWS ABOUT HIS READERS; AND IS NOT NOW SORRY THAT HE WROTE TO THEM HIS FORMER LETTER. IN HIS JOY, TITUS SHARES**

### CHAPTER 7:2-16

*Make room for us. No one have we treated unjustly: no one have we damaged: no one have we treated with greed. I do not say it to condemn you. For I have before said that in our hearts you are, to die together and to live together. Much openness of speech have I towards you: much exultation have I on behalf of you. I am filled with my encouragement: I abound beyond measure with my joy amid all our affliction. For even when we had come to Macedonia no relief our flesh had, but we were in everything afflicted: without, battles; within, fears.*

*But He who encourages the lowly ones encouraged us, even God, by the coming of Titus; and not only by his coming but also by the encouragement with which he was encouraged about you, while announcing to us your longing, your lamentation, your jealousy on my behalf so that I rejoiced the more. Because, if even I made you sorrowful by the letter, I do not regret it. If even I was regretting it. (For I see that that letter, if even for an hour, made you sorrowful.) Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful for repentance. For you were made sorrowful in a way pleasing to God, that in nothing you might receive loss from us. For the sorrow pleasing to God works repentance for salvation not to be regretted. But the sorrow of the world works out death. For see this very thing, being made sorrowful in a way pleasing to God, how much it wrought out for you of earnestness; nay, self-defense; nay, indignation, nay, fear; nay, longing; nay, jealousy; nay, vengeance. In everything you proved yourselves to be pure touching the matter. Therefore, if indeed I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of him who acted*

*unjustly, nor for the sake of him who suffered injustice, but for the sake of your earnestness on our behalf being made manifest in your presence before God. For this cause I have been encouraged.*

*Moreover, in addition to our encouragement more abundantly did we rejoice the more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has received refreshment from you all. Because, if at all to him on your behalf I have boasted, (Or, Exulted, exultation: so to end of the Epistle.) I was not put to shame. But, as all things in truth we have spoken to you, so also our boasting (Or, Exulted, exultation: so to end of the Epistle.) before Titus was found to be truth. And his heart is more abundantly towards you, remembering the obedience of all of you, how with fear and trembling you welcomed him. I rejoice that in everything I am in good heart about you.*

**Ver. 2-4.** Make room for us: in your hearts. Paul here takes up 2 Corinthians 6:13, "Be you also enlarged." This sudden return to the same subject, and the sudden and unexpected digression of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, suggest that he knew that the disaffection at Corinth was caused by sinful toleration of idolatry.

No one... no one... no one: emphatic repetition. These sudden and unexplained denials must have been prompted by charges against Paul. Some might think that by his strict moral teaching, which required abandonment of idolatry and of all unjust gains, he had inflicted loss on his readers.

Greed; refers perhaps, as it does in 2 Corinthians 12:17f, to the collection for Jerusalem. Paul declares that while urging them to contribute he was not enriching himself. He denies any unfairness or loss to his readers, or gain to himself. And what he has 'before said' (in 2 Corinthians 6:11, 12) about his love to his readers proves that he does 'not say' this 'to condemn' them, i.e. to announce coming punishment for wrong doing. For this is never the ultimate aim of our words to those we love.

In our hearts you are: implied in the similar words in 2 Corinthians 6:11, "our heart is enlarged."

To die together and live together: Paul's purpose when giving them a place in his heart. It reveals the greatness of his love to them.

To die together: put first, as in Romans 8:38, because deadly peril was ever before both Paul and his readers. So great is his affection that he has cast in his lot with them, that they and he may stand side by side in face of death ever threatening them and him, and throughout life. Cp. Philippians 1:7.

Openness of speech: 2 Corinthians 3:12; shown in 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:3.

Boasting or exultation: see under Romans 2:17; 1 Corinthians 1:29. Here and in 2 Corinthians 7:14 it evidently found vent in words. Hence my rendering 'boast,' continued throughout the Epistle. This is an apology for Paul's bold language to his readers. To them he speaks without reserve strong words of warning; to others he speaks about them glowing words of joy and confidence, examples in 2 Corinthians 7:14; 9:2. He thus prepares the way for a recognition of the improved state of the Corinthian church, with which he appropriately concludes his "Review of recent events."

With my encouragement: explained in 2 Corinthians 7:6. It gave him abundant joy. That good news about his readers fills him to overflowing with encouragement and joy, a joy which 'all' his 'affliction' cannot quench, proves the intensity of his love.

Filled with encouragement and abound beyond measure with joy: a double climax.

**Ver. 5-7.** Exposition of 2 Corinthians 7:4b: 2 Corinthians 7:5 describes the "affliction"; 2 Corinthians 7:6, 7 the "encouragement" and "joy." Paul's anxiety at Troas (2 Corinthians 2:13) continued 'even' after arriving in 'Macedonia.'

We: probably Paul and Timothy. See under 2 Corinthians 1:1. Contrast 2 Corinthians 2:12.

Our flesh; depicts the effect on their body, in virtue of its constitution, of their anxiety about the Corinthians. In 2 Corinthians 2:13 the same anxiety is looked upon as affecting Paul's "spirit."

Relief: cessation from “affliction,” 2 Thessalonians 1:7. It recalls 2 Corinthians 2:13.

Without, within; expound in ‘everything.’

Battles: with opponents in Macedonia unknown to us.

Fears: probably, as suggested by 2 Corinthians 7:6, about the Corinthian church and the effect of his letter. Cp. 2 Corinthians 2:4. The state of that church might well give him dark forebodings.

Encourages: as in Romans 1:12. See under Romans 12:1.

Lowly: in mind body, or estate: opposite to “exalted.” Paul gratefully remembers that God’s kindness to him was His usual treatment of all in similar circumstances. Amid outward perils and inward anxieties Paul received encouragement ‘not only’ from the face and presence of a beloved helper ‘but also’ from the ‘encouragement’ which Titus had evidently received from the conduct of the Corinthians. For, that Titus, who shared Paul’s anxiety, was himself encouraged by what he saw at Corinth, was proof to Paul of improvement there.

While announcing: i.e. the joy of Titus became more intense as he narrated to Paul the effect of the first Epistle. A genuine trait of human nature.

Your, your, your: each time emphatic. The ‘longing,’ the ‘lamentation,’ the ‘jealousy,’ had been Paul’s: now they were implanted in the breasts of the Corinthians.

Longing: to see Paul.

Lamentation: about their former misconduct, especially in tolerating the gross offender of 1 Corinthians 5:1f.

Jealousy (or ‘zeal’: see under 1 Corinthians 12:31) for me: earnest defense of the apostle’s honor. Rejoiced, completes the exposition of the “joy” of 2 Corinthians 7:4.

No scene is more worthy of an artist’s skill than Titus, perhaps surrounded by sympathizing Philippians, narrating with a joy which increases while he narrates, the sorrow and earnestness of the Corinthian Christians, and by his own joy turning into joy the anxiety of the apostle.



Well might this joy reveal to Paul (2 Corinthians 2:14) the grandeur, in spite of many hardships, of the gospel ministry. Notice that Paul attributes to 'God' the joy he received through the coming and the joy of Titus; implying that the good done to us by others is an accomplishment of God's purposes of mercy.

**Ver.** 8-9. Cause of the special joy occasioned to Paul by the coming and the joy of Titus.

By the letter: specially by 1 Corinthians 5:1ff. Cp. 2 Corinthians 7:12; 2 Corinthians 2:4.

If I even was regretting; reveals Paul's tender sympathy. He wrote the letter in tears, (2 Corinthians 2:4,) and regretted afterwards that he had written so severely.

For I see, etc.: The intelligence which removed Paul's regret shows that there was a temporary cause for it, viz. the sorrow occasioned to the Corinthians. "Although after writing the letter I was sorry that I had done so, (and I now see that in the sorrow I caused you I had reason for myself being sorry,) yet now I rejoice."

Not that you were made sorrowful: So careful is Paul to show that his readers' sorrow was not a matter of indifference to him. Not the immediate result, only the final result, of his letter gave joy to Paul.

Repentance: see under Romans 2:4. Their sorrow brought about in them a change of mind and purpose. This 'sorrow to repentance,' 2 Corinthians 7:9b explains, and shows it to be just cause of joy to Paul.

In a way pleasing to God: literally according to God. Same phrase in Romans 8:27. It represents God Himself as a standard with which something is compared. This sorrow brought about a change of mind for the better because it was such sorrow as, in unfaithful ones, God desires to see.

That in nothing, etc.: God's purpose in causing them this sorrow. Had their sorrow been without result, it would have been an injury, a small and undesigned one, caused to them by Paul. But God designed their sorrow to be a means of blessing, so that not even in the least degree they might receive injury from the Apostle.

Such was the cause of the joy occasioned to Paul by the coming of Titus. He found that he had not inflicted upon his readers the damage of needless sorrow. So deep was his sympathy for them that he had regretted his well-deserved rebuke to them, because of the sorrow he feared it would cause. In this fear, he sees that he was not mistaken. But, to his great joy, he sees that the sorrow he caused had done them good. Consequently, his affectionate regrets about his letter are now altogether past.

That Paul was sorry for having written words which all Christian churches put on a level with those ancient Scriptures which Paul himself accepted as the voice of God, proves how thoroughly human was the composition of the New Testament. It suggests perhaps that he was unconscious that the words he wrote were the words of the Spirit of God. But it by no means proves that they were not such. For his regret soon passed away. We are thankful now that the words which caused regret were written. And we are all sure that he wrote them under the influence of one who cannot regret or err.

**Ver. 10.** A broad general principle, explaining the connection between “sorrowful” and “in nothing receive loss.” The sorrow which accords with God’s will is a sorrow for wrong doing, arising from an intelligent comprehension of the evil of sin and prompting a resolve to forsake sin. It thus ‘works repentance.’ This is a necessary condition of ‘salvation’ from sin and from death: and salvation will never be master of ‘regret.’ Consequently, no one can regret, not even the tender heart of Paul, a sorrow which is in accordance with the will of God. And, by causing this sorrow to the Corinthians, he did them no injury. And God designed it to be so. All this is made more evident by the contrast in 2 Corinthians 7:10b.

The world: as in 1 Corinthians 2:12.

The sorrow: with which unsaved men are sad.

Death: in its fullest sense, i.e. of body and soul in Gehenna. All mere worldly sorrow tends to deaden spiritual sensibility, and to make us impervious to the divine influences which alone save from death. Such would have been the effect of Paul’s letter had it produced only worldly vexation. And such was the effect of the sorrow of Cain: Genesis 4:5.

**Ver. 11.** Proof that godly sorrow works repentance; overleaping 2 Corinthians 7:10b, which was added only to bring out by contrast the force of 2 Corinthians 7:10a.

This very thing: their own sorrow was a case in point.

Earnestness: explained and proved by the six particulars following.

Nay... nay; again and again breaks off the foregoing as not being a full statement of the case. No sooner did they hear Paul's charge (1 Corinthians 5:2) against the whole church than in 'self-defense' they repelled it; and with 'indignation,' i.e.: with intense disapproval. This was accompanied by 'fear' of the angry parent (1 Corinthians 4:15, 21) who threatened to come with a rod, mixed with 'longing' to see the beloved teacher whom they had grieved so much. They were filled with 'jealousy' for the honor of their church, and with 'vengeance,' i.e. a resolve (cp. Romans 12:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:8) to inflict punishment on the wrong doer. This last word gives the chief thought which Paul's letter left in the mind of those who heard it read in the church at Corinth.

Pure in the matter: not implicated in the sin which one of them had committed.

In everything pure; does not imply that the general rebuke of 1 Corinthians 5:2 was not deserved. Paul is now convinced that the church members generally had not in any way sanctioned the crime. But we have no proof that they were plunged into sorrow by it: nor did they at once remove the offender from their midst. And this would be sufficient proof of the low spiritual state of the church.

**Ver. 12.** Inference touching the purpose of Paul's letter, which his readers may fairly draw from its just described effect.

Him who suffered injustice: a definite and known person, evidently the stepmother's husband, and probably the culprit's own father, still living, and therefore injured by this incestuous marriage. The woman was probably a heathen. See under 1 Corinthians 5:1. And, that her husband was such, is the easier supposition. For this would explain Paul's silence about him elsewhere, and the comparative indifference expressed here; and

the church's oversight of the offense. A church-member would probably have compelled the church-officers to take action.

Among you: almost the same as to you. Paul wishes that in the church at Corinth, and therefore to the church-members, the earnestness of the whole church on his behalf should be made manifest; in other words he wishes them to become conscious of their loyalty to himself. And this wish prompted him to write; not a desire to inflict punishment, or even to do justice to the injured man. For it was not the apostle's work to set right all wrongs.

Before God; adds solemnity to Paul's purpose by pointing to God contemplating, and interested in, the conduct of the church. The word 'made-manifest' suggests that Paul knew that underneath apparent disaffection lay real loyalty to himself. The purposes mentioned here and in 2 Corinthians 2:4 and 7 are in complete harmony. Paul wrote in tears: for he knew that his letter would inflict pain. He wrote to arouse the dormant loyalty which he knew existed; that he might put to the proof their full obedience; and that thus by doing them good he might make known to them his great love for them. And, that this was the purpose of his letter, they might infer from its effect.

**Ver.** 13a. Corresponds with 'I rejoiced,' 2 Corinthians 7:7; marking the completion of the exposition, begun in 2 Corinthians 7:8, of "your jealousy on my behalf," 2 Corinthians 7:7. Because the purpose of his letter was that just described, the news brought by Titus filled Paul with encouragement: for it showed that his purpose was attained, and that the sorrow which he foresaw his letter would cause had produced its designed good effect.

**Ver.** 13b-16. Another joy, in addition to the encouragement just described. Here, as in 2 Corinthians 7:7, we have joy upon joy.

Because his spirit, etc.: cause of the joy of Titus, viz. that without exception the Corinthian Christians were to him, in his intercourse with them, a source of spiritual refreshment. Cp. 1 Corinthians 16:18. [The perfect tenses note the abiding effect of the encouragement and of the refreshment, and the abiding position as a responsible witness in which Paul's boasting about the Corinthians had placed him.] 2 Corinthians 7:14

gives a reason why the joy caused to Titus by his intercourse with the Corinthians was a special encouragement to Paul.

If at all... I have boasted: a delicate compliment to the Corinthians, viz. an intimation that he had expressed to Titus his joyful confidence in them. He is delighted to find that his expressed confidence was justified by what Titus himself saw. Otherwise, Paul's good opinion about them would have 'put' him 'to shame.' Cp. 2 Corinthians 9:2-4. 2 Corinthians 7:14b states, in contrast to 'put to shame,' what actually happened, with a reason why Paul was specially glad that his boasting about his readers had proved to be true. As herald of Him who is The Truth, he made it a point of honor to speak always exact truth; that thus by claiming respect for his own word he might claim respect for the Gospel he announced. In this he is a pattern to all Christian teachers. Conversely, in 2 Corinthians 1:18f he appeals to the Gospel he preaches in proof of his own general truthfulness.

Was found to be true: literally, 'became true;' or, colloquially, 'turned out true.'

Heart: as in 2 Corinthians 6:12. As Christians, Titus loves them. But his intercourse with them called forth a more abundant affection.

Remembering; reveals the abiding, and therefore deep, effect upon his mind.

All of you: emphatic, laying stress on the universality of their submission. Cp. 2 Corinthians 7:13.

Obedience: to the apostle's words brought by Titus.

How with fear and trembling (1 Corinthians 2:3; Ephesians 6:5; Philippians 2:12), etc.; expounds 'obedience.' It reveals the deep mark which Paul had made in his readers' minds.

Welcomed him: respectfully and readily, as armed with Paul's authority. 2 Corinthians 7:16 is the happy conclusion of DIV. 1 In every point Paul has good hopes about them: and this gives him joy. SECTION 10 brings to light Paul's feelings while writing the first Epistle, and its effect on the church at Corinth. He wrote it with bruised heart and with tears; moved, not by a wish to punish the chief offender or even to vindicate the injured man, but by a desire to put to the test, and thus manifest to himself and to

them, the loyalty which he knew underlay his readers' apparent callousness. He was moved to write by his love to them; which he hoped to make better understood by them even through this stern reproof

So great was his reluctance to cause them pain that he afterwards regretted his well-intended letter. For the purity of his motive did not save him from anxiety about its effect. And he waited eagerly for the return of Titus, with tidings from Corinth. Not finding him at Troas Paul gave up the good opening for the Gospel there presented, and hasted to Macedonia; but only to be plunged into deeper anxiety by not finding Titus even there. At last he came; and with more pleasant news. The letter has produced its designed effect. It has moved the heart of the Corinthian Christians. They were eager to clear themselves from the charge of intentional complicity in the crime, were alarmed at their toleration of it, longed to see their offended father in Christ, and were determined, for the honor of their church, to punish at once the guilty member. Such was the outflow of spiritual life that it touched and refreshed the heart of Titus. And his mission to Corinth laid the foundation of a lasting friendship. With gushing joy Titus narrates all this to Paul.

The joy of Titus, and the improvement at Corinth, of which it was a witness, filled the apostle with joy. The many perils which still surround him, and of which at times he is so deeply conscious, are for the moment forgotten. For, his anxious fears about the success of his labors in the important city of Corinth are dispelled.

## REVIEW OF DIVISION I

Already we have seen that of DIV. 1 as of the whole Epistle Paul's famous exposition and defense, in 2 Corinthians 2:14-6:11, of the apostolic ministry is the central and chief part. And we have just seen that the framework in which this exposition is embedded tells us its specific occasion DIV. 1 begins with an outburst of praise to God, and ends with abundant joy. But the praise was prompted by the apostle's hardships and perils, in a consciousness that these were a means of good to his readers. In view of a wonderful deliverance from death, he expresses hope for continued deliverance, a hope strengthened by an assurance that his readers pray for him. This assurance rests upon his consciousness of having lived unblameably among them. Having thus claimed their confidence, he repels, as unworthy of a herald of the Gospel, a charge of vacillation in postponing his visit to Corinth. His real motive was kindness. This recalls to him the tears amid which he wrote his former letter. He begs them to receive again the church-member, now repentant, whom in that letter he so severely condemned. He claims their affection still further by saying that his anxiety for them moved him to abandon a favorable opportunity for Christian work at Troas, and drove him in haste to Macedonia.

A review, from this point, of his toils, hardships, and perils, reveals to him the grandeur of his apostolic work, elicits a shout of praise to God, and moves him to set forth at length the credentials and the surpassing greatness of his office, and to show that this greatness is consistent with the fact that many reject the Gospel he unreservedly proclaims and with the deadly perils amid which he proclaims it. These perils are designed to make known the power of God, who rescues him from them. And they cannot deter the apostles: for with the eye of faith they look forward to the resurrection of the dead, to an immediate entrance at death into the presence of Christ, and to the reward of the great day. Their devotion to Christ's great work is prompted by Christ's great love, and by their own commission from God. With this commission their entire conduct accords.

Supported by this exposition of the principles of his life, Paul claims his readers' affection. And, remembering the secret source of the disaffection at Corinth, he warns them to shake off all connection with idolatry and sin. He indignantly repels the charge that he has treated them with injustice and rapacity. And, to strengthen his appeal, he says that to others he speaks confidently in their favor; and that he is now filled with joy by the good news about them which Titus has brought. He rejoices the more because he now sees that his letter to them, which he afterwards regretted, has gained its purpose. The sorrow which he foresaw it would cause has done them good. He is overjoyed to find that their conduct has filled Titus with warm love to them. And he concludes his long defense of himself and his office by a joyful expression of complete confidence in his readers.

Notice that throughout DIV. 1, when speaking of the grandeur and the perils of his work and of his faithfulness therein, Paul says 'we, us,' remembering that all this is shared by Timothy who joins him in the letter, and by others. But when (2 Corinthians 2:3-11) speaking of his former letter, in which Timothy had no share, or (2 Corinthians 1:15-2:2) of the specific charge against himself of vacillation in his purpose to come to Corinth, he says, 'I, me.' About his journey to Macedonia, he says first (2 Corinthians 2:12f) 'I, me,' thinking only of his own deep anxiety; and afterwards (2 Corinthians 7:5) 'we came,' remembering that he was accompanied by others, and probably by Timothy. Throughout the whole, when speaking of blame, he prefers to stand alone: when speaking of perils and of faithfulness, he associates others with himself.



## DIVISION II

### THE COLLECTION FOR THE POOR AT JERUSALEM

#### CHAPTERS 8,9

#### SECTION 11

**BY THE EXAMPLE OF THE MACEDONIAN CHURCHES, PAUL  
URGES HIS READERS TO PERFORM THEIR OWN PURPOSE OF  
LIBERALITY**

#### CHAPTER 8:1-15

*Moreover, we make known to you, brothers, the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia; that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy is, and their deep poverty has abounded for the riches of their sincerity. Because, according to their power, I bear witness, and beyond their power, of their own accord, with much exhortation begging of us the favor (Or, grace.) and the partnership in (Greek, of) the ministry for the saints, and not as we hoped but themselves they gave first to the Lord and to us by the will of God; that we might exhort Titus that according as he had before begun so he should also complete in reference to you this grace also.*

*Yes, just as in everything you abound, faith and utterance and knowledge and all earnestness and love from you to us, that also in this grace you may abound. Not by way of command do I say it, but by means of other men's earnestness putting to the proof the genuineness of your love. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that because of us He became poor, although rich, that you by His poverty may become rich. And an opinion in this*

*matter I give. For this is profitable for you, who not only to do but also to wish began first, last year. And now complete the doing also, in order that just as there was the readiness to wish so there may be also the completing, according as you possess. For, if the readiness exists, according to whatever one may have it is acceptable, not according to what he has not. Not in order that to others there may be relief, to you pressure: but by way of equality, in the present season your abundance for their deficiency, that also their abundance may come to be for your deficiency; that there may be equality, according as it is written, (Exodus 16:18,) "He that had much had not more: and he that had little had not less."*

**Ver.** 1-2. For the altogether new matter of DIV. 2 Paul has prepared the way by the confidence and joy about his readers expressed in 2 Corinthians 7, and especially in 2 Corinthians 7:16. He now enters it by recounting the great liberality of the Macedonians, from whose midst he writes to the Corinthians. This liberality he introduces 'as grace of God given,' i.e. as a gift of the undeserved favor of God. Thus, while holding up human excellence as an example, he shuts out beforehand all human merit. With the same thought (2 Corinthians 9:14, 15) he concludes DIV. 2

In the churches, etc.: the locality 'in' which 'the grace' was 'given.' Cp. 2 Corinthians 8:16. The kind of grace given, 2 Corinthians 8:2 states in plain words.

Much proof of affliction: affliction putting to the test, and thus manifesting, their faith. Cp. Romans 5:4. It directs attention to the spiritual significance of their affliction.

The abundance of their joy is. We should say "their joy abounds." Their abundant joy is represented as a definite object of thought. [Similar construction in 2 Corinthians 8:11.] For an example of Macedonian joy amid affliction, see 1 Thessalonians 1:6.

And their deep poverty, etc.: a second excellence.

Abounded for: Romans 3:7: produced abundant results in the direction of spiritual 'riches.'

Their sincerity: the purity of motive of their Christian life; the opposite of guile.

Riches of sincerity: more than ‘abundance.’ For sincerity is true wealth. The liberality of the Macedonians was of value to Paul chiefly as proof of the sincerity of their profession of Christianity. ‘Their deep poverty’ increased the force of this proof, and thus itself produced abundant results in the direction of spiritual wealth.

**Ver.** 3-5. A statement of fact, in proof of 2 Corinthians 8:2.

I bear witness: writing from the midst of this liberality.

Of their own accord: probably, while Paul told them (2 Corinthians 9:2) of the readiness of the Corinthians, and without any suggestion from him.

With much exhortation, etc.: they pleaded hard to be allowed as a favor to join with the other churches in this service for the brethren in Judaea. This suggests that Paul hesitated, because of their poverty, to accept their cooperation.

Exhortation: see under Romans 12:1.

Favor or ‘grace’: as in 2 Corinthians 8:19; see under Romans 1:5. It is in apposition to ‘partnership.’ They begged for the ‘favor,’ viz. ‘the partnership, etc.’

Ministry: often used for supply of bodily needs. See under Romans 12:7. That the collection was ‘for the saints,’ (cp. 1 Corinthians 16:1,) i.e. for men standing in special relation to God, gave it special significance.

And not as we hoped but themselves: last point which Paul specifies. ‘They gave, beyond their power of their own accord,’ earnestly ‘begging’ to be allowed to give, and beyond Paul’s expectation they ‘gave themselves.’ Disregarding their own need, and moved by loyalty to Christ, they gave. So that their gift was not money but themselves, not to men but to Christ. And this was the primary element of their gift:

first to the Lord. And to us: Their self-surrender to Christ was also a surrender to those whom Christ had set in authority in His Church. For the liberality of the Macedonians was loyalty to Paul as well as to Christ.

By the will of God: as in 2 Corinthians 1:1. The Macedonians recognized by their gift Paul's divinely given authority: they thus did 'the will of God.'

The instructive parallel of Philippians 4:10-18 suggests that in the liberality of 'the churches of Macedonia' the Philippians (Acts 16:12) took a prominent part. They who were the first to contribute to the support of their beloved teacher while preaching to others were also abundant in their liberality to unknown and far off brethren. And since we read here not of Philippian but of Macedonian liberality, we may suppose that their example had moved to liberality other Macedonian churches.

**Ver. 6.** Paul's request to Titus (cp. 2 Corinthians 8:17) is represented as not only a result of the liberality of the Macedonians, but as a designed result; i.e. designed by God. This implies that the request was itself an accomplishment of a purpose of God by means of "the grace given" to the Macedonians. God intended Paul to send Titus to Corinth, and used the liberality of the Macedonians to bring this about. Thus Paul viewed his own action as an outworking of a divine purpose.

He had begun before: on a former visit to Corinth; doubtless that referred to in 2 Corinthians 12:18, undertaken at Paul's request, probably with express reference to this collection, some time before Paul wrote the First Epistle. See under 2 Corinthians 9:5.

Your grace, or 'favor': as in 2 Corinthians 8:19, the unmerited kindness of the contribution for the poor at Jerusalem. Moved by the liberality of the Macedonians Paul begged Titus to go to Corinth and complete the work he had already begun there. And in making this request he felt that his meeting with Titus amid churches manifesting such wonderful liberality was by divine arrangement to encourage them to press forward the contribution at Corinth. Thus Paul introduces, as an accomplishment of a divine purpose, the specific matter of DIV. 2

**Ver. 7-8.** Just as, etc.; appeals to them on the ground of their excellence already shown.

In everything you abound: 1 Corinthians 1:5.

Faith, utterance, etc.: having these, they are in everything spiritually rich.

Utterance and knowledge: 1 Corinthians 1:5.

All earnestness: an example in 2 Corinthians 7:11.

Love to us: manifested in the “longing” of 2 Corinthians 7:11.

Also in this grace: this act of undeserved kindness.

That... you may abound: Paul’s purpose in requesting Titus to complete the collection at Corinth. Practically, it is an exhortation: for it is ‘not’ given ‘by way of command.’

Putting to the proof: as in 2 Corinthians 2:9.

Your love: to fellow-Christians and to mankind, as in 1 Corinthians 13. It is the essence of Christian character. Therefore, to put to the ‘proof’ the genuineness of their ‘love,’ is to test the worth of their Christian profession. And there is no surer way of doing this than to ask money for Christian purposes. For men generally trust in, and cling to material good.

**Ver. 9.** A reason why Paul has no need to “command,” but only to put to the test his readers’ Christian love. To those who ‘know the grace of Christ’ towards themselves, command to be kind to others is needless.

The grace of, etc.: the free undeserved favor which moved Christ to become man to save men. So Romans 5:15: 1 Corinthians 16:23; 2 Corinthians 13:13.

That because of us, etc.; recounts ‘the grace of Christ.’

He became poor; involves, as do 2 Corinthians 13:4 and Philippians 2:7, the mystery of the incarnation. It means infinitely more than abstinence from material good while on earth. For ‘riches’ denotes, not actual enjoyment of the things possessed, but control over things needful or pleasant to us. This is the real worth of money. Poverty is the absence of control over things needful or pleasant. Now, from eternity the Son of God had absolute control over all things; and was therefore infinitely ‘rich.’ Want was unknown to Him. But at His incarnation He laid aside this absolute control, and submitted, in a way to us inconceivable because divine, to creaturely and human limitations, that thus by personal experience He might become conscious of human dependence and need. All this is implied in Mark 13:32, (Luke 22:43, genuineness very doubtful,)

Hebrews 5:7. This self-improvement of Christ I venture to illustrate by supposing a rich man to leave the luxuries of home and go to the Arctic Regions to rescue a friend. For by doing so he not only abstains from his accustomed comforts but puts himself for a time beyond reach of them. And only by some similar conception, excluding however all idea of peril and thinking only of hardship, can we attach any meaning to the words 'He became poor;' and to Philippians 2:7, "He emptied Himself." But He did not (for He could not: 2 Timothy 2:13) lay aside even for a moment His divine Nature, of which the essence is Love. Never before did the divine Love of the Son of God shine forth so wonderfully as when to save men He became Man.

Because of you: more forceful than "because of us." Cp. Galatians 2:20. Paul sets the Corinthians alone, and says that Christ died for them.

May become rich: all our needs and desires supplied in the wealth of our Father's house, and already in sure anticipation of it. The self-improvement of Christ is a motive for Christian liberality. For, by giving money we limit our own control over things needful and pleasant to us, in order to supply the needs of others. And this we cannot refuse to do, in the lower sphere of material good, in view of the infinite self-sacrifice of Christ for our eternal enrichment. Thus, after setting before his readers the example of the Macedonians, Paul strengthens his appeal by pointing to the infinitely greater example of Christ.

**Ver.** 10-11, Continues 2 Corinthians 8:8, after supporting it in 2 Corinthians 8:9 by the example of Christ. Far from commanding, Paul merely gives in 2 Corinthians 8:7-11 'an opinion' (1 Corinthians 7:25, 40) about what is best for his readers.

For this: viz that he gives an opinion, not a command.

For you: emphatic, a courteous recognition of the readiness of the Corinthians. For others less ready a command might be needful.

Who not only, etc.: proof of the foregoing words.

Began first: literally 'began before,' as in 2 Corinthians 8:6; i.e. before the Macedonian Christians.

Last year: cp. 2 Corinthians 9:2: not necessarily a full year ago. When, about Easter, Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 16:1, the collection was already well known at Corinth. And, since about Titus who began (2 Corinthians 8:6) the collection there no mention is made in the First Epistle, probably he went to Corinth some time before it was written. The Corinthians took up the matter at once. Consequently, the collection may have been begun, and in some sense the Corinthians “ready,” (2 Corinthians 9:2,) the autumn before these letters were written. And this would be naturally spoken of as ‘last year.’ During the previous year the Corinthians had not only ‘begun’ it ‘before’ the Macedonians, but were before them in wishing to contribute. They were earlier, ‘not only’ in beginning to give, ‘but’ also in wishing to give. For such ready contributors an ‘opinion’ was certainly better than a “command.”

And now also the doing: in addition to what last year they did and wished to do.

Complete: (same word as ‘accomplish’ in 2 Corinthians 7:1:) in contrast to ‘begin.’ Same contrast in Philippians 1:6. A year ago they were first to begin not only to do something but to wish to do. The wish continues: but the doing is not yet completed. Paul bids them complete what they then began, and accomplish what they then wished.

That according as... so also: that with the purpose, which was so ‘ready,’ (see under 2 Corinthians 8:19,) performance may correspond. It suggests the uselessness of a purpose not followed by corresponding action.

According as you possess: developed and supported in 2 Corinthians 8:12. Only so far as they were able could their ‘performing’ correspond with their wish. Paul thus reminds his readers that in asking for the accomplishment of their purpose of liberality he takes into account their limited resources.

**Ver. 12.** Justifies the foregoing words, by stating the general principle that the limits of our ability to give do not limit the reward of our liberality, and yet are the measure of our reward. For, according to our ability, the ‘readiness’ (or ‘eagerness:’ see 2 Corinthians 8:19) itself is ‘acceptable.’ But, if genuine, it will, according to ‘whatever’ the giver ‘may have,’ develop into action. The contrasted negation, ‘not according to what he has

not,' restates emphatically the standard of acceptability. This verse, introduced to explain 2 Corinthians 8:11, shows that Paul was thinking not about the gift itself but about its acceptability to God.

**Ver. 13-14.** That Paul was seeking something acceptable to God, not a large sum of money, he now proves by stating his real purpose in making the collection, viz. not to enrich others by impoverishing the Corinthians, but to bring them material gain.

Relief: removal of affliction; cp. 2 Thessalonians 1:7.

To you pressure: literally 'affliction:' privation of the necessities of life, through liberality towards the Christians of Judaea.

By way of equality: taking equality as his standard and aim.

Their abundance... your deficiency: in the same sense as 2 Corinthians 8:13, viz. material good. For, the spiritual blessings from the Jews to the Gentiles (Romans 15:27) had been already received: but Paul refers to something still future. Although now the Corinthians are richer than the Judaeans Christians, matters may some day be reversed. And in view of the uncertainties of the future Paul now presses this collection, in order that in days to come those who now give may themselves receive material help; and that thus in the family of God 'there may be' an 'equality' unknown outside it. Therefore, so far from seeking to enrich others at his readers' cost, Paul is really seeking, in view of the uncertainties of life, ultimately to enrich them. In Romans 15:27 he gives a nobler justification than this, and in 2 Corinthians 9:12ff a nobler result, of the collection. But these do not cause him to overlook its material benefits. By establishing the principle of mutual monetary help, he was doing something to shelter the people of God in the dark days awaiting the Church and the world.

**Ver. 15.** As a pattern of what he desires to see in the Christian Church, Paul quotes Exodus 16:18, almost word for word from the LXX., viz. the narrative of Israel in the wilderness, supplied by the gift of God so that none had too much and none too little.

Had not more, had not less; than he needed. For they gathered according to the size of their families. So far as the Christian life permeates church-members and churches will there be reproduced this ancient and



beautiful ideal of a company in which each has sufficient, an ideal never realized in material good so completely as in Israel in the wilderness. For all men are but gatherers of food freely given by God.

The important matter of the collection for the Christian poor in Judaea, Paul introduces by the noble example of the Macedonians, whose liberality he speaks of as a gift of the undeserved favor of God working out for them spiritual wealth. This liberality moved him, by the design of God, to send Titus to Corinth, that the Corinthians, so rich in spiritual gifts, may be rich in spiritual liberality. To them he forbears to give commands: for the example of the Macedonians is enough, and his readers know the greater example of Christ. Indeed they were themselves the first not only to begin, but also to wish to join in, this contribution. Paul asks therefore that with their readiness to purpose performance may correspond. He asks only for gifts in proportion to ability: for this will be the measure of the reward. For his purpose is, not to enrich others by impoverishing them, but ultimately to bring them material help. He wishes to bring about in the people of God the equality of those who in the wilderness were fed by the providence of God sufficiently, but not in excess.

## SECTION 12

**PAUL HAS SENT TITUS AND OTHERS, THAT THE COLLECTION  
MAY BE READY WHEN HE ARRIVES**

### CHAPTERS 8:16-9:5

*But thanks to God who gives the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus: because, the exhortation, on the one hand, he accepted; but, being more earnest, of his own accord he came forth to you. Moreover, we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the Gospel is throughout all the churches: and not only so but also elected by the churches as our fellow-traveler with this grace which is being ministered by you, in view of the glory of the Lord and our earnest wish: guarding this, lest any one blame us in this fulness which is being ministered by us. For we “take forethought for honorable things,” not only “before the Lord” but also before “men.” (Proverbs 3:4.) And we have sent with them our brother whom we have proved in many things often to be earnest, and now much more earnest through much confidence, his confidence in reference to you. Whether on behalf of Titus we speak, he is a partner of mine, and a fellow-laborer for you: or it be our brothers, they are apostles of churches, a glory of Christ. The proof then of your love and of our boasting on your behalf, while you show towards them, you do so in the presence of the churches.*

*For, on the one hand, about the ministry for the saints it is superfluous to me to write to you. For I know your readiness, of which on your behalf I boast to Macedonians, that Achaia has been prepared from last year. And your zeal has stirred up the more part of them. But I have sent the brothers lest our ground of boasting on your behalf be made vain in this matter; that, as I said, you may be prepared, lest in any way if Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared we be put to shame, that I may not say you, in this confidence. Necessary then I deemed it to*

*exhort the brothers, that they may come beforehand to you and may prepare beforehand your before-promised blessing, that this may be ready, in this way, as blessing and not as greediness.*

After giving, in 2 Corinthians 8:7-15, as it were covertly, three strong motives for the contribution, Paul takes up again his request (2 Corinthians 8:6) that Titus should come to Corinth. He speaks of the mission of Titus (2 Corinthians 8:16-17) and another (2 Corinthians 8:18-21) and (2 Corinthians 8:22) a third; and (2 Corinthians 8:23, 24) commends them to his readers. The contribution itself he needs to touch (2 Corinthians 9:1, 2) only for a moment; and then gives (2 Corinthians 8:3-5) his purpose in sending the brethren, viz. that when he himself comes he may not be put to shame by the contribution not being ready.

**Ver. 16-17.** Paul's thought about Titus, who had brought from Corinth news so good and who acceded so readily to Paul's request to go there on this errand, elicits a shout of joy; as usual, in the form of praise to God. So 2 Corinthians 9:15; 2:14; 1 Corinthians 15:57; Romans 6:17. For the readiness of Titus, like all good in man, is the work and gift of God.

The same earnestness: as in Paul.

Gives: it flows forth each moment from God, 'in the heart of Titus:' as in 2 Corinthians 8:1: the spiritual locality in which God works and 'gives' this 'earnestness.' 2 Corinthians 8:17 states, in contrast, two facts which together explain 'the same earnestness.'

More earnest; than the foregoing words, had they stood alone, would imply. 'On the one hand,' when Paul asked Titus to go to Corinth he did so, and went there sent by Paul: 'but' so eager was he to complete the work he had begun that his journey was really an outflow of his own 'earnest' wish.

He went forth: as bearer of this letter. Cp. 2 Corinthians 8:18, 22; 9:3; Acts 15:22f, 27. For, the explanation of his mission given in 2 Corinthians 9:5 would be needed as soon as he arrived in Corinth: and this verse implies that the letter did not precede him.

**Ver. 18-21.** We: probably Paul and Timothy; cp. 2 Corinthians 1:1. So ready was Paul to join others with himself in all acts of authority.

Together with: lays emphasis on the companionship in this mission.

In the Gospel: Romans 1:9: in proclaiming and furthering it. For this he was well spoken of in 'all the churches.' Such men must have been then, as now, a link binding together the various churches. He was 'not only' praised in all the churches 'but also elected' to accompany Paul in taking the contribution to Judaea. Cp. 1 Corinthians 16:3f.

By the churches: probably of Macedonia only. Cp. Romans 15:26. It is difficult to say whether 'our' fellow-traveler, by 'us,' include Timothy, or refer only to Paul as in 1 Thessalonians 3:1-6. For we do not know whether Timothy went, or when this letter was written intended to go, to Jerusalem. But, that we have no proof that elsewhere in this Epistle Paul uses the words 'we, our' of himself alone, and Timothy's presence with him (Acts 20:4) when starting from Corinth for Jerusalem, suggest that these words refer to Paul and Timothy.

Elected: same word in Acts 14:23. In both passages apostolic authority ('we sent') is combined with popular election.

This grace: as in 2 Corinthians 8:4, 6, 7.

Ministered: as in 2 Corinthians 3:3; see under Romans 12:7. By suggesting, carrying out, and taking to Jerusalem, the contribution, Paul performed a free and honorable service for the brethren there.

With a view to, etc.: two considerations before the Macedonian Christians when electing this brother as Paul's companion; viz. 'the Lord's glory,' i.e. the exaltation of Christ in the eyes of men through performance of the work for which he was elected, and Paul's earnest wish that some one should be chosen to go with him. The former consideration reveals the spiritual aim of the election, and that the honor of Christ was involved in it: the latter shows that the election was compliance with a wish of the apostle.

Earnest-wish: same as 'readiness' or 'eagerness' in 2 Corinthians 8:11, 12; 9:2; Romans 1:15; Acts 17:11. It is the disposition which prompts men to act.

Guarding this, etc.; grammatically connected 'we have sent,' explains 'our earnest wish,' which needs explanation. In wishing for a colleague Paul,

and perhaps Timothy, were ‘guarding’ against ‘blame’ which otherwise might attach to themselves. Cp. 2 Corinthians 6:3.

Fulness: rich liberality. It is an acknowledgment of the greatness of the contribution.

For we (Paul and his colleagues) take forethought, etc.: reason for guarding against blame. It is a general principle, quoted almost word for word from Proverbs 3:4, LXX. Cp. Romans 12:17. They sought the approval, not only of Christ who reads the heart and who knew their honesty, but of ‘men,’ who judge by appearances. They therefore suggested that a colleague be elected for them in this financial business. Thus the election was for the glory of Christ, and in compliance with an earnest wish of the apostle.

Notice Paul’s careful ‘forethought.’ Although his own honesty was probably above suspicion, he foresaw a time when similar matters must be entrusted to men less known than himself, and felt the great importance of guarding, in church finance, against even a breath of suspicion. He therefore urged the Macedonian Christians to establish the precedent of committing such matters to at least two persons; a precedent well worthy of imitation now.

Who the elected brother was, we have no means of knowing. All guesses are worthless. His formal election by the Macedonians, which would be announced to the Corinthians, made mention of his name unnecessary.

**Ver. 22.** A second companion of Titus; and like the former, quite unknown to us. He had ‘proved’ himself to be an ‘earnest’ man, not in some one matter but in ‘many,’ and ‘often:’ and at the present time he was ‘much more earnest’ than usual, moved to earnestness by his ‘confidence’ about the Corinthians. Therefore, both his general character and his special interest in them commend him to the readers. And of all this Paul has had ‘proof.’ This testimony suggests that his brother was less known than the former one. And, that only the first brother is said to have been “elected” by the churches, and that the purpose of the election (2 Corinthians 8:20) is stated before mention of the second brother, suggests that he was not thus elected. If so, the word “apostles” in 2 Corinthians 8:23 denotes only

that his association with the chosen delegate was approved by the churches.

**Ver. 23.** A commendation of the three messengers.

Partner: in toil and peril. Same word in 2 Corinthians 1:7; 1 Corinthians 10:18, 20; Philemon 17; Hebrews 10:33; 1 Peter 5:1; 2 Peter 1:4; Matthew 23:30; Luke 5:10.

Fellow-worker: 2 Corinthians 1:24; 1 Corinthians 3:9; Romans 16:3, 9, 21. That Titus was a companion of their beloved apostle and a worker with him for their good, was his high commendation. The other two have three commendations. They are ‘brothers’ in Christ, ‘apostles’ approved and sent by Christian ‘churches,’ men whose mission and work reveal the ‘glory of Christ.’

Apostle: in its simplest sense of “one sent on some special business.” See under Romans 1:1.

Glory of Christ; recalls 2 Corinthians 8:19, “for the Lord’s glory.” Cp. 1 Corinthians 11:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:20. As men sent “with a view to the Lord’s glory,” i.e. to guard and magnify His honor, they were themselves in their mission and work an embodiment of His glory. Notice the gradation. To Paul and his readers they are ‘brothers:’ to whole churches they are specially related as their ‘apostles;’ and to ‘Christ’ as men bringing Him ‘glory.’

**Ver. 24.** A motive, drawn from 2 Corinthians 8:23, for receiving the messengers worthily. “Owing to their just stated relationships, what you do to them, you do ‘in the presence of the churches’ who sent them.”

Your love: to Christians generally. So 2 Corinthians 8:8, “proving the genuineness of your love.” It includes kindness to the messengers and liberality towards the poor saints at Jerusalem.

Our exultation: explained further in 2 Corinthians 9:2-4, for which these words prepare the way. On the various reading see “Notes and Replies” on page XIII.

**Ver. 1-2.** After commending the three messengers, Paul gives in 2 Corinthians 9:3-5 the purpose for which he has sent them. But this he

prefaces by saying in 2 Corinthians 9:1, 2 that he has no reason to write to them about the collection itself.

For about, etc.: reason why, instead of speaking about the collection, Paul merely bids his readers receive the messengers worthily.

On the one hand; implies that Paul mentions ‘the ministry for the saints’ (2 Corinthians 8:4) only by way of contrast to a detail about it, viz. the mission (2 Corinthians 9:3) of the three brethren.

Superfluous, etc.; (cp. 1 Thessalonians 4:9; ) reveals the apostle’s usual courtesy and tact.

For I know, etc.: reason why it is superfluous to write.

Eagerness, or ‘readiness’: 2 Corinthians 8:19.

On your behalf: in your favor.

I exult: even now he continues to boast about them.

To Macedonians: to some, not necessarily all of them.

That Achaia, etc.: the matter of Paul’s boasting. It implies that not only at Corinth but throughout the province the collection was eagerly agreed to from the first.

Has been ready: i.e. they had according to Paul’s advice, (1 Corinthians 16:1,) the money ready at home. For it is evident that the general gathering had not yet been made: whereas, that Paul continues to boast, proves that his boasting was not a mistake.

From last year: as in 2 Corinthians 8:10.

Stirred up: same word in a bad sense in Colossians 3:21.

The more part: the majority, as in 2 Corinthians 2:6.

Paul’s continued boasting about the Corinthians implies that, in the previous year when the matter of the collection was first brought before them, they took it up eagerly, and were prepared to contribute at once and actually began (2 Corinthians 8:10) to contribute. Even the liberality of the Macedonians, for which Paul is so thankful to God, was in great part a

result of the example thus nobly set by the Corinthians. All this proves that it is needless for him to write to them ‘about the collection.’ But it does not prevent him from telling them of the liberality of the Macedonians, that the example of those whom their own liberal purpose had aroused might prompt them to complete at once the work they had been the first to begin. Thus example acts and re-acts.

Since the Corinthians were a year ago ready for the collection, and since three months ago Paul received at Ephesus a deputation of Corinthians who would naturally tell him all that the church had done, we infer that the boasting in 2 Corinthians 9:2 was prompted, not by news received in Macedonia from Titus which seems to have been rather unfavorable though not such as to put an end to Paul’s boasting, but by earlier news.

**Ver. 3-5.** About the collection Paul has no need to write; ‘but’ he has need to explain why he ‘sent the’ before mentioned ‘brethren.’

Our ground-of-exultation be-made-vain: 1 Corinthians 9:15: lest the excellence of which we boast in your favor be found out to be an empty thing.

In this matter; implies that Paul’s exultation about them embraced other points. He feared lest in this detail his boast might prove to be misplaced.

That as I said, etc.: parallel to, and explaining, the foregoing purpose.

As I said, you may be, etc.: opposite to ‘ground of boasting be made vain.’

Prepared; takes up the same word in 2 Corinthians 9:2. 2 Corinthians 9:4 is a further negative purpose.

We, you: emphatic. Paul speaks of his own ‘shame,’ that he may avoid speaking of the greater shame which, if found ‘unprepared,’ would fall upon them.

Exhort: see 2 Corinthians 8:6.

Come-beforehand... prepare-beforehand: before Paul came.

Before-promised: by Paul. For Paul’s boasting about them was virtually a promise of what they would do. It takes up ‘as I said’ in 2 Corinthians 9:3.



Beforehand... beforehand... before: emphatic alliteration.

Blessing: a benefit, as in Genesis 33:11; Judges 1:15. But usually it denotes a benefit conveyed by a good word. See under Romans 1:25.

In this way, etc.; dwells upon the word 'blessing,' which was chosen to suggest this explanation. Paul begs them to contribute not as though it were an act of 'greedy' self-enrichment, (in which case they would do as little as possible to attain their end,) but as an outflow of benevolence, and therefore measured by the greatness of their love. The word 'blessing' is specially appropriate, as recalling God's benefits in contrast to man's selfishness.

Greediness, or 'covetousness': literally, "having more." Same word in Ephesians 4:19; 5:3; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:5; Luke 12:15. This exhortation we shall do well to remember in all our gifts.

Of TITUS nothing is said in the Book of Acts. This, though remarkable, accords with the scantiness of its reference (Acts 20:2) to the period when this Epistle was written. Nor is he mentioned, apart from this Epistle, except in Galatians 2:1, 3; 2 Timothy 4:10; Titus 1:4. Yet he was evidently a noble and valued helper of the apostle.

Titus was (Galatians 2:3) a Greek: i.e. not necessarily born in Greece, but of Gentile parents. See under Romans 1:16; and contrast Acts 16:3, referring to almost the same time as Galatians 2:3. His birth-place is quite unknown. He seems (Titus 1:4) to have been converted by Paul.

We first meet Titus going with Paul to Jerusalem as narrated in Galatians 2:1, (same journey apparently as Acts 15:2,) probably as representative of the Gentile Christians.

From 2 Corinthians 7:14f we infer that Titus was not a member of the church at Corinth. But Paul (2 Corinthians 12:17) sent him there, from Ephesus probably, to promote the collection for the poorer Christians at Jerusalem. That Titus began (2 Corinthians 8:6) this collection at Corinth, and that Paul assumes in 1 Corinthians 16:1f that his readers already know about it, implies that this first mission of Titus was not later than the First extant Epistle to the Corinthians, and suggests strongly that it was some time earlier. This is confirmed by the absence of any reference to Titus,

Paul's valued colleague, in the First Epistle, and by the fact that, at the instance (2 Corinthians 8:6) of Titus, the Corinthians were ready (2 Corinthians 9:2; 8:10) a year ago to contribute. This seems to prove that some months before the First Epistle was written, perhaps in the previous autumn, Paul sent (2 Corinthians 12:18) Titus and another to Corinth to begin the collection; and that he did so. Now, 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:6ff, imply that personally or by message Paul requested Titus to meet him at Troas, expecting thus news from Corinth, especially about the effect of the First Epistle. That Titus was not at Ephesus or at Corinth when Paul wrote the First Epistle, is made almost certain by its silence about him. But this expectation implies that, although not at Corinth then, Titus was likely to be there either by Paul's request or otherwise soon afterwards. He may have come to Ephesus, and have been at once sent back to Corinth, with directions to meet Paul at Troas: or, while residing elsewhere he may have been requested by Paul to visit Corinth. This would imply, as is by no means unlikely, that Paul sent Titus three times to Corinth. Either of these suppositions would account for all our scanty indications of the movements of Titus. The latter suggestion, as implying less travelling, is rather the more likely of the two. In many ways unknown to us messages may have been sent by Paul to Titus.

After his own hasty (Acts 20:1) departure from Ephesus, not finding Titus at Troas, Paul crossed over to Macedonia. Here, though not immediately, Titus met him with good news about the deep repentance and Christian earnestness of the Corinthians, and with information about the progress of the collection. Moved both by the liberality of the Macedonians and by the readiness of the Corinthians, Paul begged Titus (2 Corinthians 8:6) to return to Corinth and complete, before (2 Corinthians 9:5) the apostle's own arrival, the collection he had begun. This, Titus gladly (2 Corinthians 8:17) agreed to do; and went from Macedonia to Corinth, accompanied by one brother chosen by the Macedonian churches to go with Paul to take the collection to Jerusalem, and by another sent with the approval of the churches by Paul himself. These messengers took with them (2 Corinthians 8:18; 9:3f) the Second Epistle. The collection at Corinth was (Romans 15:26) duly made; doubtless in great part by the activity of Titus.

And now we lose sight of Titus for at least five years. In Titus 1:5 we find him again a trusted helper of the apostle, deputed to set in order the imperfectly organized churches in Crete. Paul is very wishful (Titus 3:12) to see him at Nicopolis during the winter. It would seem that later (2 Timothy 4:10) Titus was with Paul in his last imprisonment at Rome. And, with a touch of sadness, the lonely prisoner says that he has gone, doubtless for a sufficient reason, to Dalmatia.

The gushing joy (2 Corinthians 7:7) of Titus about the repentance of the Corinthians, his warm affection (2 Corinthians 7:15) for them, and his eagerness (2 Corinthians 8:16f) to visit them again, betray an ardent temperament. He worked in perfect accord (2 Corinthians 12:18) with Paul. And, though little known to us, he doubtless had no small share in founding Gentile Christianity.

## SECTION 13

**PAUL SUGGESTS A LARGE AND FREE GIFT; WHICH WILL NOT ONLY RELIEVE DISTRESS BUT ALSO BRING PRAISE TO GOD**

### CHAPTER 9:6-15

*And this: he that sows sparingly, sparingly will also reap; and he that sows with blessings, with blessings will also reap. Each one according as he has resolved in his heart, not with sorrow, or from necessity. For “a cheerful giver God loves.” (Proverbs 22:8, LXX.)*

*And God is able to make every grace abound towards you, that in everything always having all sufficiency you may abound for every good work: according as it is written, (Psalm 112:9,) “He scattered, he gave to the poor; his righteousness remains for ever.” And He that supplies seed to the sower and bread for eating will supply and will multiply your sowing, and will increase the fruits of your righteousness; while in everything you are being enriched for all sincerity, which works out through us thanksgiving to God. Because the ministry of this public service not only is supplying the shortcomings of the saints but also abounds through many thanksgivings to God: while through the proof of this ministry they glorify God for the submission of your confession, in view of the Gospel of Christ, and for the sincerity of the partnership towards them and towards all men, while themselves with supplication on your behalf long for you because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. Thanks to God for His indescribable gift.*

Paul now uses the word “blessing,” chosen to be so used, as a stepping stone to a suggestion that the gift be (2 Corinthians 9:6) abundant and (2 Corinthians 9:7) free. To this he encourages his readers by pointing to God, who is (2 Corinthians 9:8, 9) able to bless them and (2 Corinthians 9:10, 11) will do so; and (2 Corinthians 9:12-15) to the spiritual results of their liberality.

**Ver. 6.** And this; directs attention to a new and important point, viz. that acts of kindness to God's people are seeds thrown into the ground, which by the outworking of the laws of life produce similar and multiplied results. So Galatians 6:7; 1 Corinthians 9:11; James 3:18; Proverbs 22:8.

Sparingly, sparingly: exact retribution. Since gifts are seeds, he that holds himself back from giving thereby holds himself back from the harvest.

With blessings: recalls "as blessing" in 2 Corinthians 9:5. They who in giving think, not how little they can give, as they would if self-enrichment were their aim, but of benefits to be conferred, will receive back on the same principle. As they to others, so God will act to them. The plural denotes a variety of 'blessings.' These words will be fulfilled both in the various blessings in this life to those who do good and in the infinite recompense of the great Day. This sufficient motive for liberality makes direct exhortation for a large gift needless.

**Ver. 7.** A direct exhortation, but only on a matter of detail, viz. the freeness of the gift. Whatever be the amount, it must be an outflow of 'each one's' own previous 'resolve.' The choice must be 'in his heart,' the inmost center of the man, where standing alone he chooses his own action. See under Romans 1:21.

Not with sorrow or from necessity; lingers over and expounds 'as he has resolved in his heart.' The gift must not be with regret, nor be a surrender to pressure from without. For this a reason is given, almost in the words of Proverbs 22:8, where instead of "The man with kindly eye shall be blessed: because he has given of his bread to the poor," the LXX. render "A man cheerful and a giver, God blesses." The sense is practically the same, and bears on the case before us. The cheerfulness and freeness of the gift mark it as being a genuine outflow of Christian life, in which everything is free and cheerful; and are therefore acceptable to God.

**Ver. 8.** An added thought expounding the worth of the foregoing quoted words, viz. the ability of God to supply all our need.

Every grace: emphatic: all the various gifts of God, including earthly gifts looked upon as marks of His undeserved favor; nearly the same as "gift-of-grace" in 1 Corinthians 1:7. See under Romans 1:5.

That in everything, etc.: purpose cherished by ‘God’ who ‘is able, etc.’ ‘In everything,’ takes up ‘every grace.’ The five consecutive universals are exceedingly emphatic. They are evidently chosen to include conspicuously all material needs.

**Sufficiency:** objective possession of, or subjective consciousness of possessing, all that they need. The latter sense here. Same word in 1 Timothy 6:6; Philippians 4:11. They who know that God will supply all their need, and they only, are independent of the uncertainties of life. They can therefore afford to give away money to others. Thus ‘sufficiency’ is essential for large and cheerful giving. The quotation in 2 Corinthians 9:9 suggests that ‘every good work’ refers to, or specially includes, acts of beneficence.

**Abound:** literally, “have something over.” “God is able to pour out upon you abundantly in undeserved favor every good thing; in order that thus in every point and at all times having every need supplied, and being conscious of this, you may have a surplus for every kind of beneficence.”

**Ver. 9.** Quotation, word for word, of Psalm 112:9, ‘according’ with, and thus supporting, the foregoing exposition of God’s purpose.

**Scattered:** gave with a liberal hand, as men sow seed. The quotation was perhaps suggested by 2 Corinthians 9:6, and itself suggests 2 Corinthians 9:10.

**Righteousness:** such conduct as the judge approves and will reward. Cp. Deuteronomy 6:25; 24:13. See under Romans 1:17. The act of beneficence will have an endless reward. This is forcibly represented as a continuance to eternity of the act itself as, by God’s undeserved favor, a claim for reward. But even this ‘righteousness’ is by faith: for it is an outworking of faith and of the Holy Spirit given to believers. This suitable quotation reminds those familiar with it, as does that of 2 Corinthians 9:7, that liberality to the poor is approved and will be rewarded by God.

**Ver. 10.** An assurance, based on an analogy in nature, that God (who is able to do so, 2 Corinthians 9:8) actually will supply whatever is needed “for every good work.” The analogy was suggested, as was probably the word “scattered” in 2 Corinthians 9:9, by the metaphor of 2 Corinthians 9:6.

**Supplies:** derived from a word denoting the payment by wealthy citizens at Athens and elsewhere of the costs, frequently very large, of a “chorus” of singers or dancers at festivals or public entertainments. It suitably describes God’s bountiful supply of the needs of all mankind. Same word in Galatians 3:5; Colossians 2:19; Ephesians 4:16; Philippians 1:19. By supplying ‘seed for the sower’ God supplies ‘bread for’ every one’s ‘eating.’ These exact words are taken from Isaiah 55:10.

**Supply and multiply, etc.:** will give us, and in increasing measure, the ‘sowing’ needful for the reaping of 2 Corinthians 9:6, viz. the material means of doing good.

**And will increase:** or ‘make-to-grow,’ i.e. make your acts productive of good results. Same word in 1 Corinthians 3:7.

**Fruits:** same word in Matthew 26:29. See under Romans 1:13.

**Righteousness:** practical conformity with law, i.e. with the higher law of the Gospel of love. Cp. Matthew 5:10; 6:1. It suggests that in giving their money they were only doing what is right (cp. Romans 15:27) and were doing what God will reward. Cp. 2 Corinthians 9:9. Of this abstract principle of ‘righteousness’ Christian liberality is a natural concrete outgrowth produced by God. He will provide, and in increasing measure, the means of Christian liberality, and will thus give seed to sow for the great harvest; and will make their just liberality productive in still greater degree of good results. In Isaiah 55:10 God declares that, just as He provides for the material needs of men, so the provision in His word for their spiritual needs shall not be in vain. And, by clothing his own spiritual metaphor and argument in the words of Isaiah, Paul gives to it Old Testament authority.

**Ver. 11.** Same truth as in 2 Corinthians 9:10, from another point of view.

**In everything:** as in 2 Corinthians 9:8. It denotes such supply from time to time of every material need as will leave something to spare for Christian giving.

**Rich:** reminds us that they who have more than they need are practically rich.

For all sincerity: God's purpose in thus enriching them. The gifts for the poor Christians at Jerusalem were a wonderful proof of the genuineness of the faith of the Corinthian Christians. And, that they may afford such proof, Paul is confident that from time to time God will give them a measure of wealth.

All sincerity; suggests that, though proved in other ways, Christian sincerity is in some sense defective if not proved by liberality.

Which: viz. their sincerity, thus proved, 'works out.'

Through us: viz. Paul and his colleagues, who suggested and carried out this contribution. Paul added these words remembering that of the praise evoked by the collection he was an instrument. The abstract principle of Christian sincerity, operating through the collection suggested by Paul, called from the lips of those who received it, 'thanksgiving to God.' That the sincerity of the Corinthians, thus manifested, is bringing praise to God, both strengthens the assurance that God will give the means of liberality and becomes a stepping stone to the exposition in 2 Corinthians 9:12-14.

Argument of 2 Corinthians 9:8-11. Liberality is an element, even in the Old Testament, of the character which God approves and will reward. And God designs it to be a proof of the genuineness of His people. But this proof cannot be given unless we first receive from Him a measure of material good. Some degree of wealth is therefore needful for a full development of the Christian life. This, God is able to give. And, just as He supplies the food needful to maintain and develop bodily life, so we may be sure that He will supply all that is needful, including a measure of material good, to develop the spiritual life. How small a measure is sufficient for this end, we learn from Luke 21:2. But, if the widow had not had the mites, she could not have given this noble proof of her sincerity. And many lowly Christians have given from their small store; confident that God designed them to do so, and that He would supply not only their bodily needs but also something to give away. And they have found that day by day God makes them rich enough to give, while some richer men plead poverty.

**Ver. 12-15.** Because, etc.; explains the foregoing words by a matter of fact.



Public-service: see under Romans 15:27, 16; 13:6. It reveals the solemn and public importance of this collection.

The ministry, or ‘ministration,’ of, etc.: the voluntary attention to the needs of others implied in this public service. See under Romans 15:25.

Not only supplying, etc.: the material benefit of the collection, which must be mentioned together with its spiritual gain.

About: 2 Corinthians 9:8: producing results beyond the just mentioned material results.

Thanksgiving to God; takes up the same word in 2 Corinthians 9:11, and is expounded in 2 Corinthians 9:13. “By means of ‘the proof’ that your Christian profession is genuine, proof afforded by ‘this ministration,’ the Christians in Judaea are ‘glorifying’ (see under Romans 1:21) ‘God.’ In their eyes God was magnified through the proved sincerity of the Gentile Christians. The present tense suggests that they had already heard of the collection. This accords with the fact (2 Corinthians 9:2) that it was projected a year ago.

For the submission of your confession... the sincerity of your fellowship: two matters about which they ‘glorify God.’ The submission is that rendered either by their confession or by themselves to their confession. Cp. “obedience to faith” in Romans 1:5. In both places, the two expositions are practically the same. This collection was a conspicuous act of submission to the apostolic authority which enjoined it and to Christ (cp. 2 Corinthians 8:5) for whose glory it was made, by those who professed to be His servants.

Confession, or ‘profession’: Hebrews 4:14; 10:23.

In regard of the Gospel of Christ; goes with ‘glorifying God.’ [Cp. Galatians 6:4; Romans 4:2.] The good news about the Messiah had led Paul’s readers to confess Him and to lay themselves and their possessions on the altar of God. Therefore, the praise of God evoked by their gifts had ‘reference to the Gospel.’

Fellowship, etc.: partnership in rendering help to those in need, as in 2 Corinthians 8:4. See under Romans 15:26f. ‘The sincerity’ was manifested in ‘the fellowship.’ This recalls 2 Corinthians 9:11; 8:2. And the gift to the

unknown brethren in Judaea was a manifestation of brotherhood not only 'towards them' but also 'towards all men.' This was its real worth. The submission to the common Master, and the sincere spirit of brotherhood, of both which proof was given by this collection, revealed to the Jewish Christians the glory of God who had wrought such a disposition in these far off foreigners.

**Ver. 14.** Another result produced in the Jewish Christians.

Longing for you: i.e. "to see and know you," as in Philippians 1:8; Romans 1:11. This longing was mixed 'with supplication' on their behalf. The present tenses in 2 Corinthians 9:12-14 seem to imply that already news of the collection had reached Jerusalem and was already evoking this thanksgiving and affection. For this is evidently the language not of expectation but of narrative. And for all this there was sufficient lapse of time since (cp. 2 Corinthians 9:2) the collection was mooted.

Grace of God, closes DIV. 2 with its opening thought, 2 Corinthians 8:1. The Jewish Christians wonder at the undeserved favor of God which had wrought in the Gentiles such submission and brotherhood and sincerity. Thus they glorified God. They longed to see those in whom He had worked such blessings; and returned their kindness by prayer for them.

**Ver. 15.** As frequently, Paul concludes DIV. 2 with an outburst of praise.

His indescribable gift: probably of Christ and Christianity, of which all-embracing gift the liberality given to the Gentiles was one element. The exultation which culminates in 2 Corinthians 9:15 proves how all-important in Paul's view were the spiritual results of this collection. Whether he had them in view in suggesting the collection, we do not know. But it is not unlikely.

Paul begins 13 by reminding his readers that the money given for the collection is seed sown which will produce a harvest; and that therefore to limit their gifts is to limit their reward. But, while thus suggesting a large gift, he asks that it be, by each one's own deliberate choice: for, as Solomon taught, it is the cheerful giver whom God loves. Their gifts may well be both large and free. For God is able to supply every need of every kind, that they may have a surplus for every kind of good work. Indeed, this surplus for giving away is implied in an ancient promise that gifts to

the poor shall be followed by endless reward. That God supplies our material needs, was appealed to by Isaiah in proof that His word shall accomplish its spiritual aims: and it is a pledge now that He will both supply the means of sowing spiritual seed and make the seed sown productive of spiritual good. Such supply is designed to give proof of Christian sincerity, and thus to bring, as this contribution is already bringing, praise to God. This last point Paul develops. This contribution not only supplies the needs of God's people, but, by affording proof that the Gentile professors of Christianity really submit to Christ and that their Christian brotherhood is genuine, reveals the grandeur of God. And it evokes prayer for them, and an affectionate desire to see them, on the part of those whose needs they are relieving. Of the praise to God thus evoked Paul's own warm gratitude is an example.

The word 'sincerity' in 2 Corinthians 9:11, 13; 8:2, reveals the great spiritual use of earthly wealth, viz. as a proof of our purity of motive in religion. When we spend for Christ and for strangers that which we might spend in self-gratification, we give thereby conspicuous proof that our Christian profession is genuine. This proof, all should be eager to give. And, that a measure of wealth is needful for it, is a pledge that, in ordinary circumstances, God will give this to His people.

THE COLLECTION for the Christian poor at Jerusalem marks an important era in Paul's life. Hitherto his labors have been confined to the eastern DIVISION of the Roman empire. But his work there is now (Romans 15:19, 23) complete: in all the great centers he has planted Christianity. And his thoughts now turn (Romans 15:24; Acts 19:21) towards the West

Throughout all his labors, Paul has felt (Galatians 2:2) the importance of unity and harmony between the Jewish and Gentile parts of the one Christian Church; and has striven to maintain it. His earnest desire to work in connection with the apostles of the circumcision is attested by his visits to Jerusalem after each missionary journey. But his desire for concord has not led him to modify in the least his teaching that the Christian Church is not bound by Jewish trammels. From Galatians 2:11 If we learn that, although this freedom was formally acknowledged by the other apostles, it was not always courageously maintained by them. And we may well

believe that Paul felt that upon himself mainly rested the task of maintaining on the one hand the perfect freedom of the Gospel and on the other the unity of the entire Church.

For some reason, the church at Jerusalem was exceptionally poor. Years ago, (Acts 11:28,) when a general famine had been foretold, the Christians at Antioch, perhaps at Paul's suggestion, thought of, and resolved to relieve, the foreseen distress at Jerusalem. And at a later date (Galatians 2:10) Peter urged the same matter on Paul's attention.

At the time this Epistle was written the same poverty was pressing, and for some time (1 Corinthians 16:1) had been pressing, upon the mother church of Christendom. And Paul resolved to fulfill his promise (Galatians 2:10) made long ago to Peter. That Paul gave directions (1 Corinthians 16:1) for the collection in Galatia, Macedonia, and Greece, makes it very probable that he did the same at Ephesus, where he was living when he gave these directions and where he labored so long and so successfully. We may therefore infer that he started a united effort throughout the Gentile churches to relieve the distress at Jerusalem. It was probably the first general effort by men of one nation for the help of another.

Paul's earnestness in this matter, and his joy at the spiritual effects already produced (2 Corinthians 9:12ff) even by the promise of help, suggest that these spiritual effects were foreseen by him and were his chief aim in the whole effort. We may well conceive that he desired to give to the Jewish Christians this proof (2 Corinthians 9:13) of the reality and extent of the work among the Gentiles, that thus he might link together in the ties of affection the Jewish and Gentile parts of the Church, while at the same time he taught the Gentiles how much they owed to the ancient people of God and taught the Jewish Christians, what they were evidently very slow to learn, that the full possession of Gospel privileges was not confined to those who were circumcised. Before going to the West, the Apostle of the Gentiles wished to erect a monument to the success of his preaching in the East and to the truth of the free Gospel he had preached.

When and how the first directions were given to the Galatians and Macedonians, we do not know. But Titus, sent by Paul, began the contribution at Corinth. See note under 2 Corinthians 9:5. The Corinthians took up the matter so readily, and were so eager to contribute at once, that,

moved by their example which Paul quoted, the Macedonians not only showed a similar or greater readiness but accomplished at once their good purpose. The effect of the example of the Corinthians, and his own credit for veracity, made Paul now anxious that their action should correspond with their promises. He therefore sent Titus again to Corinth, accompanied by two others, to push forward the collection, so that on Paul's arrival it might be ready. And for the same end he wrote DIV. 2 of this Epistle, and sent the Epistle to Corinth by Titus and his companions.

Paul introduces the matter by describing the liberality of the Macedonians. This example, he has no need to urge the Corinthians to imitate. The greater example of Christ is sufficient for them. He remembers that they were the first to accept his suggestion for a collection; and that their gifts must be measured by, and will be accepted in proportion to, their ability to give. Paul then commends Titus and his companions, and explains the purpose of their mission. While doing so, he again refers for a moment to his readers' readiness to help and to its effect upon the Macedonians. He then concludes his reference to the contribution by reminding his readers that it is seed sown which will produce a harvest and should therefore be given cheerfully; that God is able to give them all means needful for the development of their Christian life, and therefore the means of Christian liberality; and that the promised contribution is already working out abundant spiritual results.

That in the Book of Acts we have no direct mention of this collection, accords with the scanty notice (Acts 20:1-3) of the period in which it was made; and gives great value to the undesigned reference in Acts 24:17. That in the Epistle to the Galatians we have no reference to it, suggests, as does the great similarity of the contents, that it was written about the same time as the Epistle to the Romans, when the collection was everywhere completed. And Galatians 2:10; 6:9f show that the poverty of the Christians at Jerusalem and the need for Christian liberality were present to the apostle's mind. The various references in the New Testament to his collection afford by their many coincidences a most valuable confirmation of the genuineness and the historic truthfulness of the writings which contain them.

## DIVISION III

### PAUL'S REPLY TO HIS OPPONENTS

#### CHAPTERS 10-13

#### SECTION 14

***HE BEGS THEM NOT TO FORCE HIM TO USE HIS  
DIVINELY-GIVEN AUTHORITY, THE LIMITS OF WHICH HE HAS  
NEVER EXCEEDED***

#### CHAPTER 10

*I Paul myself exhort you by the meekness and clemency of Christ, who, though face to face lowly among you yet when absent am bold towards you. But I beg that I may not when present be bold with the confidence with which I reckon it needful to be daring towards some who reckon us as walking according to flesh. For, though walking in flesh, not according to flesh do we make war. For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful before God for pulling down of strong places, while we are pulling down reasonings and every high thing which lifts itself up against the knowledge of God and are leading captive every thought to the obedience of Christ, and are holding ourselves in readiness to avenge all disobedience, whenever your obedience may be made full.*

*At the appearances, do you look? If any one trusts to himself to be Christ's, this let him reckon again in himself, that as he is Christ's so also are we. For even if something more abundantly I boast about our authority which the Lord gave for building up and not for pulling you down, I shall not be put to shame; that I*

*may not seem as though terrifying you with the letters. Because the letters, says one, are heavy and strong; but the bodily presence is weak, and the utterance despised. This let such a one reckon, that such as we are in our word by letters when absent such also when present in our work.*

*For we dare not place ourselves among, or compare ourselves with, some of those who recommend themselves. But they, measuring themselves with themselves, are not intelligent. We, however, not in reference to the measureless things will we boast, but according to the measure of the standard which God has measured to us, a measure to reach even as far as you. For not as not reaching to you do we stretch ourselves beyond bounds. (For as far as even you we have advanced in the Gospel of Christ.) Not in reference to the measureless things boasting in other men's labors, but having hope, while your faith is increasing, among you to be enlarged according to our standard, to abundance, to preach the Gospel as far as the places beyond, not to boast in another man's standard touching the things already done.*

*But "he that boasts, let him boast in the Lord." (Jeremiah 9:24.) For not he who commends himself, not that man is approved, but whom the Lord commends.*

Placing himself suddenly and conspicuously before his readers, Paul opens DIV. 3; in which he defends himself, not as in DIV. 1 against general suspicion and by a general proof of the grandeur of the apostolic ministry, but against specific misrepresentations by definite persons. And, just as the joyful ending of DIV. 1 opened a way for the financial business of DIV. 2, so the grateful ending of DIV. 2 affords an easy platform of approach to the unpleasant matter of DIV. 3

That DIV. 3 is a reply to calumnies known now only by this reply, makes it in part obscure to us. As we pass along we must gather, as well as we can, the nature of these calumnies, and then endeavor to understand Paul's reply to them.

**Ver. 1.** I myself Paul: the great Apostle, condescending to plead, alone his own cause before his children in the Gospel.

Meekness: see under 1 Corinthians 4:21. ‘Christ’ on earth (Matthew 11:29; 21:5) constantly refrained from asserting Himself. This appeal reveals Paul’s consciousness of the danger, when reproving others, of indulging a self-assertion unworthy of Christ; a beautiful trait of his character.

Clemency: a disposition to temper justice with equity, kindness, and benevolence. Same word in Acts 24:4; 1 Peter 2:18; Philippians 4:5. Paul strengthens his appeal (cp. Romans 21:1) by pointing to the known character of Christ. “Do not compel me to lay aside the meekness and clemency so conspicuous in Christ, my Master and Pattern.”

Who face to face, etc.: the very reproach of his enemies (2 Corinthians 10:10) used as an additional plea.

Lowly among you: during his previous visit to Corinth; a beautiful picture of the apostle, going about unobtrusively among his converts, asserting as little as possible his apostolic authority, and not even claiming from them maintenance. Cp. 1 Thessalonians 2:7. He had thus imitated ‘the meekness of Christ.’ But he fears that he must now act otherwise.

Am bold (or ‘courageous,’ 2 Corinthians 10:6) towards you: in the strong and fearless language of the First Epistle and in the rest of this. Paul’s habitual gentleness when at Corinth claims respect for his present fearless severity. This verse suitably and modestly introduces DIV. 3, where more than anywhere else in his writings he puts himself prominently before his readers.

**Ver. 2.** But I beg; takes up and strengthens “I exhort” in 2 Corinthians 10:1. Paul entreats them not to compel a man who has hitherto been gentle in their midst and bold only from a distance to be now bold when present with them.

With the confidence; explains the boldness he is reluctant to manifest.

I reckon: Paul’s calculation about his own conduct when he shall come to Corinth. [Cp. “judge” in 2 Corinthians 2:1; 1 Corinthians 2:2; 7:37.] The



inserted word ‘needful’ is necessary for English idiom and gives the evident ground of his calculation.

Daring: same word in 1 Corinthians 6:1; Romans 10:20; 5:7. It is stronger than “bold” in 2 Corinthians 10:1, and suggests peril. It makes therefore a climax. Paul has resolved to trample under foot, if need be, fear of man and of consequences. But he begs his readers not to compel him to do this.

Towards some, etc.; introduces definite opponents, whose presence we shall feel throughout DIV. 3 Their opposition arose from false ‘reckoning’ about Paul’s conduct. They have made their reckoning about him and he has made his reckoning about what he will do to them. Cp. 2 Corinthians 12:20; 13:2.

According to flesh: as in 2 Corinthians 1:17, which refers to the same false estimate. Cp. Romans 8:4. They supposed that Paul’s steps were directed by the needs and desires of the present bodily life.

This verse implies that there may be occasions requiring the Christian to lay aside the meekness and clemency which Christ loved to manifest, and to assert himself and act with severity. Sometimes (John 2:15) Christ did so. But Paul’s example warns us to do this, as he did, reluctantly and only after efforts to avoid it have failed, as something abnormal caused and justified by abnormal circumstances.

**Ver. 3-5.** These verses justify Paul’s “confidence,” and thus both support his request and disprove the false reckoning of his opponents.

Walk, carry on war: a climax. His path is beset with foes: and therefore his march is a battle.

In flesh, according to flesh: conspicuous contrast. A body of ‘flesh’ is the surrounding element ‘in’ which, (cp. Galatians 2:20; 5:17,) but not the directive principle ‘according to’ which, he carries on the conflict of life. See under Romans 8:4.

According to flesh; with aims, means, and methods, suggested by the needs and desires of bodily life.

The weapons: Romans 6:13: an important element in all war, determining almost all else. According to our 'weapons' will be the aim and the method of our 'warfare.'

Fleshly: Romans 15:27; 1 Corinthians 3:3. The means on which Paul relies for victory do not belong to our present bodily life. It is needless to say "but are spiritual." Paul therefore adds as a contrast what is practically a proof that 'the weapons are not fleshly,' viz. their supernatural effectiveness.

Powerful before God: literally 'to God,' i.e. in God's estimate. Cp. Acts 7:20.

Strong-places: a common word for fortresses. Same word in Proverbs 10:29; 21:22.

While we pull down, etc.; depicts the actual efficacy of these weapons in the hands of Paul.

Reckonings: calculations about things around and about our own conduct.

And every high thing: wider than 'reckonings.' All lofty thoughts about ourselves and our powers hinder us from knowing God. For we cannot know Him as the supply of all our needs, as our strength and joy and life, until we have seen ourselves to be needy and helpless and lost, i.e. until every high thought within us has been brought down to the dust. Therefore 'every high thing' in man lifts 'itself up against the knowledge of God.' Cp. 1 Corinthians 1:20, 27ff.

And leading-captive, etc.: another aspect of the victory which Paul is gaining.

Thought: result of perception, or mental vision. Formerly our thoughts raised themselves up, thus keeping out the knowledge of God. Now, they not only bow down into the dust but bow to Christ who died for us that He may be our Lord. Not only ourselves but 'every thought' in us must bow to Him. The present participles do not imply actual universal achievement, which 2 Corinthians 10:6 contradicts; but, according to Greek usage, the meaning and purpose of the work in which Paul was actually engaged. Cp. 2 Corinthians 5:19; Romans 2:4. God permits men to resist both His own influences and His servants' efforts.

**Ver. 6.** Another element in Paul's warfare, and another proof that his weapons have superhuman power.

Every disobedience; implies that some professed Christians do not surrender themselves to obey, but actually resist, Christ.

Avenge: merited and conspicuous punishment. Cp. 2 Corinthians 13:2ff; 1 Corinthians 4:21; 5:5; Acts 13:11; 5:5; terrible proofs of apostolic power.

Holding ourselves in readiness, etc.: but not actually avenging. This suggests that Paul was not accustomed to vengeance, though he was prepared for it.

Your obedience: in contrast to these opponents whom Paul is careful throughout DIV. 3 to distinguish from his readers. This suggests that they were few, and perhaps foreigners, i.e. Jews. For them Paul betrays no hope: upon them he is able and ready to inflict severe punishment.

Your obedience made full: by shaking off all connection with those who resist Paul. Else they would be involved in the punishment. Therefore Paul delays to punish till his readers have cleared themselves from complicity with the crime: and with this motive (2 Corinthians 1:23) he postponed his visit to Corinth.

The opposition of his enemies suggests to Paul a military metaphor. To him life is not only a walk but a warfare. But he is equipped with superhuman weapons, with which he pulls down whatever in man lifts itself up, thus hindering men from knowing God, and brings every thought to bow to God; and with which he is able to punish all that resist. This reveals the error of those who look upon Paul as acting merely from human motives and with human powers. And it gives immense force to his appeal to be allowed to leave unused these great punitive powers and to imitate the meekness and clemency of Christ. Thus Paul begins his self-defense by an entreaty that his opponents will not compel him to punish them; and gives proof of his power to do so by pointing to the spiritual triumphs of blessing, far above human power, which he obtains day by day in the hearts of men. For these triumphs prove that the power of God is with him. Similarly in 2 Corinthians 1:19, he claims credit for veracity by pointing to the truthfulness of Christ whose word he preaches.

**Ver.** 7-8. After pointing to the spiritual victories which prove his divine mission, Paul reasserts (2 Corinthians 10:7-11) in contradiction to his opponents his authority and power; and declares (2 Corinthians 10:12-18) that in exercising it among the Corinthians he is keeping within the limits marked out for him by Christ.

Appearances: same word as, and recalling, “face to face” in 2 Corinthians 10:1. Cp. 2 Corinthians 5:12. Some despised Paul because of his lowly appearance and demeanor among them. He asks whether it is on the outside of things that they fix their attention; and then directs them to something which merits their thoughtful calculation.

Trusts to himself to be Christ’s; is easily understood apart from, and therefore does not of itself imply, any reference to the Christ-party (1 Corinthians 1:12) at Corinth. Whether this party was actually in Paul’s thought, we cannot now determine. He bids his opponents, instead of looking at externals and reckoning accordingly, to make another ‘reckoning’ from the solitude of their inner selves. He does not think fit to deny here that his opponents are ‘Christ’s’ servants, but he claims to have given proof that he ‘also’ is such. This appeal derives its force from the proof given in 2 Corinthians 10:5 that Paul and his colleagues are doing with superhuman weapons Christ’s work. And it is worthy of thoughtful consideration by all who engage in religious controversy. 2 Corinthians 10:8 asserts that Paul not only is Christ’s but has received from Christ special authority.

Somewhat more abundantly; even than he has done in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6.

Building up, not pulling down: 2 Corinthians 13:10. He may have to pull down; but only in consequence of abnormal circumstances and with a view to further building up. Therefore he will pull down as little as possible. The contrast, ‘I boast, our authority,’ found throughout the Epistle, suggests that the plural is chosen, not as in 1 Thessalonians. 3: if probably for Paul alone, but to include others. They share ‘the authority:’ the ‘boast’ is his only.

Shall not be put to shame: facts will justify even this larger boast.

**Ver.** 9-11. God will make good even this larger boast ‘in order that’ His servant’s written words ‘may not seem to be’ empty ‘terrifying;’ as they would seem if he were “put to shame.”

The letters: the First Epistle, the lost one, (1 Corinthians 5:9,) and possibly others unknown to us.

Heavy: severe.

Strong: such as influence men.

Bodily presence weak; does not necessarily mean that Paul’s personal appearance was even by his enemies thought to be undignified. For this taunt will be disproved (2 Corinthians 10:11) when he comes. Cp. 1 Corinthians 2:3. It is sufficiently accounted for by Paul’s unobtrusive demeanor (2 Corinthians 10:1) among his converts. Nor can reliance be placed on uncertain traditions about his small stature and bodily weakness: although the latter is not unlikely. For they are sufficiently explained by his name (Paulus: a little one) and by this verse.

Despised: by his opponents; perhaps owing to his studied simplicity (1 Corinthians 2:1) of style. Another verdict is given in Acts 14:12.

Let such a one reckon: “Let him reasonably infer from the character revealed in my letters how I shall act when present.” Paul made his presence little felt among the Corinthians because there were then no gross offenses requiring punishment. And he preferred to do good in an unostentatious manner, not even (1 Corinthians 1:16) baptizing his own converts. He now bids his opponents infer from his letters how he will act in altered circumstances.

**Ver.** 12-16. Exposition, after expounding the word “terrify” in 2 Corinthians 10:9, of “the authority” claimed in 2 Corinthians 10:8. Paul thus supports the foregoing threat.

We dare not; suggests the peril of the conduct of his adversaries. Cp. Romans 15:18.

Or compare ourselves: “place ourselves among or place ourselves beside.”

Some of those; singles out definite persons whom Paul has in mind.

But they: in contrast to Paul who dares not measure himself thus.

Among themselves; includes each with himself, and each [cp. Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13, 16] with others of the same class. They take themselves and their companions as a standard of what men ought to be; and having no other standard they form a senseless estimate.

Intelligent: same word in Romans 3:11; 15:21; Ephesians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 1:19; Romans 1:21; Ephesians 3:4: so to put things together as to interpret rightly their significance and to understand their real nature. These men, by taking themselves as their measure, showed that they did not rightly interpret conduct and character.

But we: in conspicuous contrast to the foregoing.

The unmeasured things: the indefinite and undefinable fancies which were all that the boasting of the opponents had in view. Paul declares that he will not boast in reference to such phantoms.

But according to the measure, etc.: the standard by which Paul's boasting shall be measured, viz. the divinely marked out limits of his apostolic work.

The standard: literally the 'canon,' which is a Greek word denoting a straight wooden staff, then a measure of any material, then an authoritative rule of conduct. Paul represents God as marking out, as if with a measuring staff, his apostolic field of labor, (cp. Galatians 2:7,) and declares that according to the measure thus marked out his boasting shall be. Of anything beyond these limits, he will not speak. His highest boast will be "I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do."

A measure, etc.; specifies the measure thus marked out, viz. that it includes Corinth.

**Ver. 14.** Proof of the last words of 2 Corinthians 10:13. The argument is: Corinth is within our limits; for beyond these we do not stretch ourselves; yet we have actually come to Corinth. ['Yet.' best rendering of *γαρ*, when, as here and often, it introduces the minor premise. It has thus its usual confirmatory force.] That Paul does not go beyond his divinely-appointed limits, he leaves his readers to judge from the divinely-given success of his

labors. And, if not, Corinth is within his appointed sphere. In other words, in coming to Corinth he was sent by God.

In the Gospel: as in 2 Corinthians 8:18; Romans 1:9; 1 Corinthians 9:18. It expounds the spiritual and soul-saving significance of “as far as even to you we have advanced.”

**Ver.** 15-16. Not in reference to the unmeasured things boasting; takes up the same words in 2 Corinthians 10:13, and continues the description of the boasting in which Paul will not indulge. Consequently, 2 Corinthians 10:14, needful to prove the last words of 2 Corinthians 10:13, is a parenthesis.

In other men's labors: cp. Romans 15:20. The opponents boasted of the influence they had gained in a church which Paul's toilsome and weary labors had founded and among men who directly or indirectly owe to him their conversion.

Having however hope: Paul's actual feelings about the Corinthians. The continued 'increasing' of their 'faith' was a needful condition of the enlargement of Paul's field of labor.

In you to be enlarged: same phrase in Philippians 1:20, but in a different sense. It is explained in 2 Corinthians 10:16. Paul suggests, though perhaps he does not necessarily imply, that their 'faith' is already 'increasing.' And, if so, he will be able to leave them and go to preach to others beyond. Thus 'in' them, i.e. through their growing 'faith,' Paul's field of labor, and therefore himself, i.e. his own influence and success, will be 'enlarged.' But even this hoped-for enlargement will be 'according to' his divinely-given 'standard.' For to all the Gentiles (Romans 1:5) he is sent.

For abundance: something beyond and above. See under 2 Corinthians 9:12. It is explained in 2 Corinthians 10:16, which gives Paul's purpose in cherishing this hope, viz. to preach the Gospel in places still further off than Corinth. He is thinking probably of his projected (Romans 15:24; Acts 19:21) journey to Rome and Spain: an interesting coincidence of thought. The repetition in 2 Corinthians 10:16b reveals Paul's deep sense how unjust is his opponents' boasting. While his thoughts about the Corinthians, whom he had led to Christ, were that their increasing faith would enable him to break up new ground still further off, his opponents

were exulting about things in a field allotted by God to Paul, and in reference to work which they found 'already done.' With such men Paul dares not compare himself. And, since he is acting, as he has asserted and in some measure proved, within his appointed limits, his readers may expect to find him carrying out when present at Corinth the threats of his letters.

**Ver. 17-18.** A general principle suggested by the contrary conduct of Paul's opponents, supported by another general principle, and suitably preparing the way for Paul's boasting in 15-18. Same words in 1 Corinthians 1:31. 2 Corinthians 10:18 is a reason why they who exult should have Christ, for whom they labor and from whom they expect reward, as the element of their exultation.

Who recommends himself: as (2 Corinthians 10:12) these men did.

Approved: proved to be genuine, as in 1 Corinthians 11:19.

The Lord commends; by evident marks of approval. If we remember that the only proofs of real worth are those which Christ gives, all our exultation will have Him for its element, and all mere human boasting will be shut out.

Paul begins his defense by threatening reluctantly to lay aside his accustomed and Christlike lowliness, and fearlessly to punish his opponents. That he is able to do this, is proved by the superhuman power with which he is accustomed to overcome in his converts the spiritual forces of evil. With the same power he is prepared to inflict punishment. But he waits till his readers have shaken themselves free from all connection with his enemies, lest the blows which will fall upon these also strike them.

Men must not look at externals, but must reason intelligently about realities. To Paul, Christ has given authority over His Church. About this he might say more than he has said, without exceeding what will be proved to be true. For he is not one who terrifies merely from a distance. But he remembers that the purpose of his authority is not to pull down but to build up. His readers have abundant proof that he will make good the threats of his letters. How great the contrast between himself and his opponents! All their boasting is reckless self-commendation. No standard



except themselves and their companions have they for their self-measurement; which is therefore no measurement at all. All their boasting is about their influence over men who but for Paul would not have been Christians. But, when speaking about his readers, Paul speaks about those who are within the bounds specially marked out for him by God. For, in view of his spiritual success, none can say that, when he came to Corinth, he exceeded those bounds. So far is he from boasting without a measure and about other men's labors that his chief thought about his own converts at Corinth is that their increasing faith will enable him to enter the fresh ground which still remains untouched within the marked out boundaries of his apostolic work. He concludes by reminding his opponents and himself remembering that all boasting must have Christ for its element: for the only commendation which is proof of real worth comes from Him.

## SECTION 15

### PAUL'S BOASTING: HIS REFUSAL OF MAINTENANCE

#### CHAPTER 11:1-15

*Would that you bore with a morsel of senselessness of mine! Nay, indeed, bear with me. For I am jealous about you with a jealousy of God. For I have betrothed you to one man, to present to Christ a pure virgin. But I fear lest in any way as the serpent deceived Eve with his craftiness so your thoughts be corrupted from simplicity and purity towards Christ. For if he who comes is proclaiming another Jesus whom we did not proclaim, or another kind of spirit you are receiving which you did not receive, or another kind of gospel which you did not accept, you would bear with it nobly. For I reckon to have fallen nothing short of the overmuch apostles: but if I am indeed uninstructed in utterance, yet not in knowledge; but in everything we have made it manifest among all towards you.*

*Or, a sin did I commit, when humbling myself that you may be exalted, that as a free gift God's Gospel I announced to you. Other churches I plundered, by taking wages for ministry to you. And when present with you and brought to want I pressed upon no one. For my want the brothers supplied when they came from Macedonia. And, in everything, not burdensome I kept myself, and I will keep. It is truth of Christ in me that this boasting shall not be put to silence in reference to me in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows. But what I do I also will do, that I may cut off the occasion of those who wish an occasion, that in the matter in which they boast they may be found to be as we also are. For such men are false apostles, guileful workmen, men fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder: For Satan himself fashions himself into an angel of light. No great thing then if also his ministers*

*fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end will be according to their works.*

Sections 15-18, containing Paul's boasting about himself, are the kernel of DIV. 3; as are 4-8, containing his boasting about the apostolic ministry, of DIV. 1 Already, in 2 Corinthians 10:12-16, by contrasting himself with them, he has rebuked his adversaries. He will now cover them with shame, that thus he may rescue his readers from their snares, by a recital (15) of his own refusal to be maintained by the church, of (16) his hardships and perils, of (17) his wondrous revelations tempered with special affliction, and of (18) his credentials to and love for his readers. Of this, as of all human boasting, he has already in 2 Corinthians 10:17f struck the true keynote.

In 2 Corinthians 11:1-4 Paul apologizes for, and justifies, his boasting, by his relation to his readers and his fears about them. In 2 Corinthians 11:5, 6 he begins his boasting by comparing himself with his opponents, and by a general statement about himself and his colleagues. In 2 Corinthians 11:7-12 we have the first item of boasting, justified in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 by a terrible description of his opponents.

**Ver. 1.** My morsel: more literally, 'my little bit of senselessness.' Paul admits the foolishness of talking about oneself; but claims forbearance on the ground that he does not say much.

Senselessness: 2 Corinthians 11:16, 17, 19, 21; 12:6, 11: without intelligence, opposite to "prudent," 2 Corinthians 11:19. To talk about oneself is usually a mark of unsound mind. Of this folly, to a small extent and (2 Corinthians 11:13) to serve God, Paul will now be guilty. These words (cp. 2 Corinthians 11:16; 12:1, 11) betray a man unaccustomed to speak about himself. He cannot do so, even to serve God, without apology.

Nay, indeed, etc.; corrects the foregoing lament that his readers do not bear with his momentary weakness, by a request that they will do so.

**Ver. 2.** Reason why they should bear with Paul.

Jealousy (see under 1 Corinthians 12:31) of God: which God cherishes about them. Paul's thoughts about the Corinthians are an outflow of

thoughts in the breast of God. And this gives him a strong claim to their indulgence. This jealousy, 2 Corinthians 11:2b explains and justifies.

Betrothed, to present: the marriage not yet consummated. So Ephesians 5:27; Matthew 25:6; Revelation 19:7ff. Already believers are Christ's in spirit: in that day they will be His in body also. And this affiancing of the Corinthians to Christ was brought about by the labors of Paul.

One man; makes prominent Christ's unique claim to their undivided devotion.

To present, etc.: Paul's purpose in the betrothal. Cp. Ephesians 5:27.

Pure virgin: each word significant. Paul's feelings about the Corinthians were similar to those of Abraham's servant when bringing to Canaan a maiden to be wife of his master's son. Cp. Jeremiah 3:1-14; Ezekiel. 16:, etc. The frequency of this metaphor reveals the importance of the analogy on which it rests. What every man claims from his betrothed, God claims from us. Thus the human is, and doubtless was designed to be, a pattern of the divine.

**Ver. 3.** Continues Paul's explanation of his "jealousy."

In any way; reveals, as in 2 Corinthians 2:7; 9:4; 12:20, a watchful anxiety which takes everything into account.

Serpent, Eve, deceived, craftiness; recall vividly the details of Genesis 3:1-13.

Corrupt, or 'damage': as in 2 Corinthians 7:2; 1 Corinthians 3:17; 15:33; Ephesians 4:22.

Thoughts: the products of their mental activity, as in 2 Corinthians 10:5; 2:11; 3:14; Philippians 4:7.

Sincerity towards Christ: singleness of purpose, i.e. a heart ruled by the one purpose of loyalty to Christ. Same word in same sense in 2 Corinthians 8:2; 9:11, 13; Romans 12:8; Ephesians 6:5. Paul feared lest their thoughts should be so injuriously affected as to turn away from the absolute fidelity which Christ claims from His betrothed. The comparison with Eve, easily suggested by the metaphor of 2 Corinthians 11:2, both justifies Paul's fear and finds excuse for the objects of it. For Eve in

Paradise was pure: yet she fell. And ‘the serpent’s craftiness’ suggests, as 2 Corinthians 11:15 asserts, that the Corinthians were exposed to similar perils.

And purity: see Appendix B.

This comparison suggests that Paul accepted Genesis 3:1-13 as historic fact. See my ‘Romans’ Diss. III. For a fable could give no ground for his fear, and would be inconsistent with the earnestness of this passage. And the comparison suggests that the serpent was a mouthpiece of a spiritual foe. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:14; Revelation 12:9; 20:2; Wisdom 2:24.

**Ver.** 4. Reason for Paul’s fear, viz. his readers’ conduct and disposition.

He who comes: any strange arrival, looked upon in Paul’s vivid conception as a definite person. It suggests that Paul’s opponents at Corinth were men from without. So 2 Corinthians 10:6.

Proclaim: as a herald; see Romans 2:21. They acknowledge ‘Jesus’ of Nazareth to be the Christ; but so misrepresent His teaching as practically to portray ‘another Jesus,’ i.e. a man quite different from Him whom Paul ‘proclaimed.’

You are receiving: not necessarily actually received; but their minds were going in that direction. See 2 Corinthians 10:5.

Another kind of spirit; probably does not refer to “the spirit of the world,” (1 Corinthians 2:12: cp. Ephesians 2:2,) but suggests in irony the powerlessness of the opponents to impart the Holy Spirit. Any animating principle received from them must be of ‘another kind’ from Him whom they had already ‘received’ through Paul’s ministry. Cp. Galatians 3:2.

Another kind of Gospel: Galatians 1:6.

Accepted: 1 Thessalonians 2:13: welcomed as true. Paul supposes them to be listening to something quite different from the good news which they had heard and accepted from his lips.

Received, accepted; claims their own previous welcome to the Gospel in support of what he now says.

Jesus, the Spirit, the Gospel: the three great factors of the Christian life. Touching each of these, Paul contrasts his teaching and its results with that of his opponents.

Nobly: bitter irony.

You would bear with it: or (R.V. Greek text) 'you bear with it.' The latter reading states simple matter of fact. The former represents Paul as feeling the utter impossibility of his own supposition; and, instead of saying, "you bear it," as merely saying that if it were possible his readers 'would bear with it nobly.' The reading is quite uncertain.

**Ver.** 5-6. A short summary, introducing the boasting of 15-18; and justifying the contrast, unfavorable to the opponents, implied in 2 Corinthians 11:4. It reveals the purpose of the whole boasting, viz. to cover Paul's opponents with shame, and thus save his readers from their snares.

Fallen-short: 2 Corinthians 12:11; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 12:24: to be behind, or deficient, in anything. Grammar does not decide whether Paul refers to a past and now continuing falling short, or to something future and continuing. Cp. 2 Corinthians 10:10; 5:11. The former is more likely.

The overmuch apostles: the false apostles of 2 Corinthians 11:13. It continues the irony of 2 Corinthians 11:4. There is no hint of a reference to the twelve. 2 Corinthians 11:6 begins Paul's boasting, by meeting a charge of his opponents, already quoted in 2 Corinthians 10:10.

Uninstructed: same word as "private-member" in 1 Corinthians 14:16, 23f. See notes. Paul admits that he has not had the special training in rhetoric given in the schools. But this is not inconsistent with that eloquent which is the natural outgrowth of full knowledge and deep earnestness, and which breathes in every page of Paul's epistles. Yet we can well conceive that Paul did not use the artificial modes of arrangement and expression then in vogue in the schools, to which probably then as in all ages inferior men attached great importance.

Not in knowledge: acquaintance with the matter in hand, which is infinitely more important than modes of utterance.

We have made it manifest: viz. the just-mentioned ‘knowledge.’ Paul means probably that ‘in everything’ he did he gave proof, ‘among all’ men, of his knowledge, by his action towards the Corinthians. He thus appeals, in support of the assertion in 2 Corinthians 11:6a, to his own known work.

Towards you: cp. 2 Corinthians 1:12.

Manifest in: as in 2 Corinthians 4:10f.

I am... we have. While defending himself Paul remembers that his defense avails equally for his colleagues.

**Ver. 7.** From his first boast, viz. of “knowledge,” Paul now turns to a second.

Or was it a sin, etc.; suggests perhaps, but does not necessarily prove, that this boast, like the last, may be a reproach from his adversaries. For it may be that Paul merely throws his boast into the form of a reply to a conceivable objection that thus he may place his conduct and that of his opponents in a stronger light.

When humbling myself, etc.; a preliminary comment on the following fact, revealing its bearing upon this question. Paul submitted to menial toil and actual want (2 Corinthians 11:8) in order that thus the Gospel might have unhindered progress (1 Corinthians 9:12) and might raise the Corinthians into the lofty position of sons of God. Cp. 2 Corinthians 8:9.

That-as-a-free-gift, etc.: the supposed sin committed by Paul.

As-a-free-gift: without receiving pay from his converts.

Free-gift.... Gospel of God: appropriate collocation. Cp. Romans 5:15. It could not be a sin to announce without cost the good news which God had sent into the world; especially when in doing so he was making himself low that his hearers might be lifted up.

**Ver. 8-9.** Facts explaining, and showing the force of, the statement implied in the question of 2 Corinthians 11:7.

Other churches: those of Macedonia (2 Corinthians 11:9, Philippians 4:15f) and possibly others; from whom Paul received money to enable him to preach at Corinth without cost to the Corinthians.

Plundered: a daring hyperbole. If sin was committed, it was against the 'other churches.'

Minister to you: to render them the free and honorable service of preaching the Gospel. Cp. 2 Corinthians 5:18. The following words suggest that 2 Corinthians 11:8a refers to money received before Paul came to Corinth. And contributions received in Thessalonica before his first visit to Corinth (Acts 17:1; 18:1) are mentioned in Philippians 4:16. Either to these or to gifts received after he left Macedonia, Philippians 4:15 may refer. Perhaps Paul accepted the second contribution sent to him at Thessalonica in view of his needs in the missionary journey still before him. And, if so, he took pay from other churches in order to preach the Gospel at Corinth.

2 Corinthians 11:9a is a second and more startling fact.

Brought to want: probably because his labors in the Gospel did not leave him sufficient time to earn a livelihood.

Present with you; recalls with almost tragic force Paul laboring among the Corinthians, how earnestly and successfully they knew well, and yet in want.

Press-down-upon: 2 Corinthians 12:13: a very rare word denoting to press upon so as to paralyze. Another hyperbole. They could not say that he laid paralyzing burdens upon them for his own maintenance. 2 Corinthians 11:9b states another fact which explains how Paul avoided burdening his readers.

The brothers: well known to the readers; perhaps Silas and Timothy. Cp. Acts 18:5, "when they came from Macedonia, i.e. Silas and Timothy, Paul was being held fast by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ"; which seems to imply that when they came he was fully occupied with preaching.

When they came, etc.: their coming put an end to his 'want.'



In everything; includes demands for money and whatever else might seem to oppress them.

And will keep; lays emphasis on Paul's refusal to be burdensome, as being an expression of a deliberate and abiding purpose.

2 Corinthians 11:7-9 reveal an interesting trait of the inner apostolic life of Paul, a practical working out of his set purpose (1 Corinthians 9:12, 15ff) to preach the Gospel without cost. At Corinth (Acts 18:3) and at Thessalonica (2 Thessalonians 3:7ff) and at Ephesus (Acts 20:34) he toiled at menial labor to support himself and his companions. And he did not give to the Gospel merely his spare time, after earning a livelihood; but spent to supply his bodily needs only the time not occupied by evangelical work. Consequently, although his weary toil was continued into the night, (2 Thessalonians 3:8,) he was unable to keep himself from want: for he could not restrain (Acts 18:5) his evangelical activity, and would not lay a burden upon his new converts. This last he refused to do lest he might hide the true nature of the Gospel under the appearance of worldly self-seeking. Yet he accepted with gratitude free gifts from a distance: for these he felt to be a meet expression of spiritual life.

**Ver.** 10-12, Dwells upon, and explains the motive of, the deliberate purpose asserted in the last words of 2 Corinthians 11:9.

Truth of Christ: the exact correspondence of Christ's words with facts, past, present, or future. See under Romans 1:18. Since Christ lives in Paul, (Galatians 2:20,) this element of His character is found in Paul. To this he now appeals. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:18; Romans 9:1.

That this boasting, etc.: an assertion which is a 'truth of Christ' in Paul.

This boasting: viz. "I have kept myself... and will keep."

In reference to me: as in 2 Corinthians 10:13, 15, 16; Galatians 6:4; cp. Romans 4:2: not quite the same as "my boasting." Others besides Paul might boast about his refusal to burden the church. The presence of opponents made it specially important that 'in the regions of Achaia' this boasting should not be silenced. 'Why?' interrupts the discourse as if to compel the readers to consider Paul's conduct and motive.

Because I do not love you? His refusal of money from the Corinthians while accepting it from the Macedonians might seem to be an act of contemptuous dislike. For we seldom refuse a gift from those we love.

God knows: before whom (2 Corinthians 11:11) Paul's heart and apostolic work "are made manifest."

**Ver. 12.** Paul's real purpose in refusing to burden the Corinthians. To us it is obscure through our ignorance of the precise conduct of his opponents. The 'occasion' (as in Romans 7:8) they sought was probably an opportunity of boasting to Paul's disadvantage. And he was resolved so to act as to prevent this. It is easiest to suppose that these Jews who had come to Corinth boasted that they were disinterested and unpaid benefactors of the Corinthians; and that they were seeking an opportunity to show that Paul was not such, and was therefore inferior to themselves. Had he accepted maintenance from the Corinthians, these men would have found the opportunity they sought.

In the matter in which they boast: in the boasted disinterestedness of their service for the Corinthians.

As we are: i.e. laboring for the Corinthians without pay. This seems to imply that while these opponents professed to be disinterested benefactors they were really serving their own selfish ends, and were secretly making, perhaps in some indirect way, their own profit. They were (2 Corinthians 11:13) "guileful workmen." Paul refuses maintenance in order by his example to compel his opponents to forego these unworthy gains.

May be found; suggests a scrutiny to which their conduct (as well as Paul's) would be subjected. Paul refuses maintenance that thus they may be compelled to do the same, so that when their conduct is examined 'they may be found' to be like him.

Notice the bitter irony of these last words. Paul's opponents boasted their disinterestedness, while making gain of the Corinthians; and eagerly watched him to detect self-enrichment, that they might boast of their own superiority. (These have been the tactics of demagogues in all ages.) But Paul resolved to refuse just recompense for real and great benefits, that thus by his example he may compel those who boasted their superiority to

come up to his own level of working without pay, so that when his conduct and theirs are investigated they may be found to be as disinterested as he was. This interpretation is confirmed by the next verse.

**Ver. 13-15.** Paul's purpose (2 Corinthians 11:12) implies that his opponents are not what they professed to be. He now explains and justifies his purpose by a plain assertion that they are 'false' and 'guileful.'

False-apostles: like "false brethren," "false-prophets," 2 Corinthians 11:26; Galatians 2:4; 1 John 4:1; 2 Peter 2:1, etc. They claimed to be apostles, but were not.

Workmen: Philippians 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:15; Matthew 9:37; Acts 19:25. They were workers; but with hidden, selfish, and wicked motives.

Fashioning themselves, etc.: more fully, "changing their exterior into that of apostles of Christ." They assumed the dignity of men formally sent by Christ and thus holding the first rank in the church. See under Romans 1:1. The repetition of the word 'apostle' suggests that they claimed this specific title. Yet this audacity excites 'no wonder' in Paul. 'For' their master 'Satan' does the same.

Angel of light: same as "angel from heaven," Galatians 1:8. When visibly visiting earth they came clothed in the brightness of the world to which they belong. Satan's empire is darkness: Colossians 1:13. But it is his habit to approach men in the garb of an angel from heaven. And at all times Evil is prone to assume the appearance of Good.

His ministers: doing, of their own free choice, his work. Cp. "his angels," Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:7. Such are all who deal in falsehood and guile: for unconsciously they are acting under his guidance and are working out his purposes. This fearful description implies that Paul's opponents, though church-members and professed followers and apostles of Jesus, were bad men, deliberately deceiving the Corinthian Christians. Therefore, since Evil ever assumes the garb of Good in order to ensnare men, it was 'no wonder' that these men assumed a garb which was not their own.

Ministers of righteousness: as in 2 Corinthians 3:9. Cp. Romans 6:19. These men put on a new garb, representing themselves 'as' men laboring to

make dominant among men conformity to the Law of God, and thus servants of the abstract principle of 'Righteousness.'

Whose end, etc.: Their guilt was so evident that a mere statement of a general principle announces their fate.

According to their works: Romans 2:6.

End: Romans 6:21f; Philippians 3:19; Hebrews 6:8; 1 Peter 4:17: not simply the point at which something ceases, but the goal towards which it tends, and in which existing forces find their full outworking and the whole its consummation. Cp. 1 Timothy 1:5; 1 Peter 1:9. Its cognate adjective is "mature" or "perfect." See under 1 Corinthians 2:6. These words imply that Paul had no expectation that all men will eventually be saved. For he is evidently thinking of bad works; and therefore of a bad 'end.' But, if finally restored, the end of all men, and of these servants of Satan, would be endless happiness; in whose light the most terrible and prolonged bygone torments will, as endless and glorious ages roll by, dwindle into insignificance. Of these eternally happy ones Paul could not say (Philippians 3:19) that their "end is destruction"; nor Christ, (Mr 14:21,) "it were good for him, if that man had not been born." Certain passages which seem to imply an expectation of universal restoration will claim our attention elsewhere.

## REVIEW

In beginning to portray his own conduct Paul is deeply conscious of the foolishness of speaking about oneself. He therefore begs for indulgence, on the ground of his special relation to his readers, and his fears about them prompted by their ready reception of false teaching. Their folly in this he shows (2 Corinthians 11:5-12:18) by a long portrayal of himself. Whatever may be said about his modes of speech, he has given full proof of his knowledge. And, although reduced to want in their midst until relieved by contributions from Macedonia, he refused and will still refuse, all payment for his labors among the Corinthians. Yet he does this, not from want of love but because he is determined to put an end to the gains of some who profess to be disinterested and unpaid benefactors; that thus he may bring up to his own level, under the scrutiny to which both he and they are subject, those who claim to be his superiors. This implied charge he supports by saying that his opponents are deceivers, servants of the great deceiver, men whose real conduct will in the end have its due recompense.

About the deceivers here referred to, see further in the Review of DIV. 3 under 2 Corinthians 13:10.

## SECTION 16

### PAUL'S TOILS, PERILS, AND HARDSHIPS

#### CHAPTER 11:16-33

*Again I say, let not any one think me to be senseless. But at any rate if you do, even if as senseless, receive me, that I also may boast some little. What I speak, not according to the Lord do I speak, but as in senselessness, in this confidence of my boasting. Since many boast according to flesh, I also will boast. For gladly you bear with the senseless ones, being prudent. For you bear it if one enslaves you, if one eats you up, if one lays hold of you, if one lifts himself up, if in the face one strikes you. By way of dishonor I say how that we have become weak. But in whatever matter any one is daring, in senselessness I say it, daring am I also. Hebrews are they? And I am. Israelites are they? And I am. Seed of Abraham are they? And I am. Ministers of Christ are they? Wandering from my senses I speak, beyond this am I: In labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in beatings surpassingly, in deaths often. By the hand of Jews five times I received forty stripes save one: three times I was beaten with a rod: once I was stoned: three times I suffered shipwreck: a night and day I have spent in the deep. In journeys often: in dangers of rivers, dangers of robbers, dangers from my race, dangers from Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers in the sea, dangers among false-brothers. By labor and toil, in watchings often: in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Apart from the other things, there is for me my daily attention, my anxiety about all the churches. Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is ensnared and I am not set on fire? If there is need to boast the things of my weakness I will boast of. God, the Father of the Lord Jesus, knows, He who is blessed for ever, that I do not lie. In Damascus, the ethnarch of Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes, to seize me: and*

*through a window, in a basket I was let down through the wall, and I escaped their hands.*

**Ver. 16.** A second apology, introducing a second specific matter of boasting and a second contrast to Paul's opponents.

Again; refers back to 2 Corinthians 11:1, which was practically an ironical disproof that his boasting is folly. This repetition reveals Paul's great reluctance to appear to speak foolishly, even though conscious of a noble motive. He is jealous about the impression he makes upon others. 'But if' he fail to convince them that he is not foolish he still begs them to listen to him 'even if as' to a 'senseless' one.

Receive, or 'accept': as in 2 Corinthians 11:4. Same word in 2 Corinthians 6:1; 7:15; 8:17; Galatians 4:14; Matthew 10:14, 40f. Cp. 2 Corinthians 7:2. To accept Paul's pleading, is to accept him who pleads.

I also may boast: as others do. This supports the foregoing plea. It is developed in 2 Corinthians 11:18-20.

Some little: same words as in 2 Corinthians 11:1. Paul begs them to forgive, if they look upon his boasting as foolish, a momentary weakness, one shared by others whom they tolerate.

**Ver. 17.** A comment on "that I may boast."

According to the Lord: taking the Master as my pattern, and His will as my guide. So Romans 15:5; 8:27. Paul wishes to throw off for a moment his apostolic dignity and say a few words which do not involve his Master's reputation; in condescension to the weakness of his readers, who could not see, as we all see now, that in all this boasting he was animated by pure loyalty to Christ.

As in senselessness; keeps before us the request of 2 Corinthians 11:16b.

In this confidence (same word as in 2 Corinthians 9:4) of my boasting: source of the foolishness of which he might seem to be guilty, and in some sense an excuse for it. He speaks as he does because he is sure that what he says is true.

**Ver. 18.** Another excuse for Paul's boasting, one already suggested in 2 Corinthians 11:16. However foolish boasting may be, Paul does but imitate his opponents.

According to flesh: 2 Corinthians 5:16; Romans 8:4: from the point of view of the present bodily life. All such boasting looks at and exults in matters pertaining to bodily life, and looks at them under the influence of the appetites and needs of the body. It is the exact opposite of speaking "according to the Lord." Compare and contrast Galatians 6:13.

**Ver. 19-20.** A justification of "I also will boast," viz. the ready forbearance and prudence of the Corinthian Christians.

For gladly you bear with; recalls "nobly you bear it" in 2 Corinthians 11:4.

Prudent: same word in 1 Corinthians 4:10; 10:15; Romans 11:25; Luke 16:8; Matthew 25:2-9. "It seems to belong to the prudent man to be able to take counsel well about the things good and profitable to him:"

Aristotle, 'Ethics' bk. vi. 5. 1. It is the exact opposite of 'senseless.' Since Paul's readers are full of sense, it is easy for them to condescend to bear with others who have less sense than themselves. This bitterly sarcastic justification of his own boasting, Paul supports at once, in 2 Corinthians 11:20, by his readers' forbearance towards his opponents. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:4, supporting 2 Corinthians 11:3.

Enslaves you: same word in same connection, Galatians 2:4. The opponents were robbing the Corinthian Christians of their Christian liberty and bringing them under bondage to the Law. Cp. Galatians 5:1-12; Acts 15:10.

Eats you up: maintains himself at your expense. Cp. Mark 12:40; Luke 15:30.

Lays-hold-of-you: catches you as in a trap, or in the chase. Same word in same sense in 2 Corinthians 12:16.

Lifts himself up; as greater than, and claiming authority over, you.

Strikes you in the face: a daring description of violence and contempt. All this can be no other than a picture of the actual conduct of Paul's opponents at Corinth, conduct tolerated, at least formally, by the church.



And it justifies fully the boasting which follows, which would in ordinary circumstance be foolish and unworthy of a servant of Christ. For, men accustomed to treatment like this cannot refuse to tolerate a little boasting from the apostle.

**Ver. 21.** Transition to Paul's actual boasting.

By way of dishonor: i.e. placing dishonor upon myself.

I say: habitually.

We: Paul and his colleagues, in contrast to the opponents.

How that, etc.; looks upon this weakness not as objective fact but as Paul's subjective view of it. Objectively, they were both weak and strong according to the point of view.

We have become weak: by laying all our powers on the altar of Christ, and by going at His bidding into positions of helplessness. Cp. Philippians 3:8. These words are inserted to make conspicuous the contrast which follows.

Any one is daring: (as in 2 Corinthians 10:2:) as the opponents were.

I also; keeps before us, as in 2 Corinthians 11:16, 18, the comparison of Paul and his opponents. In whatever matter they act fearlessly, disregarding consequences, Paul, though ever acknowledging his own weakness is equally fearless. They are not afraid to usurp authority over the Church of Christ: and Paul is not afraid to punish them.

**Ver. 22.** Now begins Paul's actual boasting, in face of his opponents. It is not an example of the daring of 2 Corinthians 11:21, but the ground of it. These adversaries claimed authority over Gentile believers because they were the ancient people of God. But in this Paul is their equal.

Hebrews: oldest name of the covenant people; Genesis 14:13; 39:14, 17; Exodus 1:15f, 19; Deuteronomy 15:12; 1 Samuel 4:6; Jeremiah 34:9, 14; Judith 12:11. Probably equivalent to "immigrant," or "foreigner"; and used in the Old Testament chiefly to distinguish the sacred nation from others. In Acts 6:1 it distinguishes those who used the national language from those Jews who spoke Greek either always or usually. And this is probably the reference here and in the similar boasting of Philippians 3:5. Cp. John 19:13, 17, 20; Acts 22:2.

Israelites: the favorite and sacred name, as given by God in the crisis of his life to the one ancestor claimed by the whole covenant people and by it only. Cp. Romans 9:4; 11:1; John 1:48f; Acts 2:22; 3:12; 5:35; 13:16; 21:28.

Seed of Abraham; recalls the promises to Abraham. Same connection in Romans 11:1. This verse implies that Paul's opponents at Corinth were Jews, priding themselves in the ancient language and customs of their nation, in the honor conferred upon it by God, and in the blessings promised to Abraham and his descendants. In Galatians 6:12 we find similar opponents.

**Ver. 23.** Ministers of Christ are they? neither admits nor denies, but simply quotes, their boast. Contrast 2 Corinthians 11:15. Paul's reply to this boast is so startling that he introduces it with an apology, 'forsaking my senses I speak.'

Beyond this, etc.: i.e. I am something more than a minister of Christ. These words are senseless inasmuch as nothing is greater than to be a minister of Christ. They are justified by the contrast between the life portrayed in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 and that of these professed ministers of Christ. Paul's superiority is seen 'in labors' to which (1 Corinthians 15:10) he devotes himself more abundantly than they; 'in prisons' in which with 'more abundant' frequency he is confined, 'in beatings' which fall upon him in a degree 'surpassing' anything they suffer; 'in' the presence 'often' of 'death' itself in various forms. In the last point Paul lays aside the language of comparison; perhaps as having in this matter no rival.

In... in... in... in: same sense as 2 Corinthians 6:4-7.

Labors, prisons, beatings: 2 Corinthians 6:5; Acts 16:23.

Deaths: 2 Corinthians 1:10; 4:11; 6:9; Romans 8:36. Notice the fourfold climax.

**Ver. 24-25.** A simple enumeration in proof of the last two items of 2 Corinthians 11:23.

By Jews: in contrast probably to 'beaten with a rod,' which in the one recorded case (Acts 16:22) was by Gentiles.

Five times: all unknown to us.

Forty stripes save one: same number in Josephus, 'Antiq.' bk. iv. 8. 21, 23. Deuteronomy 25:3 limits the number of stripes to forty. Notice that the Jews, even in cruelty and injustice to a servant of God, were scrupulously careful to obey in an insignificant detail the letter of the Law. Cp. Matthew 23:23.

I was thrice beaten with a rod: only one case (Acts 16:22) recorded.

Once I was stoned: important coincidence in Acts 14:19.

Three times I suffered shipwreck: all unknown.

In the deep: the sea, probably the raging sea; (same word in same sense, Psalm 107:24; ) perhaps clinging to a portion of wreck.

**Ver.** 26-27. Continued descriptive exposition of 2 Corinthians 11:23.

Dangers... dangers: suggested by 'journeys,' which were then not only wearisome but perilous.

Of rivers: by crossing them, or through their overflow. The dangers of travel suggested other dangers.

From my race: Galatians 1:14; Acts 7:19. Cp. Acts 14:19; 17:5, 13; 20:19.

From Gentiles: cp. Acts 16:19; 19:24ff.

False brethren: Galatians 2:4. Of this danger, the treason of Judas is an example.

Labor and toil: 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8. The double expression intensifies the idea.

Watchings: 2 Corinthians 6:5: and 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8 suggest that Paul refers to loss of sleep occasioned by menial toil for self-support.

Hunger and thirst: Deuteronomy 28:48. It is so unlikely that voluntary religious fasts (of which we have no mention in Paul's writings) would be enumerated among the hardships mentioned here that, in spite of the apparent repetition, it is better to suppose that the 'fastings often' were

involuntary lack of food on journeys or through poverty. So 2 Corinthians 6:5. The frequent lack of food is thus parallel to the frequent loss of sleep, each plural term being closely related to two foregoing singulars. Paul lingers over his hunger and thirst, and says that it was frequent.

Cold and nakedness; completes the picture. Cp. 1 Corinthians 4:11.

**Ver.** 28. Apart from the other things: which Paul does not mention.

My daily attention: his eye ever fixed on the churches, watching their progress and perils. This attention was to him ‘anxiety,’ and embraced ‘all the churches,’ both those founded by himself and under his special care and those beyond his sphere of labor. In all Christians he took deep interest: and his anxious care for them was a heavier burden than the hardships enumerated above. This anxiety explains his prayers (Romans 1:9; Philippians 1:4; Colossians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:2) for each church singly.

**Ver.** 29. Examples of this anxiety, and its effect upon Paul.

Weak: in faith and spiritual life, 1 Corinthians 8:9; Romans 14:1.

I am weak: Weakness is practically a limitation of our action. Paul makes the weakness of these brethren a limitation of his own action. So 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; Romans 15:1. For, his intense sympathy moves him to look at everything from their point of view, and to abstain from whatever will injure them. Thus their weakness, by limiting his action, is a real and felt weakness to him. Just so, in the weakness of her infant a mother feels herself to be weak.

Ensnared: entrapped, and injured in spiritual life; a frequent result of weakness. So 1 Corinthians 8:13.

I: emphatic, directing conspicuous attention to the effect upon Paul.

Set-on-fire: same word as “burn” in 1 Corinthians 7:9, denoting intense emotion; in this case, of sorrow. Cp. Luke 24:32; 3 Macc. 4:2, Psalm 39:4; Jeremiah 20:9. Notice the climax. Paul sees a brother weak in spiritual life: and in his weakness the apostle’s own power and liberty are limited. The brother falls into some snare of the enemy: and sorrow like a fire consumes the heart of Paul. And this of each case: ‘who is weak, etc.?’ This deep

sympathy with all the brethren calls from him “daily attention,” and gives rise to “anxiety about all the churches.” That Paul’s sympathy and anxiety embraced all churches everywhere and all persons and details within his observation, proves that it was inbreathed by God.

**Ver.** 30-31. If there is need, etc.; reveals again Paul’s reluctance to speak about himself as he is here compelled to do.

Weakness: literally “absence of strength,” denotes in a narrower sense “sickness” (as in Luke 13:11f; John 5:3, 5) as being an absence of bodily strength, and in a wider sense all kinds of human powerlessness.

Things of my weakness: occasioned by, and betraying, weakness. Cp. 2 Corinthians 12:5, 9.

I will boast; may refer either to his abiding resolve, or more likely to 2 Corinthians 11:32, 33, and especially to 2 Corinthians 12:7-11, and perhaps other matters present to his mind but afterwards passed over. If so, these words, though verbally suggested by “weak” in 2 Corinthians 11:29, yet have, as often in such cases, no special reference to it, but begin a new, though not different line of boasting.

I lie not: in declaring my purpose to ‘boast in the things pertaining to my weakness.’ This purpose is from a human point of view so unlikely that in asserting it Paul appeals to Him who alone ‘knows’ his motives.

God, the Father of the Lord Jesus: see 2 Corinthians 1:3; Romans 15:6.

He who is, etc.: i.e. God the Father: as demanded by the Greek construction.

Blessed for ever: see Romans 1:25; 9:5. While Paul thinks of God, and especially of ‘the Father of the Lord Jesus,’ whose strength is manifested in his own weakness, he seems to hear from afar the song of praise which will go up for ever.

**Ver.** 32-33. In Damascus; recalls the well-known beginning of Paul’s Christian life.

Ethnarch: literally “national-chief.” Same word in 1 Macc. 14:47; 15:1; Josephus, ‘Antiq.’ bk. xiv. 7. 2, ‘Wars’ bk. ii. 6. 3. It was evidently a provincial governor set by ‘Aretas’ over the Syrian city of Damascus.

Aretas: king of Arabia Petraea, whose daughter Herod Antipas married and afterwards divorced. See Josephus, 'Antiq.' bk. xviii. 5. 1.

Was guarding: a military term; also in Galatians 3:23; Philippians 4:7; 1 Peter 1:5. This implies that Damascus, which both earlier and later was under Roman rule, was at this time in the power of Aretas. For a very plausible explanation of this, see ch. iii. of Conybeare and Howson's 'St. Paul.' It is certainly an interesting coincidence that whereas there exist Roman coins of Damascus both earlier and later there are none belonging to the time here referred to.

Window: same word in Acts 20:9.

Lowered through the wall: same words in Acts 9:25. We have here another witness of the correctness of the Book of Acts. The slight difference is easily explained by supposing that the Jews prompted and assisted the Ethnarch to watch for Paul. The abrupt transition from this incident suggests that it was designed to be the beginning of a series of proofs of Paul's "weaknesses," a series commencing at the very commencement of his Christian course; but broken off suddenly to make way for the more startling matter of 2 Corinthians 12:2-4. Paul's furtive mode of escape (in the darkness of night, Acts 9:24) proves the extreme peril and helplessness of his position. By narrating this incident he was therefore "boasting in the things which belong to his weakness."

## REVIEW

In passing to a second specific matter of boasting Paul betrays again his consciousness of the unseemliness of boasting; and, jealous for his readers' respect, begs that his boasting be not taken as a mark of foolishness. But, even if it is, he has still a claim to attention. In saying this, which may seem to be foolish, he is careful not to implicate the authority of his Master but to speak only in his own name. He has a claim to his readers' attention because from the lofty standpoint of their own wisdom they are accustomed to bear with foolishness and with unscrupulous self-assertion and violence. And, though Paul humbles himself by confession of weakness, he is if need be as bold as they. Equally with his opponents he can claim descent from the sacred people. And their claim to be ministers of Christ is surpassed by his own ministry, of which the credentials are written in hardships and perils of every kind and without number. And in addition to these he has a special burden, inasmuch as the spiritual weakness and fall of any who in any church bear the name of Christ is to him a personal weakness and a burning sorrow. The mention of weakness moves him to say that the things pertaining to his weakness shall be the only matter of the boasting which is forced upon him. He has matters of boasting so wonderful that before narrating them he appeals, as witness of his veracity, to Him who knows all things and whose praise will be sung for ever. He tells first a peril and escape at the very beginning of his Christian career, a kind of matriculation to him in the school of persecution, an escape not by the pomp of supernatural deliverance but by ordinary human instrumentality.

## SECTION 17

### PAUL'S RAPTURE TO PARADISE; AND THORN IN THE FLESH

#### CHAPTER 12:1-11

*To boast is needful. It is not indeed profitable: I will come, however, to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ fourteen years ago (whether in body I do not know, whether outside of the body I do not know: God knows) such a one caught up as far as the third heaven. And I know such a man, (whether in body or apart from the body I do not know: God knows,) that he was caught up into Paradise and heard utterances not to be uttered which it is not allowed to a man to speak. On behalf of such a one I shall boast. But on behalf of myself I shall not boast, except in my weaknesses. For, if I may wish to boast, I shall not be foolish, for I shall speak truth But I forbear; lest any one in reference to me reckon beyond what he sees me, or hears from me.*

*And by the superabundance of the revelations-for which cause, that I may not be beyond measure lifted up, there was given to me a stake for the flesh, an angel of Satan to strike me, that I may not be beyond measure lifted up. About this three times I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he has said to me, Sufficient for thee is my grace: for the power is in weakness accomplished. Most gladly then I shall rather boast in my weakness, that there may encamp over me the power of Christ. For which cause I am well pleased with weaknesses, with wantonnesses, with necessities, with persecutions, with positions of helplessness, on behalf of Christ: for when I am weak then I am powerful. I have become foolish. It was you that compelled me. For, as to me, I ought by you to be recommended. For, nothing have I fallen short of the overmuch apostles; if I am even nothing.*



**Ver. 1.** The narrative of Paul's first great peril seemed to be the beginning of a series of similar adventures. But the series is suddenly broken off by another expression of reluctance to speak about himself. He writes under necessity. This reveals again his deep consciousness of the folly of boasting.

Needful: in order to put his opponents to shame, and thus rescue the readers from their snares. Cp. 2 Corinthians 12:11; 11:30.

Not profitable: as a general principle; neither for him who speaks nor those who hear.

I shall come, however: though boasting is not profitable, I shall pass on to other matters of boasting.

Revelation: a lifting up of a veil to disclose something unknown before, either by an outward and conspicuous event, (1 Corinthians 1:7; 3:13; Romans 2:5; 8:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8,) or by the inward teaching of the Spirit in His ordinary (Philippians 3:15; Ephesians 1:17) or extraordinary (1 Corinthians 14:30; Ephesians 3:5) operations. See under Romans 1:17.

Visions, i.e. presentations of unseen realities in visible form: one class of 'revelations.' Interesting coincidences in Acts 26:19, compared with Galatians 1:16; Luke 1:22; 24:23. Same words together in Daniel 10:1.

Of the Lord: either as Himself revealed, 1 Corinthians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7, 13; 4:13; (Romans 2:5; 8:19; 16:25,) or as Himself revealing, Galatians 1:12; Revelation 1:1. The plural number suggests that here Paul refers to various kinds of 'visions,' and (to use a wider word) to 'revelations' in any mode, imparted by Christ.

**Ver. 2-4.** An example of these.

In Christ; points to spiritual contact with Christ as the source of all that follows. While writing, Paul 'knows a man' who, united to 'Christ, was fourteen years ago caught up' to 'heaven.' The introductory words "to boast is needful" prove that Paul refers here to himself. See under 2 Corinthians 12:5. That Paul speaks of himself in the third person, is akin to the ideal standpoint in time assumed in Romans 4:24; 5:1; 7:14; 8:30; and betrays his vivid imagination.

In body: i.e. body and spirit together 'caught up.'

Outside of the body: the spirit alone, leaving the body behind. The state of the body, in this case, Paul probably does not think of. It might be in sleep or trance. If so, since we cannot conceive the body to be inanimate, the suggestion of Lactantius (quoted by Meyer) may practically be near the truth: "the mind goes away; the soul remains."

I do not know: emphatic repetition, in contrast to 'I know.' That Paul did not know whether his body as well as his spirit was caught up to heaven, shows how intensely supernatural was the event.

God knows: before whose hand and by whose power the rapture took place.

Caught up: carried away by a strong hand. Same word in 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Acts 8:39; Revelation 12:5.

As far as; suggests distance.

Third heaven: cp. Ephesians 4:10 "above the heavens"; Hebrews 4:14. Lucian (lxxvii. 12) speaks in satire of "a Galilean who walked upon air to the third heaven." We cannot decide whether Paul thought of seven heavens, as the Jews did; who, however, distinguished them variously. The words suggest naturally the unseen world, beyond the place (Matthew 6:26; 16:2f; 24:30) of the birds and clouds and that (Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:25) of the stars. In 2 Corinthians 12:3 Paul lingers upon his knowing the man but not knowing whether the rapture was in the body or without it, this however known clearly by God.

Apart from: rather more emphatic than 'outside of.'

**Ver. 4.** Paradise: probably a Persian word, but found in Hebrew (A.V. "orchard") in Sol. Song of Solomon 4:13; Ecclesiastes 2:5, (A.V. "forest") in Nehemiah 2:8; in the Greek LXX., Genesis 2:8, etc., Genesis 13:10; Numbers 24:6; Isaiah 51:3, etc.; Sirach 24:30, 40:17, 27, Susanna 4, 7, etc.; in Josephus frequently, and in classic Greek. It denotes a park or pleasure ground, especially around a palace. So Xenophon, 'Anabasis' bk. i. 2. 7: "there Cyrus had a palace and a great paradise, full of wild beasts which he hunted on horseback whenever he went to exercise himself and the horses. Through the middle of the paradise flows the river Meander." In Genesis

13:10 the Jordan valley looks like “the paradise of God”: and in chs. ii., iii. the “garden of Eden” is constantly rendered “paradise of pleasure.” To this last, Revelation 2:7 evidently refers: and 2 Corinthians 12:4 and Luke 23:43 suggest it. In Luke 23:43 it is evidently the pleasant place where the souls of the departed righteous wait for the resurrection. The associations of the words suggest that Christ by His entrance made the dark Sheol or Hades (Hebrew and Greek names for the place of the dead) into a place of delight. Revelation 2:7 (cp. Revelation 22:2) refers to the place of final glory, which will surround the palace and throne of God. It is practically the same as the New Jerusalem which John saw coming down out of heaven from God; and which may therefore be supposed to be already existing in heaven. It is thus distinguished from the paradise into which at His death Christ entered. It is difficult to say whether Paul refers here to the happy place of the departed righteous, or to that more glorious place before the throne where we may conceive sinless spirits of other races already dwelling in glory and which will in the great day extend its boundaries to earth that it may be the final home of redeemed mankind. The word ‘paradise’ may be either identical with or the higher part of, or higher than the “third heaven.” This last supposition would imply that the rapture to Paradise was a further rapture beyond that to the third heaven. But of this there is no hint whatever. The word ‘paradise’ was used by later Jewish writers for the present abode of the departed: and, that in this sense it was generally understood, is implied by Christ’s use of it without further specification in Luke 23:43. On the other hand Revelation 2:7 is an express allusion to Genesis 2:9. It is therefore perhaps better to understand by the word ‘paradise’ here, where it is used without explanation and must therefore be understood in its more familiar sense, the present abode of the faithful dead. And, since those whose bodies are not yet rescued and who are waiting (Revelation 6:10) for the completion of their number must be conceived to be in the lowest part of the celestial universe, ‘paradise’ cannot in this verse be higher than, and must therefore be identical with, the third heaven. Paul lingers over, and thus lays stress upon, this remarkable event of his life. The word ‘paradise’ expounds the “third heaven.” He was carried not only above the sky and clouds but into the beautiful resting place of the departed servants of God.

Not to be uttered: not “unutterable,” or the following prohibition would be needless. Same word used for sacred secrets in Herodotus bk. v. 83; and in bk. vi. 135, where the secret was divulged.

Which it is not allowed, etc.; expounds and limits ‘not to be uttered.’  
‘Man’ may not speak it.

If our reckoning be correct (see Dissertation iii.) this rapture took place in A.D. 44, about the time of the death (Acts 12:23; Josephus, ‘Antiq.’ bk. xix. 8. 2) of Herod Agrippa, and probably shortly before Paul’s solemn separation (Acts 13:1f) for the mission to foreign countries. Perhaps by this rapture God was preparing His servant for the new and perilous work now before him.

**Ver. 5-6.** Such a one refers certainly to Paul himself: for, no other reason is suggested why this revelation should be to him a matter of boasting, and it is clearly implied in 2 Corinthians 12:7. Paul’s rapture was so utterly independent of his own effort and merit that the raptured person seemed to be some one other than himself. And the lapse of time made this conception more easy to him. Ourselves long ago seem to us other than our present selves. Thoughts about the man who fourteen years ago was caught up to Paradise fill Paul with an exultation he cannot forbear to express.

On behalf of myself: “so as to bring honor to myself, for something I have done or can do.”

Except in my weaknesses: 2 Corinthians 11:30: an exception which seems to be a contradiction. An example is given in 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10.

For if I wish etc; gives weight and worth to Paul’s refusal to boast, by saying that he might boast if he would.

I shall not be foolish; reveals again (cp. 2 Corinthians 11:16) Paul’s deep sense of the folly of boasting and his jealous care to have the esteem of his readers. The folly of boasting is its usual untruthfulness. But Paul will ‘speak truth.’

Reckon: as in 1 Corinthians 4:1. He refrains from boasting because he does not wish his readers to form any estimate of him beyond what they actually see him to be; and, since so great a part of his activity was speech,

beyond the worth of the words they hear from his lips. In this jealous care for the esteem of others, and in this refusal to acquire fame by talking about oneself, a fame always precarious, we shall do well to imitate the apostle.

**Ver. 7.** Continues the narrative of 2 Corinthians 12:4, which was interrupted by the comment of 2 Corinthians 12:5, 6. It recalls an affliction probably well known to the readers, and delineates its effect upon Paul.

The revelations; implies others besides the one just mentioned.

Superabundance: surpassing in grandeur or number those granted to others. These words are pushed prominently forward to connect the stake in the flesh with the rapture to Paradise.

For which cause: various reading: see Appendix B.

That I be not beyond-measure-lifted-up: kind foresight of God. That Paul felt himself exposed to this danger, warns us of the spiritual peril which always accompanies special gifts. None but a great and humble man could have made such confession.

There was given to me; probably by the Giver of all good. For it follows close after a divine and merciful purpose and before any mention of Satan. Cp. Philippians 1:29.

Stake: any sharp piece of wood, artificial or natural; most frequently artificially sharpened, especially for military palisades; more rarely splinters; or (metaphorically, as here) in Numbers 33:55; Ezekiel 28:24; Sirach 43:19, a thorn. The evident severity of this affliction (proved by Paul's earnest prayer), and the deliberate purpose of it, suggest perhaps the figure of a sharpened piece of wood driven intentionally into his body.

For the flesh: viz. to pierce it.

Angel: anglicized form of a Greek word for one who brings news or a message, constant equivalent (LXX.) for a Hebrew word denoting sometimes (Job 1:14) one who brings news but usually one sent either (1 Samuel 11:3; 16:19; 2 Samuel 11:19) with a message or (1 Samuel 19:11) to do some work. Naturally the Greek word took up (cp. Luke 9:52; 7:24) the full compass of the Hebrew word. The common use of it for heavenly

beings sent to do for God all sorts of work on earth (Acts 12:7, 23, etc.) suggested its use here for an affliction caused (and therefore sent) by Satan to do his malicious work.

To strike me, as if with a fist: business of the angel sent by Satan. Same word in 1 Corinthians 4:11; Matthew 26:67; 1 Peter 2:20. Notice the change of metaphor. That which, looking at its point of attack, viz. the body, and its obstructiveness and pain, is a stake driven into the flesh, is represented also as a personal combatant sent by Satan to strike at Paul from time to time severe blows. The repetition of ‘that I may not be lifted up’ (see Appendix B) reveals Paul’s deep consciousness of the merciful divine purpose which underlay the malicious satanic purpose of the affliction.

The word ‘flesh’ suggests that this affliction was a bodily ailment. For, in a moral sense, to Paul the flesh with its desires (Galatians 5:24) was crucified. In Luke 13:16; Job 2:7 such ailments are attributed to Satan. Probably all forms of sickness, being directly or indirectly a result of sin, have the same source. The word ‘stake’ suggests acute suffering and a hindrance to the apostle’s work. This latter is confirmed by ‘in weakness,’ 2 Corinthians 12:9. [The present subjunctive implies continuous or recurrent suffering.] The word ‘strike’ suggests recurrent attacks. A humiliating malady is suggested by its divine purpose. The word ‘given’ suggests that it was not inborn, or if inborn afterwards greatly aggravated. Paul’s prayer implies that its removal was conceivable. It therefore cannot have been a memory of past sin. Christ’s refusal implies that it was not sinful; and so does Paul’s resolve to boast in it. These indications suggest severe and recurrent and painful bodily ailment, which Paul recognized as a work of Satan but also as a gift of the kind forethought of God, and which seemed to hinder his apostolic activity. Its mention here suggests, but does not quite prove, that it came soon after the rapture to Paradise. Certainly it was something calculated to counteract any lofty self-estimate which the rapture might create. The above is the oldest explanation of this verse. It was held probably by Irenaeus, bk. v. 3; and certainly by Tertullian, ‘On Modesty’ ch. xiii.: “a pain as they say of ear or head.” And it is given by most modern expositors. Purely inward temptations either sensual (Roman Catholic writers) or spiritual (Luther) would hardly have been matter of boasting; while the former contradicts 1 Corinthians 7:7, and the latter the

word ‘flesh.’ Outward persecutions (Greek fathers) would be hardly sufficiently personal.

The kind of bodily malady is a matter of mere conjecture. Possibly Galatians 4:14, “your temptation in my flesh” refers to a recurrence of it, detaining Paul in Galatia and thus leading to the founding of the churches there, and such as to test the loyalty of the Galatian converts. But of the nature of this sickness in Galatia we have no indication. An affection of the eyes, or epilepsy, are plausible guesses, but not much more. [To suggest the former in Galatians 4:15, a more emphatic pronoun would be needed.] See the very good notes in Lightfoot’s ‘Galatians,’ and in vol. i., excursus x., of Farrar’s ‘St. Paul.’

**Ver. 8-9a.** On behalf of this: i.e. that I might be delivered from it.

Three times: definite and memorable prayers, perhaps at different attacks of the malady. The repetition reveals Paul’s earnestness.

The Lord: Christ. Cp. 2 Corinthians 12:9, “power of Christ.” Notice an express prayer to Christ.

Depart from me: it was therefore removable, either with or without a miracle.

He has said (or in idiomatic English ‘he said’) to me: after the third petition. [The Greek perfect notes the abiding effect of Christ’s words. See ‘The Expositor,’ First Series, vol. xi. pp. 198, 301.] Whether this was by special revelation or by the ordinary operation of the Holy Spirit casting divine light upon truth already received, we are not told.

Sufficient for thee etc: “My smile and My purpose to do thee good will afford everything needful for thy highest welfare even in spite of this great affliction.” This implied refusal is at once justified by a great truth.

The well-known power: with which Christ makes His people strong (Philippians 4:13) to do and to dare and to suffer.

Weakness: conspicuous contrast to power.

Accomplished: attains its full goal, works out its full results, and thus reveals its full grandeur. Same word in Romans 2:27; Galatians 5:16; Luke 12:50; 18:31; 22:37; John 19:28, 30: cognate to ‘end’ in 2 Corinthians

11:15; see note. ‘The power’ of Christ manifests to the full its irresistible energy and attains its highest results by performing works of power with powerless instruments. For this reason Christ refused to remove the stake in the flesh which seemed to be to Paul an element of weakness. Cp. 2 Corinthians 4:7; 1:9. Notice that ‘the power’ of Christ makes His ‘grace’ sufficient for us. For He who smiles upon us is able to accomplish His kindly purpose.

**Ver. 9b-10.** Paul’s comment on the words of Christ.

In my weaknesses: of which the stake in the flesh was only one example. In these he ‘will boast, rather’ than pray for their removal; and with joy. Then follows a purpose which in his boasting Paul cherishes, and which is to some extent attained by his boasting. He desires that like a ‘tent’ there may be spread over him the power of Christ, guarding him on every side. Similar word in John 1:14; Revelation 7:15; 21:3: cognate to “tabernacle,” Hebrews 9:2ff. In view of this desire, his weaknesses can evoke only exultation: for they afford opportunities for the might of Christ to attain through him its noblest results, results proportionate to the confidence of his exultation. This illustrates Romans 5:3. Boasting in our weaknesses is justified because it is virtually a boasting in the power of God.

For which cause: because the power of Christ will encamp over, and realize itself in him.

Acts of wantonness (Romans 1:30), etc.: four outward circumstances in which Paul often felt his weakness. They mark a transition from the matter of the stake in the flesh. Acts of purposeless cruelty, repeated lack of the most needful things, the repeated pursuit of enemies, positions in which there seemed to be no way of escape, in all these Paul cheerfully acquiesced, because by revealing his own weakness they revealed the power of Christ.

On behalf of Christ: connected, not with the words immediately preceding, to which it would be a needless addition, but with ‘I am well pleased’ to which it adds immense force. In all these things Paul acquiesces for Christ’s sake, i.e. because in them Christ’s power and glory will be revealed.



For when, etc.: reason why Paul is 'well-pleased in weaknesses.' In want and persecution Paul is absolutely 'weak;' for his own powers can do nothing. But in these circumstances he finds that the power of Christ supplies all his need and shelters him from every foe: and therefore, because that power encamps over him, he is practically so 'powerful' that nothing can hurt him. And this strength in weakness moves him to acquiesce in these various afflictions, for Christ's sake.

When, then: as in 1 Corinthians 15:28, conspicuous coincidence in time. 'When' we are consciously 'powerless' to work out by our own strength any good result, 'then' do we rely simply and only on the infinite power of Christ, and are truly strong.

**Ver. 11.** At the end, as at the beginning, of 17 Paul utters his deep sense of the foolishness of boasting. By not speaking in his favor as they 'ought' to have done and by listening to his detractors, Paul's readers 'compelled' him to speak about himself, which in itself is foolish, that thus he might rescue them from the guile of his opponents. For the good of others he condescends to say things which but for their motive would be unworthy of an intelligent man. Than this, no kind of self-denial is to sensible persons more difficult or more noble

Recommend: as in 2 Corinthians 3:1.

For, nothing, etc.: 2 Corinthians 11:5: proof, from Paul's intrinsic worth as compared with his rivals, that his readers ought to have spoken in his defense.

I am nothing: although not less than others who claim to be much, yet, measured by a correct standard all that Paul has and is can do nothing to attain the well-being of himself or others, and is therefore of no intrinsic worth. And this is the last word of all human boasting. And it is Paul's last direct rebuke to his adversaries. SECTION 17 is full of instruction and comfort. Not infrequently now special exaltation in the service of God is accompanied by a special drawback, a drawback which may sometimes be attributed to enemies, human or superhuman. Such drawbacks, from whatever immediate source, are given by the kind forethought of God, to counteract the danger which, as the case of the apostle emphatically and solemnly warns us, accompanies spiritual elevation. Nor need we lament

the drawback. For Christ who smiles on us, will by His own power supply all that we need in order to do His work on earth in perfect peace and exultant joy. For, His power will make us strong. And our weakness will make His strength more conspicuous. Consequently, as revealing Christ's power, the weakness which we cannot by our own efforts or prayers remove may well be to us matter of exultation and delight. Of such exultation we have in Romans 8:31-39 a splendid example

## SECTION 18

### PAUL'S CREDENTIALS TO, AND LOVE FOR, HIS READERS

#### CHAPTER 12:12-18

*The signs indeed of the apostle were worked out among you in all perseverance, by signs and wonders and powers. For what is there in which you were made worse beyond the other churches? Except that I myself did not press upon you. As a favor forgive me this injustice.*

*Behold, this third time I am in readiness to come to you; and I will not press upon any one. For I do not seek yours but you. For the children ought not to lay up treasure for the parents, but the parents for the children. And for my part I most gladly will spend and will be spent out on behalf of your souls; if more abundantly loving you the less I be loved.*

*But, be it so, it was not I that burdened you, but, being crafty, with guile I laid hold of you. Any one of those whom I have sent to you, by him did I defraud you? I besought Titus and sent with him the brother. Did Titus at all defraud you? Was it not by the same Spirit that we walked? was it not in the same steps?*

Section 18 supports the contrast of Paul and his rivals at the end of 17 by pointing to his apostolic credentials, and then concludes his boasting by returning to the first specific matter of it, viz. his refusal to be maintained by the church. This last matter he supplements by rebutting the charge that, if not directly, yet indirectly, he had made gain of his readers.

**Ver. 12.** Signs of the apostle: visible proofs justly demanded from him who claims to be an ambassador-extraordinary of Christ.

Were worked out: more modest and more correct than “I worked.” That they were evidently wrought by God, gave to them their validity ‘as signs of the apostle.’ This is a definite assertion that Paul wrought miracles

among his readers. An assertion so bold is in the last degree unlikely to be false. We shall not doubt it for a moment if we believe that Christ rose from the dead. See my 'Romans,' Dissertation i. An important coincidence in Acts 15:12; Romans 15:19.

Perseverance, or 'endurance': see under Romans 2:7. The miracles continued for some time and in face of obstacles.

Signs and wonders and powers: miracles, looked at in three aspects, as meaning something, as prodigies exciting attention, and as manifestations or power. See under Romans 15:19: cp. Hebrews 2:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:9.

Powers: a very common term for miracles; Matthew 7:22; 11:20ff; Matthew 13:54, 58, etc.: cp. Matthew 14:2. For, our chief thought is the divine power therein manifested. These miracles proved that Paul "fell nothing short of the overmuch apostles." He thus puts them utterly to shame: for they had no such credentials to show. This decisive contrast is reserved to the last.

**Ver. 13.** Appeal to the readers, in proof of 2 Corinthians 12:12, that in miracles wrought among them no church surpassed them. They had therefore, within their own observation, abundant proof that in his credentials Paul did not "fall short of the over-much apostles." But while in this point equal to any church, Paul cannot forget that in another point they fell short of others, viz. in not contributing to his support. Although this arose from Paul's own refusal, it none the less put them in a worse position (cognate word in 1 Corinthians 6:7; Romans 11:12) than 'the other churches:' for his refusal was prompted by their liability to misunderstand his reception of payment. In bitter irony he represents his damage as his own doing; and in still more bitter irony begs for their forgiveness. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:7.

Press-down-upon: 2 Corinthians 12:14: same rare word in 2 Corinthians 11:8, which by its rarity it recalls.

I myself; was no paralyzing load weighing you down.

This verse implies that, though at Thessalonica (2 Thessalonians 3:8f) and probably at Ephesus (Acts 20:34) Paul preached without cost to his hearers, yet this was not his invariable rule; or, that the Corinthians had

not, like (2 Corinthians 11:8; Philippians 4:16) the Philippians, sent him help while laboring elsewhere.

**Ver.** 14-15. As in 2 Corinthians 11:9, Paul strengthens “I did not press down” by saying that he will continue the same course, thus showing that his refusal sprang from a settled resolve.

This third time: to pay a third visit. For it refers evidently to two occasions on which he did not burden them. An unfulfilled purpose to come a second time would be meaningless here. So 2 Corinthians 13:1f. Already twice he has labored among them without remuneration: and he is ‘in readiness to come a third time’ and do the same.

For I do not seek, etc.: an abiding general purpose, supporting the foregoing specific resolve.

Seek you: cp. 1 Corinthians 9:19; Matthew 18:15. His converts saved are the eternal enrichment which Paul seeks.

For the children, etc.: modest admission that the foregoing principle of Paul’s action is only his duty: and this sense of duty is given as a motive of his action. But while thus professedly giving up all claims on his readers, Paul really lays them under heaviest obligations, viz. those of children, if not to lay up treasure for, yet to obey and love and protect their parents. For by accepting a parent’s obligation he reminds them that he is their Father in Christ. Cp. 1 Corinthians 4:14f. By renouncing all claim as matter of right he casts himself upon their gratitude and love.

**Ver.** 15. Paul’s cheerful acceptance of the foregoing general principle as a guide of action.

Will-be-spent-out: will permit the complete consumption of all he has and is.

On behalf of your souls: i.e. to save their souls, to save them from eternal death; implying their peril. For this Paul does not hesitate to make the greatest conceivable sacrifice. 2 Corinthians 12:15b is a contingency (see Appendix B) which would make this great sacrifice needful to save their souls. For if their love is in inverse proportion to his love to them, their souls are in danger. The very ingratitude of his readers, (if they be ungrateful, which is left open to question,) will only spur him, by the

spiritual peril it reveals, to more unsparing sacrifice to save them. Thus Paul concludes his long boast by words of love, the greatest we can conceive, a love not destroyed but moved to greater sacrifice by the unloving spirit of those loved. Such is the love revealed in God's gift of His Son for rebellious man.

**Ver. 16-18.** Paul's last word in self-defense against a last insinuation of his enemies. To give definiteness to this insinuation, that he may expose it, Paul suggests it as his own thought. But the definiteness of his words makes it almost certain that they were taken from the lips of his opponents.

Be it so: it was not I, etc.: an admission prefacing the insinuation.

Laid-hold-of: same word in same sense, 2 Corinthians 11:20. 'Crafty' and 'guile' suggest at once Paul's known opposite character. The meaning of 2 Corinthians 12:16 is made clear by the sudden question of 2 Corinthians 12:17. It was insinuated that, though not himself receiving maintenance, Paul did practically the same thing by sending friends to be maintained at Corinth; and that for his design to enrich them his own refusal was but a guileful cloak. This insinuation, 2 Corinthians 12:18 meets by stating what Paul actually did, and by appealing to his readers' knowledge of what his messengers did.

I besought Titus: begged him to go to Corinth. This refers, as 2 Corinthians 12:17 implies, to an actual visit of Titus to Corinth some time before this letter was written, a visit made at Paul's request. On this visit Titus began, doubtless by Paul's suggestion, the collection for the poor at Jerusalem. So 2 Corinthians 8:6. And perhaps to this the insinuation refers. The similar words of 2 Corinthians 8:6, 18 refer to the visit Titus was now about to make. See note under 2 Corinthians 9:5.

The brother: quite unknown to us.

Did Titus, etc.; directly meets the insinuation, which was probably made indefinitely in the words perhaps of 2 Corinthians 12:16, by appealing to matter of fact.

The same spirit, the same steps: the One Holy Spirit (to whom the word 'spirit' most frequently refers) guiding both men along the same path. Cp.

1 Corinthians 12:4; Galatians 5:16; Romans 8:4. The same divine inward principle manifested itself in the same outward actions. This implies that Titus, like Paul, refused to be maintained by the Corinthians. And, in this fact, falls to the ground the insinuation that through Titus Paul enriched himself.

PAUL'S BOASTING, 2 Corinthians 11:1-12:18, or 15-18, is now complete. It was forced upon him by the boast (2 Corinthians 10:12; 11:18) of certain Jewish (2 Corinthians 11:22) opponents at Corinth, who are kept in view (2 Corinthians 11:5, 12, 18ff; 12:11) throughout; and by the submission to them (2 Corinthians 11:4, 19) of the Corinthian Christians. It is prefaced by a broad Old Testament principle which ought to rule all human boasting. Paul's deep consciousness of the unseemliness of boasting and his reluctance to this boasting are betrayed by apologies and explanations both at the beginning of the whole and at each transition from one to another of its four specific matters. These are, his refusal to be maintained by the church, 2 Corinthians 11:7-12; his hardships and perils, 2 Corinthians 11:23-33; his rapture to Paradise and counterbalancing affliction, 2 Corinthians 12:1-10; his divine credentials, 2 Corinthians 12:12, 13. At the beginning of his boast Paul justifies it by his peculiar relation to his readers and by their readiness to be led away. After claiming to be at least equal to his opponents, he claims to have given full proof of his knowledge. In contrast to the deceitful pretensions of others he has labored without cost to his readers and will continue to do so. Like his opponents, he can claim Jewish descent; and he surpasses them in the hardships and perils of his service for Christ. He has been so completely under supernatural influence that he knows not whether with or without his body he was caught up to Paradise: and he is not ashamed to speak of his terrible bodily affliction, and to glory in it as an occasion for a manifestation of the power of Christ. Not only in other churches but in equal measure at Corinth his apostolic authority has been confirmed by miraculous works. He concludes his boasting by recalling for a moment the first specific point of it, which he uses as a stepping stone to an expression of parental love for his readers, a love which even ingratitude does but kindle into an intenser glow of self-sacrifice. The same topic also suggests an insinuation of his foes, which vanishes in a moment before an appeal to simple matter of fact.

## SECTION 19

**UNLESS THE OFFENDERS REPENT, PAUL WILL RELUCTANTLY  
GIVE THEM SEVERE PROOF OF HIS AUTHORITY**

### CHAPTERS 12:19-13:10

*For a long time you are thinking that to you we are making reply. Before God, in Christ, we speak. But all things, beloved ones, are on behalf of your edification. For I fear lest in any way, when I come, not such as I wish I find you, and I be found by you such as you do not wish, lest in any way there be strife, jealousy, outbursts of fury, factions, evil-speakings, whisperings, self-inflations, disorders; lest again when I have come my God will humble me with regard to you and I bewail many of those who sinned-before and have not repented, about the uncleanness and fornication and wantonness which they practiced. This third time I am coming to you. "At the mouth of two witnesses and of three every word shall stand." (Deuteronomy 19:15) I have said before and I say beforehand, as when present the second time and absent now, to those who have before sinned and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare. Since a proof you seek of Him who speaks in me, even Christ, who towards you is not weak but is strong in you. For indeed He was crucified through weakness, but He lives through the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him, through the power of God, towards you.*

*Try yourselves whether you are in faith: prove yourselves. Or, do not understand yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? Except perhaps you are reprobates. But I hope that you will know that we are not reprobates. But we pray to God that you do nothing bad; not that we may be seen to be approved, but that you may do the good and we be as unapproved. For we cannot do anything against the truth but on behalf of the truth. For we rejoice when we are weak but you are strong. This we also pray, your full*



*equipment. Because of this, these things while absent I write, that when present I may not act severely, according to the authority which the Lord gave to me, for building up and not for pulling down.*

Paul's boasting is now complete. He therefore returns to the matter which prompted it, viz. the misconduct of some whom he has already (2 Corinthians 10:2) threatened to punish. He writes fearing that there are evils at Corinth which will make his visit painful to him, 2 Corinthians 12:19-21: if the sinners do not repent he will give them severe proof of his authority, 2 Corinthians 13:1-4: but he begs them to prevent this by self-examination and well doing, 2 Corinthians 13:5-10.

**Ver.** 19. For-a-long-time: viz. while listening to Paul's boasting, 2 Corinthians 11:1-12:18.

Making reply: anglicized into "apology": same word in Romans 2:15; Acts 26:1, 2, 24; 1 Corinthians 9:3; 2 Corinthians 7:11.

We: as in 2 Corinthians 10:2-11: suggested perhaps by Paul's defense (2 Corinthians 12:18) of Titus.

To you: emphatic: "your approval being my aim."

Before God, in Christ, we speak: 2 Corinthians 2:17: in the presence of God, and prompted by spiritual contact with 'Christ' as the encompassing element of Paul's life. Cp. Romans 9:1.

All things: all he says and does, including the foregoing boast.

On behalf of your edification: to help forward your spiritual development. Notice the triple reference of Paul's words, before God, in Christ, for the spiritual growth of men. So 2 Corinthians 5:13f. These three are ever united.

**Ver.** 20-21. Explanation of the kind of "edification" Paul has in view in his self-defense. He has magnified his authority and has threatened to punish, to lead some guilty ones to repentance, lest he find them, and they him, other than he and they wish.

In any way: as in 2 Corinthians 11:3.

When I come: on the visit proposed in 2 Corinthians 9:4; 1 Corinthians 16:2ff.

Be found by you: literally 'to you,' as in Romans 7:10, denoting the influence upon them of this discovery.

Lest... lest... lest; expounds in full Paul's 'fear.' The second 'lest' introduces two classes of sins which Paul fears that he will 'find' but does not 'wish' to find at Corinth.

Strife, jealousy, outbursts of fury, factions: same words in same order in Galatians 5:20. See under 1 Corinthians 3:3; Romans 2:8.

Evil-speakings, whisperings: Romans 1:29. Their place here reveals the evil of them.

Self-inflations: special failing of the Corinthian Christians: cognate to "puffed up," 1 Corinthians 4:6, 18f.

Disorders: 2 Corinthians 6:5; 1 Corinthians 14:33.

**Ver. 21.** Will humble: Nothing brings a Christian teacher into the dust so much as the defection of those whom he has looked on as fruits of his labor and as his crown of rejoicing. This humiliation Paul now fears.

Again: i.e. will again humble. Its conspicuous position allows no other connection. Thus understood it has almost tragic force. For it implies (cp. 2 Corinthians 2:1) that on a previous visit Paul had already been thus humbled. And, remembering that time, he now fears that it 'will' be so 'again.'

My God: as in (1 Corinthians 1:4,) Romans 1:8. It is a reverent acknowledgment that even the feared humiliation, though caused by man's unfaithfulness, will be from God, i.e. taken up into His plan to work out His purposes of mercy for Paul. 'In regard of you,' or 'in reference to you.' Contrast 2 Corinthians 3:4; Romans 4:2.

I shall bewail: sorrow for the guilty will accompany Paul's own humiliation.

Before-sinned: probably 'before' Paul's second visit, to which the word 'again' refers. So "before-sinned" in 2 Corinthians 13:2. This does not

necessarily imply that before Paul's second visit they had committed the gross sins mentioned immediately afterwards, but simply that they had committed 'sin.' He fears that he shall find that the sins he reproved long ago (2 Corinthians 13:2) had developed into these aggravated forms.

And have not repented: at the time of Paul's expected visit, of which he is now speaking. Not all but 'many of those who had before sinned' were, Paul fears, guilty of the gross sins mentioned below.

About the uncleanness, etc.; may go with repented, but has more force as giving the specific matter of Paul's sorrow about these unrepentant ones.

Uncleanness: general sensuality.

Fornication: a specific form of it, viz. intercourse with harlots.

Wantonness: insolent casting aside of all restraint. Same three words together in Galatians 5:20.

Which they have practiced; gives vividness to, and lingers over, the picture.

2 Corinthians 12:21 forms with 2 Corinthians 12:20 a climax, touching what Paul fears he will find when he comes to Corinth. He has written for his readers' good (2 Corinthians 12:19) strong words, because he fears there are at Corinth the evils enumerated in 2 Corinthians 12:20. He also remembers those who before his last visit had committed sins, and who have not yet repented. And he now writes fearing lest, touching 'many' of these, he will find and will have to mourn over their gross sensuality and reckless insolence, sins far more terrible than those of 2 Corinthians 12:20. To find this at Corinth, will fill him with sorrow and smite him down to the very dust. Cp. 2 Corinthians 2:3. Therefore, seeking their edification, (2 Corinthians 12:19,) he has defended his own apostolic authority, which Jewish strangers have taught them to despise; that thus he may with more force reprove those who have sinned. He hopes thus to save himself from pain and humiliation. And the pain and humiliation which he dreads reveal the greatness of the sins he reproves.

**Ver.** 1-2. Paul has already (2 Corinthians 12:20b, 21) told his readers what sort of men he expects, but does not wish, to find them. He will now tell them what sort of man they will find him.

This third time; implies clearly that he has twice before been at Corinth. For the first 'coming' was an actual visit. And Paul refers now to what will happen, not on his way towards Corinth, but after his arrival. With this he could not compare a never-completed second journey. So 2 Corinthians 12:14. He evidently wishes to recall, in view of a third visit, his conduct on two earlier visits.

I am coming: written from Macedonia on the way from Ephesus to Corinth. Cp. 1 Corinthians 16:5.

At the mouth, etc.: word for word from Deuteronomy 19:15. When Paul comes, a church court will be held: and every charge will be judged, according to the Mosaic Law, on the evidence of 'two witnesses and,' where available, 'of three.' A similar quotation with the same purpose in Matthew 18:16. There is no indication whatever that, as some have suggested, Paul's journeys were the 'witnesses;' or that this word has here any but its common meaning of one who has seen and can testify.

**Ver. 2.** Said-before; contrasts with his previous words on his second visit Paul's present words by letter: 'say-before;' contrasts his present words with their approaching fulfillment. Paul's words by letter 'now when absent' correspond with his words of mouth 'when present the second time,' i.e. on his bygone second visit.

To those who before-sinned: i.e. 'before' his second visit, as in 2 Corinthians 12:21. But his present words by letter apply of course to any who sinned subsequently. 'Before,' reminds us that some had sinned long ago.

And to all the rest: all the church-members, by way of warning. The tone of uncertainty, 'if I come again,' when Paul was actually on his way to Corinth, suggests that he here quotes his own words on the second visit. He would then speak naturally of his next visit as coming 'again.' Notice the emphatic prominence (cp. 2 Corinthians 2:1; 12:21) of this word.

I will not spare; is more than exclusion from the church, and suggests bodily punishment similar to that of 1 Corinthians 5:5; Acts 5:5; 13:11. The miraculous powers in the apostolic church made more inexcusable the case of those who by open sin set at nought such powers. And now this

dread power is ready to fall in supernatural punishment on those who are continuing to treat it with contempt.

Of this INTERMEDIATE VISIT of Paul to Corinth, we have no express mention. But without it the conspicuous and emphatic word 'again' in 2 Corinthians 2:1 and 2 Corinthians 12:21, and this third time in 2 Corinthians 12:14 and 2 Corinthians 13:1, are practically meaningless; whereas with it they have almost tragic force; and xiii. 2 would otherwise be uncouth. No doubt is cast on it by absence of reference to it in the Book of Acts. For, how much of Paul's career is not mentioned there, 2 Corinthians 11:23-26 proves. That no reference is made to it in the First Epistle, is more remarkable; especially as on this unmentioned visit Paul found at Corinth the sins which in that epistle he severely condemns. (This objection is well put in Baur's 'Apostle Paul' pt. ii. ch. 2.) Certainly the visit cannot have been later than the First extant Epistle: or the explanation in 2 Corinthians 2:3f about that epistle would be needless. But if it took place some time before the lost letter was written, the fact that by this letter Paul had given the Corinthians a later expression of his mind about sensuality might account for his silence about the visit: whereas his thoughts, while writing this second extant letter, about his approaching visit to Corinth would naturally and sadly recall his last visit. It is much easier to suppose this than to reconcile the passages referred to above with the supposition that Paul had visited Corinth only once. Opportunities of going there would be frequent during his three years' (Acts 19:10; 20:31) sojourn at Ephesus: and his anxiety about the church at Corinth would be a constant motive for such a journey. It has been suggested that the unmentioned visit was a return to Corinth after a temporary absence during Paul's eighteen months' residence there. But the lapse of time between his departure from Corinth narrated in Acts 18:18 and the writing of this epistle, which included three years at Ephesus, makes the other supposition more likely. The whole subject is well discussed in Conybeare's 'St. Paul,' ch. xv. Dr. Farrar ('Life of St. Paul' vol. ii. p. 118) silently agrees with Baur in rejecting an intermediate journey.

The silence of the Book of Acts, and the indications in this epistle, suggest that the visit was short. To Paul it was (2 Corinthians 2:1; 12:21) painful and humiliating. But, instead of punishing at once those whom he then found guilty of gross sin, he threatened that, if they did not repent, he

would do so at his next visit. And he now fears that; with similar sorrow and humiliation, he shall be compelled to fulfill his threat.

**Ver. 3-4.** Since you seek a proof: reason why he “will not spare.” By punishing he will prove, to those who doubt it, his apostolic authority.

Proof of Him, etc.: probably (cp. 2 Corinthians 9:13) proof afforded by Christ. But such proof is also proof that Christ speaks in Paul.

Not weak but powerful: and therefore able to give the proof sought.

Towards you: as influencing from without.

Among you: as working in the midst of ‘you.’ A climax: Of Christ’s ‘power’ towards and ‘among’ the Corinthians, Paul has already given full proof, viz. (2 Corinthians 12:12) the miracles wrought in their midst and (2 Corinthians 3:2) the spiritual effects of the Gospel in their hearts. He will now add the more terrible proof of special punishment.

**Ver. 4.** Proof of the (2 Corinthians 13:4a) power of Christ (2 Corinthians 13:4b) in Paul, in view of admitted human weakness. The crucifixion of Christ was a result of His human weakness. This involves, as does 2 Corinthians 8:9, the mystery of the Incarnation. And the dread reality of these words must not be set aside. We are here told expressly that Christ was crucified because He had not power to save Himself. Yet He is unchangeably divine, and had dwelt from eternity in infinite power. We must therefore conceive the Eternal Son as willingly taking upon Himself at His incarnation, in a mode to us inconceivable but divine, for a time and for our salvation, real human weakness; and as being in His dying moments forsaken (Matthew 27:46) by God, and powerless in the hands of His enemies. The ridicule of the Jews, (Matthew 27:42) “others He saved: Himself He cannot save,” was solemn truth. So in the garden (Matthew 26:53) the only way of deliverance which Christ mentions is prayer to His Father for angelic assistance. Thus “in all things He was made like His brothers”: Hebrews 2:17.

But He lives: upon the throne.

By the power of God: “who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory,” 1 Peter 1:21. The resurrection of Christ is ever attributed to the Father’s power: 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Corinthians 15:15; Romans 4:24;

6:4; 8:11, etc. He who was so weak that He could not save Himself from the cross now lives by the outstretched arm of God. And the ‘power’ thus manifested is proof that (2 Corinthians 13:3) Christ is “powerful” in His Church to save and to punish. For the power of the Father abides in those whom it rescues; even, we may reverently suppose, in the Risen God-Man. (Cp. John 5:26; 6:57; Colossians 1:19.) Therefore the power of God which raised Christ is proof that Christ has power to inflict punishment in His Church.

**Ver. 4b.** Expounds “speaks in me”: as 2 Corinthians 13:4a expounds “who is not weak.” It shows how Christ’s life by the power of God bears upon Paul and his readers.

Weak in Him: helpless amid peril, as Christ was and because the Spirit of Christ moves Paul to similar self-devotion for the salvation of men.

We shall live, on earth rescued from imminent peril ‘by the power of God’ so as to minister ‘for you.’ And, just as Christ’s rescue from death by the power of God is a proof of His present power towards and among His professed servants so Paul’s frequent and almost miraculous deliverance from impending death, from perils endured for Christ’s sake, proves that in him the power of God is enabling him to exercise apostolic authority. Compare and contrast 2 Corinthians 4:7ff and 10:1ff. Guilty men may well fear both Him who was raised from the dead and His servant who, even within the jaws of death protected by the arm of God, continues and will continue to live.

**Ver. 5.** Direct appeal, coming with great force after the solemn words of 2 Corinthians 12:20-13:4.

Try, or ‘tempt’: put to the test, with good or bad intention. Same word in 1 Corinthians 7:5; 10:9, 13; Matthew 4:1; 16:1; Hebrews 11:17; James 1:13; Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5: cognate to “temptation,” 1 Corinthians 10:13; Galatians 4:14; 1 Timothy 6:9, etc.

In faith: i.e. having belief of the gospel promise of eternal life as the element of life. [The article presents this as a well-known and therefore definite object of thought.] Cp. “stand in the faith,” 1 Corinthians 16:13; “continue in faith,” 1 Timothy 2:15; “live in the faith,” Galatians 2:20. Paul has in mind men guilty of open sin. But such cannot (see under

Romans 10:9) believe the Gospel. He therefore urges his readers generally to search their hearts whether they are continuing in faith; that thus the guilty ones may find that they have lost the condition of salvation and no longer belong to Christ, and may by this discovery be led to repentance.

Prove: a nobler word than ‘try,’ only used of a trial with good intent: “find out, by testing, your own genuineness.” So 2 Corinthians 8:8; 1 Corinthians 3:13; 11:28; 16:3. The addition of it here suggests a hope that the trial will be satisfactory. These words are very emphatic. “‘Yourselves,’ test ye: ‘yourselves’ prove ye.”

Or do you not, etc.: alternative appeal, which ought to supersede those going before. For, Christ in them is a proof that they are in faith. “Is it needful to make the examination? do you not read your own hearts and find there marks of the presence of Christ?”

Christ Jesus in you: by His Spirit giving victory over sin, prompting filial confidence in God, and reproducing the whole mind of Christ. Cp. Romans 8:9ff; Ephesians 3:17. This is a result of ‘faith;’ and a proof that it is not vain.

Except perhaps, etc.: adds force to this question by stating the only alternative.

Reprobate, or ‘disapproved’: rejected after trial. Same word in 1 Corinthians 9:27; Romans 1:28; 2 Timothy 3:8; Titus 1:16; Hebrews 6:8.

**Ver. 6.** A severe but disguised warning, in view of the foregoing alternative.

We: emphatic transition from the readers to Paul and his colleagues. Whether or not the Corinthians test themselves, their conduct will put to the proof Paul’s apostolic faithfulness. In this trial he will not fail. And he hopes that they will know this. That he refers to proof given by inflicting punishment, 2 Corinthians 13:7 shows.

Reprobate: as in 2 Corinthians 13:5, one who fails in trial: chosen in order to contrast Paul’s faithfulness with the faithlessness of some at Corinth. It also suggests that his faithfulness will compel him to punish. It is, like 2 Corinthians 13:3, a severe warning to those who question his authority.



I hope: 2 Corinthians 5:11. He desires that, in case of obstinacy, they may have, and may recognize, the proof.

**Ver.** 7-9. A disinterested prayer for the readers, appropriately concluding the warning.

Pray to God: formal transition from the presence of men to the presence of God. Cp. 2 Corinthians 5:13.

May be seen to be approved: as is every teacher by the excellence of his pupils. Paul's prayer that they 'do nothing bad' is not prompted, as it might easily be, by a selfish wish to gain approval through their goodness, but simply by a desire that they may do what is good. And their well-doing will deprive Paul of a proof of his apostolic authority, viz. that afforded by the punishment he would inflict. In this case, he will not be reprobate i.e. one who has failed in trial; but, as destitute of the proof afforded by inflicting supernatural punishment, he may speak of himself comparatively 'as unapproved:' same word as 'reprobate,' 2 Corinthians 13:5. (Similarly unscrupulous rulers have sometimes wished for a weak rebellion as an occasion for showing their power to crush it.) Paul thus reminds his readers that his prayer for their good behavior is not self-seeking, but self-denial. For their continued obstinacy would magnify his power.

**Ver.** 8-9a. The foregoing unselfish prayer traced to a necessity of Paul's nature.

We cannot: because it would be contrary to our inmost disposition.

The truth: the word of God, which corresponds always with absolute reality. See under Romans 1:18. It is designed to mold men's conduct in correspondence with God's will, that thus they may "do the truth." Consequently, to lead men into sin, is to act 'against the truth.' This, to Paul's renewed nature, was impossible. His powers like those of Christ, 'can' be put forth only 'on behalf of the truth.'

For we rejoice, etc.: reason of this impossibility.

We, you: each emphatic.

Strong: capable of spiritual activity and endurance. Cp. Romans 15:1.

Weak: not spiritual weakness, which could not be a joy to Paul or help others to be strong. It is, as in 2 Corinthians 13:4, human incapacity for doing anything great. The spiritual strength of his readers was a joy to Paul: and this joy was not lessened by the fact that, in order to impart to them this strength, Paul himself went into positions of weakness. And this was with him an abiding principle. For the objects which give us joy determine our whole character. And this joy of Paul kept him back from doing anything to hinder the truth from molding his readers' conduct; and compelled him to put forth his powers 'on behalf of the truth.'

Consequently, since for their strength he was willing to be weak, he cannot wish them to persevere in sin that thus he may have an opportunity of showing his apostolic power. For this would run counter to his very heart, which rejoices in their spiritual strength. 2 Corinthians 13:7-9a are full of terrible warning. So completely are the unfaithful ones in Paul's power that selfish motives would suggest a wish that they would continue obstinate. Consequently, desire for their repentance is pure self-sacrificing love for them.

**Ver. 9b.** Leads us back to the starting point in 2 Corinthians 13:7.

Also pray: as well as rejoice when you are strong.

Your full equipment: in apposition to 'this.' Paul prays that his readers be strong; or, what is practically the same, that they be fully equipped.

Cognate word in 1 Corinthians 1:10. See note. He prays that they be thoroughly furnished with all gifts of the spiritual life, fitting them to do the work and fight the battles of God. For the fallen ones, this implied complete restoration. That of these Paul here thinks chiefly, is proved by foregoing and following warnings.

**Ver. 10.** Concludes DIV. 3, by giving its purpose, with a solemn warning; and by restating a principle of clemency which has been kept in mind throughout. It is thus an epitome of the whole.

Because of this: "because I rejoice in and pray for your spiritual strength and complete restoration." This prompts him to write to them 'while absent.' For the same reason (2 Corinthians 1:23-2:4) Paul changed his purpose of coming to Corinth direct from Ephesus, and wrote his First Epistle. This implies that the reformation (2 Corinthians 7:11) wrought by

the First Epistle was not a complete one. Even after its good results Paul finds it needful to add the severe words of DIV. 3 of the Second Epistle.

That when present, etc.; develops because of this, in view of the readers' present state.

Severely: by inflicting punishment. Cognate word in Romans 11:22.

The authority which, etc.: almost word for word as in 2 Corinthians 10:8. Even if Paul act severely, he will act 'according' to his divinely-given 'authority.' But he remembers that the purpose of this authority is not to 'pull down' but to 'build up' the church. Therefore, if he is obliged to pull down he will do so as little as possible. And these are his last words to the refractory church-members.

Building up, or 'edification'; takes hold of 2 Corinthians 12:19, marking the completion of 19 there begun.

## REVIEW

Throughout his long boasting, in 15-18 or 2 Corinthians 11:1-12:18, Paul has been appealing, in self-defense, to his readers. He now tells them, with the dignity of a true servant of God, that their approval has not been the aim of this self-defense. He has spoken before God, resting in and united to Christ. Not the approval, but the spiritual good, of his readers has been his aim. His fear about them prompts him to write, lest when he comes the gross and unrepented sins of some of them humble him into the very dust. His readers know him well. Already he has been with them twice. When he comes again he will fulfill his threat, and punish those who by sufficient witnesses are proved to be guilty. Those who call in question his apostolic authority will then have the proof they profess to seek. Just as Christ, though powerless to save Himself even from the cross, yet reigns now by the power of God, so they will find Paul, though apparently a poor weak man, but weak for Christ's sake, yet armed with divine power. He bids them put themselves to the test whether they continue believing and whether Christ still dwells in them: else they are already rejected as unfaithful. They will soon find that Paul is not unfaithful. He prays for them with disinterested love. For their obstinacy will magnify his apostolic authority. But this he does not desire: for he cannot but wish for their highest good. He therefore writes these severe words, that thus he may be spared from severe actions, remembering that severity is not the purpose of the authority with which he has been invested by Christ.

DIVISION 3: opens to us a terrible view of the church of Corinth in Paul's day. As we look from our modern standpoint into the confusion which reigned then and there and into the strange mixture of diverse and mutually opposing elements, we distinguish two groups of opponents to Paul, each one with marked characteristics. One of these comes into view gradually, assuming greater definiteness as we watch it, until at last the features of its leaders are clearly seen. The second group startles us by its sudden appearance in distinct and dark colors. The former group was Jewish; the latter, probably Gentile. Doubtless both came under Paul's warning at the outset of DIV. 3 (2 Corinthians 10:2) to those who reckoned him 'as walking according to flesh.' For, both they who openly disputed his

authority and they who set it at naught by open sin looked upon the apostle as acting from merely human motives and as armed only with human powers

Paul's Jewish opponents were professed Christians: for they boasted (2 Corinthians 10:7, 11:23) that they belonged to Christ. 'He that comes' (2 Corinthians 11:4) suggests that they were not inhabitants of Corinth, but arrivals from elsewhere. They claimed (2 Corinthians 11:5, 13; 12:11) the highest rank in the Church, viz. to be 'apostles of Christ.' Doubtless it was they who needed (2 Corinthians 3:1) commendatory letters. They professed to be disinterested friends (2 Corinthians 11:12) of the Corinthians: but their claim was (2 Corinthians 11:13) falsehood and guile. For they were bad men, doing Satan's work, and on the way to perdition. they (2 Corinthians 11:20) 'ate up' the Corinthian church and 'caught' it unawares: they tried to bring it into bondage to the Mosaic Law, or rather to themselves: and treated it with insolence. They openly charged the apostle with being bold only at a distance, and powerless when present; and insinuated (2 Corinthians 12:16) that he had guilefully made others his instruments for plundering the Corinthians. Yet even these men were listened to and tolerated (2 Corinthians 11:19) in the church which owed its existence to the long toil and the dauntless courage of Paul. In Galatians 2:4 we find similar men in the birthplace of Christianity.

The second group of adversaries was guilty of gross sensuality. Such men, Paul was humiliated at finding (2 Corinthians 12:21; 13:2) even on his unrecorded second visit. He forbore to punish them, but threatened to do so when he should come again if they were still unrepentant. This sensuality seems (1 Corinthians 5:9) to have prompted his lost letter. A very aggravated case of it, which Paul could not tolerate even while absent, he deals with (1 Corinthians 5:1ff) in his first extant letter. And the general unfaithfulness was his chief reason (2 Corinthians 1:23) for writing that letter instead of coming, as he first intended, direct from Ephesus to Corinth. Although the letter moved the church generally to repentance, it failed to reach some of the worst cases of sensuality. And Paul wrote the severe threatenings of DIV. 3 of this Second Epistle to avoid, if possible, severe discipline, painful both to them and to him, when he comes to see them.

Paul declared that these disorders at Corinth would, if continued evoke a proof of his apostolic authority. They have done so, in a way beyond his thought and to us most valuable. For Paul's reproof of these disorders is an infallible mark of the genuineness of the Epistles before us. That against the Corinthian church we find charges of sensuality far more terrible than anything else we have from his pen, accords with the world-wide infamy of the city whose temple to the goddess of lust had once been served by a thousand impure priestesses. And certainly no forger personating the apostle after his death would venture to write thus about the early days of a church which in the second century was well known and important. The severity of these Epistles proves that they came from the only man who would have dared to write thus.

In dealing with these serious disorders Paul begins with an implied threat of punishment, which he supports by appealing to the supernatural results which his gospel has already produced in the hearts of his readers. And then, since his authority had been openly questioned by his Jewish opponents, he boldly contrasts himself with them. This leads to his long boasting, of which I have given a summary under 2 Corinthians 12:18. And this is followed by an explanation of his purpose in writing to them these bold words, an explanation full of warning and of disinterested love.

## SECTION 20

### FAREWELL

#### CHAPTER 13:11-13

*As to the rest, brothers, rejoice, be fully equipped, receive exhortation, mind the same thing, be at peace. And the God of love and of peace will be with you: Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the participation of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you.*

**Ver.** 11-12. Concluding and cheerful words, the more welcome after severe reproof.

As to the rest: suggesting much else which Paul would like to say. In spite of many defects he still recognizes them as ‘brethren’ in Christ.

Rejoice: Philippians 3:1; 4:4: eight times in this sad epistle. All children of God we may bid ‘rejoice,’ whatever be their circumstances: for all have abundant reason for joy.

Be-fully-equipped, or ‘restored’: more fully “undergo from day to day restoration or equipment.” [The present imperative seems to imply that only gradually are the depraving inward effects of sin removed and we fitted for the work of God.] It recalls the same word in 2 Corinthians 13:9; 1 Corinthians 1:10. While bidding them rejoice Paul cannot forget their great deficiencies, which must be removed before their joy can be full.

Exhortation; includes the ideas of encouragement and comfort. See under Romans 12:1. “Yield to my entreaty to be fully restored, an entreaty full of encouragement and comfort.”

Mind the same thing: a restoration which (1 Corinthians 1:10) had been greatly needed. Cp. Philippians 2:2; Romans 12:16; 15:5.

Be-at-peace: same word in Romans 12:18. It is a pleasant result of being of the same mind.

God of love and peace: of whose nature love and peace are essential elements, and from whom they flow forth to His people's hearts. 'Love' is put first, as being itself the inmost essence of God and the source of 'peace.' If we obey Paul's exhortation to peace, the Eternal Fountain of 'peace,' and of 'love' the source of peace, will dwell with us. Cp. Romans 15:33; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 John 4:7-13; John 14:23.

Greet etc: as in 1 Corinthians 16:20; Romans 16:16.

**Ver. 13.** Parting benediction, the most full in the New Testament, embracing conspicuously each Person of the Trinity.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Corinthians 8:9; 12:9: put first because Christ's favor towards men is the immediate source of all blessing, and the channel through which flows our salvation which has its ultimate source in 'the love of God.' These last words trace up the channel to its source.

Participation of the Holy Spirit: cp. 1 Corinthians 10:16: partnership with others in possessing the Holy Spirit. This is the inward result of 'the grace of Christ and the love of God,' and the means through which they become practically known to us and thus abide 'with' us. Cp. Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 2:12.

Participation; reminds us that 'the Holy Spirit' is the common possession of all the children of God, uniting all in one. What others have, Paul desires his readers to share.

All of you: emphatic, including those now unrepentant. The smile which ever beams from the face of Christ the eternal love which fills the heart of God, and the Holy Spirit who fills the hearts of the children of God with consciousness of His eternal love, are to be our companions along the pilgrimage of life. And, if so, the sunshine of Christ's smile, the unchanging love of God, and the guidance and strengthening of the Holy Spirit, will make our path, be it ever so rough, a path of peace and joy.

**REVIEW OF THE EPISTLE.** We notice at once that the matter of chs. viii., ix., viz. the collection for Jerusalem, is quite different from the rest of the Epistle, which is almost entirely apologetic. The Epistle thus falls into the three broadly marked divisions which I have adopted, and which may



be called, the First Apology, the Collection, the Second Apology. The matter of the collection was inserted between the Apologies probably because Paul preferred to pass to it at once while full of the joy with which he concludes the First Apology, rather than after the warnings and threatenings and sorrow of the Second. The Apologies differ in that the First is general, addressed to the whole church, while the Second is directed against certain gross offenders, many of them of long standing, and against certain foreign and deceitful opponents. Each of the Apologies contains a long boast, which is its kernel. And the difference just mentioned between DIV. 1 and DIV. 3 is seen in that the earlier boasting (2 Corinthians 2:14-6:10) sets forth chiefly the grandeur of the office faithfully filled by Paul and his colleagues; whereas the second boasting (2 Corinthians 11:1-12:18) sets forth, with evident reluctance, Paul's own personal conduct and hardships and claims, and this in direct contrast to specific opponents.

This Epistle was evidently prompted by (2 Corinthians 7:6ff) the arrival of Titus and by the tidings he brought about the church at Corinth, tidings on the whole, but not altogether, very good. The earlier severe letter, which Paul wrote (2 Corinthians 2:4) in tears and afterwards (2 Corinthians 7:8) regretted having written, had produced most excellent results. The whole church (2 Corinthians 7:11) was moved to repentance for tolerating the gross criminal, and to an outburst of loyalty to the apostle. But there was still (2 Corinthians 12:21) among some church-members gross sin, which Paul feared would make his visit to Corinth humiliating to himself and painful to his readers: and there were false and boastful men who, though deliberate and probably professed enemies of the Apostle, yet had influence in the church. And the collection for Jerusalem was not making satisfactory progress. Paul must therefore write again; to express his joy at their repentance, to urge forward the collection, and if possible by warnings from a distance to bring the impenitent ones to repentance, so as to prevent the severity which he still fears he will be compelled to use when he arrives. And, now that he is sure of the repentance of the more part, he can tell them the reason of the postponement of his visit.

Paul writes under the influence of recent deadly peril. But to this he refers only in a song of exultant gratitude. Coming next to his change of plan, he appeals to his own straightforwardness; and then gives the reason of the

change. He bids the Corinthian Christians receive back the now-repentant sinner condemned in the earlier letter. In glowing language he depicts the grandeur of the apostolic ministry. Then, preparing beforehand as usual a way to DIV. 3, he urges his readers to separate themselves from all sin; and concludes DIV. 1 by an outburst of joy at the tidings about the Corinthians which Titus has brought. This joy suitably prepares the way to the collection for the poor believers at Jerusalem. This he urges them, for their honor among the churches, to have ready in abundance when he arrives. And he concludes his reference to it by pointing out its great and good spiritual results.

Paul comes now to the most painful matter of his letter, reserved to the last. He quietly threatens punishment to some whose names he forbears to mention; and after doing so refuses to compare himself with his boastful and deceitful opponents. He then sets forth in contrast to them his own disinterested labors, his many hardships, and his wonderful revelations. As a counterpart to these last he mentions a severe personal affliction, and Christ's promise in the midst of it. He appeals to his miraculous credentials, and strengthens his appeal by an expression of tender love for his readers; and concludes his long self-defense by rebutting an insinuation about his colleagues. From the vantage thus gained, he speaks again, rather by way of suggestion than of direct threatening, about the punishment he fears he shall be compelled to inflict; and begs his readers to make needless by self-examination this proof of his apostolic authority. He concludes his letter with a cheering salutation and a beautiful benediction.

This epistle preserves for us an episode in the life of Paul otherwise unrecorded, viz. a visit to Corinth, probably during his three years' sojourn at Ephesus. It was to him (2 Corinthians 2:1; 12:21) a painful and humiliating visit. For he found in the church men guilty of gross sensuality. He contented himself with warning them to repent, and threatening punishment at his next visit in case of continued sin. We are not surprised to find that some time after this visit he wrote (1 Corinthians 5:9ff) a letter of warning against sensuality, and against intercourse with professed Christians who were guilty of it. At the time of this letter he intended probably (2 Corinthians 1:15) to go direct from Ephesus to Corinth, and then to Macedonia, and then back to Corinth. He changed his plan (2 Corinthians 1:23) because of bad tidings about the state of the church; for

above all things he wished to avoid another painful visit to his beloved but unfaithful children. Instead therefore of coming at once, he wrote, in the spring of the year in which he left Ephesus, his First Epistle: and a few months later, with the purposes expounded above, he wrote the Second Epistle, which we now reluctantly close.

More than any other, this Epistle reveals to us the heart of the Apostle, the kind of life he lived, and the sort of people with whom he had to do. The hand which writes it trembles with fear, a fear which reveals the heroism of the man who in spite of it goes forward without a moment's hesitation along his path of peril. We feel the tender love which prompts forbearance towards unfaithful ones, and fills his eyes with tears while he writes the condemnation of an outrageous offender and makes him afterwards regret the letter he has written, but which did not prevent him from writing it. Now love has its joys as well as its sorrows: and Paul's joy at the good news brought by Titus has no bounds. Yet., in spite of his intense love and deep sympathy, he is still resolved to punish those who continue obstinate. Upon these, though with a sad heart, his strong hand will fall. We have also in this Epistle the darkest picture extant of the continual and deadly peril of the apostle. That his life is prolonged, is little less than a constant miracle. Once it seemed to him that there was no way of escape: and the hero, saved so often before from imminent peril, prepared to die. The Epistle reveals also the irregular life of many of those lately gathered out of heathenism, and the gross sin of some who nevertheless continued to be members of the church; and the unscrupulous and deceitful hostility to Paul of others who had influence in the church. In short, we have here a picture, in most vivid colors, of an Apostle and his converts.

# COMMENTARY

## ON ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE

## TO THE GALATIANS

### EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE

### SECTION 1

#### *APOSTOLIC GREETING TO THE GALATIAN CHRISTIANS*

#### CHAPTER 1:1-5

*Paul, an apostle, not from men nor through man but through Jesus Christ and God, the Father, who raised Him from the dead, and all the brethren with me, to the Churches of Galatia; grace to you and peace from God, the Father, and our Lord, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of God, our Father, to whom be the glory for the ages of the ages. Amen.*

**Ver.** 1. Apostle: see under Galatians 1:19; 1 Corinthians 15:7; Romans 1:1.

Not from men: as though some body of men delegating to him authority were the starting point of Paul's apostolic journeys. Cp. John 1:24. [So 1 Peter 1:12; Acts 11:11; John 1:6.]

Men, not 'man:.' for it was inconceivable that Paul was sent by any one man.

Through (see Romans 1:5) man: i.e. 'through the agency or instrumentality of a man'; as Elisha (1 Kings 19:16) was called to be a prophet by the agency of Elijah. Yet Elisha was sent from God, and was endowed with His authority. But so completely independent of everyone on earth was Paul's apostleship that it was not even conveyed to him by human lips. This complete and emphatic and repeated denial, we shall find (cp. Galatians 1:11f) to be Paul's chief thought throughout DIV. 1 So fully does it occupy his mind while writing, that it finds utterance in the first line of the Epistle.

But through Jesus Christ: Romans 1:5; 1 Corinthians 8:6: the channel of all good from God to us. These words are expounded in the narrative of Acts 26:17f.

That Jesus Christ is placed in emphatic contrast to 'man' and is linked under one preposition with God, reveals His absolute and infinite superiority, in Paul's thought, to the entire human race, and His nearness to God. See my 'Romans,' Diss. i. 7. The word 'man' in 1 Timothy 2:5; Acts 17:31, presents no difficulty: for in Galatians 1:1 the same word is negated simply as not being a full description of Him through whom Paul received the apostleship.

God, the Father: Ephesians 6:23; Philippians 2:11; Colossians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4. The title 'Father' is added, not to distinguish God the Father from God the Son, as in theological phrase, but to declare that 'God' is also 'Father.' The following words suggest that Paul thinks of Him chiefly as Father of Christ. But the close relation between Christ and His followers as sharers of His sonship suggests at once that 'God' is also their 'Father.'

Through... God, the Father: through the agency, i.e. the immediate activity, not only of 'Christ' but of 'God.' The Father was Himself the medium (as well as the source) and the instrument or agent (as well as the First Cause) of Paul's mission. For (Romans 11:36) 'All things are' both 'from Him and through Him.' In other words, God rose as it were from His throne and by His personal action invested Paul with the apostleship; the greatest conceivable proof of its importance. It is needless to add that God is also the source of Paul's commission: for we cannot conceive Him acting as agent for another. Hence we have no 'from God' corresponding to not

from men. These last words were needful to rebut (so Galatians 1:11f) a reproach of Paul's enemies. Cp. 'an heir through God,' in Galatians 4:7.

That Paul's apostleship was 'through' the agency of 'Christ,' is self-evident: but that it was 'through... God, the Father,' requires further explanation. This is given in the following words, 'who raised Him from the dead.' These words, thrust prominently forward in the first verse of the Epistle, reveal the importance in Paul's thought of this great fact and its essential connection with the mission of the apostles. By the Risen Savior, Paul was sent. Had He not risen, there had been no voice on the way to Damascus; and no apostolic mission. And, had not the apostles been sent to preach, the resurrection of Christ would have been without result. Therefore, when raising Christ by His own immediate power and without any human agent, with a view to the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world, God was Himself personally taking part in the mission of the apostles. Paul thus begins his letter of rebuke by bringing his readers into the presence of the infinite power of God manifested on earth, thus raising at once the question at issue above man and all that man can do. Cp. Romans 1:4.

From the dead: or, literally and more forcefully, 'from among dead-ones,' among whom Christ lay in death.

**Ver. 2.** All the brethren with me: Paul's companions, probably, in travel and Gospel work. So Philippians 4:21, where they are contrasted with 'all the saints.' For, Paul would hardly speak of the whole Church from whose midst he wrote as being with him: rather, he was with them. But, of the band of fellow travelers, he was indisputably the center. They were probably in part those mentioned in Acts 20:4. See Diss. i. This mention of these fellow-workers implies that they recognised unanimously Paul's apostolic commission as from God and independent of human authority. And this recognition by them, known as they doubtless were and respected in Galatia, could not but influence the readers of this Epistle. Not that Paul's authority rested upon its recognition even by these good men. His reference to them merely suggests that they who reject it thereby separate themselves from this band of noble workers.

The Churches of Galatia: close coincidence with 1 Corinthians 16:1; Acts 16:6; 18:23, where no city is mentioned. This suggests that Christianity

had not spread from one center, as it did from Corinth and Ephesus, (contrast 2 Corinthians 1:1,) over the whole province. The reason is hidden under the obscurity which veils the origin of these Churches. These words also suggest that the Christian communities in ‘Galatia’ were not united into one organic whole. And this accords with the fact that, except Acts 9:31, ‘the Church throughout Judea and Samaria,’ we never find the Churches of a province spoken of as one Church.

**Ver. 3.** See under Romans 1:7. The words ‘to you’ between ‘grace’ and ‘peace’ detain our attention and mark off each as a distinct object of thought.

Father: as in Galatians 1:1, and perhaps prompted by the phrase there. But here the foregoing words suggest that Paul thinks chiefly of ‘God’ as ‘Father’ of His people. The RV. margin has equal documentary evidence, but might easily be an imitation of Paul’s usual salutation. Notice that, as in Galatians 1:1 ‘Christ’ and ‘God’ are joined together under one preposition as agent of Paul’s apostleship, so here as the source of ‘grace and peace.’

**Ver. 4a.** An historical fact touching Christ, followed in Galatians 1:4b by an eternal truth touching God, these underlying and prompting the foregoing good wish.

Gave Himself: 1 Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:14; Ephesians 5:2, 25; Romans 8:32; 4:25: i.e. undoubtedly, gave Himself up to die. Cp. Galatians 2:20 with Galatians 2:21; Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 22:19; John 6:51. For Christ’s death stood in special relation to ‘our sins:’ 1 Corinthians 15:3; Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 3:18. Cp. 1 Maccabees vi. 44, where of Eleazar’s heroic death in battle we read: “and gave himself to save his people and to preserve for himself an eternal name.” The phrase suggests that a man’s life is his greatest conceivable gift, and includes all other possible gifts.

For our sins: literally touching our sins. Another reading with less documentary evidence, and no better internal probability, is ‘on behalf of our sins,’ as in 1 Corinthians 15:3. The whole clause receives its only and sufficient explanation in the teaching of Romans 3:24-26 (see note) that Christ was ‘set forth in His blood’ in order to reconcile with the justice of

God, and thus make possible, the justification of believers, i.e. the pardon of their sins.

That He might: or 'may.' The Greek does not suggest whether this purpose of Christ's self-surrender is, or is not, already accomplished.

The age: Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 1:20: the whole course and current of things around, except so far as these are controlled by Christ, looked upon as existing and moving in time and for a time.

Evil: actually hurtful: same word in Ephesians 5:16; 6:13; often used of Satan, Ephesians 6:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 John 2:13f; 3:12; 5:18f. 'The present age' is injurious in its influence. The word rendered 'present' denotes sometimes, as in 2 Thessalonians 2:2, that which stands before us as now beginning or about to begin. But elsewhere (Romans 8:38; 1 Corinthians 3:22; 7:26; Hebrews 9:9) it has the simple sense of 'present' in contrast to something future. And so probably here: for although Paul speaks often (Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 1:20; 2:6, 8; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 1:21; 1 Timothy 6:17; 2 Timothy 4:10; Titus 2:12) of the age in which he lived, he never suggests that any other age will begin earlier than that (Ephesians 2:7) which will be ushered in by the return of Christ. 'The present age,' is stronger than 'this age' and pictures the mass of things moving around us which ever tends to carry us along in its own direction as if, changing the metaphor, standing in our midst and face to face of us. Christ's purpose to 'deliver us' implies that the current around is a force carrying us to destruction, and from which we cannot rescue ourselves. Indisputably, the influences of the world around are a current, more tremendous than the rapids of Niagara, carrying to ruin all except those whom Christ saves. And the mention of 'our sins' suggests that surrender to this current is the due punishment of sin. Into this seething whirlpool Christ flung Himself that He might rescue us from it.

**Ver. 4b-5.** The purpose of Christ's historic self-surrender accords with, and therefore realises, 'the' eternal 'will of God.' Cp. Ephesians 1:5, 11. Thus, as ever, Paul rises from the Son to the Father. Grammatically we might with RV. render 'our God and Father;' or, as in the American Revisers' margin, 'God and our Father,' or rather in idiomatic English 'God our Father.' Since the word 'God' does not need a defining genitive, in order to convey a complete idea, whereas the idea of 'Father' is essentially



relative and therefore needs a complement expressed or understood, the latter renderings seem to me to convey more probably Paul's exact thought. The whole title declares that He who reigns supreme as God is also 'our Father.' And in the presence of God, in view of His Fatherhood and of His eternal purpose of salvation, Paul cannot refrain from an outburst of praise. So Romans 1:25; 2 Corinthians 11:31. The grandeur revealed in our rescue from the course of things around, by the self-surrender of Christ, belongs, and will be for ever ascribed, to our Father God.

Taking up his pen to write to the Galatians, Paul's first thought, forced upon him by the reproach of enemies, is that his apostleship, so far from being of human origin, is independent even of human agency; and that it was committed to him by the immediate action of Christ and of God. This is acknowledged by all his companions in evangelical labor. To men constitutionally prone to be carried away by surrounding influences, Paul intimates that these influences are bad, that surrender to them is a result of our sins, and that to rescue us from them Christ gave Himself to die, in accordance with an eternal purpose of God. This proves the deadly nature of these surrounding influences, and the earnestness of Christ and of God to save us from them. The splendor of God revealed in this deliverance will, as Paul desires, shine forth for ever.

In 1 we have the great historic fact that Christ rose from the dead on which rests the faith which justifies; and the great doctrine that salvation comes through Christ's death, which harmonises justification by faith with the justice of God. We have no hint that either the fact or doctrine was questioned by Paul's opponents. He therefore begins his letter by bringing his readers into the presence of truths which they admit and which are a firm foundation for the argument which follows.

## SECTION 2

### THE EARLY APOSTACY OF THE GALATIAN CHRISTIANS

#### CHAPTER 1:6-10

*I wonder that ye are so quickly removing from Him that called you in the grace of Christ, to another kind of good tidings; which is not another good tidings, except that there are some who are disturbing you and wishing to overturn the good tidings of Christ. But even if we or an angel out of heaven announce good tidings to you other than the good tidings we announced to you, let him be anathema. As we have before said, also now again I say, if any one is announcing to you good tidings other than ye received, let him be anathema. For, now, is it men I am persuading, or God? Or am I seeking to please men? If I were still pleasing men, Christ's servant I should not be.*

In 2 we have the subject-matter of the Epistle, viz. an early defection in Galatia and efforts there to overturn the Gospel; Galatians 1:6, 7: Paul's condemnation of the false teaching; Galatians 1:8, 9: his justification of the disregard of human approval which this condemnation involves; Galatians 1:10.

Instead of thanks to God, as in all his other letters to Churches, Paul's salutation is at once followed by severe blame. His 'wonder' (cp. Mark 6:6; 1 John 3:13) tells how unusual is the conduct blamed; and thus adds severity to this rebuke.

So quickly; denotes either (cp. Luke 14:21) a rapid defection now going on; or defection after (1 Corinthians 4:19) a short interval, measured here either from the arrival of the false teachers, or from Paul's last visit, or from his readers' conversion. Paul's exact thought, we cannot determine with certainty. Even the last measurement would give a space of seven years at most. And this is a very short time for steadfastness which is worthless unless it endure till death and for a Church designed long to

outlive the longest lived of its members. Consequently, this word affords no sure note of the time when the Epistle was written. See Diss. III. 3.

Removing: migration from place to place, or change of opinion. So Acts 7:16; Hebrews 11:5: also 2 Macc. vii. 24, of an apostate Jew; and Sirach vi. 9, of a friend turned to an enemy.

Ye-are-removing: defection now going on while Paul writes, and not yet complete. This agrees with the present tense in Galatians 3:3, 'are being-made perfect'; Galatians 4:9, 'are-turning'; Galatians 1:4, 'are-being-justified'; and throughout the Epistle, e.g. Galatians 4:21; 5:1-3, 12; 6:12, 13. These present tenses and Paul's expression of wonder, suggest that he wrote while the sad news was still fresh; and while the apostacy was still going on, hoping thus to stay its progress.

Him that called you: God, as always with Paul: cp. Galatians 5:8; 1:15; 1 Corinthians 7:17; Romans 8:30. These words remind us that the Gospel is the voice of God calling men to Himself; and imply that to forsake Gospel truth is to forsake God. For the Gospel call is the medium through which God presents Himself to us, and the instrument by which He draws us and binds us to Himself.

In the grace of Christ: Romans 5:15: cp. Galatians 6:18; 2 Corinthians 8:9; 12:9; 13:13. The Gospel call comes to us accompanied and surrounded by the undeserved favor which moved Christ to give Himself for our salvation. Apart from this favor, there had been no Gospel. Thus these words bring Galatians 1:4 to bear upon the apostacy of the Galatians.

To another-kind-of Gospel, or a different Gospel: 2 Corinthians 11:4: point towards which, while forsaking God, they are moving. The call of God was good news of coming deliverance: and nothing less than this could meet the case of men carried helplessly to ruin by the present evil age. Therefore, since his readers are turning from God who spoke to them these good tidings, Paul assumes in irony that they must have heard other good news. And, if so, it must have been of a kind quite different from that which they heard from Paul. He thus compares his own teaching with that which his opponents would put in its place, each being looked upon as good news.

In the words ‘called you, in’ the ‘grace of Christ, another Gospel,’ we trace at once the pen of the author of the Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians.

**Ver. 7.** Explanation of the foregoing veiled comparison.

‘Which other kind of good tidings, as I have ventured to call this false teaching, is not really another good tidings, as though there could be two announcements of coming deliverance between which we might choose. It is, therefore, no Gospel at all. My own words are not correct ‘except’ as pointing to the fact that there are some who disturb you, etc.’

Disturb: to destroy one’s peace: so Galatians 1:10; Acts 15:24; 17:8; John 5:7; 12:27; 13:21; 14:1, 27. Who and how many the disturbers were, we are not told: simply the fact of disturbance is asserted.

Gospel of Christ: Romans 15:19; (Galatians 1:9); 1 Corinthians 9:12; 2 Corinthians 2:12; 9:13; 10:14: the good news about Christ. For Christ is present to our thought rather as the Great Matter, than as Author or Herald, of the Gospel. Cp. Romans 1:2; 2 Corinthians 4:4.

Overturn the Gospel: the tendency, if not the deliberate aim, of the false teachers; so utterly opposed is their teaching to the good news about Christ. They were already ‘disturbing’ Paul’s readers; and were ‘wishing to overturn the Gospel.’ This last, they endeavor to do by putting in its place something quite different from it. The new teaching, in order to contrast it with the teaching it was designed to supersede, Paul calls in Galatians 1:6 ‘another kind of Gospel.’ And only in this sense does he use this phrase.

The matter of the Epistle is now fairly before us, viz. an early defection in Galatia. And the teaching which caused it, Paul declares to be an attempt to overturn the Gospel. To prove this assertion, will be the chief purpose of his argument.

**Ver. 8-9.** This argument, Paul delays for a moment in order to pronounce, and to repeat, against the false teachers in Galatia the most tremendous condemnation possible. He thus reveals the greatness of the issues at stake in the argument he is about to begin.

Even if we, etc.: an almost inconceivable supposition, giving to the condemnation which follows the widest application possible, and thus greatly increasing its force.

We: Paul and the brethren with him.

Angel out of heaven: graphic picture of the appearance of an angel.

Other than, etc.: limited, by Paul's reference to men who desired to overturn the Gospel, to teaching contrary to, and therefore subversive of, the Gospel preached by Paul. This fearful condemnation therefore does not bear upon merely defective teaching. Even the man who builds (1 Corinthians 3:15) with straw may himself be saved; so long as he does not endeavor to overturn the foundation.

Anathema: see under Romans 9:3. It can denote no less than the actual curse of God. Under this curse Paul declares that the false teachers lie; and approves this. To this terrible condemnation, the repetition in Galatians 1:9 adds great force.

The contrast with 'I say now' implies that 'as we said before,' does not refer to Galatians 1:8, and must therefore refer to words spoken by Paul and his companions either in an earlier letter or on an earlier visit. It is perhaps most easily explained as recalling Paul's second visit to Galatia, recorded in Acts 18:23. But the prevalence of the error in question, and the important discussion of it at Jerusalem shortly before (Acts 16:6) Paul's first visit, and the decrees which (Galatians 1:4) on that journey he circulated, make it quite possible that this warning was given by him even when founding the Galatian Churches. That 'if any one is announcing, etc.' states actual fact, we infer confidently from Galatians 1:7. It is thus a contrast to the inconceivable supposition of Galatians 1:8. [Hence the change in the Greek moods.] The changed ending of the conditional clause, 'that which ye received,' brings as evidence against themselves the readers' own previous acceptance of Paul's teaching. Cp. 1 Corinthians 15:1. It is thus a forerunner of Galatians 3:1.

That this tremendous condemnation is due to narrow intolerance of opinions different from his own, Paul's breadth of view disclosed throughout the Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians forbids us to believe. We are therefore compelled to accept it as proof of the greatness

of the error and the guilt of the men referred to. And we wait, with bated breath, to know what their teaching was. We expect to find it directly subversive (Galatians 1:7) of the Gospel, thus tending to rob the world of the blessings therein proclaimed and conveyed; and to find that it implied wilful rejection of the teaching of Christ. For, only against error involving moral guilt could this fearful curse be pronounced. Thus Paul's words of condemnation raise our expectation, on the threshold of the Epistle, to the highest point.

The nature of the error here referred to can be gathered only by inference from the Epistle itself. It will be discussed fully at the close of our exposition. See note there.

**Ver. 10.** Now: in emphatic prominence, revealing the importance of the present moment, and the mighty issues 'now' at stake.

Persuade: win over to our side as friends; same word in Acts 12:20. 'Is it at this present time the favor of men or of God I am securing?'

To please men: 1 Thessalonians 2:4: method by which we 'persuade' them. While 'seeking to please' them we are actually engaged in the work of winning them to our side. That Paul actually persuaded (2 Corinthians 5:11) men and sought (Romans 15:2; 1 Corinthians 10:33) to please them, in order to save them, implies that he refers here to the favor of men sought only for our own selfish ends. To seek the favor of men in order to save them, and only so far as this motive leads us, is itself one of the best means of obtaining the favor of God. Between these two modes of pleasing men, the ultimate aim places an infinite difference.

To the question of Galatians 1:10a, 10b gives both an answer and a reason for it.

Still; suggests that Paul, like all men, had once the favor of men his main purpose. Apart from Christ, in life depends more or less on men around us. Consequently, the favor of some of them must at all costs be obtained. Consciousness of this is bondage to the caprice of those on whom our supposed welfare depends. But Christ's servants know that their welfare depends only on their Master's smile. They are therefore independent of men, and have no need to seek man's favor except so far as by doing so they are serving and pleasing Christ. Consequently, to 'please men' as we

did in days gone by, is to abandon the liberty of 'a servant of Christ.' Compare carefully 1 Corinthians 7:23. The conspicuous contrast of 'men' and 'Christ' involves, as in Galatians 1:1, the superhuman dignity of Christ.

**Ver.** 10 is given to support Galatians 1:9. The support thus rendered, our ignorance of details somewhat obscures. But a clue is found in Galatians 6:12, where Paul declares that zeal for the Law was a mask under which the disturbers were endeavoring to escape from persecution. If so, they were mutilating the Gospel in order to conciliate its enemies. Such conduct is doubly incompatible with the service of Christ; and justifies the severe condemnation of Galatians 1:10. By using the first person, and thus expounding the principles of his own action, in words which his readers knew were true, Paul brings his own contrary example to bear on the matter at issue. Cp. 1 Corinthians 8:13; 9:26; 10:33; 11:1. He also reveals by silent contrast the selfish motives of the seducers. His reference to himself is also a suitable stepping-stone to DIV. 1

# DIVISION I

## PAUL'S CONTRARY CONDUCT AND PRINCIPLES

### CHAPTERS 1:11-2:

### SECTION 3

#### PAUL'S GOSPEL IS DIVINE

#### CHAPTER 1:11, 12

*For I make known to you, brethren, the good tidings announced as good tidings by me, that it is not according to man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it; but it came through revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Make known to you; calls attention to an important matter, as in 1 Corinthians 12:3, 15:1; 2 Corinthians 8:1. It also suggests that the error in Galatia arose from ignorance.

Good-tidings, announce good-tidings: same word already five times in 2, reminding us emphatically that the preaching of Paul was good news.

That it is not, etc.: special element in the 'good tidings' which Paul wishes to 'make known.'

Not according to man: it is not such teaching as man could produce, does not correspond with man's powers. This calls attention to the nature and contents of Paul's Gospel.

**Ver. 12.** Explains how it is that Paul preached a Gospel which does not accord with, i.e. which surpasses, man's own powers of intellectual discovery. The explanation is that it was received not from man but from



‘Christ.’ Paul did not receive it from human lips, as something which one man hands over to another.

Nor was I taught it: as something acquired by the intellectual effort of learning.

Revelation (see under Romans 1:17) of Jesus Christ: either as the Author Himself revealing, Matthew 11:27; or the Object-matter, Himself revealed, 1 Corinthians 1:7; 1 Peter 7, 13. Here Galatians 1:16 suggests the latter thought: and this is the usual sense of the genitive after ‘revelation.’ But the contrast with ‘received from man’ reminds us that ‘Jesus Christ’ is the source of this ‘revelation.’ And this is possibly the sense of 2 Corinthians 12:1. Both ideas may have been present in Paul’s mind. The ‘Revelation of Christ’ in 1 Corinthians 1:7 is His sudden unveiling at the Great Day: here, and in Galatians 1:16, it is His unveiling subjectively in the mind of Paul. Cp. Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:5.

The statements in Galatians 1:11, 12 are given in support of something going before. And the repeated word ‘good-tidings,’ or ‘Gospel,’ at once recalls the same word in Galatians 1:6-9, thus overleaping the passing reference in Galatians 1:10. Paul assumed in Galatians 1:7 that the good news which he proclaimed and his readers accepted, but which the disturbers wish to overturn, is ‘The Gospel of Christ.’ To defend this assumption, is the purpose of DIV. 1 And this defense Paul has now introduced by a statement, which he will at once proceed to prove, that the matter of his preaching was acquired not by ordinary means but by a lifting up of the veil which hides Christ from mortal view.

The above statement and the long argument following, which shed light on Galatians 1:1, can be explained only by supposing that the false teachers had insinuated that Paul received the Gospel at second hand and preached only in virtue of a commission from the apostles sent personally by Christ, and was therefore inferior to them; and that to their commission he had been unfaithful by preaching a Gospel different from that which he received from them. To this insinuation the facts which occupy the remainder of DIV. 1 will be a crushing reply.

This revelation was conveyed to Paul (Ephesians 3:5) by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit (Ephesians 1:17) of wisdom and revelation, received at

Damascus by (Acts 9:17) the agency of Ananias. And doubtless the revelation was progressive. Yet we may suppose that he sought and received from others an account of the works and words of Jesus. Indeed he may have known these in part before his conversion; as many know them now and are uninfluenced by them. But, in addition to this external knowledge, Paul was deeply conscious that by the direct agency of God the eyes of his heart had been opened to see a heavenly light and to apprehend the life-giving truths underlying the words and works of Christ. And this is true, in some measure, of all believers: cp. Ephesians 1:17. Probably the matters in dispute turned not so much on what Christ had said as on the underlying significance of His words. And of this, Paul's knowledge was derived, not from human witnesses, but from Him who was pleased to reveal His Son in him.

## SECTION 4

### PAUL'S FORMER LIFE

#### CHAPTER 1:13, 14

*For ye have heard my manner of life formerly in Judaism, that beyond measure I was persecuting the Church of God, and was laying it waste: and I was making progress in Judaism beyond many of my own age in my race, being more abundantly zealous for my paternal traditions.*

Now begins historical proof, occupying the rest of DIV. 1, of the statement in Galatians 1:12. As a dark background for it, throwing into bold relief his subsequent career, Paul describes first his own earlier life. And this description is also the beginning of the proof. For, such terrible hostility could be overcome by nothing less than a 'revelation of Jesus Christ.'

Ye have heard: probably from Paul himself; a coincidence with Acts 22, 26, which reveal Paul's habit of narrating his conversion.

Manner of life: same word in Ephesians 4:22; 1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Corinthians 1:12; Ephesians 2:3; 1 Timothy 3:15.

Judaism: the Jewish way of living, especially in religion. So 2 Macc. viii. 1, "those who had remained 'in Judaism,'" in contrast to apostates; 2 Macc. ii. 21; xiv. 38.

The Church of God: cp. 1 Corinthians 15:9. To 'persecute the Church' is to make war against 'God.'

Was-laying-waste: Galatians 1:23: was engaged in its utter destruction. Paul looked upon himself then as actually destroying the Church. The same word is used for destruction of cities; and, in Acts 9:21, of persons.

**Ver. 14.** Making progress: same word in Romans 13:12: literally 'knocking forward,' laboriously making oneself a way. In everything distinctive of a Jew, especially in fanatical devotion to the Law and to Jewish

prerogatives, Paul was day by day going forward. This devotion, many other young men shared: but in his fervor he left them behind.

In my race: 2 Corinthians 11:26; Philippians 3:5. It suggests or implies that those to whom Paul wrote were for the more part not Jews.

Zealous: emulous to maintain and defend: literally a 'zealot,' which is an English form of the Greek word here used. Same word in Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13; 21:20; 22:3; 1 Corinthians 14:12; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 3:13. Of the same word, Cananaean in (RV.) Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:18 is a Hebrew form. It became the name of a sect of fanatics madly jealous for what they thought to be the prerogatives of Israel.

Traditions: customs or teaching handed down verbally or in writing from one to another. See under 1 Corinthians 11:2. Cp. Mark 7:3-13; Colossians 2:8. 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6.

Paternal: see Diss. i. 2. That Paul says my traditions, even when comparing himself with others of his own race, suggests that he refers to something specially his own, probably to the traditional customs and interpretations of Scripture which distinguished the sect of the Pharisees. For Paul was (Philippians 3:5, Acts 26:5) a Pharisee, a son (Acts 23:6) of Pharisees. So Josephus, 'Antiquities' bk. xiii. 10. 6, "The Pharisees handed over by tradition to the people many ordinances received from the fathers": ch. 16. 2, "the ordinances which the Pharisees brought in according to the paternal tradition." A sample is in Mark 7:3-13.

Notice that Paul's words about his earlier life here and 1 Corinthians 15:9; Philippians 3:6; 1 Timothy 1:13 confirm completely the statement in Acts 8:3; 9:1, 13; 22:4, 19; 26:10.

## SECTION 5

### *PAUL'S CONVERSION AND JOURNEY TO ARABIA*

#### CHAPTER 1:15-17

*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that as good tidings I might announce Him among the Gentiles, immediately I did not set the matter before flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and I returned again to Damascus.*

**Ver. 15-16a.** A new era in Paul's life, due entirely to the good pleasure of God, an historic realisation of an eternal purpose.

When it pleased God; suggests that the time was chosen by the good will of God, who might have spoken to him earlier or later.

Separated me, etc.: 'placed me, from the moment of my birth, apart from other men,' i.e. in a unique position. This can refer only to the as yet unrevealed purpose of God. Paul cannot forget that the voice on the way to Damascus was a manifestation of a purpose which had followed him from the first moment of his personal existence. Even then God designed him for special work. Cp. Isaiah 49:1; Jeremiah 1:5.

Called me: Romans 8:28: by the voice of Jesus. This voice was the first link in the historic realisation of God's purpose. Cp. Romans 8:30.

Through His grace: channel by which the voice came to Paul. God first looked on him with undeserved favor; and then, in order to place him in the unique position for which from birth He had destined him, He spoke to him on the journey. Notice the parallel: 'it pleased God to reveal His Son in me; and by His grace He called me.'

To reveal, etc.: an inward unveiling and vision, in the heart of Paul, of the Son of God, of His Nature and Mission. See under Galatians 1:12. Thus to know Christ is the highest gain and joy, and would itself compensate for

the lack of all besides. This revelation followed immediately Paul's reception of the Holy Spirit: for he at once (Acts 9:20) began to preach. But it would be developed as day by day the Spirit gave him a nearer and clearer view of Christ. Paul then adds the definite purpose of this revelation.

In me: in the mind and spiritual life of Paul; of which every part was permeated and ennobled by this vision of the unveiled face of Christ. It cannot refer, as in 1 Timothy 1:16, to an objective manifestation of Christ to men in (cp. Galatians 1:24) the person of Paul. For this would need to be clearly specified, would confound these words with those following, and would omit an all-important link of the chain, viz. Paul's own inward vision of Christ. For, none but those in whose inner life Christ is revealed can preach Him aright. The other idea, the word 'manifest' (2 Corinthians 4:10f) would better express.

Announce Him: for Christ is Himself the matter of the good news.

Among the Gentiles: a definite element in God's purpose; and a close coincidence with Acts 26:17.

**Ver.** 16b-17. Paul's action immediately after this divine revelation, described, as his wont is, first negatively then positively.

Set the matter before: for advice, as though Paul's conduct would be influenced thereby. Same word in Galatians 2:6: similar word in Galatians 1:2.

Flesh and blood: men; whose intelligence is limited and their counsel molded by the constitution of their material clothing. Cp. Matthew 16:17; Ephesians 6:12. Similarly, 1 Corinthians 15:50; Hebrews 2:14 recall the conditions imposed by man's bodily life. That Paul does not refer here to taking account of the needs and comfort of the body, is proved by his mention in Galatians 1:17 of the earlier apostles; and by the scope of DIV. 1, viz. his independence of human authority.

Nor did I go up, etc.: another negation specifying the former one.

Go up to Jerusalem: Galatians 2:1f, Acts 11:2; 15:2; 21:12; and Acts 18:22, which refers probably to Jerusalem. It was not only the head of the nation, but was situated on high ground. On receiving the heavenly vision,

Paul did not go to present himself to the Mother-Church of Christendom in the metropolis of his nation. Consequently, his success was in no way due to any commission from those who were apostles before him.

By going into Arabia instead of going 'up to Jerusalem,' Paul 'went away' from Christian counsellors. He went, probably, to the kingdom of Aretas, bordering Judaea, with Petra as capital. Cp. Josephus, 'Antiquities' bk. xiv. 14. This journey is most easily harmonised with Acts 9:19f by supposing that immediately after his conversion Paul preached for a short time ('some days,,' Acts 9:19) in the synagogues at Damascus, and then went to Arabia; that after a short sojourn he returned to Damascus and stayed there a great part of the three years mentioned in Galatians 1:18; and that his departure from Damascus to Jerusalem was prompted, as narrated in Acts 9:23ff and 2 Corinthians 11:33, by plots of the Jews. That the journey to Arabia is not mentioned in the Book of Acts, suggests that it was short, and thus perhaps unknown to the writer or omitted as unimportant. The purpose of the journey is not stated, and is unknown to us. Chrysostom and other early writers suppose that Paul went to Arabia, a Gentile country, to preach the Gospel there, thus beginning at once his destined work. If so, the temporary rule of Aretas over Damascus (see note under 2 Corinthians 11:32) may have afforded him a favorable opportunity of preaching in the capital of the Arabian kingdom. Or, in harmony with the deepest and noblest instincts of human nature, his sudden and wonderful change may have prompted Paul to seek retirement in order to ponder in the solitude of a foreign country the commission received from Christ. In this case, he may, like Elijah, have travelled as far as Sinai, which was included probably in the kingdom of Aretas: and to this visit may be due the allusion in Galatians 4:25. Between the above suggestions we cannot decide. Possibly, solitary contemplation in a land of strangers may have been combined with some measure of evangelical activity. In either case Paul 'went away' from Christian counsellors: and this is the point he wishes to emphasise.

Again: even from Arabia, which was nearer to Jerusalem than to Damascus, Paul simply retraced his steps 'to Damascus.' These last words imply that his conversion was at Damascus, of which in this Epistle no other mention is made: an undesigned and important coincidence with Acts 9:3.

## SECTION 6

### *PAUL'S VISIT TO, AND EARLY DEPARTURE FROM, JERUSALEM*

#### CHAPTER 1:18-24

*Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem, to make acquaintance of Cephas; and I remained with him fifteen days. But no other of the Apostles did I see, except James, the brother of the Lord. The things which I write to you, behold before God I do not lie.*

*Then I came into the regions of Syria and of Cilicia. And I was unknown by face to the Churches of Judaea, the Churches in Christ. But only they were hearing that, He who persecuted us formerly now announces as good news the faith which formerly he was laying waste. And they were glorifying God in me.*

**Ver.** 18. Then: Galatians 1:18, 21; 2:1: three consecutive steps in the historic narrative.

After three years: possibly only one whole year and parts of two others, as in Matthew 27:63, Mark 8:31. they were measured probably from Paul's conversion, as is 'immediately' in Galatians 1:16. If the visit to Arabia was short, most of this time would be spent at Damascus. probably after Paul's return there.

To-make-acquaintance-of Cephas: a purpose very different from a desire to obtain apostolic sanction for his work.

Cephas: see under 1 Corinthians 1:12.

Fifteen days: exact length of a memorable visit, fixed indelibly in the mind of Paul. This short sojourn, sufficient to make acquaintance of Peter, would give no time for training in Gospel truth.

For the bearing of this verse on Acts 9:17, 26, see Diss. i. 2.



**Ver. 19.** The brother of the Lord: to distinguish this 'James' from (Acts 12:2) the brother of John, who was not then put to death.

Except James: or 'but only James.' Grammatically the words so rendered do not necessarily imply that James was himself an apostle. See under Galatians 2:16. But here Paul cannot wish to say that besides Peter he saw no one, or no Christian, at Jerusalem except James. Cp. Acts 9:28ff. And the whole Context, which refers specially to 'the apostles,' shows that to these the exception refers. It implies fairly that James, if not himself actually and usually called an apostle, was yet so closely related to the apostles that the statement that at Jerusalem Paul saw no apostle except Peter needed to be qualified by the statement that he also saw James. And this agrees exactly with the prominent position of James, attested by his mention in Galatians 2:9 before Peter and John. The apostles held (1 Corinthians 12:28) the first rank in the Church: and in the first rank stood certainly James. This lessens the apparent discrepancy in Acts 9:27, by permitting us to speak of Peter and James as 'apostles.' The others, possibly, were away from Jerusalem on evangelical work.

**Ver. 20.** This protestation (peculiar in N. T. to Paul: Romans 9:1; 2 Corinthians 11:31; 1 Timothy 2:7) implies some difficulty, fancied or real, in the foregoing statement; and proves its great importance. It is most easily explained by supposing that Paul's opponents boldly asserted, or insinuated, in order to prove that he had been unfaithful, that he had received a formal commission from the whole apostolic band; and that from this he derived his authority in the Church. To contradict any such assertion, Paul assures us in these solemn words that his purpose in going to Jerusalem was to become acquainted with Peter, and that he saw there no other leader of the Church except James. Thus, by directing attention to a matter of importance, this apparently casual protest helps us to understand Paul's argument.

**Ver. 21-24.** A third step in Paul's narrative, following (1) Galatians 1:15-17 and (2) Galatians 1:18-20.

Syria and Cilicia: adjoining provinces, far from Jerusalem: mentioned together in the same order in Acts 15:23, 41. Syria is put first as nearer to Jerusalem, and as the more important. See Diss. i. 2. From Tarsus Barnabas brought Paul to Antioch, the Capital of Syria, where he labored

(Acts 11:26) a whole year. Thus agree the statements here and in the Book of Acts. The indefinite term 'regions of, Syria, etc.' suggests various journeys within or around these provinces.

**Ver. 22.** The Churches of Judaea; possibly do not include that at Jerusalem. For the people and life of the surrounding country are so different from those of a metropolis that the latter seems hardly to belong to the former: and it is not likely that Paul would be fifteen days in Jerusalem without meeting some Christians there. Similarly, from Jerusalem apparently (John 2:13) Jesus went (John 3:22) into 'the Judaeian land.' Yet in 1 Thessalonians 2:14, similar words certainly include Jerusalem. And it may be objected that if to these Paul was known it was immaterial to say that he had not visited the Churches in the small towns around. On the apparent contradiction with Acts 9:28, see Diss. i. 2. Perhaps these words were added to complete the account of Paul's relations with the Jewish Christians, and to give opportunity for the statement in Galatians 1:24 of their accord with him.

The Churches in Christ: a comment on these Judaeian Christians, testifying their union with Christ and therefore the genuineness of their profession. So 1 Thessalonians 2:14. The plural 'Churches' suggests, as in Galatians 1:2, that they were not united into one organised whole.

Unknown by face; hardly implies that they had never seen his face even as a persecutor, and therefore does not prove that Paul refers only to Churches outside Jerusalem. For, if they had never met him as a Christian, he would be, as to personal intercourse, still unknown to them.

**Ver. 23-24.** The 'only' contact of Paul with the Christians of Judaea was that from time to time news came that their 'former' persecutor was 'now' preaching the Gospel. Of this Gospel, 'faith' was a chief element. (Another chief element was the Cross of Christ: 1 Corinthians 1:18.) Paul announced 'as-good-tidings' that God saves all who believe. 'Formerly' he was at work crushing out this teaching by destroying (same word in Galatians 1:13, Acts 9:21) those who announced it. Cp. Acts 6:7, 'obeyed the faith'; Romans 1:5.

Glorified: see under Romans 1:21; 15:6, 9; 1 Corinthians 6:20.

In me: John 17:10. In the changed conduct of Paul there shone forth to the Christians of Judaea the grandeur of God, awakening their admiration. This was his earnest desire: that in my body Christ shall be magnified, Philippians 1:20. Since this admiration was voluntary, they are said to have themselves 'glorified God.' These words attest the agreement of the Judaeans Christians with Paul at this early stage of his career, so far as he was known to them; and thus prepare the way for the formal agreement in 7.

## SECTION 7

### A SUBSEQUENT VISIT TO JERUSALEM

#### CHAPTER 2:1-10

*Then, fourteen years having elapsed, again I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking along with me also Titus. And I went up according to revelation; and I set before them the Gospel which I proclaim among the Gentiles, (privately, however, to those of repute,) lest in any way I should be running or have run in vain.*

*But not even Titus who was with me, he being a Greek, was compelled to receive circumcision, and that because of the false brethren privately brought in, who came in privately to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. To whom not even for an hour did we yield by submission; that the truth of the Gospel might remain with you.*

*Moreover, from those reputed to be something-what kind of men they formerly were, makes no difference to me: a man's appearance God does not accept: for to me those in repute proposed nothing: but, on the contrary, having seen that I am entrusted with the Gospel of the uncircumcision, according as Peter with that of the circumcision, (for he who wrought for Peter for apostleship of the circumcision wrought also for me for the Gentiles,) and having known the grace given to me, James and Cephas and John, the men reputed to be pillars, gave their right hands to me and Barnabas, right hands of fellowship, that we should be for the Gentiles, but they for the circumcision. Only that the poor we should remember, which very thing I have also been eager to do.*

Paul's independence of the earlier apostles, proved in 5, 6, by the slightness of his intercourse with them in the years following his conversion, he now further proves by his formal intercourse with them on a later visit to Jerusalem. Of this visit, he describes (Galatians 2:2) the

occasion and purpose; and the reception then given (Galatians 2:3-5) to Titus, and (Galatians 2:6-10) to himself.

**Ver. 1.** Then: a fourth stage in the narrative, following those similarly introduced in Galatians 1:18, 21.

Fourteen years: reckoned probably from the just-mentioned visit to Jerusalem, which visit is recalled by the word 'again.' To this simple exposition there is no chronological objection. See Diss. i. 7; and 3, where I hope to show that this journey may be confidently identified with that in Acts 15:4.

With Barnabas: as recorded in Acts 15:2: see note under Galatians 2:21.

Along with me; seems to reveal Paul's consciousness that in this mission he took the chief part, and thus accords with the order of names in Acts 15:2, where compare 'certain others with them.' Of Paul's companions, 'Barnabas' and 'Titus,' and they only, are mentioned, in view of the incidents recorded in Galatians 2:3, 9, 13.

Also Titus: as well as 'Barnabas:' see note under 2 Corinthians 9:5.

**Ver. 2.** Occasion and purpose of this journey.

According to revelation: in agreement with, and therefore prompted by supernatural light from God, either in a vision or in some other mode unknown to us. Cp. 2 Corinthians 12:1ff. This was the inner and real, as Acts 15:2 states the outer and formal occasion of Paul's visit to Jerusalem. Similarly, Peter went to Caesarea (Acts 10:20) both by request of Cornelius and by Divine revelation. We can well conceive that amid the disputes at Antioch Paul sought counsel from God, and received a special reply which moved him to undertake the journey. This revelation, guiding Paul's movements, attests his peculiar and independent relation to God.

Set before (or 'presented to') them: for their judgment. Similar word in Galatians 2:6; 1:16; the same word in Acts 25:14.

To them: indefinite, followed by the more exact statement, 'to those in repute.' The looser statement was perhaps prompted by the thought that what Paul said to the leaders at Jerusalem he said through them to the whole Church.

The Gospel which, etc.: the matter of his preaching in heathen countries.

Privately, however: manner in which Paul presented his Gospel to the Christians at Jerusalem, viz. not in a public gathering but in a private interview, and not to the whole Church but to some of its members whom all esteemed.

Those in repute: Galatians 2:6. There is no hint here that Paul presented his Gospel afterwards to the whole Church. Had he meant this, he would have said it. His words here are easily harmonised with Acts 15:12 by supposing that, before the public assembly met, Paul stated his principles privately to the leaders of the Church, and that in the assembly he merely narrated the facts of his missionary journey, leaving the exposition of Gospel principles to the earlier apostles. Possibly, to this preliminary interview was due the harmony of the assembly. See Diss. i. 3.

Lest... in vain: purpose, not only of the subordinate details of manner, viz. 'privately, to those in repute,' but of the more important general statement 'I presented to them the Gospel.'

In any way; suggests (cp. 1 Corinthians 9:27) Paul's careful foresight of all contingencies.

Be running: 1 Corinthians 9:26; Philippians 2:16; i.e. along the apostolic course marked out for him by God, with all speed, and for a prize. In order that his present strenuous efforts and those of the past seventeen years, may not be 'in vain,' Paul expounded to the Church at Jerusalem his teaching 'among the Gentiles.'

Paul's purpose implies that upon the approval of his teaching by the other apostles depended the permanent success of his past and present labors. And this, after the lapse of so many centuries, and without having received as yet any hint of the nature of the point in dispute, we can in some measure understand. Had there been essential diversity of teaching between Paul and the earlier apostles, Christianity would have perished in its cradle. For, the sole and sufficient proof that the Gospel as preached in the early Church was actually taught by Christ, was the unanimous testimony of the leaders of the Church. Had Paul's Jewish opponents in Jerusalem (Acts 15:5) or Corinth (2 Corinthians 11:4) or Galatia (Galatians 1:7) been able successfully to appeal from him to Peter, their appeal would

have been irresistible; and would either have discredited his teaching or have created most serious doubt as to what was the actual teaching of Christ. Such doubt would have rendered impossible the firm faith needful to inspire heroic Christian life capable of making head against the corruptions, and the tremendous hostility, of the world around. Therefore, in order that the Church might survive the storms which threatened its life, it was all-important that, by an unmistakable and formal declaration, such appeal to the earlier apostles should be rendered impossible. Discord between them and Paul would have shaken the faith of his converts, and have prevented the erection of a Church capable of enduring to the end of time. It would thus have made vain his past labors, and have blighted the hopes which were the inspiration of his life.

The foregoing exposition implies that the point in dispute was vital. For, difference of opinion about a mere detail would not have been serious. And Paul's calm resolution to maintain to the letter his own teaching, in spite of the felt importance of harmony, proves the infinite importance of the matter in debate. This explains in some measure the tremendous condemnation in Galatians 1:8f. And it raises to the highest degree our eagerness to know the point at issue. For we feel instinctively that a matter of such transcendent importance then must pertain to all time and to all men. It will gradually transpire as we follow the argument of the Epistle.

The purpose here stated does not necessarily imply any real fear about the result of this interview. Paul merely tells us the means he took to guard against what would otherwise have been a serious danger. Doubtless, he knew well that, whatever some other members of the Church at Jerusalem might say, the apostles would support him.

Notice that Paul's acknowledgment that his own permanent success depended on his colleagues' approval of his teaching was the strongest denial he could give to the insinuation that his teaching differed from theirs. His wish to work in harmony with the earlier apostles is attested by his visits, at some peril, to Jerusalem.

[The interpretation of the last words of Galatians 2:2 is open to some doubt. The indicative **εδραμον** suggests that also **τρεχω** is indicative; and that **μη** introduces, not a negative purpose as expounded above, but an

indirect question. Cp. 1 Thessalonians 3:5. If so, Paul asks whether his present or past labors were in vain. This would be practically an appeal to his success in proof of the divine authority of his teaching. And against the exposition adopted above it is objected that an aorist indicative cannot express a purpose. On the other hand, the construction just suggested is most unusual if not unparalleled; whereas *μη* introducing a negative purpose is very common. Moreover, in an appeal to the success of his work, Paul would have spoken first of his past efforts, whether I have run or am running in vain: or, rather, he would have spoken only of the past. For the results of his present efforts could not yet be tested. But here his present efforts are mentioned first. And, again, it is very doubtful whether Paul's success among the Gentiles was sufficiently evident to his fellow-apostles to be the ground of an important argument about the truth of his teaching. It is much easier to suppose (with A.V. and R.V.) that *τρέχω* is subjunctive, noting a negative purpose; and that *η εδραμον* is an afterthought, modifying somewhat the earlier construction. At the time of his journey to Jerusalem Paul was in the midst of Gospel effort. He remembers that the permanence of the Church, and therefore the abiding success of his present efforts, depend upon the harmony of the apostles. He remembers also his long course of past effort. And, since this past effort is now matter of fact, its results only being still contingent, he speaks of it in the aorist indicative. In this he is justified by its use after *μη* when, (e.g. Galatians 4:10) expressing fear: for in a negative purpose the idea of fear is always present.]

**Ver. 3-10.** Result of Paul's taking Titus to Jerusalem and presenting his Gospel to the Christians there: viz. that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised, Galatians 2:3-5: and that the teaching of Paul and Barnabas was cordially approved by the leaders of the Church, Galatians 2:6-10.

**Ver. 3.** But, or 'nevertheless': although I took with me Titus, and presented the whole matter of my preaching, 'nevertheless, etc.'

Not even Titus: as one very likely to be 'compelled to be circumcised.' This is explained by the words (cp. Galatians 1:2, Acts 15:25) 'who' was 'with me.' Even though other Gentile Christians were allowed to remain uncircumcised, yet the official position of Titus, as representative to Jerusalem along with Paul of the Church at Antioch, might have been urged



as a reason why he should pay respect to the ancient Covenant of God with Israel by submitting to circumcision. That this was not required from Titus, is clear proof that the Church at Jerusalem did not consider circumcision needful for the highest Christian privileges.

Greek: see under Romans 1:14.

He being a Greek: and thus uncircumcised. This guards against the inference that the Christians at Jerusalem would have tolerated (cp. Acts 21:21; 16:3) an uncircumcised descendant of Abraham.

Was not compelled to be circumcised; suggests that there was pressure, in remarkable accord with Acts 15:5; but states that the pressure was not effective.

**Ver. 4.** Reason why ‘Titus was not compelled to be circumcised’; or rather a reason of something therein implied, and stated plainly in Galatians 2:5, viz. that Paul and others strenuously resisted the pressure to have Titus circumcised. In ordinary circumstances the circumcision of a Gentile convert, at the request of Jewish Christians with whom he was associated, would have been less important. But at Jerusalem were men who had intruded themselves into the Church in order to rob the Gospel of its distinctive features and thus (Galatians 1:7) overturn it, and who with this in view demanded as obligatory the circumcision of Titus. Paul here says that their demand prevented his circumcision. For it would have been an admission that the rite was still binding.

The privately-brought-in false-brethren: enemies of the Gospel, who by concealing their real opinions and pretending faith in Christ had crept into the Church at Jerusalem. In 2 Corinthians 11:13 we find similar men at Corinth.

Privately... privately: suggested rather than expressed by the first syllable of the Greek words here used. The suggestion is strengthened by the repetition, and by the word ‘spy-out.’ Same compound words in 2 Peter 2:1; Romans 5:20; cp. Jude 4; 2 Peter 1:5. This secrecy implies that these men were a small minority of the Church at Jerusalem; and that the majority did not share or know, and would not have tolerated, their views. Else, the secrecy were needless. Consequently, these words are an indirect and courteous recognition by Paul of the soundness of their faith.

False-brethren: Christians only in pretense. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:26; Acts 13:6; Matthew 24:24; 2 Corinthians 11:3. Contrast the weak brethren in 1 Corinthians 8:11f. It would be unfair to assume that these false brethren were the Pharisees mentioned in Acts 15:5: for these last are called actual believers. But the presence in the Church of converted Pharisees who had not cast off completely the prejudices of their early training would make more easy the entrance of the false brethren. Hence these passages confirm each other.

To-spy-out: same word in 2 Samuel 10:3; similar words in Hebrews 11:31; Joshua 2:1-3: definite purpose of these men when entering the Church. They wished to learn all they could about Christianity in order to pervert it.

Our freedom: from the Mosaic Law of works, which they wished to reimpose. And this involves freedom from sin and from every humiliating restraint: cp. 1 Corinthians 7:22; 9:19; John 8:32.

Which we have, etc.; expounds and dwells upon the word 'our.' This freedom is in Christ: i.e. objectively, through the historical facts of His death and resurrection; and subjectively in virtue of, and in proportion to, our spiritual union with Him. Thus Paul, as his wont is, anticipates Galatians 4:26, 5:1, 13.

Our... we... us: all Christians, specially including those at Jerusalem into whose midst the false brethren crept, and with whom Paul here associates himself as sharer of the same freedom. This is another acknowledgment of the spiritual life of the Jewish Christians. In Galatians 2:5, the Gentile Christians are specially referred to.

Us: emphatic, the mass of the Christians at Jerusalem, in contrast to the secret intruders.

Bring-into-bondage: a very strong word: 'they crept into our midst in order that they might crush us down into slavery.'

These words are the first indication of the error disseminated by the disturbers in Galatia. For, only by supposing that they asserted the universal necessity of circumcision can we account for the mention of the rite here. That our supposition is correct, is placed beyond doubt by

Galatians 5:2; 6:12; and by the whole argument of DIV. 2 which reveals the spiritual consequences of this demand. We therefore infer with certainty that Galatians 2:4 would recall to Paul's readers men in their midst essentially the same as those here described. Against both classes of false teachers, the curse of Galatians 1:8f was valid. And their deceitfulness (cp. Galatians 4:17; 6:12) helps us to understand it.

**Ver. 5.** We did not yield; implies that, through the resistance of Paul and others, the pressure put on Titus failed. Who these others were, we are left to infer. But the secrecy needed for the entrance of the false brethren, and the full accord with Paul of the leaders at Jerusalem, suggest that these last were included, as were probably other members of the Church there.

Not even for an hour: emphatic. It implies that the demand was made at a definite time; and therefore more or less formally. It was at once resisted.

By submission: suggested by 'bring-into bondage.' To have yielded the circumcision of Titus, would have been to how to the yoke which the secret foes sought to impose. A close coincidence with Acts 15:10.

The truth of the Gospel: Colossians 1:5: the correspondence with reality which belongs to the good news. The teaching of the false brethren was at variance with reality. For, under the Gospel, circumcision is not actually a condition of the favor of God.

Might continue; suggests that the Galatians were in danger of losing the truth they already possessed.

With you: in contrast to 'we did not yield.' Paul fought the battle of the Gentile Christians. This implies that the continuance of the spiritual life of Paul's converts, which needed the truth for its nourishment, was at stake in his resistance to the demand that Titus be circumcised. Consequently, his resistance to this demand had the same purpose as his exposition (Galatians 2:2) of the Gospel he preached among the Gentiles. Hence the explanation under Galatians 2:2 is equally valid here. Moreover in DIV. 2 we shall learn that this demand for the circumcision of Gentile converts involved an obligation (Galatians 2:3) to keep the whole Law, and thus made of no effect (Galatians 3:10) the Gospel promise and (Galatians 2:21) the death of Christ. Thus by matters far from Galatia Paul is

preparing a way for an argument affecting most closely the spiritual interests of the Galatian Christians.

Dr. Lightfoot suggests that Galatians 2:4 begins a new unfinished sentence; and that Paul was going on to say that because of the false brethren James and Peter counselled that Titus be circumcised, but that he hesitated to say this, and broke off the sentence, merely adding in Galatians 2:5 that he resisted the demand made. But we have no right even to suggest a difference of opinion between Paul and the other apostles without some sort of proof: and of such difference of opinion we have here no trace. Moreover, when an essential part of a sentence is broken off, we expect to find its sense reappearing in another form. But of this supposed counsel we have in the following verses not the faintest hint. In Galatians 2:6-10, the concord of the earlier apostles with Paul is as complete and unhesitating as in the contemporary speeches recorded in Acts 15:6-21. Nor can Peter's conduct at Antioch (Galatians 2:11) be accepted as an indication of his advice at Jerusalem. The reason given in Galatians 2:4 can be no other than a reason for the great decisive fact stated in Galatians 2:3 and again in Galatians 2:5, viz. that through the resistance of Paul and others Titus was not compelled to be circumcised. [Had the word δε been absent, there would be no question about the relation of Galatians 2:4 to Galatians 2:3. Its insertion merely gives independent importance to the reason thus introduced: cp. Romans 3:22; 9:30; Philippians 2:8. So A.V. and R.V.]

In Galatians 2:5, the words 'to whom not even' are omitted, reversing the sense, in the Clermont MS., both Greek and Latin. Tertullian ('Against Marcion' bk. v. 3) charges Marcion with having wrongly inserted the negative. Some other Latin writers accept or refer to, this omission. And in the existing Latin translation of Irenaeus (bk. iii. 13. 3) the passage is quoted without these words: but the context leaves us in doubt whether they were actually omitted by him. The omission is confined to Latin copies. This places their genuineness beyond doubt. And it is confirmed by internal evidence. For, had Paul yielded, he would not have added the humiliating words 'by submission.' Nor can we see how his submission would have secured the permanence of Gospel truth among his readers. This is an interesting example of a very early, and rather serious, error in some copies of the New Testament.

The suggestion of Dr. Farrar ('St. Paul' vol. i. p. 413) that Titus was actually circumcised, and that Paul merely declare: that this was not by compulsion and was no act of submission, has no support in the Epistle; and is contradicted by the prominent position of the negatives in Galatians 2:3, 5 which evidently rule the entire assertions, whereas this suggestion would require them to be closely associated with the words 'compelled' and 'submission.' Moreover it is difficult to see how the circumcision of Titus, when once demanded, could be other than submission to compulsion.

On the apparent inconsistency of Galatians 2:3, 5 with Acts 16:3, see Diss. i. 5.

**Ver. 6-10.** Result of Paul's presentation (Galatians 2:2) of his Gospel at Jerusalem to those in repute.' The connection is noted by the recurrence of these last words in Galatians 2:6 twice and in Galatians 2:9.

Those reputed to be something: certain men (names given in Galatians 2:9) rightly or wrongly supposed to have special worth or special authority, of whatever kind and from whatever source: a rather fuller phrase than those in repute in Galatians 2:2.

What sort of men.. God does not accept: a parenthesis breaking off the construction. After speaking of what they were 'reputed to be,' Paul interposes a few words about 'what they' actually 'were.' Even this is 'nothing' to him: for it is nothing to 'God.'

A man's appearance, or 'face,' God does not accept, or 'respect': His estimate and treatment of men is not determined by externals. Same teaching and almost same words in Romans 2:11. The order of the Greek words suggests the incongruity of 'appearances' being taken into account by 'God.' These last words imply that 'what sort of men they were' refers to something merely external. The easiest explanation is that Paul thinks of their former relation to Christ on earth. For, that Peter and John were His chosen and intimate companions and that James was a member of His own family, would naturally give them great 'repute' in the Church at Jerusalem. But this relation to Christ belonged only to externals. It therefore placed them neither higher nor lower in the sight of God; and had no bearing on the independent authority which Paul had received from the

Risen Savior. These words, unexpectedly interposed, suggest, as do Galatians 1:1, 11, that the disturbers had insinuated that Paul's authority was inferior to that of the earlier apostles who had been personally associated with Jesus. He interrupts his argument to remind us that the difference between him and them was only external, and therefore of no weight with God.

If the above exposition be correct, the best rendering will be 'what they once were' as in RV. margin, or more literally 'what sort of men they were formerly;' not 'whatsoever they were,' A.V., and RV. text. [For, the word *ποτε*, which in the N.T. nowhere else means 'ever' but frequently (e.g. Galatians 1:13, 23 twice) 'formerly,' would at once suggest a reference to days gone by.]

Instead of continuing and completing the sentence interrupted by the parenthesis, e.g. "from those reputed to be something" ... I received nothing,' Paul abandons it and begins a new sentence. He does so in order to weave his parenthesis into his main argument, as a general principle exemplified in his main assertion which follows it: for to me, etc. Those in repute takes up the thread broken off at 'those reputed to be something.' Such broken construction is common in Greek: cp. Romans 5:12.

Proposed nothing: literally 'presented nothing to me' or 'set nothing before me:' similar word in Galatians 2:2, same word in Galatians 1:16.

To me: very emphatic. Paul set before the men in repute at Jerusalem the Gospel he preaches among the Gentiles: but before him they set nothing, i.e. they had no correction or addition to make. This proves that their earlier relation to Christ was nothing to Paul, and illustrates the general principle that externals avail not with God. They evidently knew no more about the Gospel than he did. And, that the earlier apostles had nothing to add to, or correct in, Paul's exposition of his Gospel, proves both his independence of them and their complete accord with him.

**Ver. 7.** But on the contrary: conduct the opposite of proposing anything to Paul. They merely acknowledged him as a fellowworker.

Having seen that, etc.: inward motive of their action.

Having seen... 'and having known' (Galatians 2:9) are in apposition with 'James and Cephas and John,' which last expression is parallel to 'those in repute' in Galatians 2:6.

Entrusted with: same word and thought in 1 Timothy 1:11; Titus 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 Corinthians 9:17; Romans 3:2. [Contrast the perfect tense here, noting permanence, with the aorist in Romans 3:2.]

Uncircumcision: see under Romans 2:26.

Gospel of the uncircumcision, of the circumcision: difference of destination only. Cp. 'apostleship of circumcision' in Galatians 2:8. Of any other difference, we have no hint: and all such is denied in Galatians 2:8. Moreover, God will treat (Romans 3:30) Jew and Gentile alike: and, since the Gospel announces His merciful treatment of men, it must in essence be the same to all. Consequently, the difference is only in the aim of the mission of Peter and of Paul.

**Ver. 8.** A parenthesis explaining the phrase 'Gospel of the uncircumcision.'

He that wrought: cp. Colossians 1:29: God the Father, the Source of whatever power for good operates in men. So 1 Corinthians 12:6; Ephesians 1:11, 20; Philippians 2:13. But God operates always through the instrumentality of (1 Thessalonians 2:13) His word and (Ephesians 3:20) power and through the agency (1 Corinthians 12:4) of the Holy Spirit.

Wrought: literally 'inwrought:' an inward activity, and putting forth of power, of God in men. It is the Greek original of the English word 'energy.' A close parallel in Ephesians 3:7.

For Peter: not 'in Peter' which is already implied (cp. Colossians 1:29) in the verb. The usefulness and consequent enrichment and honor of Peter were an aim of God's work in him. And with similar aim God wrought also for Paul.

This verse implies that only inward divine energy can fit a man to discharge a divine commission.

**Ver. 9.** And having known, etc.; continues and completes, in strict grammatical sequence, the sentence interrupted by the parenthesis of Galatians 2:8. Thus this parenthesis differs from that in Galatians 2:6. ‘Having seen’ in Galatians 2:7, denoting mental apprehension of a fact, forms with ‘having known,’ comprehension of the significance of a fact, a climax.

The grace given to me: God’s undeserved favor revealed in the committal to Paul of the Gospel of the uncircumcision and in the corresponding divine energy at work in him. Same words and same thought in Ephesians 3:2, 7, 8; 4:7. That ‘James’ is put before ‘Cephas’ and ‘John,’ who were disciples of Christ long before he was, implies that in the Church at Jerusalem he held a place in some respects higher than that of the most prominent of the twelve apostles. It was a courteous recognition of the Church at Jerusalem, of which James was the head, as the Mother-Church of Christendom. See note at end of DIV. 1

Reputed to be pillars; both completes the idea partly conveyed by the word ‘reputed’ in Galatians 2:2, 6, and tells us that the men just named are those referred to there.

Pillars: 1 Timothy 3:15; Revelation 3:12. So Ep. of Clement ch. v., ‘the greatest and most righteous pillars,’ viz, Peter and Paul: see my ‘Corinthians’ App. A. Of the Church, which is God’s temple, they were accounted to be conspicuous supports and ornaments. A metaphor common in Jewish, Greek, and Latin writers.

Gave right hands: cp. 2 Kings 10:15; Ezra 10:19; 1 Macc. vi. 58; xi. 62. So Josephus, ‘Antiq.’ bk. xviii. 9. 3, about the Parthians: “He gave his right hand, which is with all the barbarians there the greatest proof of confidence in those talking together.” The word of-fellowship is delayed, that we may think first of the outward act, viz. the shaking of hands, and then of its significance, viz. recognition that all were comrades. The order of words, me and Barnabas, (a remarkable coincidence with Acts 15:2, 22, 35,) suggests Paul’s consciousness that he held the first place; and this agrees with the singular number (‘I, me’) throughout Galatians 2:6-9a. See under Galatians 2:1.



Fellowship: literally 'having something in common with others.' See under 1 Corinthians 10:16; Romans 15:26. "James and Cephas and John" recognised 'me and Barnabas' as sharers with themselves of the rank and work of apostles.' They did so 'in order that,' while working in harmony, each party should devote itself to its divinely (Galatians 2:8) marked out sphere of labor.

That we should be for the Gentiles: i.e. apostles to the Gentiles.

**Ver. 10.** The 'only' exception to the wish of James, Peter, and John that Paul and Barnabas should devote themselves to the Gentiles.

The poor: or 'the poor ones.' It implies a poverty so notorious as to make the Jewish poor a definite object of thought. And their mention by James, apparently without any special occasion, suggests that the poverty was abiding. A remarkable coincidence with Acts 11:28f, Romans 15:26.

That we should remember: assuming that mere remembrance would evoke help. [The subjunctive present notes an abiding remembrance.] This request reveals the deplorable state of Palestine even as compared with surrounding countries.

I have also been eager to do; adds to the request Paul's ready consent and fulfilment.

Eager: same word as 'earnestness' (RV.) in same connection in 2 Corinthians 8:7, 8. The conspicuous change from 'we' to 'I' forbids us to limit this expression of eagerness to the promise then made; for in such promise Barnabas would certainly join; and if so Paul could not speak of it in the singular number. His assertion of eagerness covers his own conduct to the time of writing this Epistle: whereas Barnabas left him (Acts 15:39) soon after their return from Jerusalem to Antioch. [I have therefore correctly rendered the Greek aorist, retaining its absolute indefiniteness, 'I have been eager.'] This request may have been recalled to Paul's mind by the great collection for the poor at Jerusalem which he was making while writing these words, and which was a conspicuous proof of their truth. Possibly, on other occasions also he had rendered help.

## REVIEW

After proving negatively the independence of the Gospel he preached by the scantiness of his intercourse with the earlier apostles, Paul gives in Galatians 2:7 further proof of it by narrating their action when he met them at an important crisis in the history of the early Church, fourteen years after the visit mentioned above. This later visit to Jerusalem was undertaken by God's direction: and Paul felt that upon its success hung the highest welfare and indeed the permanence of the Gentile Churches. The greatness of the issue moved him to present the matters in dispute, not publicly to the whole Church, but privately to its leaders. The chief point objected to in his teaching, viz. that circumcision was not binding on Gentile converts, was conceded, in spite of opposition, in the test case of Titus, a Gentile companion who had gone up with Paul to Jerusalem. And, when Paul expounded his teaching among the Gentiles, the earlier apostles had no correction or addition to suggest, but simply and readily recognised him as a fellow-worker, to whom along with Barnabas God had allotted work different from that allotted to them. They merely begged him, in his work among the Gentiles, not to forget the poverty of his fellow countrymen at home, a request with which during many years Paul had eagerly complied.

This section has revealed a specific, and as we shall see probably the most conspicuous element of the erroneous teaching which in this letter Paul combats, viz. the universal obligation of circumcision. The tremendous spiritual consequences involved in this error, we shall learn in DIV. 2 To overturn it by stating and defending the truth of the Gospel, we shall find to be the chief aim of this Epistle.

## SECTION 8

### PAUL'S RESISTANCE TO PETER, AND EXPOSITION OF HIS OWN PRINCIPLES

#### CHAPTER 2:11-21

*But when Cephas had come to Antioch, to the face I withstood him, because he was known to be in the wrong. For, before there came some men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they came, he began to withdraw and to separate himself fearing them of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was led away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they are not walking rightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said to Cephas before all, If thou, being a Jew, eatest as do the Gentiles and not as do the Jews, how dost thou compel the Gentiles to act as do the Jews? We, by nature Jews and not sinners from the Gentiles, yet knowing that a man is not justified by works of law but only through belief of Jesus Christ, also we believed in Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified by belief of Christ and not by works of law; because "By works of law will no flesh be justified." (Psalm 143:2.) Now if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, also ourselves have been found to be sinners, are we to infer that Christ is a minister of sin? far from it. For, if what I pulled down these things again I build up, I present myself as a transgressor. For I through law died to law that I might live for God. With Christ I have been crucified, and it is no longer I that live, but in me Christ lives. And the life which I now live in flesh I live in faith, in belief of the Son of God who loved me and gave up Himself on my behalf. I do not set aside the grace of God: for if through law comes righteousness, then Christ died for nought.*

*After proving the independence of his authority as an apostle, from the scantiness of his intercourse with the earlier apostles during the*

*years following his conversion and from the formal recognition accorded to him by them at Jerusalem, Paul now goes on to give a final and conclusive proof of the same from an incident at Antioch in which he actually resisted publicly the chief of the twelve apostles. His words to Peter flow into a description of his own spiritual life, a description which is a reply both to Peter and to the disturbers in Galatia.*

**Ver.** 11. Another step (cp. Galatians 1:15) in the historical narrative.

Had come: better than (R.V.) 'came.' For evidently Peter had been some time at Antioch, and after him others had arrived, before Paul rebuked him. [For this correct use of the aorist where we use the pluperfect, cp. Acts 21:26; 1:2. The action is looked upon merely as having occurred at some indefinite past time.]

Cephas... to Antioch: a coincidence with Acts 15:35, where both Paul and Barnabas are said to have remained some time at Antioch after their return from the conference at Jerusalem. The scantiness of the narrative of the Book of Acts forbids all surprise that this incident is not recorded there.

To the face I withstood him: graphic picture.

Known to be in the wrong: same word in 1 John 3:20f. It denotes, not spoken condemnation, but mental recognition of his guilt by those around; thus differing from the word in Romans 14:23. That Peter was known to have done wrong, moved Paul to reprove him publicly. Otherwise the rebuke might have been private.

**Ver.** 12-13. The just-mentioned misconduct of Peter, and its effect upon others.

Came... from James: probably to be taken together. For such a phrase as 'they from James' (cp. Acts 6:9) is not found in the New Testament: and it is not likely that Paul would speak of any men as disciples of James. Cp. Mark 5:35; 1 Thessalonians 3:6; which also forbid us to infer that these men were sent by James. But, that his name is used in this semi-local sense, reveals his influence in the Church at Jerusalem, to which these men evidently belonged. And this professed relation to James suggests that he was in less marked antagonism to them than was Paul. That these were

‘false brethren,’ we have no proof. For those in Galatians 2:4 were only a secret minority of the Church at Jerusalem. But evidently (cp. Acts 11:3; 15:5) these men held the restrictions of the Mosaic Law to be still binding.

He used to eat-with the Gentiles: as the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem complained that he did with Cornelius, in apposition to the practice of (Luke 15:2) the Pharisees and Scribes. The vision of Peter (Acts 10:28) implies that this refusal to eat with the Gentiles arose from fear of eating food forbidden (Leviticus 11:2ff) in the Law. If so, by eating with Cornelius and with the Gentiles at Antioch, Peter acknowledged virtually that the Law of Moses was no longer binding even upon Jews; in direct opposition to the converted Pharisees (Acts 15:5) at Jerusalem. He thus went rather further than the Decree, which (Acts 15:24) merely refused to make the Law binding on Gentiles but said nothing about Jewish Christians. But he did so in obedience to a revelation (Acts 10:15) from God.

Drew-back: same word in Acts 20:20, 27, from the lips of Paul. It suggests a quiet and timid retirement leading to separation.

Them of (or ‘from’) the circumcision: Romans 4:12, (cp. Galatians 2:14,) Acts 10:45; 11:2: converts from Judaism. Yet not all the converted Jews at Antioch. For in Galatians 2:13 ‘other Jews’ imitated Peter’s example; and therefore could hardly be objects of ‘fear’ to him. Probably Paul refers chiefly to the new comers from Jerusalem; and perhaps to others whose zeal for the Law was rekindled by their arrival. They were men whose religious life bore conspicuously the mark of their origin.

Separated himself: from the society and from the tables of the Gentile Christians; who evidently did not observe the Mosaic distinctions of food. We have here a genuine trait of Peter’s character, viz. a proneness to yield, for good or ill, to the latest influence from without. Probably the influence of Paul’s exposition of his principles (Galatians 2:2) prompted the speech recorded in Acts 15:7ff: the influence of these new arrivals now prompts conduct quite inconsistent with that speech. See note below.

**Ver. 13.** Continues the narrative by adding the result of Peter’s conduct.

Hypocrite: an English form of the Greek word for an actor in a theatre; then in the N.T. for one who pretends to be what he is not. The

denunciations of Christ (Matthew. 6:2, 5, 16, etc.) gave to the word a tremendous significance. Cp. 2 Macc. vi. 21, 24, 25.

Played-the-hypocrite-with him: in the unreal part Peter was acting, 'the rest of the' Christian 'Jews' at Antioch joined him. This implies that formerly they had eaten with the Gentiles; and that now, while acting as though the Mosaic restrictions were still obligatory, they knew that the obligation had passed away. All this agrees with Acts 15:31. Paul thus claims both Peter and the Jewish Christians at Antioch as in their hearts agreeing with that which in this Epistle he so earnestly advocates. The word 'Jews' recalls the powerful influence of nationality; especially of visitors from the capital on fellow-countrymen living in a foreign land.

Even Barnabas: as though unlikely to be influenced by such an example: a courteous recognition of his superiority to those around him. And, that even he was led away, (same word in 2 Peter 3:17,) proves the strength of the influence which bore him along.

With their hypocrisy: the repetition lays great stress on the unreality of their action. Notice the different relation of Peter and Barnabas to this movement. Apparently without any outward pressure. Peter yielded at once to the silent influence of the arrivals from Jerusalem. His powerful example, as the foremost of the twelve apostles, carried along the whole body of the Jewish Christians at Antioch. And to this accumulated influence Barnabas yielded. He could not stand alone. But he was moved by the mass. Peter moved the mass.

**Ver. 14.** Paul's view of the conduct just narrated; and his rebuke of Peter. [αλλ' οτε introduces a contrast.] He thus expounds (Galatians 2:11) 'to the face I withstood him'; as in Galatians 2:12, 13 he expounded 'he was known to be in the wrong.'

Walking aright: along a straight road.

The truth of the Gospel: as in Galatians 2:5. The Gospel corresponds with, and reveals, eternal realities. And this revealed reality is a straight line along which God designs us to go.

Before all: for his bad example had been felt by all, and therefore needed public rebuke.

As do the Gentiles: literally, ‘in-Gentile-fashion’ and ‘not in-Jewish-fashion:’ two modes of life placed side by side in marked contrast. Paul refers evidently to the Mosaic restrictions of animal food; the most conspicuous distinction between Jews and Gentiles, and evidently designed by God to be such. Rather than break through these restrictions, many Jews had preferred to die: 1 Macc. i. 63; 2 Macc. vi. 18f; vii. 1. In complete contrast to these traditions of martyrdom for the Jewish Law, was Peter’s conduct at Antioch before the men ‘came from James.’

How, or ‘how is it that thou’: Galatians 4:9; Romans 6:2; 8:32; 1 Corinthians 15:12. So remarkable, because so inconsistent, was Peter’s action that Paul asks ‘how’ it comes about.

To-act-as-do-the Jews: literally to ‘Judaize;’ cognate to ‘in-Jewish fashion,’ and ‘Judaism’ in Galatians 1:13, 14. Cp. Esther 8:17, ‘many Gentiles were having themselves circumcised and were Judaizing because of the fear of the Jews’: Plutarch, Cicero 8 7, “guilty of Judaizing.” It embraces whatever habits of life distinguished the Jews from other nations. By separating himself from the Gentile Christians. Peter virtually taught with apostolic authority that for the full enjoyment of the favor and covenant of God Jewish customs must be observed. And by so doing he was practically forcing the Gentile converts to live under Jewish restrictions.

Compel: the real, though undesigned, significance and tendency of Peter’s action; according to the usual sense of the Greek present, which does not indicate whether or not the influence so exerted was effectual. Cp. 2 Macc. vi. 18; “Eleazar was being compelled to eat pork;” although he refused to eat it: so 2 Macc. vii. 1.

Peter’s previous conduct, which agreed with his convictions, Paul assumes to be his normal conduct; and therefore speaks of it in the present tense, describing it for emphasis both positively and negatively. With this he contrasts the practical tendency of Peter’s later conduct. By his authoritative example he was compelling Gentiles to maintain Jewish distinctions which he, a born Jew, had systematically trampled under foot. The exposure of this inconsistency before the Christians at Antioch, who knew that Paul’s words were true, is his first argument against Peter, to

whom it must have come with overwhelming force. And with equal force it bore upon the Churches in Galatia. For this question implies that both Peter and the Church at Antioch, in spite of their contrary action, agreed with Paul's teaching, viz. that Mosaic restrictions are no longer binding.

**Ver. 15-16.** A second appeal, based on the spiritual experience of Paul and Peter, against the teaching implied in Peter's inconsistent conduct. It is suggested by the foregoing rebuke.

**We:** Paul and Peter, in contrast to the Gentiles whom Peter was compelling to live like Jews.

**By-nature:** by birth, and apart from their own action; in contrast to proselytes who became Jews by choice. See under Romans 2:14.

**By-nature Jews:** parallel with, but more definite than, 'being a Jew' in Galatians 2:14.

**And not, etc.:** emphatic contrast, as in Galatians 2:14.

**From Gentiles:** i.e. converts from heathenism.

**Sinners:** necessary result of heathen origin, as all Jews would readily admit: for heathenism cannot save from sin. It was a common Jewish designation of Gentiles. So 1 Macc. ii. 44, "they smote sinners in their anger and lawless men in their fury;" Tobit. xiii. 6, "His greatness to a nation of sinners;" Wisdom x. 20, referring to the Egyptians in the Red Sea: cp. Luke 6:32f with Matthew 5:47; Matthew 26:45 with Luke 18:32. For the sake of the contrast which follows Paul assumes the point of view of Jewish self-righteousness, a point of view actually correct in this one particular. For, like all men, the Gentiles were sinners.

**But knowing, etc.:** in apposition with 'we,' and continuing by a slight contrast the description begun in 'by-nature Jews.' Although born Jews and not inheritors of the pollution of heathendom, yet we know that a man does not receive justification from works of law.

**A man is-justified:** as from day to day one and another receive justification.

**Law:** any rule of conduct. Jews would think only of the Mosaic Law.



Works of law: cp. Romans 2:15: actions prescribed in a rule of conduct. From such actions no one derives righteousness: i.e. no one is accepted by God as righteous because he had done what some law bids. See an instructive parallel in Romans 3:28. Naturally Paul thinks of actions prescribed in the Law of Moses; actions moral or ritual, both which are prescribed in the same Law and closely interwoven. But his words in their full latitude exclude justification by anything done in obedience to a rule of conduct. If there be justification, it must be 'apart from the works of law.'

But only (literally 'except,' or 'if not') by works of law; suggests at first sight that only by faith are we 'justified by works of law.' But this inference is not supported by Greek usage. For, inasmuch as exceptions are usually preceded by a universal assertion, positive or negative, the exception is, even when preceded by a limited assertion, sometimes taken, not to the entire assertion, but to a wide term contained in it. So Luke 4:26f, 'many lepers in Israel... but not one of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian': i.e. no leper was cleansed except Naaman. So in Romans 14:14 an exception is taken, not to the statement 'nothing is common of itself,' but simply to a wider assertion 'nothing is common.' So Revelation 21:27: 'there shall not enter into it anything common... except they that are written, etc.' And that here 'except through faith' limits, not 'justified by works of law,' but the wider statement 'is not justified,' is made quite certain by the clear statements in Galatians 3:11, 'in law no one is justified'; in Romans 3:28, 'a man is justified by faith apart from works of law.' Paul merely says in the strongest way possible that 'a man is not justified except through faith.'

Faith, or belief, of Jesus Christ: assurance that His words are true or will come true, as the case may be: see note under Romans 4:25.

Also we; takes up the word we in Galatians 2:15 and puts it in conspicuous prominence on the pedestal erected for it by the intervening words. Then follows the chief assertion of the sentence occupying Galatians 2:15, 16. This is better (so A.V. and RV.) than to begin a new sentence here. For, the foregoing words, which have great force as a preparation for those following, have not sufficient independent weight to be a separate sentence. 'Also,' or 'even we:' in addition to the 'sinners

from the Gentiles;’ in spite of being born Jews, and prompted by our knowledge that justification comes only through faith.

Believed in Christ: with Paul, only Romans 10:14; Philippians 1:29; Colossians 2:5; 1 Timothy 3:13; 2 Timothy 3:15: very common in the 4th Gospel. See note under Romans 4:25. It denotes a confidence in Christ which assures us that He will fulfil His promises.

We believed: when we first put faith in Christ: so Romans 13:11.

In order that we might be justified, etc.: definite purpose with which we believed in Christ. On this purpose rests the weight of the argument. It is made very conspicuous by the repeated contrast, before and after, between belief of Christ, whose name is mentioned three times, and works of law. Over this contrast, Paul seems to linger. He declares emphatically that both he and Peter reposed faith in Christ because of the felt impossibility of gaining justification by works of law. [For **ov** in a final sentence, cp. 1 Corinthians 1:17. Paul says categorically that while seeking justification he was not seeking it from works of law.]

Because from works, etc.: reason why Paul sought justification by faith and not by actions prescribed in a rule of conduct, or rather the reason already given repeated in epigrammatical form, viz because from that source justification will never come.

No flesh: see under Romans 3:20. The Hebrew coloring of this conclusion, and its word for word agreement with Romans 3:20, which is evidently a quotation from Psalm 143:2, prove that it is also a reference to the same. Paul’s words are thus supported by Old Testament authority. Indeed otherwise they would be empty repetition. Their exact agreement with Romans 3:20, even where they differ from the LXX., suggests that this quotation was frequent in the lips of Paul: and its appropriateness makes this very likely.

Galatians 2:15, 16 give the inner side of the spiritual history of Peter and Paul. And they by no means contradict what we know of its outer side. We cannot doubt that Peter, before Andrew ‘led him to Jesus,’ and Paul, before he went to Damascus, had like thousands since sought the favor of God by obedience to law, i.e. by morality or by religious duties; and that the failure of their search had taught them that not thus can it be obtained.

Indeed without this preparation the words of Jesus to Peter and afterwards to Paul would have been ineffective. Until we find that morality cannot save us, we cannot trust for salvation to the word of Christ. Consequently, these words are true of all who venture to repose faith in Christ. And they were a powerful appeal to Peter's remembrance of his own inner life. For he was now practically setting up as a condition, and in this sense as a means, of salvation that which, when he first came to Christ, he had forsaken because he had found that from it salvation could not be obtained. Paul says: 'Take the case of you and me. Although we were born Jews and not the offspring of idolaters and sharers of the awful immorality of heathenism, yet, inasmuch as we found by experience that no justification comes from works done in obedience to law, but only through faith, even we, born Jews and as compared with others moral men, put faith in Christ in order that from faith in Him we might have a justification not to be derived from works of law.' And this motive for believing Christ, viz. that from works of law no one clothed in flesh and blood will receive justification, is frequently asserted in the Old Testament. This argument would come to Peter with force the more overwhelming because it is really a reproduction of his own earlier teaching; e.g. Acts 15:10f; 10:28, 34; 11:17.

This long and emphatic quotation of Paul's words to Peter assures us that they bear very closely upon the argument of this Epistle. We have thus another indication, in addition to that detected in Galatians 2:3, of the error then prevalent in Galatia. Evidently, the disturbers not only demanded that Gentile converts be circumcised, but did so on the ground that obedience to the Mosaic Law was an abiding and universal condition of justification. That this inference is correct, will be placed beyond doubt by the argument of Gal. 3; as our inferences in Galatians 2:3 about circumcision will be verified by plain assertions in Galatians 5:3; 6:12. Thus this verse prepares the way for the main argument of the Epistle.

**Ver. 17.** An incorrect inference from Galatians 2:16 in the form of a question, suggesting an objection so serious that Paul must at once state and overturn it. It has a close parallel in Romans 6, where a similar objection is met by a similar argument: cp. Galatians 2:19 with Romans 6:6, 11; 7:4.

Justified in Christ: 'in His blood,' Romans 5:9; 'through the redemption which is in Christ,' Romans 3:24; in law,' Galatians 3:11; 5:4; 'sanctified in Christ,' 1 Corinthians 1:2. Justification was wrought out for us objectively in the historic Person of Christ, and subjectively appropriated by the faith which unites men to Him.

Seeking to be justified, etc.: implied in the purpose asserted in Galatians 2:16, viz. 'that we might be justified by belief of Christ.'

We were found, or 'have been found': [the Greek aorist includes both senses:] cp. 1 Corinthians 15:15; Romans 7:10.

Also ourselves sinners: in addition to the 'sinners from the Gentiles' in Galatians 2:15. It takes up 'also we' in Galatians 2:16. The mere search for justification, apart from its success, was itself a discovery that the seekers, like the Gentiles whom they once despised, were 'also themselves sinners.' For only sinners need justification. Consequently, this supposition is a correct inference from Galatians 2:16. Even Peter and Paul had by their turning to Christ been 'found' to be previously 'sinners.' Paul now asks whether from this we are to draw the further inference that 'Christ is a minister of sin.' Cp. 'ministers of righteousness,' 2 Corinthians 11:15, 'ministry of righteousness,' 2 Corinthians 3:9; 'minister of circumcision,' Romans 15:8. It is practically the same, but more dignified than 'servant of sin,' Romans 6:20. 'Since the Law utterly condemns sin, and since by turning to Christ for justification we were found to be, in spite of our earnest efforts to keep the Law, sinners like other men, are we to infer that Christ is an officer in the service of sin, that His influence tends to extend its empire?' This is, in another form, the ever recurring objection that the Gospel of Christ which reveals the guilt of even the most moral men is opposed to morality. Paul states it here in the form of a question in order that he may overturn it by a picture of his own life of faith.

The above exposition implies that the questioned inference,

Christ a minister of sin, is incorrectly deduced from a correct hypothesis, 'also ourselves found to be sinners;' the hypothesis being really a correct inference from Galatians 2:16. The early Greek commentators suppose the undoubtedly false inference 'Christ a minister of sin' to be correctly

deduced from, thus disproving by ‘reductio ad absurdum’ the hypothesis ‘ourselves found’ to be ‘sinners.’ If so, Galatians 2:17 proves that believers are no longer under the penalty of sin, by saying that otherwise Christ in whom they trust for pardon is, by leaving them still under condemnation, doing the work of sin. Paul’s question would thus be a proof of the truth of the Gospel which proclaims the justification of all who believe. But this argument would need to be more clearly indicated; especially as Galatians 2:16 is not so much an assertion of the Gospel as a denial that men are justified by works; whereas, as expounded above, the hypothesis flows naturally from the foregoing assertion.

**Ver. 18.** Proof, extending to Galatians 2:21, of Paul’s indignant denial that the discovered sin of even moral seekers for salvation in Christ proves Him to be a minister of sin.

Pulled down, build up: metaphor common with Paul, Romans 14:19f; 15:20. By ‘eating with the Gentiles’ Peter was pulling down the barrier of the Mosaic restrictions: by afterwards withdrawing from them he was building it again. This express and evident reference Paul courteously veils by using the first person as though merely stating a general principle.

These again: emphatic exposure of Peter’s inconsistency.

Transgressor: one who oversteps the limits marked by law; more precise than ‘sinner,’ preparing the way for the word ‘law’ twice in Galatians 2:19. If by formerly pulling down the restrictions of the Law, Peter had, as Galatians 2:19 will show, been really carrying out the ultimate purpose of the Law, he is ‘now, by maintaining the same restrictions, opposing the Law and transgressing the limits it has marked out for its own operation. His own inconsistency condemns him.

**Ver. 19.** Shows the bearing on Galatians 2:17 of the general and rather ambiguous statement in Galatians 2:18; and thus introduces the main proof that even though the Gospel brings down all men to the common level of ‘sinners’ yet Christ is not ‘a minister of sin.’

As to me: the Greek emphatic pronoun, recalling us from the general statement of Galatians 2:18 to Paul’s own actual spiritual life.

I died to law: expounded in Romans 7:4, ‘put to death to the Law through the body of Christ.’ By His crucified body, Paul was removed completely from the jurisdiction of law, so that God no longer treats him according to his previous obedience to a rule of conduct as though such obedience were the means of obtaining His favor. This is another way of saying that by the death of Christ God has reconciled the justification of sinners with His own justice. And this escape from the claims of the Law and separation from its rule was brought about ‘by means of law.’ For it was to satisfy these claims that Christ died: and the purpose of the Law was to force men to Christ, and by so doing place them beyond its own jurisdiction. Thus objectively and subjectively Paul’s deliverance from the rule of law was brought about by the operation of law.

That I may live for God: God’s purpose in liberating Paul from law. Cp. Romans 7:4, ‘put to death to the Law... that we may bear fruit for God:’ Romans 6:11, ‘living for God in Christ Jesus.’ This verse embodies in a few words the most distinctive teaching of Paul.

It is now evident that, if by the operation of the Law and in accomplishment of its original purpose Paul has been set free from law and therefore from the Mosaic restrictions, to build up again the barrier erected by these restrictions is to run counter to the spirit and purpose of the Law itself, and is therefore a transgression of the Law. Just so, to re-erect the scaffolding of a finished building is to thwart the original purpose of that scaffolding, which is a building free from scaffolding. Consequently, by separating himself from the Gentile converts at Antioch, Peter was resisting the voice of Sinai: for he was hindering its real and final purpose. Again, since the purpose of this release from law is that we ‘may live for God,’ it is evident that although the Gospel brings down all men to the common level of sinners yet Christ is not thereby promoting the rule of sin. For, to use for God all the powers which life gives, is (cp. Romans 6:11) the absolute opposite of sin. All this is made more evident by the description in Galatians 2:20 of the life which Paul is living.

**Ver. 20.** “The summit and marrow of Christianity:” Bengel.

Crucified-with: same word in Matthew 27:44; Mk 15:32; John 19:32.

With Christ I have been crucified: Romans 6:6; Galatians 6:14: 'I have shared with Christ the results of His death on the cross.' For by the agony of His crucifixion Paul escaped, as did Christ, from the penalty of sin imposed by the Law. Through the death of Christ, and therefore in some sense upon His cross, Paul's old life came to an end.

The rest of Galatians 2:20 describes the life which Paul, though crucified, still lives. Of this life, his own personality is 'no longer,' as it once was, the principle and source. He is deeply and gratefully conscious that his own life, both in its essence and its manifestations, is infinitely above himself who lives it; and is a direct outflow (John 14:19) of the immortal life of Christ, so that Paul's thoughts and words and acts have their true source not in him but in Christ. Thus Paul lives on earth 'in' human 'flesh' a life, not earthly but heavenly, not human but divine; a life which is in some sense a continuation of Christ's life on earth.

These words are the highest development of the teaching that in us dwells the Spirit of God who is (Romans 8:9ff) the Spirit of Christ and who breathes into those in whom He dwells the lifegiving, animating, controlling presence of Christ Himself. This inward presence of the Spirit of Christ makes us (1 Corinthians 12:12) members of the body of Christ. And Paul could say in Philippians 1:21: 'to me to live is Christ.' And if Christ lives in us as the animating principle of our life, we live in Christ as our surrounding element and home and refuge.

Notice that it is the crucified Savior who lives in those who have shared His crucifixion. Only they whose former lives have come to an end upon the cross of Christ have Christ living in them. For union with Him implies (Romans 6:3) union with His death.

Now follows the subjective element and medium and condition of the life which Christ lives in Paul.

I now live; counterpart to 'no longer I live.'

In flesh: in a body of flesh and blood, which in virtue of its material constitution influences and limits in so many ways the spirit within. And these limitations give occasion for a revelation in Paul's bodily life of the grandeur of Christ, who in spite of them lives in him a life of constant victory over the flesh.

In flesh, in faith: conspicuous contrast of the local physiological sphere with the spiritual sphere of Paul's life.

Faith, or 'belief,' of the Son of God: as in Galatians 2:16 twice: assurance that the words of Jesus are true and will come true; in this case, an assurance that Christ will fulfil His promise by living in us as the animating principle of our life. This assurance is the surrounding element and atmosphere in which Paul lives and moves, and from which he draws his life and through which he sees objects around him on earth and above him in heaven.

Son of God: Christ in His unique and eternal relation to the Father.

Loved me, etc.: close parallel in Ephesians 5:25; cp. Romans 8:37. It refers to the historical manifestation in time of Christ's eternal love.

Gave-up: to suffering and death, as suggested by 'crucified-with Christ.' Cp. Galatians 1:4. It denotes frequently surrender into the power of another: cp. 1 Corinthians 5:5, 1 Timothy 1:20. Same word also in Romans 4:25; 8:32; 1 Corinthians 11:23; Ephesians 5:2, 25.

On my behalf: for my benefit, viz. salvation. In view of the self-surrender of Christ, Paul forgets all others and remembers only that for him Christ died. Cp. 2 Corinthians 8:9. The love of Christ in its historical manifestation is a sure ground of the faith in which Paul lives. Because of His love and self-surrender we are sure that Christ will fulfil His promise to live in us: the faith thus evoked becomes the element of our life: and in proportion to our faith (but not because of it) Christ lives in our life. That such a life if lived 'in flesh,' reveals the grandeur of Him who can inspire even flesh and blood with His own spirit.

**Ver. 21.** The grace of God: cp. 1 Corinthians 15:10. It reminds us that the life just described is a gift of the undeserved favor of God, of the favor revealed in the death of Christ.

Set-aside: strange contrast to Galatians 2:20, implying that it is possible to refuse and lose this great gift. It brings Galatians 2:20, which seemed for a moment to raise us far above all theological controversy into Heaven itself, to bear on the sad reality of the discord at Antioch.

For if, etc.; explains what Paul means by rejecting the grace of God.



Righteousness: practically, the judge's approval; see under Romans 1:17.

Through law: of any kind, moral or ritual. 'Righteousness through law,' is the judge's approval obtained by obedience to prescriptions of conduct. God gave Christ to die in order to reconcile with justice favor shown to men who have disobeyed. Consequently, if by obedience men may obtain the favor of God, the death of Christ was needless; and the infinite favor shown therein was wasted. In this sense, to preach justification by law, is to 'set aside the grace of God.'

The objection in Galatians 2:17 is now completely silenced; not by exact syllogism, but by a reasoned exposition of Paul's own spiritual life. It might seem that, by proclaiming a Gospel which reveals the failure of well-meant efforts to obtain the approval of God by keeping the Law', Christ was an enemy of righteousness and a helper of sin. But this thought is dispelled by the fact that Christ lives in Paul and Paul lives in faith and thus lives for God; such a life being, as we at once feel instinctively, the noblest life conceivable. Paul entered this life by sharing in some sense the death of Christ and thus escaping from the jurisdiction of the Law. This escape from law was itself brought about by the operation of law. Consequently, the real transgressors are, not those who break down the Mosaic restrictions which were not designed to be permanent or universal, but those who run counter to the spirit and purpose of the Law by reinforcing these restrictions after having by their conduct broken them down. Such men trample under foot the favor of God shown in the death of Christ. For, by maintaining the Law as a condition of righteousness they say practically that men are able to keep it; and if so the death of Christ, who died to deliver us from its claims, was needless.

The connecting links of this argument, which we have in some measure supplied in exposition, will be found developed in DIV. 2, for which it prepares the way.

The objection in Galatians 2:17 was probably frequent in the lips of Jewish opponents of Christianity. And the reply to it here given had as much force for the disturbers in Galatia as for Peter at Antioch. So in all ages and places a rich experience of spiritual life is the strongest condemnation of salvation by morality or by religious duties.

It has been questioned whether the whole of Galatians 2:14-21 was in substance actually spoken to Peter, or whether Paul glides away imperceptibly into a new argument with his Galatian readers. But, certainly, 'we' and 'also we' in Galatians 2:15, 16 refer, not to the Galatians who were Gentiles, but to Paul and Peter who were Jews. And it is difficult to separate 'also ourselves sinners' in Galatians 2:17 from 'sinners' in Galatians 2:15 and 'also we' in Galatians 2:16. Moreover, Galatians 2:18 is most easily explained as being a reference to Peter's inconsistent conduct at Antioch. And the appeal in Galatians 3:1 seem to mark the point at which Paul turns to his readers in Galatia. We have, therefore, no reason to doubt that the whole paragraph, to Galatians 2:21, was in substance spoken by Paul to Peter.

That Peter yielded at once, and fully, to this appeal, we infer with confidence. For, evidently, reply was impossible. His answer, which must have been humiliating, is therefore omitted. This was the more easy because, whatever Peter said, Paul's appeal to him is an overwhelming argument against the disturbers in Galatia. For Peter, to whom they seem to have appealed as an authority superior to Paul, admitted by his conduct that the Law was not binding on Gentiles; thus contradicting them. Moreover, so far was Peter from being an absolute authority that subsequently he acted, influenced by men like-minded to them, in opposition to his previously avowed principles. And Paul's declaration that the powerlessness of the Law to save had driven both Peter and himself to seek salvation in Christ, was equally true of the advocates of circumcision in Galatia, so far as they were honest men.

Of DIVISION 1, the only explanation is that in the churches of Galatia Jewish teachers, either mistaken or feigned disciples of Christ, had said that Paul's authority was inferior to that of the earlier apostles, because derived from them, and that he preached a false Gospel different from that committed to him by the twelve. We also infer that they demanded the circumcision of Gentile converts, as a condition of their justification. These teachers were unfortunately successful: and, led by them, while Paul wrote, many Galatian Christians were turning away from the Gospel and from God

In view of this false teaching which bore on its face marks of human origin, Paul declares that his own teaching is not such as man would devise; and explains this by saying that he received it, not from man, but by express revelation of Christ. Indeed, the contrast between his past and present life proclaims that Christ had been revealed to him and in him. So sufficient was this revelation that Paul sought no human counsel, but went away to Arabia; and even when returning from Arabia he did not go to Jerusalem but came back to Damascus. Only after three years did he visit the Mother-Church of Christianity. Naturally he wished to meet the chief of the earlier apostles: and he saw also James, but no others. This proves that from the apostolic college as such he had received no commission. And the length of his visit, only a fortnight, was insufficient to make Paul in any sense a disciple of Peter or James. For some time after this Paul was known only by hearsay to the Christians of Judaea. But what they heard gave them the highest satisfaction.

The independence of Paul's authority, proved by his distance from the Palestinian apostles, is confirmed by his intercourse with them fourteen years after his first meeting with Peter. The infinite importance of harmony between himself and them, even for the success of his own mission, Paul felt deeply; and, to secure it, he set before the leaders of the church at Jerusalem privately the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles. Of the sentiments of the Christians at Jerusalem, the presence of Titus was a practical test. Although occupying a conspicuous position as Paul's companion, and in spite of some pressure, he was allowed to remain uncircumcised. His circumcision was refused because it was demanded by guileful enemies of the Gospel. In Paul's teaching the apostles at Jerusalem found nothing to correct and nothing defective. They simply recognised his independent mission.

Subsequently, at Antioch Paul administered to Peter public rebuke for withdrawing from the Gentiles, influenced by Jews from Jerusalem, after having fraternised with them. So great was Peter's influence that in his withdrawal he was followed by the other Jews at Antioch and even by Barnabas. Paul showed the gross inconsistency of his conduct, and reminded him that it was because the Law could not save that both Peter and himself put faith in Christ. And to the possible objection that if the Gospel brought down even moral men to the common level of sinners then

was Christ a servant of sin, he replied by describing the spiritual life which had followed his death to the Law. By the metaphor of one who pulls down and then builds up, Paul exposes still further Peter's inconsistency; and concludes by declaring, as in DIV. 2 he will prove, that the practical teaching involved in this withdrawal makes needless and useless the death of Christ and the grace of God therein revealed. To the great argument which now lies before us in Gal. 3, these last words are the best possible stepping stone.

A marked feature of DIV. 1 is the number of definite allusions to men conspicuous in the early Church, making it an invaluable contribution to the biography of the New Testament. The characters here depicted we will now study.

The term BROTHER OF THE LORD which in Galatians 1:19 designates James, the first of the three pillars mentioned in Galatians 2:9, demands attention. Brothers of Christ are three times (Matthew 12:47ff; Mk 3:31ff; Luke 8:19ff; Matthew 13:55; Mk 6:3; John 2:12) associated with His mother. Our first thought is that these were later sons of Joseph and Mary: and this is supported by the word 'firstborn' in Luke 2:7. This opinion, of which however we have no certain trace earlier than Helvidius, (A.D. 380,) has been advocated lately by Meyer, Alford, Farrar, and others. The only historical objection to it, but a very serious one, is John 19:26, 27. For, if Mary had four sons of her own, who though perhaps not believers when Christ died became such (Acts 1:14: cp. 1 Corinthians 15:7) immediately afterwards, of whom one was worthy to be made (Galatians 2:9) head of the Church at Jerusalem, we cannot conceive that Christ would set aside filial obligation by committing His mother to the care of John, even though he was the beloved apostle and not improbably nephew to Mary. It is easier to believe that the word 'firstborn' had become, in consequence (Luke 2:23) of the Levitical ritual, equivalent to 'which openeth the womb' in Exodus 13:2, etc., Or, it might refer to a later son who died early. The perpetual virginity of Mary rests on no historical evidence; and therefore cannot be adduced as an historical argument.

That the Lord's brothers were sons of Joseph by an earlier wife, is a conjecture without other Scripture proof, and suggested simply by John 19:25. But it would most easily account for all the known facts of the case.

Mary's step-sons would naturally be often with her. They would be called the Lord's brothers in the sense in which even Mary in Luke 2:48 calls Joseph His father; and in recognition of their almost sacred social nearness to Christ. And, if they were not her own sons it is much more easy to conceive reasons which prompted Christ to commit her to John. This opinion was held probably by Clement of Alexandria, and certainly by Origen, Eusebius, and the early fathers generally.

Another theory was in A.D. 382 advocated, and was probably invented by Jerome; and was accepted by Augustine and the Western fathers generally; viz. that the Lord's brothers were cousins, sons of His mother's sister, and that consequently the word 'brothers' is used of them only in a looser sense, as in Genesis 13:8; 29:12; Leviticus 25:48. Jerome also supposes that in Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3, James (or Jacob) and Joseph (or Joses) were identical with James the little and Joseph, sons of 'the other Mary,' in Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; that their mother was 'Mary of Clopas,' whom he supposes to be Christ's 'mother's sister' in John 19:25; and that James the little was both 'the Lord's brother' in Galatians 1:19 and 'the son of Alphaeus' in Matthew 10:3. This theory rests entirely on the supposition that Mary the mother of James and Joses (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40) was sister to our Lord's mother: and for this there is no ground except the assumption, adopted without any proof by Meyrick in Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible,' vol. i., p. 920b, that in John 19:25 'Mary of Clopas' must necessarily be the same person as 'His mother's sister.' But surely it is as easy to understand this verse to mention four persons as three: cp. Acts 1:13. And it is in the highest degree unlikely, and so far as I know without parallel, that two sisters were commonly spoken of by the same name. Certainly, to suppose this, is much more difficult than to find four persons mentioned in John 19:25. That two pairs of brothers (Matthew 13:55; 27:56) bore the very common names James (or Jacob) and Joseph, cannot be accepted, even though the name Simon be added to each pair, as proving or hardly as suggesting that they were the same. The argument that, if James the Lord's brother were not the son of Alphaeus, of this apostle nothing is known, loses all force amid the obscurity which surrounds the subsequent course of all the apostles except three. Thus vanishes New Testament support for Jerome's theory. And it has no support in early tradition.

This theory is, moreover, open to serious objection. The title assumed in Jude 1 suggests or implies that Jude's brother was the well-known leader of the Church at Jerusalem: for any other James would need to be distinctly specified. And, if he were the son of Alphaeus, we are almost compelled to believe that the apostle 'Jude of James' was also brother of the Lord. But if two out of the four, or indeed if James the most illustrious of the four, were already enrolled among the apostles, it could not have been said, as in John 7:5, that Christ's 'brothers did not believe in Him.'

Nor is the looser sense given by this theory to the word 'brother' allowable in this case. For, without any hint of any unusual sense the men in question are again and again in all four Gospels, in the Book of Acts, and twice by Paul, called the Lord's brothers; never once His cousins or kinsmen. Yet for the relation of cousin there was a definite term both (Leviticus 25:49) in Hebrew and (Colossians 4:10) in Greek. Just so, Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius, ('Church History' bk. iii. 20, 32, iv. 22,) speaks of James and Jude as the Lord's brothers, and of Simeon as His 'cousin,' and as His 'uncle's son.' The occasional use, in cases open to no mistake or where the distinction was unimportant, of the word 'brother' in the looser sense of kinsman surely does not warrant us to interpret thus this frequent and matter-of-fact designation. The effect of giving to words so indefinite a meaning is seen in Estius, who supposes that the Lord's mother's sister also was only her cousin. Moreover, if the Lord's brothers were sons of Mary's sister, it is difficult to account for their association three times with Mary without any reference (especially in John 2:12) to their own mother.

Jerome's theory may therefore, as destitute of solid evidence in Scripture or tradition and as opposed to the plain meaning of a common word and to John 7:5, be confidently set aside. We are therefore compelled to believe that the Lord's brothers were sons of Joseph. And we have found one strong reason, viz. the words from the cross to Mary and John, for surmising that they were his sons by an earlier wife. And this surmise we may accept, in the absence of other evidence, as the easiest explanation of the known facts of the case.

We must, accordingly, think of Jesus, not as a solitary child, but as one, probably the youngest, among four brothers and at least three sisters; and

of Mary, not as devoting herself to the rapt contemplation of her one mysterious Son, but as discharging the many duties involved in the care of a large family. Into the privacy of that sacred home we are not allowed to intrude. And perhaps we need not envy its members their domestic nearness to the Savior. It may be that even his nearness made it difficult for them to believe (John 7:5) that he whom they had known and cared for and played with in their own home as a little boy younger than themselves and needing their help was indeed the foretold deliverer and the Son of God. Perhaps it was only after He had risen and had appeared in special manner (1 Corinthians 15:7) to the oldest probably of the brothers that they were led (Acts 1:14) to bow to Him as their Lord.

On the whole subject see a very able dissertation in Lightfoot's 'Galatians.'

Of JAMES, THE LORD'S BROTHER, the notices in the New Testament are few, but harmonious and definite. The position of his name in Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3 suggests that he was the oldest of the four brothers. But this is no conclusive proof: for the order of Simon and Jude varies, showing that it is not according to age; and the subsequent fame of James would account for his place at the head of these lists. If he was Joseph's son by an earlier wife, James was some years, if the oldest son, several years, older than Jesus. This suggests an explanation of the fact that (John 7:5) about six months before His death James and His brothers did not believe in Christ, and ventured to give Him advice. Possibly, to this unbelief refers Mark 6:4: 'a prophet is not without honor except... among his kinsmen and in his own house.' As to Peter who denied Him, so to His brother James who hesitated to believe in Him, the Risen Savior (1 Corinthians 15:7) specially appeared. This was probably to him, as was a similar event to Paul, the turning point in life. For, immediately after the ascension (Acts 1:14) the brothers and mother of Jesus were associated with the apostles. The special message to James in Acts 12:17 suggests that he then already occupied a prominent place in the Church at Jerusalem. Still earlier Paul, on his first visit as a Christian, met James there. That at the conference at Jerusalem the name of James stands in Galatians 2:9 before those of Peter and John, seems to imply that already James held the first place in the Mother-Church. And with this agrees the decisive part taken by James at the conference, as recorded in Acts

15:13ff. That in Galatians 2:12 some Christians are said to have come ‘from James,’ implies that they sheltered themselves under his name; and suggests that to their teaching the teaching of James was in less marked opposition than was that of Paul. And all this agrees with Acts 21:18-25, where James speaks as the recognised head and mouthpiece of the Christians at Jerusalem, all of whom are said to be ‘zealous for the Law.’ From 1 Corinthians 9:5 we learn that the brothers of the Lord, and therefore presumably this most famous of them, were married. And, even by the strictest observers of the Mosaic Law, marriage was held in honor.

That the Epistle of James was written by the Lord’s brother, is suggested at once by its opening words, ‘James, servant of God.’ For, his unique position in the Mother-Church of Christendom would make further designation needless for him, but imperative for any other James. And modesty might easily restrain him from using a title of honor which others freely gave to him.

The Epistle is quoted as Scripture by the Greek fathers of the fourth century. Jerome (*‘Illustrious Men’* ch. ii.) says: “James, who is called the brother of the Lord, by surname the Just... wrote only one Epistle, which belongs to the seven Catholic Epistles, which also itself is said to have been edited by some one else under his name, although gradually in process of time it has obtained recognition.” Eusebius (*‘Church History’* bk. iii. 25) says: “Of the books contradicted, but known nevertheless to most men, the so-called Epistle of James is in circulation, and that of Jude, and the Second Epistle of Peter, and the so-called Second and Third Epistles of John.” So bk. ii. 23: “It must be known that it is accounted spurious: at any rate not many of the old writers have mentioned it.... Nevertheless we know that this with the others is publicly used in most Churches.” Origen (*‘Comm. on John’* vol. xix. 6) says: “If faith is mentioned, but it be without works, such faith is dead; as we have read in the current Epistle of James.” So *‘Notes on Exodus’* p. 124: “For which cause also it has been said, God cannot be tempted with evil;” word for word from James 1:13. In the Latin version of Origen by Rufinus, which however is not always reliable, we read (*‘Homilies on Exodus’* viii. 4, p. 158): “But also the Apostle James says;” quoting James 1:8. And so elsewhere. We have no earlier quotations. But a passage in Hermas (*‘Commandment’* ix.) suggests strongly that the writer had seen the Epistle of James. It is included in the



Syrian Peshito Version, made probably earlier than the fourth century; and is quoted in existing copies of versions of the works of Ephrem, a Syrian father of the same century. These are valuable testimonies to the genuineness of the Epistle. For, it was most likely, as written for Jewish Christians probably at Jerusalem, to be known in Eastern churches using the Aramaic language.

We notice at once the difference between these somewhat doubtful testimonies and the earlier and unanimous witnesses for the genuineness of the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians. And this weaker external evidence is not supported by any internal historical evidence such as that adduced for the Epistles. It is, however, supported by internal theological evidence so strong as almost to banish doubt, viz. a type of teaching differing widely from that of Paul, but in complete accord with the earlier and later surroundings, and the vocation, of the Lord's brother.

We can easily conceive that James, the son (Matthew 1:19) of 'a righteous man,' and trained in a home adorned by the piety of Mary, would, like Timothy, (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15,) receive from the Jewish Scriptures rich spiritual nourishment. The Law would be to him a guide and delight, and a promise of a better revelation to come. But his nearness to Jesus would make it difficult to accept as the promised deliverer one whom as probably a younger brother he had loved and tended. And to him the Gospel itself would be, when at last the vision of the Risen Savior had moved him to accept it without reserve, in some sense a consummation of the Law. Just as in the Epistles of Paul the antagonism of Law and Gospel recalls the writer's sudden transition from the one to the other, so the absence of any such antagonism in the Epistle of James is in complete accord with his gradual transition from Judaism to Christianity. Consequently, with James the word 'law' is always a title of honor; and even the Gospel is (James 1:25; 2:12) a 'law of liberty.' In short, the Epistle of James agrees so completely with the many casual but very definite references in the New Testament and (see below) in ancient tradition that we cannot doubt that it was written by the Lord's brother.

The apparent contradiction between James and Paul about justification is discussed in Dissertation 4.

The disposition and training of James were admirably fitted for the work he had to do. He became a medium of transition from Judaism to Christianity. Sympathising deeply with all that was good in the earlier revelation, and finding even in its ritual probably abundant edification, and therefore unwilling to break away from it, he would gain and retain the confidence of the best of the Jews. At the same time his opening words are a confession that 'Jesus Christ' is his 'Lord'; and he places side by side the names of God and Christ. The kernel of his religion was (James 2:1) the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And, like Paul's converts at Thessalonica, he was waiting (James 5:7, 8) for 'the coming of the Lord.'

The chief aim of the Epistle is to rebuke those, be they Jews or Christians, who cling to some outward form, be it ritual or creed, and yet refuse to allow their religion to control their actions. That faith in Christ leads to right action, also Paul teaches constantly: cp. Galatians 5:16ff. But by confining our attention to the practical outworking of religion as the one test of its genuineness, the Epistle of James supplements the writings of Paul, and becomes an element in the sacred volume of abiding and infinite value.

Both in its outer form and in its spiritual significance, in its silence and in its teaching, the Epistle of James agrees closely with the First Gospel, which holds a place and discharges an office among the Gospels similar to that of this Epistle among the Epistles. Compare James 1:2 with Matthew 5:10ff; James 1:4 with Matthew 5:48; James 1:20 with Matthew 5:22; James 1:26 and James 3:2 with Matthew 12:36; James 2:8 with Matthew 22:39; James 2:13 with Matthew 9:13; James 2:14ff with Matthew 7:21ff; James 3:12 with Matthew 7:16; James 4:4 with Matthew 6:24; James 4:11 with Matthew 7:1; James 4:12 with Matthew 10:28; James 5:2 with Matthew 6:19; James 5:12 with Matthew 5:33ff., etc.

By Luther, in the Preface to his German New Testament, A.D. 1522, this Epistle was rejected in strong language as unworthy of the Gospel. But the book he rejected would have saved him from many unguarded and injurious words which his enemies have used as weapons against Protestantism, and would have supplied the chief defect of his theological teaching. How serious is this defect, and how sharp are the weapons thus put into the

hands of adversaries, we see in Dollinger's 'Reformation,' vol. iii., pp. 1-274.

Later tradition confirms, amid much which is evidently fabulous, the picture of James given above. Josephus ('Antiq.' xx. 9. 1) narrates that, when "James the brother of Jesus which is called Christ" was put to death by the high priest Ananus, it displeased the best men in the city and those strictest about the laws. Hegesippus, in a lost work quoted at length by Eusebius, ('Church History' bk. ii. 23,) says that "James the brother of the Lord.... because of his surpassing righteousness was called just;" that he was a Nazarite from birth; and that he alone used to go into the temple, i.e. into the sacred house itself. Hegesippus gives also an account of his death varying from that of Josephus. This quotation, in spite of much evidently incorrect, bears reliable witness to the opinions about James current in the second century. Similar evidence of the same date is found in the Clementine writings, which, while in the interests of Judaism bitterly opposing the teaching of Paul, without mentioning his name, make friendly reference to James.

Enough has now been said to prove that the character, position and influence, and writings of James deserve the most careful study of all who wish to understand the early development of Christianity.

Of PETER, the notices here accord exactly with those in the Gospels and in the Book of Acts, in reference both to his position in the Church and to his personal character.

In the Gospels, not only do we find him in the inner circle of three disciples at the raising of Jairus' daughter, at the Transfiguration, and in the agony of Gethsemane, but in all lists of the apostles his name is placed first: so Matthew 10:2; 17:1; 26:37; Mark 3:16; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33; Luke 6:14; 8:51; 9:28; John 21:2; Acts 1:13; John 1:45 being apparently the only exception. This remarkable uniformity suggests that among the twelve he was in some sense first. And this is put beyond doubt by Matthew 16:17-19; where the words 'Upon this rock I will build My Church,' following the emphatic words 'Blessed art thou Simon son of Jonah... and I say to THEE that THOU art Rock' and followed by 'I will give to thee the keys, etc.' refer certainly to Peter himself, designating him for a unique position in the Church. They were evidently designed to

prepare Peter for special service, and to mark him out to his fellow-apostles as their divinely appointed leader. They are confirmed by the remarkable change in Luke 22:31 from 'Satan has asked for YOU,' to 'I have made petition for THEE that THY faith fail not. And do THOU, when once thou hast turned again, make THY brethren firm.' But the true explanation of these words is in Acts 1-5, where we find Peter acting as the recognised leader and mouthpiece of the apostles and throwing wide open to all seekers for salvation the gates of the Kingdom of God, and where we see resting upon his immovable courage the entire interests, and indeed the existence, of the infant Church. See 'The Expositor' for April 1884.

In close agreement with all this, the motive of Paul's first journey to Jerusalem after his conversion is in Galatians 1:18 said to be, to see Peter. And, even when surrounded by other apostles, Peter is in Galatians 2:8 spoken of singly as entrusted with 'apostleship of the circumcision,' in a sense similar to Paul's unique commission for the Gentiles. This is the more remarkable because immediately afterwards (Galatians 2:9) the name of James is placed before that of Peter. The best explanation is that James was head of the Church at Jerusalem, whereas the twelve were sent to proclaim the Gospel to the world; and that among the twelve Peter held the first place.

The personal notices of Peter present a similar agreement. His concurrence, in Galatians 2:9, with the teaching of Paul is a remarkable coincidence with Acts 15:7ff, where similar teaching is attributed to Peter himself; and with Acts 11:17. And that, through fear of new comers from Jerusalem, Peter contradicted by action his own previous words, is in exact accord with his denial of Christ under the sudden influence of a servant maid. His subsequent almost reckless courage, contrasted with his timidity then, has often and justly been appealed to as the effect in him of the Spirit given at Pentecost. His weakness at Antioch is but another proof, in addition to thousands in all ages and circumstances, that the weaknesses of earlier days are an abiding source of danger even to those who have received the impulse of new spiritual life. As an embodiment of this lesson the incident referred to is of immense value.

These coincidences confirm strongly the genuineness of the Epistle to the Galatians and the correctness of the narratives in the Gospels and the Book of Acts.

Of the two Epistles attributed to Peter, the former was accepted as undoubtedly genuine by all early Christian writers, and may be received with confidence as the voice of the Apostle of the Circumcision. The genuineness of the Second Epistle is surrounded by difficulties which cannot be discussed here.

Touching Peter's relation to the Church at Rome, Jerome ('Illustrious Men' ch. ii.) says: "Simon Peter... Prince of the apostles... in the second year of Claudius (i.e. A.D. 42)... went to Rome and there for twenty-five years occupied the priestly chair, until the last, i.e. the fourteenth, year (i.e. A.D. 67) of Nero. By Nero he was affixed to a cross, and thus was crowned with martyrdom, his head turned to the earth and his feet lifted high, inasmuch as he declared himself to be unworthy to be crucified like his Master." Eusebius (in the Armenian text of his 'Chronicon') gives the same date for the beginning of Peter's episcopate. But these statements are made unlikely in the last degree by (see Diss. i. 3, 7) Peter's imprisonment at Jerusalem in A.D. 44 and his presence in A.D. 51 at the conference mentioned in Galatians 2:1-10; and by the absence of all reference to him in the Epistle to the Romans, and in that to the Philippians which was undoubtedly written from Rome.

About the death of Peter, we read in Eusebius, 'Church History' bk. iii. I, on the authority of Origen: "At the end, having come to Rome, he was empaled head downwards, himself having demanded to suffer thus." So bk. ii. 25; and 'Demonstration of the Gospel,' bk. iii. 5, vol. iv. p. 116. In his 'Church History,' bk. ii. 25, Eusebius quotes Caius of Rome (A.D. 210 about) as saying: "If thou wilt go to the Vatican or to the Ostian Way thou wilt find the monuments of those (Peter and Paul) who founded this Church." He quotes also a letter of the same date to the Roman Church from Dionysius, bishop of Corinth saying that at both Corinth and Rome both Peter and Paul preached. Tertullian ('Against Marcion' bk. iv. 5) says: "the Romans... to whom Peter and Paul left the Gospel sealed by their own blood." Similarly, in his 'Prescriptions against Heretics' ch. 36. Also Irenaeus, 'On Heresies' bk. iii. 1: "While Peter and Paul were

preaching in Rome and founding the Church.” So ch. 3. We see then that within little more than a hundred years of his death, in places so far apart as Corinth and Carthage, Rome and Gaul, and soon afterwards in Syria, it was confidently believed that Peter died at, or visited, Rome. And the literature of the early Church presents no trace of a contrary tradition. These testimonies and this silence admit of no explanation except that this belief was true. Had he died elsewhere it is most unlikely that no claim to this honor would have been put forward. Now if Peter died at Rome, it is easy to believe that to some extent he preached there. And this might easily give rise to the incorrect tradition that he and Paul founded the Church at Rome.

Many reasons unknown to us may have brought Peter to Rome. Possibly he came at Paul’s request, that the Jewish and Gentile Christians might see, in the concord of the apostles of the circumcision and the uncircumcision the oneness of the Gospel which both preached.

From the above, which is a fairly complete statement of the evidence, it is clear that we have no historical proof that the bishops of Rome are in any sense successors of Peter and inheritors of the prerogatives given to him. Consequently, the primacy of Peter among the twelve apostles in no way supports the claim, put forward by the Bishops of Rome, to the primacy of the universal Church.

Of JOHN, the solitary mention in Galatians 2:9 accords with the scanty reference to him in the Gospels and in the Book of Acts. During the life of Christ we find him frequently associated with his brother James and with Peter; with Peter only, in Luke 22:8 and (as we confidently infer) in John 18:15; 20:3. But only once (Mr 9:38; Luke 9:49) do we hear his voice; except once more (Luke 9:54) along with James, who if we may trust the constant order of names was his older brother. As in John 18:15 he had with apparently unwavering courage entered the judgment hall with Jesus, so in Acts 3:1-4:20 he bravely stands by Peter in great peril, and sanctions his bold words to the Sanhedrin: but again his voice is not heard. In remarkable agreement with all this we find him in Galatians 2:9 present among the men of repute at Paul’s private interview at Jerusalem: but we have no recorded word from his lips. Similarly, in Acts 15:6ff, assuming

him to be present, he gives only silent approval to the words of Peter and James.

The long silence of John was at length broken by a voice which will never more be silent, viz. his Gospel and First Epistle. See further in Dissertation 5.

Of this intimate companion of Jesus and profound student of His teaching, whose words re-echoing and expounding the most precious words of his Master are light and life now to millions and will be so, probably in increasing measure, to the end of time, the only mention in the writings of Paul is Galatians 2:9. And possibly the only meeting of these two greatest theologians of the New Testament was at this conference at Jerusalem.

BARNABAS was (Acts 4:36f) a Levite, born at Cyprus but afterwards a member of the Church at Jerusalem and owning land there. So prominent was he as a preacher that he received from the apostles the name he afterwards always bore: 'Son of prophecy.' Cp. Acts 13:1, where among the prophets and teachers his name stands first. He knew (Acts 9:27) the story of Paul's conversion, recognised him at Jerusalem, and introduced him to the apostles. When the work began (Acts 11:21) at Antioch, the apostles wisely sent there Barnabas, as being from childhood associated with Gentiles. In the infant Church he used his gift of exhortation with delight and success. But, feeling the greatness of the work, and appreciating the powers of Paul, Barnabas persuaded him to come to Antioch: and for a whole year the two preachers labored together. He went with Paul to Jerusalem taking alms for the poor; and then on his first missionary journey. That Barnabas was at that time looked upon as holding a place in the first rank in the Church, is implied in the title 'apostle' given to him, jointly with Paul, in Acts 14:4, 14. With Paul, Barnabas went to the conference at Jerusalem, and returned with him to Antioch. But after this he betrayed a momentary weakness by following the example of the Jewish Christians at Antioch who imitate Peter in withdrawing from the Gentiles. Paul's words in Galatians 2:13, 'even Barnabas,' seem to betray surprise at the defection of his old comrade. Possibly this made Paul less reluctant to separate from Barnabas when the latter wished (Acts 15:37) to take on their contemplated missionary journey John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, who had deserted them on a

former journey. After the dispute, Barnabas went with Mark to Cyprus, his native island, doubtless to labor there in the Gospel. He now vanishes from view, except that in 1 Corinthians 9:6 he is spoken of by Paul as a fellow-worker and as, like Paul, refusing to be maintained by those to whom he preached. These courteous words suggest that the parted comrades were afterwards reconciled.

Barnabas is spoken of with confidence by Tertullian ('On Modesty' ch. 20) as author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. And at the end of the Sinai MS. of the New Testament and in some other Greek and Latin MSS. is an epistle commonly called by his name, and attributed to him frequently and confidently (e.g. 'Stromata' bk. ii. 6, p. 161: 20, p. 177) by Clement of Alexandria and ('Against Celsus' bk. 1. 63) by Origen. But it is reckoned apocryphal by Eusebius ('Church History' bk. iii. 25) and by ('Illustrious Men' ch. 6) Jerome. Neither of these works can make good a claim to be from his pen.

Such are our scanty notices of one who occupied a front place in the founding of Gentile Christianity; and whose character is summed up (Acts 11:24) in words which are a pattern of Christian eulogy, 'he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.' The past tense suggests perhaps that when those words were written he had passed away. We may therefore call them written on the imperishable page of Holy Scripture, the Epitaph of Barnabas.

On TITUS see note under 2 Corinthians 9:5.



## DIVISION II

### JUSTIFICATION IS BY FAITH, APART FROM LAW AND THEREFORE FROM CIRCUMCISION

#### CHAPTER 3:1-5:13a

#### SECTION 9

#### *BY FAITH THE GALATIAN CHRISTIANS RECEIVED THE SPIRIT*

#### CHAPTER 3:1-5

*O senseless Galatians, who was bewitching you before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly written as Crucified. This only I wish to learn from you, From works of law did ye receive the Spirit, or from a hearing of faith? So senseless are ye? Having begun by the Spirit, are ye now by flesh being brought to maturity? So many things have ye suffered in vain? If at least it be indeed in vain. He then who supplies to you the Spirit and works powers in (or among) you, is it by works of law or by a hearing of faith?*

We have assumed as the only explanation of this Epistle that in Galatia were men who bitterly opposed Paul's teaching that the good things of the New Covenant are received by faith and in proportion to our faith, apart from obedience to the Mosaic Law or to any law; and that these teachers insinuated that Paul's authority was inferior to that of the earlier apostles, because derived from them, and intimated that he had been unfaithful to the teaching they had committed to him. That his authority as a teacher, and his teaching, were not derived from them, Paul has proved by the facts of DIV. 1; and in so doing has prepared a way for a defense and exposition of his teaching, which is the second, and chief, matter of this Epistle. It occupies DIV. 2

Paul's words to Peter have brought him to the cross of Christ and to the self-sacrificing love there manifested. From these, as the best possible starting point, he now passes to a series of arguments with his readers in Galatia. And, while turning to them, in the light which shines from the Cross, his first thought is wonder at their strange defection.

**Ver.** 1. Senseless: lacking power to grasp underlying realities, to read the meaning of that which was written in letters so public and plain. Same word in Luke 24:25; Romans 1:14: cognate word in Romans 1:20, R.V. 'perceived'; Ephesians 3:4; Hebrews 11:3.

Bewitch: deceive with magical art: same, or cognate, word in Sirach xiv. 6; xviii. 18; Wisdom iv. 12.

Was-bewitching: while the process of fascination was going on. So strange is their spiritual blindness that Paul assumes that someone has thrown a spell over them; and asks who the magician is.

Who?... you: the deceiver confronting his victims.

Before whose eyes, etc.: a fact proving the 'Galatians' to be 'senseless' and suggesting that they had been 'bewitched.'

Openly-written: publicly placarded, as in 1 Macc. x. 36, and probably Jude 4; or 'written-beforehand,' as in Romans 15:4; Ephesians 3:3.

Probably the former: for 'beforehand,' which could only mean, before the wizard came, would, as already implied in the context, add no sense to the word 'written;' whereas 'openly' is a new and Important idea, and one suggested by

before whose eyes. The name of Jesus Christ was written in plain letters before the eyes of Paul's readers where they and all men could read it: and it had been written as the name of one

Crucified. Cp. 1 Corinthians 1:23; 2:2. This recalls 'crucified with Christ' in Galatians 2:20 and 'Christ died in vain' in Galatians 2:21. All this proves their spiritual blindness, and suggests that they had been bewitched. For the teaching which had beguiled them set aside (Galatians 2:21) practically the death of Christ.

The words ‘bewitch’ and ‘eyes’ recall a widespread superstition that from the eye of the enchanter to that of his victim passed a fascinating glance. So Plutarch, ‘Symposium’ v. 7, p. 680 c: “about those said to bewitch and to have a bewitching eye.” And Alexander of Aphrodisias, ‘Physical Problems’ bk. ii. 53: “they send forth a ray as if poisonous and destroying from the pupil of their eye: and this entering in through the eyes of the envied one will change the soul and the nature.” From the fascinating and deadly glance of the deceiver, the vision of Jesus crucified should have saved the Galatians.

**Ver. 2.** First argument in defense of Paul’s teaching.

This only: this one argument being sufficient to decide the matter.

I wish to learn; suggests deliberate and careful inquiry.

From works of law: as in Galatians 2:16.

The Spirit: not His miraculous gifts merely or chiefly, of which the real worth was that they revealed His presence; but Himself dwelling in the hearts of all His people in all ages as their life and light and strength and joy, and the bearer to them and in them of all that Christ has and is. Cp. Galatians 4:6: 5:16, 22, 25. The Spirit, Paul assumes that his readers have received; and that they know it. His inward presence was in the Apostolic Church outwardly manifested by supernatural gifts, especially by that of tongues: cp. Acts 10:44ff; 11:17; 8:17f; 19:6. For it was important that both the receiver and others around should have unmistakable proof that he had received the Spirit. But the same Spirit in all His fulness dwells in us now, revealing Himself by a direct influence in our hearts moving us to call God our Father and breathing into us a strength and wisdom which we know to be not ours but God’s; and in some measure revealing Himself to others by the moral beauty of those in whom He dwells.

The word rendered ‘hearing’ denotes both the faculty (as in Mark 7:35; 1 Corinthians 12:17; Hebrews 5:11) and the act (as in 2 Peter 2:8) of hearing. It therefore easily denotes the matter heard: for there can be no hearing without something heard. Same word three times in Romans 10:16f: ‘faith comes from hearing’; i.e. we first hear and then believe, and not otherwise can we believe. Similarly, the reception of the Spirit comes

from hearing: the Galatian Christians heard a word preached, and thus received the Spirit. Moreover, it was a hearing of faith, i.e. accompanied, and therefore characterised, by faith. Cp. Hebrews 3:12; 4:2. The simplicity of this exposition renders needless the suggestion that faith was the matter heard, as in Romans 2:5 it is the object to be obeyed.

This verse itself disproves the assertion of the disturbers that observance of the Mosaic Law is a condition of the blessings of the New Covenant. Already the readers had received the Holy Spirit who is Himself the great and promised (Ezekiel 36:27) gift of that Covenant. Paul asks, 'Whence did you obtain this gift? Was it by obeying prescriptions of conduct, or by hearing and believing a preached word?' To state the only answer possible, is needless. A mere appeal to his readers' memory of their early Christian life is conclusive argument.

**Ver. 3.** Questions developing the arguments involved in Galatians 3:2.

So senseless: introducing the absurdity exposed in Galatians 3:3b.

Begun... brought-to-maturity, or 'completion,' or 'perfection': same words in 2 Corinthians 8:6, 10f; Philippians 1:6. Being-brought-to-maturity: a process now going on. Same word in 2 Corinthians 7:1, cognate word in 1 Corinthians 2:6: see notes. That the circumcision urged upon Titus is needful for entrance into the Christian life, Galatians 3:2 has disproved. Consequently, the only supposition still open to its advocates is that by obeying the Mosaic Law the Galatian Christians were 'being brought to maturity.'

Spirit: the Holy Spirit, but looked upon in the abstract as a life-giving principle.

Flesh; implies that the Jewish restrictions which the false teachers sought to impose on the Galatians pertained only to outward, bodily life, to something done by, or to, the body. And this we can understand. For, in its inner significance none can fulfil the Law. They who trust to it for salvation do so by limiting their thoughts to small outward details, of piety or morality, which they are able to perform; and by rigourously performing these. Just so, the Judaisers insisted on (Galatians 5:3, 6:12) circumcision and on (Galatians 2:12) Mosaic distinctions of meat, things pertaining to the body. Paul reminds his readers that their spiritual life

began by reception of the Holy Spirit, an inward, pervasive, life-giving principle; and asks whether, after such a beginning they are now being raised to a further and final stage of development by something pertaining only to their outward covering of flesh and blood. Notice here the contrast of 'Spirit' and 'flesh' so deeply interwoven (cp. Galatians 5:16; 6:8; Romans 8:4-13) into the thought of Paul.

It may be objected that Baptism and the Lord's Supper touch only the flesh, and that therefore the same argument would prove that they cannot be obligatory on those who have already received the Spirit. But their solemn institution by Christ at the founding of His Church breathed into the outward rite a spiritual significance which can never be separated from it. Probably (Galatians 6:13) the disturbers in Galatia cared for nothing but the outward act of circumcision. Against them, therefore, this question would have irresistible force.

**Ver. 4.** The mention of maturity suggests another element in the Christian life of the Galatians, viz. the many things they have suffered. These are most easily explained as persecutions aroused by Jews. For, the hostility to Paul (Acts 14:2, 19) in the neighboring cities of Iconium and Lystra was caused by Jews; and unquestionably their reason was that his teaching broke down Jewish prerogatives. To similar hostility, for the same reason, the Galatian Christians must have been exposed. They knew how much direct and indirect persecution was included in 'so many things.' But if the new teaching be true, these sufferings were 'in vain,' i.e. (cp. Galatians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 15:2) without sufficient cause and without result. For, against this teaching their enemies would have little or nothing to say. Similar argument in Galatians 5:11. Thus Paul appeals to his readers' outward, as in Galatians 3:2f to their inward Christian life. He asks, 'Are you willing to trample under foot as needless your own sufferings for the Gospel? These sufferings were provoked by the teaching you are now surrendering.' This question rests on the broad principle that whatever we have suffered for is dear to us. We do not like to admit that our sufferings have been needless and without result.

At the word in vain Paul starts, and adds as if apologizing for it if at least it be in vain. [εἰ γὰρ 'implies emphatically that the foregoing question rests entirely upon the supposition embodied in the word in vain,' which καὶ

raises into conspicuous prominence. These particles therefore suggest scrutiny whether the supposition be correct.] These added words reveal Paul's reluctance to believe that these sufferings had been in vain; and thus suggest how serious his question is.

**Ver. 5.** A repetition of the question in Galatians 3:2, transferred now from entrance into, to present continuance in, the Christian life; a transfer suggested by the arguments in Galatians 3:3, 4, which give great force to the question now asked. It is an appeal to present religious experience. 'If your Christian life began by reception of the Holy Spirit, it being thus impossible for it to be brought to maturity by anything merely outward, and if for this Christian life you have already suffered so much, I ask whether God is now 'supplying to you the Spirit, etc.'"

Supplies: see under 2 Corinthians 9:10; cp. Philippians 2:19.

The Spirit: same full and general sense as in Romans 3:2. Of this inward presence of the Spirit, endowment with supernatural 'powers' was one visible and conspicuous manifestation.

He that supplies: God, who (Galatians 4:6) sends forth the Spirit of His Son into the hearts of His adopted sons. Paul thus supplements 'received the Spirit' in Galatians 3:2; and removes the controversy into the presence of God, the source of all good. The present tense, with the definite word 'you,' implies that each moment the Spirit goes forth (cp. John 15:26) from God to men. Paul thus courteously acknowledges his readers' continued spiritual life; and assumes that they are conscious of a continuous reception of the Spirit by faith. This, the servants of Christ understand by personal experience. They find in their hearts an influence which raises them above themselves and enables them to live a life which is not their own but God's; and they find that in proportion to their faith, and from the very words believed, this life flows from Him to them. Of this divine life thus received, their obedience to God is a joyful result, but by no means an instrument or source.

Powers: either words of supernatural power, i.e. miracles, as in 2 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 29. Probably the latter, as more usual with Paul: but the practical difference is hardly perceptible.

In you, or 'among you': both meanings embraced in the Greek word. The miracles were wrought 'among' (same word in 2 Corinthians 12:12) the Galatians: but capacity for miracles was by the energy of God operating 'in' the hearts of those who did them. This latter exposition is suggested here by the inwardness of the Spirit's operation, and is implied in my exposition of the word 'powers.' Cp. Matthew 14:2; 1 Corinthians 12:6. 'This question implies that miracles were indisputably wrought in the apostolic Churches. Paul asks, 'what is the immediate source from which you receive day by day the Holy Spirit, and from which proceeds power to work miracles? is it works done in obedience to a rule of conduct, or attention to, and belief of, a spoken word?' Answer is needless. They know that, when most firmly they believe the Gospel, then most richly does the Spirit animate and glorify their entire life, and then most mightily does the power of God endow them with supernatural capacities.'

## REVIEW

The suggestion that Christ died in vain, as would be the case if the teaching of the Judaizers were correct, reveals to Paul, as he turns to discuss the teaching they contradict, the mental blindness of the Galatian Christians. A single argument seems to him sufficient to settle the matter at issue. His readers' Christian course began with reception of the Spirit to be in them the animating principle of a new life. Paul asks whether they obtained the Spirit by means of obedience to legal prescriptions or by hearing with faith a preached word. Memory replies. The only supposition open is that obedience to law might lead them to a richer and higher Christian life. But the legal prescriptions of which the Judaizers think reach only to the material clothing of human life. Can mere bodily obedience develop a life begun by receiving a life-giving Spirit? The thought is absurd. Again, for the teaching of Justification by Faith apart from works of law, the Galatian Christians have already suffered persecution. Are they now prepared to admit that these sufferings were needless and profitless? These questions enable Paul to ask again in stronger form his first question. The Spirit whom day by day God still gives to his readers, and who reveals His presence by working miracles among them, do they receive by works of law or by faith? Thus not only their past but their present experience confirms the Apostle's teaching.

This section illustrates a principle in theology all-important yet very liable to abuse, viz. that frequently abstract teaching may be verified by reference to our own spiritual life. To make subjective feelings a standard of truth, is perilous in the last degree. But our inner life is capable of, and deserves scientific analysis. Such analysis must, if correct, agree with the teaching of Christ as expounded by His apostles. And the comparison will in some cases detect a misunderstanding of the words of Christ, and in others confirm our confidence that we have rightly interpreted His words.



## SECTION 10

### *JUST SO, BY FAITH ABRAHAM WAS JUSTIFIED*

#### CHAPTER 3:6-9

*According as "Abraham believed God; and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." (Genesis 15:6.) Know therefore that they of faith, these are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, having foreseen that by faith God justifies the Gentiles, (or nations,) announced beforehand good news to Abraham, that "In thee shall all the nations be blessed." So then they of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.*

The foregoing appeal to his readers' spiritual life past and present, Paul now supports by showing it to be in harmony with the spiritual history of the father of the Jewish nation. And this historical comparison becomes a starting point and basis of an exposition of the relation of the Gospel to the Law which occupies the remainder of DIV. 2 Paul thus continues his defense, begun in 9, Or the doctrine of salvation by faith, from the legal restrictions with which some sought to overload and practically invalidate it.

**Ver. 6.** That Paul's readers received the Holy Spirit by faith accords with a remarkable spiritual fact recorded of Abraham in Genesis 15:6. Paul thus verifies his appeal to personal experience by comparison of the ancient Scriptures. An excellent example.

Believed God: word for word from the LXX. (cp. Exodus 14:31; 19:9) as in Romans 4:3; James 2:23 instead of 'believed in Jehovah' as in the Hebrew: probably because 'believe in' is not common in Greek. See my 'Romans' p. 147. Abraham was sure that God will fulfil His promise to give him children as numerous as the stars: and this faith God reckoned to be fulfilment of the condition on which the promise was suspended. Thus by faith Abraham obtained the fulfilment of God's promise. The express and conspicuous record of this, and of the covenant which 'on that day' amid slain sacrifices God made with Abraham, is in remarkable agreement

with the fact that by faith the Galatian Christians received the Spirit of God who is the bearer of all the blessings of the New Covenant.

**Ver. 7.** Logical inference from the quotation in Romans 3:6, which Paul bids his readers make.

They of faith: i.e. whose relation to God, and confidence, and character, are derived from, and determined by faith: so Romans 3:26; 4:16; cp. Romans 2:8; 4:14. 'They' who have a spiritual life derived 'from faith' are sharers of Abraham's spiritual nature; and in some sense derive it from him. For they follow in the way of faith which he trod. And Paul will show that the blessings they now enjoy are those promised to his children. They may therefore be called his 'sons.'

**Ver. 8.** Not only does Genesis 15:6 prove that the men of faith are Abraham's sons, but in the spiritual facts of Genesis 15:2, and 5 is a fulfilment of the first promise to Abraham so exact that it implies intelligent foresight.

The Scripture: Galatians 3:22; 4:30; Romans 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2: the passage of Scripture here quoted, viz. Genesis 12:3. So always, apparently. The collective sacred writings are 'the Scriptures,' Romans 1:2; 15:4; 16:26. Cp. 'this Scripture,' Mark 12:10; Luke 4:21; 'another Scripture,' John 19:37; 'every Scripture,' 2 Timothy 3:16.

Having foreseen: the divine foresight preceded the announcement recorded in Genesis 12:3. A strong personification: cp. Galatians 3:22; 4:30; Romans 9:17. That the solemn words of God are quoted simply as 'the Scripture,' and that foresight is attributed to it as to a living person, reveals Paul's firm conviction both of the correctness of the record and of its divine authority. See my 'Romans,' Diss. III. Similarly, the law of England, enforced as it is by the power of the government, is sometimes spoken of as though it were a living person. And this reveals the unique position of the law among other writings.

By faith God justifies the Gentiles: simple matter of fact, going on day by day while Paul wrote this Epistle, and foreseen by God before He spoke the first promise to Abraham.

Announced beforehand good things: viz. the spiritual good actually bestowed in Paul's day. Compare carefully Romans 2:2 'the Gospel which He promised beforehand in Holy Scriptures.' The quotation is from Genesis 12:3, changing only 'all the families of the earth' into all the nations or 'all the Gentiles,' to agree with 'justifies the Gentiles.'

In thee: in virtue of something done to, or by, Abraham. So 1 Corinthians 15:22; 'in Adam all die.'

In Paul's day God was giving to all who believe, in all nations, the blessings of the New Covenant. This Covenant was a development of that which God made with Abraham in the day when he believed the promise that he should have children numerous as the stars. Consequently, their faith was a development of his faith. And in their justification was fulfilled the promise made to Abraham before he left his own country. Paul will show in 11 that not otherwise could this promise be fulfilled. So exact is the fulfilment that it must have been designed. He may therefore rightly say that the original promise, recorded in the ancient writings which were to Israel the voice of God, was a foresight of the blessings which in his day God was actually bestowing.

**Ver. 9.** Logical result of Genesis 12:3 taken in connection with Genesis 15:6, stated in a form similar to Galatians 5:7 and preparatory to 11.

They of faith... believing Abraham: the point of the argument. The blessings now received by those who believe in Christ are a fulfilment of the promises pledged to Abraham in the Covenant made with him by God in the day he believed. Consequently, they who share Abraham's faith share also with him the blessings which follow his faith.

Section 10 is preparatory to 11, 12. In order to expound the true position and design of the Law, Paul has taken us into the presence of Abraham centuries before the Law was given, and proved from the Scriptures that he obtained the favor of God by faith, and that the justification of the Gentiles by faith is a fulfilment of the first promise made to Abraham. In the light of these facts he will now approach the Law.

## SECTION 11

### THE LAW BRINGS A CURSE

#### CHAPTER 3:10-14

*For so many as are of works of law are under a curse: for it is written that “Cursed is every one that does not continue in all the things written in the Book of the Law to do them.” (Deuteronomy 27:26.) And that in law no one is justified in the presence of God, is evident: because “the righteous man by faith will live.” (Habakkuk 2:4.) But the Law is not by faith, but “He that hath done them will live in them.” (Leviticus 18:5.) Christ hath bought us off from the curse of the Law having on our behalf become a curse; (because it is written, “Cursed is everyone that hangs upon wood:” Deuteronomy 21:23; ) that to the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus, that we might receive through faith the promise of the Spirit.*

Proof that the promise to Abraham was a foresight of the Gospel; viz. because not otherwise can that promise be fulfilled, since all who trust in law are under a curse: Galatians 3:10. That the Law cannot save, is proved by its difference from faith as a means of salvation: Galatians 3:11, 12. The powerlessness of the Law to save rendered needful the death of Christ for the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham: Galatians 3:13, 14.

**Ver. 10.** Proof of Galatians 3:8, 9. The original promise to Abraham is fulfilled in those who believe the Gospel: for all others, including all who trust in Law, ‘are under a curse.’ Paul thus approaches, from the platform set up in 10 on the firm foundation of God’s first treatment of Abraham which agrees with his readers’ own spiritual experience in 9, the chief matter of DIV. 2, viz. our relation to the Law.

So many as: favorite phrase with Paul; Galatians 3:27; 6:12, 16; Romans 2:12; 6:3; 8:14.

Of works of law: whose religious life and claim to God's favor are derived from, and determined by, actions prescribed in a rule of conduct. That all such are under a curse, is proved by the very solemn and conspicuous words of Deuteronomy 27:26, which are a summary and culmination of the curses which Moses bade the Levites pronounce on Mount Ebal, and which embody the spirit of the entire Mosaic Law. The quotation is from the LXX., which however reads 'all the words of this Law.' The Hebrew, omitting 'everyone' and 'all' reads 'Cursed is he who does not establish the words of this Law to do them.' But the difference is unimportant: for these strong universal terms give the tenor of the whole Law.

The Book of the Law: same phrase in Deuteronomy 31:26; Joshua 2:8; 2 Kings 22:8, 11.

Continue in: abiding self-restraint within the limits marked out by the Law.

To do them: purpose of this self-restraint.

This argument implies that none have kept the Law, i.e. that all have sinned. So Romans 2:1; 3:9, 19, 23. To make us conscious of this, Paul chose the exceedingly broad and conspicuous summary of the Law of Moses in Deuteronomy 27:26, which reminds us that the Law is no mere series of regulations which we can easily keep but covers and touches all the actions of life and even the secret springs of conduct. Consequently, each deeper insight into the Law reveals transgressions undetected before and pronounces against us a fresh condemnation. And if so, the first great promise to Abraham can never be fulfilled to any one on the basis of law. It can be fulfilled only as the Galatian Christians have already received blessing from God, viz. by faith. And all this was foreseen by God when He spoke the promise.

**Ver.** 11-12. Further proof that the Law cannot save.

Justified in law: same phrase in Galatians 5:4; and, from the lips of Paul, Acts 13:39: to have a rule of life as the surrounding element in which, and therefore the medium through which, a man receives justification. Cp. 'in Christ,' Galatians 2:17; Acts 13:39; 'in the blood' and 'name of Christ,' Romans 5:9; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 4:4.

In the presence of God: the Great Judge who knows the whole case and pronounces just judgment. Cp. 'righteous before God,' Romans 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:6; Romans 2:11; 9:14; 11:25.

No one is justified: an abiding principle. No one obtains by accepting a rule of conduct as the surrounding element of his spiritual life, a favorable sentence in the presence of the heart-searching Judge. This is 'evident' from the total difference between justification by faith and by law. These two incompatible principles Paul states in word-for-word quotations from Habakkuk 2:4 and Leviticus 18:5. God's words to Habakkuk are not perhaps given as independent proof that salvation is by faith: yet, taken in connection with Genesis 15:6, they remind us that this doctrine has its roots in the records of the Old Covenant. See under Romans 1:17. Not only did God accept Abraham's faith as a fulfilment of the required condition of the promise, but to Habakkuk He declared that by unshaken firmness, resting upon the believed word of God, the righteous man will survive the coming storm. But the main argument is the contrast with Leviticus 18:5.

The Law is not by faith, or 'from faith': it is not derived from the principle 'believe and live.' This modest and indisputable assertion reveals the infinite difference between 'the Law' and 'faith.'

He that hath done, etc.: a broad principle prefixed in Leviticus 18:5 to a series of legal prescriptions. Same quotation in Romans 10:5. It is the principle underlying all law. Reward follows right doing. The word will-live is a link uniting the two quotations; life through faith and life through obedience. That in each case bodily life is referred to, does not weaken the argument: for even bodily life is in the Old Testament a mark of the smile of God. The total incompatibility of these two channels of life, in connection with the exceeding breadth of the Law and with the Gospel announced by Christ and reflected from afar here and there in the pages of the Old Testament, makes it quite 'evident' that on the basis of law no one stands before God justified.

**Ver. 13-14.** Relation of Justification by Faith to Christ.

Us: rather emphatic: viz. Paul and the Jews who had received and broken the Mosaic Law. But this is true of all men: for all have (Romans 2:15) broken 'the' same 'Law,' and lie under 'the' same 'curse.'

Bought-off: same word in Romans 4:5; Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5; cp. 'bought' in 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; 2 Peter 2:1; Revelation 5:9. The word rendered 'redeem' in Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18; Luke 24:21 (cp. Romans 3:24) is quite different; yet similar in sense. See under Romans 3:24.

The curse of the Mosaic Law: that pronounced in Deuteronomy 27:26, quoted in Galatians 3:10.

Having become on our behalf a curse; explains and justifies 'bought off,' by stating the price, i.e. the costly method, by which Christ set us free.

On our behalf, or 'for our benefit': constant statement of the relation to us of Christ's death; Galatians 2:20; Romans 5:6ff; 8:31f; 14:15; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 11:24; 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:15. That the benefit was rendered by Christ taking our place, we learn here from the context. For the price takes the place of the thing 'bought:' and we were made free from the curse by Christ placing Himself under it. And, since that curse was death, we rightly say that Christ died in our stead. But this is only a forceful way of stating the great fundamental doctrine of Romans 3:24-26, (see note,) that we are justified by means of the death of Christ.

A curse: an example and embodiment of a divine curse. What that is, we learn by contemplating Christ Crucified. The word was suggested by the Hebrew form of Deuteronomy 21:23, 'a curse of God is a hanged one.' So Zechariah 8:13, 'ye were a curse among the nations.' A very close parallel in 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Because it is written, etc.: an important quotation (Deuteronomy 21:23) placing Christ actually under 'the curse of the Law;' slightly changed from the LXX. in which 'upon wood' is repeated from Deuteronomy 21:22. These words are needful here, to give the full sense of the original. As in the quotation in Galatians 3:10, the LXX. strengthens the passage by inserting 'everyone.' The Hebrew equivalent of the word 'wood' denotes primarily a tree, as in Genesis 2:9, 16; then the material derived from trees. The corresponding word denotes in classic Greek wood, or things made from wood, and very rarely or never a tree. But it is used by the LXX. for

the above Hebrew word even when used in this last sense, as in Genesis 2:9, 16; and in the same sense and reference is found in Revelation 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19. But elsewhere in the N.T. there is no need to give it any other than its ordinary sense of a piece of wood. The original words of Deuteronomy 21:23 embrace both a living tree, and any pole from which a dead body might be hung. A corpse hanging from a tree or pole, as being a conspicuous presentation of death and of crime, was marked out in the Law as specially accursed; and was not allowed to remain over night. By a strange coincidence (for crucifixion was a Roman punishment) Christ came under this legal curse: and in obedience to the Law His body was removed lest even that Most Sacred Temple should defile the coming Sabbath. And this apparently small coincidence reveals how completely He had taken upon Him our curse. Thus the Law pronounced a curse upon the All-Blessed One; and by so doing proclaimed itself to be imperfect and passing.

**Ver.** 14. Double purpose for which Christ ‘became a curse.’ It thus expounds ‘on our behalf.’

To the Gentiles, or ‘nations’: emphatic.

The blessing of Abraham: recorded in Galatians 3:8 as proclaimed in Genesis 12:3.

In Christ Jesus. Not until Christ came and bore our curse, and only in proportion to our spiritual union with the Risen Savior, can the blessing of Abraham reach us.

That we might receive, etc.: further purpose, expounding the practical significance of the foregoing. It leads us back to the spiritual facts of Galatians 3:2-5, with which the case of Abraham was in Galatians 3:6 said to agree; thus preparing a way to Galatians 4:6 and Galatians 5:16.

The promise of the Spirit: viz. that the Spirit shall be given: Joel 2:28; Ezekiel 36:27; John 14:16, 26.

Receive (or ‘obtain’) the promise: receive its fulfilment; Hebrews 10:36; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:4.

Through faith, joins 11 through 10 to 9. It marks the completion of the matter introduced in Galatians 3:2.



Galatians 3:13, 14 assume that Christ was crucified in order that God's purpose of mercy might be accomplished in us, a fundamental doctrine which probably no Christian would deny. But, if crucified, he fell under a curse conspicuously pronounced by the Law. Now upon all men the Law pronounces a curse: for none have fully obeyed its commands.

Consequently, Christ fell under the curse of the Law in order to rescue us from it. And only through Him, and to those who believe the Gospel, can the original promise made to Abraham be fulfilled: for all others are shut out from all blessing by the curse of the Law. Therefore, Christ bought us off from the curse of the Law by Himself submitting to its curse.

Moreover the Spirit given to those who believe is Himself a fulfilment, and the agent of the complete fulfilment, of the first promise made to Abraham. Consequently, this gift was the aim of the death of Christ.

In 9 Paul appealed to his readers' past and present experience in proof that the Holy Spirit, the great gift of the New Covenant, comes by faith and not by works of law. In 10 he shows that this agrees with the story of Abraham; and asserts that it is a fulfilment of the original promise to Abraham. This last assertion, he proves in 11 by showing that in no other way can this promise be fulfilled; that as a means of salvation obedience to law is incompatible with faith, by which he has already shown that Abraham obtained God's favor; and that the only conceivable explanation of the death of Christ is that He died that in the spiritual facts of 9 the promise to Abraham might be fulfilled.

## SECTION 12

### ***YET THE LAW CANNOT SET ASIDE THE STILL EARLIER PROMISE***

#### **CHAPTER 3:15-18**

*Brethren after the manner of men I say it. Even a man's confirmed covenant, no one sets aside or adds conditions to. Now to Abraham were spoken the promises, and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds" as of many, but as of one, "And to thy seed," which is Christ. But this I say, a covenant before confirmed by God, the Law proclaimed four hundred and thirty years afterwards does not annul, in order to make of no effect the promise. For if the inheritance is by law, it is no longer by promise. But to Abraham God graciously granted it by promise.*

The Law is not a later-imposed condition: for, if it were, it would prevent fulfilment of the promise, which was earlier than the Law and had reference not only to Abraham but to Christ. Paul will thus prove that the Law (which cannot save: 11) cannot hinder salvation.

**Ver. 15.** After the manner of men (literally, 'according to man,' as in Galatians 1:11)

I say: Romans 3:5; 1 Corinthians 9:8: 'taking human nature and its customs as my standard.' Hence, Paul goes on to speak of 'a man's covenant'. He thus appeals to the principles of human morality in proof of what God will do. Cp. Matthew 7:11. This implies that what is wrong in man cannot be right in God.

Covenant: an engagement in which men mutually bind themselves to do certain things on certain conditions. See my 'Romans' pp. 136, 266.

Confirmed: ratified, and thus made legally binding. Same word in Genesis 18:20. 'Although it be only a man's engagement, yet, when ratified, no one 'sets' it 'aside.'" Nor, when a man has bound himself to do something on certain conditions, does he 'add' other conditions and require their

fulfilment before he performs his part of the engagement. For he would thus practically 'set aside' the covenant.

**Ver. 16.** This verse applies 'to Abraham,' and through him to Paul's readers, the principle stated in Galatians 3:15. They would remember that God's words 'to Abraham' were 'the' well-known 'promises;' and that in the day of Abraham's faith (Genesis 15:18) these were confirmed by a solemn 'covenant.' This familiar historical connection is the historical link binding Galatians 3:16 and 15. Cp. Galatians 3:17, and Ephesians 2:12 'the covenants of the promise.' Nearly all 'the' many 'promises to Abraham' have the conspicuous addition, 'and to thy seed:' Genesis 13:15, (and in LXX. Genesis 13:17,) Genesis 17:8, 19. These words are quoted here to prove that on the principle asserted in Galatians 3:15, persons still living can claim the promises 'to Abraham.' To complete this proof, Paul will show in Galatians 3:16b that these added words pertain to Christ.

To Abraham... and to (or 'for') his seed: the Greek dative includes both him to whom, and those for whom, 'the promises were spoken;' a latitude which no English rendering can reproduce.

He does not say: probably God; for the words referred to are in 'the promises' spoken by Him. Instead of 'thy sons' (as in the frequent phrase 'sons of Israel': Exodus 1:13; 12:37, 40) God says always (even in Genesis 26:24) 'thy seed;' using a singular noun. This proves clearly that He looked upon Abraham's descendants as one organic whole. The plural of the Hebrew word rendered 'seed' denotes in 1 Samuel 8:15, where alone in the O. T. it is found, (cp. a similar word in Isaiah 61:11; Daniel 2:12, 16,) not persons but grains of seed; and therefore could not have been used to denote descendants. But the plural of the corresponding Greek word was sometimes, though rarely, so used: e.g. Plato, 'Laws' p. 853c. Paul therefore adopts it here as the easiest way of describing popularly a grammatical construction conspicuously absent from the promises to Abraham. The exact words 'and to thy seed' are found in (LXX.) Genesis 13:15, 17; 17:8. The word 'and' recalls a conspicuous addition in the promises to Abraham.

Which seed, looked upon as one organic whole, is Christ: a concisely expressed deduction from Galatians 3:14a.

Is; denotes coincidence or practical identity, as in 2 Corinthians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 10:16, (12:12,) Romans 2:12, 16. The promise to Abraham's seed is fulfilled, by God's design, in those united to Christ, in them only, and in virtue of their union with Him. The personality of Christ enfolds them: (for they have put on Christ, Galatians 3:27:) and His relationships and rights are theirs. Thus the personality of Christ is in some sense co-extensive with the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham. And, since this was originally designed by God, and since the fulfilment of the promises to Abraham will set up the kingdom of Christ, Paul does not hesitate to say in Galatians 3:19 that He was 'the seed to whom the promise was made,' and to say here that the seed 'is Christ.' The profound truth thus expressed, viz. the practical identity of Christ and His people, has many applications and is worthy of careful study. The expression itself was suggested by the form, conspicuous by its uniformity, of the promises to Abraham's descendants.

**Ver. 17.** But this I say, or 'mean': practical bearing of Galatians 3:15, 16 on the matter in hand. Galatians 3:15 states a universal principle of human morality: Galatians 3:16 proves that God's relation to Abraham and to his spiritual children comes under it: and Galatians 3:17 shows how the principle applies to them. God bound Himself (Genesis 15:18; 17:2) by a 'covenant' to fulfil 'the promises to Abraham.'

Ratified: the legal obligation 'by' which 'God' condescended to bind Himself. Possibly Paul has in mind (cp. Hebrews 6:17f) the solemn oath in Genesis 22:16. The prefixed word 'before' emphasizes the fact that this confirmed covenant was earlier than 'the Law.'

Does not annul: an unchangeable principle. For God to attach to the promises, centuries after He had confirmed them by oath, an impracticable (Galatians 3:10) condition, would be in effect to set aside His own covenant.

In order to make-of-no-effect (see under Romans 3:3) the promise: the only conceivable purpose of God for annulling the covenant by adding a later and impossible condition, viz. to avoid fulfilling His own 'promise,' i.e. to make it practically inoperative. To denote a mere result, another familiar Greek phrase would have been used, as in 1 Corinthians 2:7; 5:1; 13:2. All inevitable results of God's action, being foreseen, are taken up

into His plan, and are therefore His definite purposes. Consequently, had God afterwards made His promises to Abraham conditional on obedience to the Law, He would have done so with a deliberate purpose of evading His own promises. For God to plot this, and to accomplish it by giving the Law at Sinai, is inconceivable.

**Ver. 18.** Explains how the Law, if it were a condition, would neutralise the promise.

The inheritance: the benefits to Abraham's children, bodily and spiritual, in virtue of their relation to him. It is a constant designation of the land of Canaan given to Israel as descendants of Abraham: Deuteronomy 4:38; 15:4; 19:10, etc. But Canaan was only an imperfect firstfruit of the infinite blessing which comes and will come to all 'who walk in the steps of the faith of their father Abraham.' Thus will he become (Romans 4:13) heir of the world.

By law: cp. Galatians 3:21: derived from a rule of conduct, i.e. by obeying it.

No longer: logical result, as in Romans 11:6; 7:17.

By promise: derived from an announcement of good things from God to us. As shown in Galatians 3:11, 12, these modes of derivation, viz. man's exact obedience to words of command, and God's fulfilment of His own promise, are utterly incompatible. We must therefore choose between them. Which alternative is the true one, the following historical statement determines.

By promise: more fully, 'by means of promise.' Before giving the inheritance God gave a promise, and made belief of it the condition of fulfilment. The promise was thus the instrument and channel 'through' which the inheritance came.

Graciously-gave it, or 'gave it as an act of grace': Romans 8:32; 1 Corinthians 2:12: akin to 'gift-of-grace,' in Romans 1:11; 5:15f, etc.; and to the word 'grace' in Galatians 1:3, 6, 15, etc. It suggests an argument. For the promises to Abraham were evidently undeserved favor. Therefore the inheritance does not come through law: for then (Romans 4:4f) it would be matter not of favor but of debt. [The Greek perfect directs attention to the

abiding results of God's word of grace to Abraham, reminding us that it created an era in his history and in that of the world. But since Paul refers to a definite event or events in the past, the use of English tenses requires the preterite. The R.V. 'hath granted it' does little or nothing to reproduce the force of the Greek perfect; and is very uncouth.]

## REVIEW

In proof that the benefits of the Gospel are obtained by faith and not by obedience to law, Paul has appealed to his readers' spiritual life, and has shown that it accords with the story of Abraham. Not otherwise can the blessings promised to Abraham's children be obtained: for the Law pronounces a universal curse, from which we are rescued only by the curse which fell upon Christ. Now if, hundreds of years after giving the promises and confirming them by a covenant, God had made their fulfilment conditional on obedience to law, He would have set aside His covenant, thus violating a recognised principle of human morality; in order to evade fulfilment of His promises. The evasion would be complete: for obedience as a condition of benefit is quite different from the undeserved favor manifested in God's promises to Abraham. This last verse opens a way for the argument of 13 which rests upon the total difference between law and promise.

Paul's appeal in Galatians 3:16 to a small grammatical distinction reveals his confidence that the Book of Genesis is a correct record of God's words to Abraham. His argument rests, however, not on one passage, but on an expression used some fifteen times and forming a conspicuous feature of the narrative. In this, Paul is a pattern to us. Appeal to general usage is the only safe method of Biblical theology. Moreover, the point in question is only a detail confirming an argument already conclusive, by an interesting coincidence which cannot be explained except on a principle involved in the argument. This allusion to a grammatical detail thus differs altogether from the childish word-play of the Jewish writers.

THE PRECISE STATEMENT of time in Galatians 3:17, 430 years, recalls Exodus 12:40, 41, where (and there only) the same period is given twice, yet not as the time from Abraham to the Exodus, as Paul here says, but as the duration of the sojourn in Egypt. This discrepancy is evidently derived from the LXX., which Paul usually quotes, and of which the Vat. MS. reads 'which they sojourned in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan,' while the Alex. MS. adds further 'they and their fathers.' With this last agrees the Samaritan Pentateuch. But the Hebrew text (given in the A.V.) is open to no doubt. For it is supported not only by the Peshito

Syriac and the Latin Vulgate but also by internal evidence: for the Vatican reading betrays a clumsy attempt to shorten the stay in Egypt, perhaps to bring it into harmony with the genealogy in Exodus 6:16-20; and the Alex. reading looks like a correction of the other. Moreover, it is much more natural, in reckoning the time of the departure from Egypt, to give the length of the sojourn there than the period elapsed since Abraham entered Canaan. It is also difficult to suppose that in Genesis 15:13 the 'land not theirs,' in which Israel was to dwell 400 years and which seems to be contrasted with the land promised to Abraham, includes both Egypt and Canaan, countries so different in their relation to Israel. The word rendered 'generation' in Genesis 15:16 is an indefinite term for a human life or the men living at one time, e.g. Numbers 32:13; and is different from the word used in Genesis 11:10, 27, etc. The shorter chronology seems to be supported by the genealogy in Exodus 6:16ff: but this is neutralised by the longer genealogies in Numbers 26:29; Joshua 17:3; Ruth 4:18ff; 1 Chronicles 2:5f; 2:18; 7:20ff. For it is more likely that names have fallen out of the shorter list than been inserted fictitiously into the longer one. Moreover, if taken as a complete list, Exodus 6:16-20 does not give the length of the stay in Egypt: for in this case the lives would overlap to an extent which is not specified, leaving us without any exact chronological data. The aggregate of these lives, viz. 487 years, rather suggests that they are in the main consecutive, and that these four lives represent the four centuries or generations which God foretold should live and be spent in Egypt. We find therefore no reason to suspect corruption in the plain historical statement of our best authority for the Old Testament, the Hebrew text.

The above discrepancy is found also in Josephus who in 'Antiq.' ii. 15. 2 follows the LXX. by interpreting the 430 years to include Abraham's sojourn in Canaan, yet in ch. 9. 1 and 'Wars' v. 9. 4 speaks of the bondage in Egypt as lasting 400 years.

Against the foregoing historical arguments the cursory allusion in Galatians 3:17 has no weight. About trifling discrepancies between the Hebrew and Greek texts, Paul probably neither knew nor cared. And they have no bearing whatever upon the all-important matter he has here in hand. He adopted the chronology of the LXX. with which alone his readers were



familiar; knowing, possibly, that if incorrect it was only an understatement of the case.

The above discussion warns us not to try to settle questions of Old Testament historical criticism by casual allusions in the New Testament. All such attempts are unworthy of scientific Biblical scholarship. By inweaving His words to man in historic fact, God appealed to the ordinary laws of human credibility. These laws attest, with absolute certainty, the great facts of Christianity. And upon these great facts, and on these only, rest both our faith in the Gospel and in God and the authority of the Sacred Book. Consequently, as I have endeavored to show in my 'Romans' Diss. i. and iii., our faith does not require the absolute accuracy of every historical detail in the Bible, and is not disturbed by any error in detail which may be detected in its pages. At the same time our study of the Bible reveals there an historical accuracy which will make us very slow to condemn as erroneous even unimportant statements of Holy Scripture. And, in spite of any possible errors in small details or allusions, the Book itself remains to us as, in a unique and infinitely glorious sense, a literary embodiment of the Voice and Word of God.

## SECTION 13

### *THE LAW WAS DESIGNED TO LEAD US TO FAITH IN CHRIST*

#### CHAPTER 3:19-24

*What then is the Law? For the sake of the transgressions it was added, until the Seed should come to whom the promise had been made; ordained by the agency of angels, in the hand of a mediator. But the mediator does not pertain to one person: and God is one person. The Law then is it against the promises of God? Far from it. For if there had been given a law able to give life, really from law would righteousness be. But the Scripture has shut up together all things under sin, that the promise may by belief of Jesus Christ be given to those who believe. But before that the belief came, we were kept in ward under law, being shut up together for the belief about to be revealed. So that the Law has become our tutor for Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

**Ver. 19.** After showing what ‘the Law’ is not, viz. a later-imposed condition practically annulling the earlier promise, Paul will now say ‘what’ it ‘is.’ And this is absolutely needful to his argument. For, indisputably, the Law holds an all-important place in the Old Covenant: and until this place be found we shall ever be in danger of misinterpreting its purpose. Paul asks, ‘since the inheritance is not derived from a rule of conduct, ‘what then’ is the meaning and aim of ‘the Law?’” To this question, 13 is the answer. Cp. Galatians 3:24.

It was added; recalls ‘adds conditions to,’ in Galatians 3:15, and reminds us that the Law was later than the promises, and suggests that it was subordinate to them.

For-the-sake-of: a general term noting any kind of motive, something either existing or thought of; cp. Titus 2:11; Jude 16. Grammatically it might mean ‘because of the sins committed before the giving of the Law’; or perhaps, ‘in order to restrain sin in the future.’ But these senses are foreign

to the context. Paul's meaning is expounded, and his teaching here completed, in Galatians 3:22; and in Romans 5:20, which teaches that the Law was given in order that it might be broken, that thus the previous moral fall of Adam might multiply into many breaches of a written law. And this meaning is confirmed by the word 'transgressions,' which denotes (Romans 4:15) violations of actual commands. To men born in the power of sin and therefore unable to obey, God gave a law. The only possible result was disobedience; which, since it was inevitable and foreseen, must have been taken up by God into His plan, and in this sense designed by Him. Paul speaks therefore of 'the' various subsequent 'transgressions,' which were a definite object of God's thought, as being His motive for giving the Law. The ultimate purpose of blessing behind this immediate purpose is stated in Galatians 3:22 and in Romans 5:21.

Until the Seed, etc.: a second detail about the Law, and another mark of its subordinate position. It was an addition; and was only for a time. Cp. Galatians 3:25.

The Seed: Christ, as declared in Galatians 3:16.

To whom the promise had been made: Greek perfect as in Galatians 3:18. His coming gave birth to, and He was thus practically identical with, the many nations of Abraham's spiritual children; in whom were fulfilled the promises to his seed, and whom God had specially in view when giving these promises. And their fulfilment involves the establishment of Christ's kingdom. Consequently, the promises given to Abraham and designed to be fulfilled in those who in after-ages should believe the Gospel, were designed also for Christ.

Ordained by the agency of angels: a third detail about the Law, revealing its importance as superhuman. Paul thus, as his wont is, pays it due honor. But even these words of honor place the Law below the Gospel. Same teaching in Acts 7:53, words heard probably by Paul before his conversion; and in Hebrews 2:2, where the Law is contrasted with the Gospel. That it was common among the Jews, we infer from Josephus, 'Antiq.' bk. xv. 5. 3, "We have learnt from God by the agency of angels the best of the decrees and the most sacred of the things in the Law"; and from Philo, vol. ii. 642, "Angels announced the commands of the Father to His children." All this proves how firmly in Paul's day both Jews and

Christians held that the Law of Moses was given by angels. Yet of a plurality of angels at the giving of the Law the only mention is Deuteronomy 33:2, which we may perhaps render, 'Jehovah came from Sinai... He drew near from multitudes of holiness,' as though, surrounded by armies of the holy ones of heaven God proclaimed the Law. This the LXX. render 'with myriads of Kadesh, from His right hand angels with Him.' Cp. Psalm 68:17, 'The chariots of God are multitudes, thousands twice-told: the Lord is among them: a Sinai in holiness.' But these two ambiguous passages hardly account for definite teaching so widely accepted. Its source is rather the frequent mention of an angel as the medium through which God spoke to Moses. So Exodus 3:2; 23:20; 33:2; Numbers 20:16: cp. Acts 7:30, 'there appeared to him an angel in a flame of fire' Acts 7:35, 38, 53. This derivation is not disproved by the plural number, 'angels:' for this merely leaves undetermined whether the angel of the Lord was always the same heavenly person, and asserts in general terms that the Law of Moses was given by angelic agency. And this general statement is sufficient to prove the infinite importance of the Law.

That the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament was the pre-existent Son of God, was held by the earliest fathers. So Justin ('Dialogue with Trypho,' 56ff) argues at length; and Tertullian, 'Against Marcion' bk. ii. 27, iii. 9. But of this opinion we can find no trace in the New Testament: and, had it been true, it could hardly have been passed over in silence. Indeed, had the Angel in the burning bush and the pillar of cloud been immediately the Son of God, then by Him was the Law spoken at Sinai: and, if so, Paul's words here would fall so far below the truth that we cannot conceive him using them. And the argument of Hebrews 2:1ff would be invalid. Accordingly, Augustine ('On the Trinity' bk. iii. 11. 22f, 27) argues forcefully that through a created angel God appeared and spoke to Moses. So Jerome on Galatians 3:19, and other later writers. And this seems the best explanation. In Daniel 12:1; 10:13 we find Michael, one of the chief angel-princes or archangels, who cannot well be other than a created angel, standing in special relation to Israel. This suggests that possibly he led Israel in the wilderness.

That God spoke to Israel His Law through a created angel, foreshadowed the day when through the face and lips of the Eternal Son, incarnate, God showed Himself and spoke to, and dwelt among, men. And this is the true

relation between the Angel of the Lord and the Son of God. The one was forerunner of the other. Moreover, whatever God does visibly He does through the Son. Mediatly, therefore, through the Son, God spoke the Law to Israel.

A fourth detail about ‘the Law.’

A mediator: Moses, who received from God through the agency of the angel the various commands of the Law.

In the hand of: common Hebrew phrase for agency; so Numbers 4:37, 45, cp. Acts 7:35. But it reminds us that ‘in’ the very ‘hand’ of Moses (cp. Exodus 32:15) were brought down from Sinai the tables of stone which were the noblest part, and a visible and permanent embodiment, of the Law. Cp. Leviticus 26:46: ‘the Laws which Jehovah gave between Himself and the sons of Israel in Mount Sinai in the hand of Moses.’

Mediator: once in the LXX., Job 9:33. By Philo, Moses is twice called ‘a mediator:’ vol. ii. 642 referring to Exodus 20:19, and vol. ii. 160 referring to Exodus 32:7. It reminds us that, not only did God select Moses to be His means of communicating with Israel, but that (Exodus 20:19) he was requested by Israel to be such, and that through him the people promised (Exodus 19:8; 24:3) to obey the commands of God. Thus in every sense Moses was ‘a mediator’ through whom was negotiated the Covenant of God with Israel.

Led astray by 1 Timothy 2:5 and Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24. Origen and most of the Fathers understood the mediator to be Christ. But He was mediator of a Better Covenant. This mistake warns us not to accept as decisive the united judgment of even the greatest of the Fathers. We have means and methods of research unknown to them.

**Ver. 20-21a.** An objection provoked by the word ‘mediator,’ and noted here in order to be overturned by, and thus to prompt, a further exposition of the purpose of the Law.

The mediator: any mediator, but looked upon as embodying and representing a definite conception. Hence the article.

Does not belong to one: the very conception involving two contracting parties, each of whom is bound by the contract. ‘In the hand of a mediator.

Yes. And this implies that by the Old Covenant more than ‘one person’ was bound; i.e. someone else besides ‘God’ who ‘is’ only ‘one person.’ Thus the obligation accepted by Israel at Sinai, which seemed to be overlooked in the argument of Galatians 3:17, is silently brought before us, that the doubt thus suggested may be dispelled. The obscurity of Galatians 3:20 no loss. For it is not a link in the argument; but merely suggests the important objection stated in Galatians 3:21a, which is overturned in Galatians 3:21b, 22, viz., ‘the Law then,’ is it ‘against the promises of God?’ The reply to this objection completes the answer to ‘what then is the Law?’ in Galatians 3:19.

Since the Law was an engagement binding not only God but another party, viz. Israel, it might be thought that this engagement would limit, and thus practically set aside, ‘the’ earlier ‘promises’ to Abraham. If so, it would be against the promises of God. This question Paul answers by an indignant negative; and supports his denial by completing in 22 his exposition of the purpose of the Law.

Of the New Covenant Christ is mediator, inasmuch as through Him God draws us to Himself. But Christ was not, as Moses was, requested by men to be a medium of communication between them and God. Consequently, he was not a mediator in the same sense as Moses, But to any contrast between them there is no reference here.

An account of the many expositions of Galatians 3:20 is given in the commentary of Meyer. See additional note on p. xxiii.

**Ver.** 21b-22. Proof that the Law is not ‘against the promises.’ According to Paul’s wont, the weight of the proof rests on the second clause, viz. Galatians 3:22,

that the promise may be given, etc.; for which Galatians 3:21b prepares the way.

Give-life: same word in Romans 4:17; 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 36, 45; 2 Corinthians 3:6; John 5:21; 6:63. It denotes here eternal ‘life.’ This is the ultimate design of the Law, Romans 7:10: and in Galatians 3:22 we shall see the design accomplished. But that the ‘Law’ is not of itself ‘able to give life,’ Paul proves by saying that this would involve ‘righteousness

actually' derived 'from law,' which in Galatians 3:10-13 he has shown to be impossible. He thus introduces suitably the real purpose of the Law. It is not 'able to give life' because (Romans 8:3) it is 'weak through the flesh.'

Righteousness: as in Galatians 2:21. It is the opposite of 'under a curse' In Galatians 3:10.

The Scripture: or rather 'the portion of Scripture;' see under Galatians 3:8. It is the literary embodiment of the Law. So suitable here is Deuteronomy 27:26, quoted in Galatians 3:10, that we cannot but think that to this passage specially Paul refers. The Scripture is personified as in Galatians 3:8, to enable us to realise its tremendous power.

Shut-up-together: same word, and a close parallel, in Romans 11:32.

All things: probably 'all men,' cp. Romans 11:32; for they only can 'sin.' Cp. 1 Corinthians 1:27f. The neuter looks upon men in the aggregate as an abstract idea.

Under sin: Romans 3:9: under its curse and penalty and power, and these looked upon as a burden from above pressing all men down. As Paul read Deuteronomy 27:26, the very words of Scripture seemed to bar irresistibly every way of escape from the deadly bondage of sin. For its words made him powerless to obtain, by anything he could do, the favor of God. See under Galatians 3:8.

That the promise, etc.: ultimate purpose of the Law in shutting up all things under sin. It expounds, in answer to the question in Galatians 3:21, the relation of the Law to the promises, looking at these as one whole, as 'the promise.'

May-be-given: i.e. may be fulfilled, which alone remains to be done. So Hebrews 10:36; 11:39. This promise includes virtually (cp. Galatians 3:14) the Holy Spirit and all the blessings of the New Covenant.

By belief of the words of Jesus Christ: as in Galatians 3:16. It is thrown forward for emphasis. To them that believe: emphatic repetition cp. Romans 3:22. Believers are the recipients, and their faith the immediate source, of the blessings. It is conceivable that even believers might receive them from some other source, e.g. observance of ritual.

The question in Galatians 3:19 is now answered. God gave a law which was powerless to save inasmuch as men were unable to obey it, a law which pronounced a curse upon all who did not obey it, in order to force men to seek and to obtain, by simple belief, the blessings promised by God to Abraham. Consequently, the Law is not 'against,' but subservient to, 'the promises of God.' A practical outworking of this divine purpose in the spiritual life of Paul is recorded in Galatians 2:16.

**Ver. 23.** Restatement of Galatians 3:22, in another form preparing a way for 14. 'Faith' (literally 'the faith') 'came,' when belief of the good tidings of salvation proclaimed by Christ entered into the hearts of men. For then 'faith,' i.e. assurance that God will fulfil His word, assumed in their thought a new and definite form as the abiding channel of spiritual life. Hence practically 'faith came' when the Gospel came. But the argument suggests the former expression as the more suitable note of time.

**Kept-in-ward:** 2 Corinthians 11:32; Philippians 4:7; 1 Peter 1:5: a military term denoting both the closing of all way of escape and protection against enemies.

**Under law:** the abstract principle of treating men according to their actions, (hence no article,) looked upon as an irresistible power under whose authority Paul and his readers were once held in guard. Doubtless he thought chiefly of the Mosaic Law, in which this principle assumed historic form. But these words are true also of the law (Romans 2:15) written on the heart; and therefore include all readers, Jews or Gentiles.

**Being-shut-up:** Greek present passive; as though each moment at the bidding of the Law every way of escape was being closed. It defines 'kept-in-ward;' and links Galatians 3:23 to Galatians 3:22. For, to be shut up under law, is, since we cannot obey it, to be shut up under sin. Contrast Romans 6:14.

**For the faith, etc.:** purpose for which every way of escape was each moment closed: and therefore parallel with Galatians 3:22b.

**Revealed:** Galatians 1:16: specially appropriate because faith is matter of immediate consciousness; which is implied in this word. See under Romans 1:17. The Gospel unveiled, not merely the truths therein set forth, but a new conception of confidence in the promises of God. And in order that



we may have this conception of faith we were formerly held in prison under the irresistible rule of law.

**Ver. 24.** Summing up of 13, and especially of Galatians 3:22, 23.

The Law: of Moses. But, in less degree, this is true of the law written on the heart.

Tutor, or ‘guardian’: 1 Corinthians 4:15: one who takes charge of children under seven years old, usually a slave. Cp. Plato, ‘Lysis’ p. 208c: “Who rules thee? This tutor. Indeed, a slave!... Strange that one who is free be ruled by a slave! But, what doing, does the tutor rule thee? Leading me to the teacher’s house.”

For Christ: purpose for which ‘the Law has become our tutor,’ viz. that, instead of wandering elsewhere, we should come to Christ and belong to Him. That Paul thinks of ‘Christ,’ not as a teacher, as the word ‘tutor’ naturally suggests, but as a means of justification, the following words show.

That we might, etc.: parallel with ‘for Christ,’ and supplementing it. We were placed in helpless bondage under the iron rule of law, that for us there might be no way of escape except by coming to Christ to ‘be justified through faith.’ Cp. Galatians 2:16. SECTION 13 is an important addition to the teaching about the Law in Romans 5:20. See note under Romans 8:11. The Law was given in order to reveal to us our utter moral helplessness and ruin, to destroy all hope of self-wrought salvation, and thus to drive us to Christ for help and to prepare us to accept in sheer desperation justification as God’s gift on the simple condition of faith. Notice carefully that the immediate moral purpose of the Law to hold men back from sin, which must have been in God’s thought when giving it, is by Paul completely subordinated to this ultimate evangelical purpose. To him the Law is only a preparation for the Gospel. This reveals his deep conviction of the powerlessness of mere morality to secure man’s highest interests, and of the infinitely greater importance of the new life proclaimed in the Gospel. With Paul, Christian morality is derived (Galatians 5:14) from the law of love accomplished in us by (Galatians 5:16) the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

## SECTION 14

### *BY FAITH WE ARE IN CHRIST, HEIRS OF ABRAHAM*

#### CHAPTER 3:25-29

*But, faith having come, no longer are we under a tutor. For ye all are sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For so many of you as have been baptized for Christ have put on Christ. There is no Jew nor Greek; there is no servant nor freeman; there is no male and female. For ye all are one person in Christ Jesus. But if ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise.*

In conspicuous contrast to the reign of law before faith came, Paul describes in Galatians 3:25-28 his readers' changed position now; and in Galatians 3:29 their consequent relation to Abraham and to the promise made to him.

**Ver. 25.** The change which followed the arrival of faith.

Under a tutor; links the metaphor of Galatians 3:24 to the words 'under law' in Galatians 3:23.

**Ver. 26.** Proof of the foregoing statement.

All: an emphatic breaking down of the distinction (Galatians 3:28) of Jew and Gentile which the false teachers were so anxious to maintain. Note the change from 'we' and 'our' in Galatians 3:23-25, which refer chiefly to Jews who had the Law of Moses, to 'ye' in Galatians 3:26-29, which embraces Paul's Gentile readers as sharers of the blessings about to be described.

Sons of God: Romans 8:14. Paul's argument assumes that this title is inconsistent with being 'under a tutor.' And, since the word 'son' is in itself by no means inconsistent with being under a tutor but rather the reverse, this assumed inconsistency reveals the theological definiteness, in Paul's thought, of the term 'sons of God' denoting a relation to God

incompatible with bondage to law. See further under Galatians 4:5, 7. This incompatibility, and that this sonship is 'through faith,' imply that not all men are in this sense 'sons of God.' So always in the New Testament. See my 'Romans,' p. 239: cp. John 2:12.

In Christ Jesus; might be joined to 'faith,' as in Ephesians 2:15; 1 Timothy 3:13; 2 Timothy 2:13; 3:15. But, if so, the addition of these words hardly adds to the sense. And, that they contain a new and independent thought, is suggested by the word Christ, at the end of Galatians 3:27 and Galatians 3:28. So the R.V. By means of our faith and in virtue of union with Christ who is the only-begotten Son of God, we are ourselves 'sons of God.' Of this great privilege Hosea 2:10, quoted in Romans 9:26, is a remarkable prophecy.

**Ver. 27.** Proof of the whole statement in Galatians 3:26.

So-many-as, covers 'all;' baptized, covers 'by faith;' put-on Christ, covers 'sons of God in Christ Jesus.'

Baptized for Christ: the formal and visible gate into the Christian life, designed to lead to a new relation to Christ. See under Romans 6:3.

Put-on Christ: so that the nature and disposition and relations of Christ are like a garment enwrapping us on every side. See under Romans 13:14; and cp. Job 29:14, 'I put on righteousness; and it clothed me. Like a robe and turban was my justice.' So Job 8:22; 39:19, etc. Objectively, they had already at their baptism put on Christ. For by thus publicly avowing faith in Him they had fulfilled a condition of the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to obtain these blessings; and had thus made them their own. Now the New Covenant makes us sharers of all that Christ has and is.

Consequently, since He is Son of God, and the 'baptized have put on Christ,' they also 'are sons of God in Christ.' Subjectively, Paul bids his readers (in Romans 13:14) put on Christ, i.e. appropriate to themselves Christ's moral disposition, which was already theirs at baptism by a right given to them in the undeserved favor of God.

This argument implies that all Paul's readers were baptized; and that their baptism was an expression of faith, so that what the baptized possess as such they have obtained by faith. Cp. Colossians 2:12: 'wherein also ye were raised with Him by faith.' Paul thus, as in Galatians 3:3-5,

courteously assumes the genuineness of their Christian profession, and appeals to their entrance into the Christian life. Any false brethren among them are here left out of account.

Since Galatians 3:26, 27 cannot apply to infants, and indeed would hardly have been written had many of Paul's readers been baptized in infancy, it is utterly unfair to infer, from the spiritual significance here attributed to the baptism of believers, that similar spiritual results are wrought in baptized infants. For the baptism of a believer is an outward expression of a great spiritual and personal crisis in his inner life: whereas an infant's personal life has not yet begun. This difference bars all argument from the one to the other. Consequently, this passage and others similar have no bearing on the regeneration of infants in baptism. The inward and spiritual benefits of baptism are, by those baptized in infancy, obtained actually and personally only when the baptized one claims them by personal faith in, and confession of, Christ, thus joining the company of His professed followers.

**Ver. 28a.** In the embrace of Christ as the encompassing element of life, fade all earthly distinctions, nationality, social position, and even sex. Similar thought in Colossians 3:11; Romans 10:12; 1 Corinthians 12:13. The changed form 'male and female' marks off this distinction from the others. And we remember that it was earlier than sin. Yet as we come to Christ even sex vanishes: and without distinction men and women of every rank and nationality receive in Him the same spiritual blessings.

Only to sex as affecting our relation to Christ does this assertion apply. It therefore does not absolutely deny the distinction of sex in man's future glory. And, that it belongs to man's original constitution, suggests strongly that even sex will share that glory. We can well conceive that, just as the happiness of many families on earth is increased immensely by the mutual influence of brothers and sisters, so it will be in the great family above. Paul's prohibition (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:12) to women to speak in the Church proves that in this relation also, in his view, the distinction of sex continues.

**Ver. 28b.** Broad foundation principle of the foregoing assertions.

All ye: still more emphatic than the appeal in Galatians 3:26; recalling the varieties of Paul's readers.

Are one person: cp. Ephesians 2:15. It makes prominent that our relation to Christ is that of living persons. Contrast 'are one thing' in 1 Corinthians 3:8; 11:5; John 17:11, 21-23; where personality is left out of sight, and men and even the Father and Son are looked upon merely as abstract objects of thought.

One-person: not identity, but the strongest description possible of absolute identity of relation; which, in the Father and Son, and in us so far as Christ's purpose is realized, finds its consummation in absolute harmony.

In Christ: John 17:21, 23: i.e. through the objective facts of Jesus, and through spiritual union with Him. This repetition of the last words of Galatians 3:26 marks the completion of the argument there begun. 'Ye are no longer in bondage: for ye are all sons of God, a position incompatible with bondage: for the life ye entered at baptism is union with Christ, who is Son of God. And in union with Him all earthly distinctions fade.'

**Ver.** 29. Leads up the argument of 13, 14 to the chief matter of Gal. 3, the promises to Abraham and his seed.

Ye are Christ's: 1 Corinthians 3:23; 15:23; Romans 14:8. They who have put on Christ themselves belong to Him.

Then are ye, etc.: logical inference, Since all the Galatian Christians are in Christ and are thus in: some sense one person, and so belong to Christ and are in some sense a part of Christ; and since (as proved in Galatians 3:13, 16) the seed for which the promise to Abraham was made is coextensive with Christ, Paul infers that his readers also are included in Abraham's seed.

Heirs according to promise: practical significance of the foregoing. What the heritage is, we learn from 'sons of God' in Galatians 3:26. Cp. Romans 8:17.

Promise; recalls the whole argument of Galatians 3:14-29.

According to promise: the mode and kind of heirship, viz. in virtue of an announcement of Coming benefit. Paul has no need to say that he refers to the promises to Abraham. He therefore speaks merely of 'promise' in the abstract. The word 'heirs' which in Greek closes the verse opens a way for 15.

In SECTION 14 Paul describes his readers' present position, after describing in 13 their former state. They are no longer under any kind of restraint, and therefore not under the Law. For, by faith and in virtue of their union with Christ, they enjoy the glorious position of sons of God. For when they entered the Church of Christ they assumed His position and rights. In relation to Him all human relations vanish. For, in Christ, the many members of His Church become only one person. And, since they belong to Him in whom are fulfilled the promises made to Abraham's seed, themselves are heirs on the basis of divine promise

## SECTION 15

### ***PUPILAGE IS PAST; AND WE HAVE RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION***

#### **CHAPTER 4:1-7**

*But I say that for so long time as the heir is a child he differs nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the father's predetermined time. So also we, when we were children, were under the rudiments of the world, held in bondage. But when the fulness of the time came God sent forth his Son, born from woman, born under law, that He might buy off those under law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons God sent forth the Spirit of The Son into our hearts crying Abba, Father. So that no longer art thou a servant but a son: and, if a son, also an heir through God.*

In, 13 Paul taught that by giving the Law God imposed a temporary bondage on those who afterwards became His sons and heirs of Abraham. His justification of this remarkable assertion, he postpones to 15; eager to describe at once, in 14, for the sake of contrast, his reader's subsequent and present position of honor. That this previous temporary bondage is not inconsistent with their present position, he shows in Galatians 4:1-3; and in Galatians 4:4-7 supplements his description in 14 of this position by recording the two great events which have brought about the change. Thus Galatians 4:1-3 are parallel to 13; Galatians 4:4-7, to 14. To the preliminary description of men under the guardianship of law, the word 'heirs,' which concluded 14, is a convenient stepping stone.

**Ver. 1.** But I say; introduces a new point, as in Galatians 5:16; 3:17.

For so long time as: exact co-extension of time, as in Romans 7:1; 1 Corinthians 7:39.

Child: usually one under ten years old. Same word in 1 Corinthians 3:1; 13:11; Ephesians 4:14; Hebrews 5:13f; Romans 2:20; Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21.

Servant, or 'slave': see under Romans 1:1.

Lord: one having control over men or things, correlative to a 'servant' who is under the control of his Lord. Cp. Matthew 10:24f. Even if the father was still living 'the heir' was in some sense 'Lord of all,' as already possessing a relation to the father which will some day put the estate under his control. But the contrast between the child's apparent and virtual position is more conspicuous if we conceive the father to be dead. For then the estate has no owner except one who is himself under the control of others. And, that our Father in heaven ever lives, does not exclude this thought. For the analogy is quoted merely to show that outward dependence is consistent with real and great wealth.

## **Ver. 2.** Further description of the child's position.

Guardians: literally, men to whose care something or someone is committed. Same word in Matthew 20:8; Luke 8:3. It is a wider term than 'stewards,' which denotes (e.g. 1 Corinthians 4:1f; Romans 16:23) one who has charge of the property of another, in this case, that of the heir. This narrower sense of stewards suggests that 'guardians' refers chiefly to those in charge of the child himself. Whether in Roman law 'the father' could 'determine the time' when his heir should take possession, is immaterial. For Paul is now passing from the metaphor to its underlying reality. The son, although virtually possessing the whole estate, is under the control of others until a certain fixed time comes. Paul remembers that for us this was

the Father's predetermined time, i.e. a time fixed by our Father in heaven. Similarly, in English law a father can determine by will at what age his son shall receive from the trustees full control over the inheritance.

## **Ver. 3.** Application of the foregoing comparison.

Also we: as well as the heir to an estate. That both Jewish and Gentile readers are included, is made quite certain by Galatians 4:5 and Galatians 4:8, 9.



When we were children: as implied in the word ‘tutor’ in Galatians 3:24. It is the point of the foregoing comparison. Virtually it is explained and justified in the following words, which are evidence of spiritual childhood. In another sense, i.e. in contrast to the maturity of heaven, even believers (1 Corinthians 13:11) are ‘children.’

Rudiments, or ‘elements’: primarily, the letters of the alphabet; then the simplest component parts of the material world, as in 2 Peter 3:10, 12; Wisdom 7:17; 19:17, and especially earth, air, fire, water; then the simplest beginnings of any branch of knowledge, as in Hebrews 5:12. If we render ‘elements,’ then ‘the elements of the world’ (so Colossians 2:8, 20) will denote the constituent parts composing the material world around us. But this would give no sense consistent with Paul’s teaching. For unbelievers, though in bondage to the material world around them, are in no special bondage to its component parts. Consequently, the inserted word ‘elements’ would be meaningless. It remains therefore that here and in Colossians 2:8, 20 Paul thinks of ‘rudiments,’ i.e. of the simplest beginnings of spiritual education. So Hebrews 5:12. And, if so, since ‘the world’ cannot possibly be the entire lesson, of which ‘the rudiments’ are the beginning, these last words must be taken as conveying a complete idea, as in Galatians 4:9; and ‘of the world’ must denote the matter of which ‘the rudiments,’ these simplest beginnings, consist. The material world, with its various material objects, was the great lesson-book of pictures laid open by the great Father before the eyes of the infant human race, that men might read therein His name, and to some extent His nature and His will concerning them. Even to the heathen God revealed Himself (Romans 1:20) through the material world; and thus laid a foundation of moral obligation. And God’s revelation to Israel was conveyed through material objects, viz. the holy things of the Old Covenant. For this reason, the worship both of Jews and Gentiles took a material form. And since, by God’s design, both heathenism and Judaism were on their better sides a preparation for the Gospel, Paul embraces them here, overlooking for the moment their vast differences, under this one designation. The writings of Greece and Rome reveal some progress in these rudiments of religion. All this is not disproved by Paul’s description of idolatry, on its worse side, as (1 Corinthians 10:20) a worship of demons and as hostile to the Gospel. For in Galatians 4:10 even the divinely-ordained Mosaic ritual is treated as

apostacy; and frequently those who claimed for it continued validity are denounced in strongest terms. And this we can understand. For they who place above and against the perfect teaching of Christ the rudimentary teaching of material forms pervert into positive error even divinely-given truth.

Since, both in Jews and Gentiles, these rudiments of religion assume the form of law, i.e. of a rule of conduct with rewards and punishments, they were a superior power ‘under’ which in earlier ages our race lay, against which there was no rising up, and from which no escape.

Held-in-bondage: graphic description, expounding the word ‘under;’ cognate to ‘servant’ in Galatians 4:1. It recalls Galatians 3:22. The rudimentary teaching given to Jews and Gentiles in material forms belonging to the world around reveals God’s will that we obey Him, and the penalty awaiting disobedience; and, by prompting efforts after obedience, reveals our powerlessness to obey, and the presence of a power hostile to God forcing us to sin and from which we cannot free ourselves. Hence all who have only this rudimentary teaching are ‘held-in-bondage:’ for they cannot do what their best judgment approves. This idea of ‘bondage’ will be more fully developed in 18.

That, in contrast to the saved, the unsaved are here called ‘children,’ and that they are placed by ‘the Father’ under a tutor, implies that they stand in special relation to Him, and indeed in some sense are already His sons. For it is a man’s own sons whom he puts under a tutor. This relation of all men to God rests upon their creation and the death of Christ for all men. We must therefore not think that our faith evokes God’s paternal love to us. That love rested on us before time began; and manifested itself in the death of Christ for us even when we were sinners. Yet, in the New Testament, believers and no others are called (Galatians 3:26, Romans 8:14; John 1:12) sons of God. This limitation was probably designed to warn us that they who reject Christ are in a real sense, and unless saved by faith will be in every sense, outside the family of God.

**Ver. 4-7.** Two facts, one (Galatians 4:4f) historical and one (Galatians 4:6) spiritual which have put an end to the pupilage and bondage just described and brought about (Galatians 4:7) the happy state depicted in 14.

**Ver. 4.** The word rendered 'time,' (same word in Galatians 4:1,) which differs from that in Ephesians 1:10, suggests the long delay of Christ's coming.

The fulness of the time: as though a long space were marked out to be filled up by successive moments. Cp. Mark 1:15; Luke 21:24; John 7:8; Genesis 29:21. It was 'the Father's predetermined time.' On what principles this space of time was marked out, Paul does not say. But doubtless the purpose of the delay was that the Law written on the hearts of men and on the tables of stone might have full scope, and thus prove itself powerless to save and in this way reveal man's helpless bondage under sin; and that human nature might have time and opportunity to put forth all its powers, under the influence of law more or less fully understood, and thus find out its inability to attain for itself happiness. When Christ came, the civilisation and religious teaching of the ancient world were utterly worn out; and in spite of them society was rapidly sinking into ruin.

Sent forth; recalls the surroundings from the midst of which, and away from which, Christ came to earth.

His Son: as in Romans 1:3; 8:3. That this title is used here as a sufficient designation of Christ, implies that it belongs to Him in a unique sense, i.e. that He holds a relation to the Father shared by none else. See my 'Romans' Diss. i. 7. And, since this august title is evidently chosen to mark the dignity of Him whom 'God sent forth,' it implies the pre-existence of Christ. This proof is not invalidated by John 1:6, which certainly does not imply the preexistence of John: for these very different words are fully accounted for by John's designation from birth for a special office: cp. Luke 1:15; Jeremiah 1:5.

Born from woman: bodily derivation of the earthly life into which God sent His Son. It is similar to, but wider than, Romans 1:3: see notes.

Under law: Galatians 4:21; 5:18; Romans 6:14; 1 Corinthians 9:20. Christ entered by birth a state of subjection to a prescribed rule of conduct. By being born a Jew, He took upon Himself the obligation to keep, in every sense, the Law of Moses; and accepted obedience to law as the condition of the approval of God.

**Ver. 5.** Purpose for which Christ was born under obligation to keep law.

Those under law: the Jews. A close verbal and real parallel is in 1 Corinthians 9:20, where a servant imitates His Master. In a wider yet correct sense all men are under law. For all are subject (Romans 2:14) to a rule of conduct by which they will be judged. Actually, those under obligation to keep the Law are also under its curse. For, all men have broken the Law. From this curse, Christ came to 'buy' us 'off,' (same word in Galatians 3:13,) by Himself enduring it. This purpose implies that Christ's assumed obligation to keep the Law, and therefore His perfect obedience, were needful for man's deliverance from the penalty of sin, i.e. needful to reconcile (Romans 3:26) his deliverance with God's justice. It thus involves the active obedience of Christ as an essential element of man's salvation. But this element Paul does not make prominent. He attributes salvation, always to the death, never to the obedient life, of Christ.

The adoption: literally 'the son-making,' the act in which God makes us His sons. See my 'Romans' p. 238.

Receive; reminds us that this act of God is an enrichment to us.

We: not emphatic, yet reminding us that 'the adoption' is for both born Jews and Paul's Gentile readers. This further purpose implies that only those bought off from the curse of the Law can 'receive the adoption,' i.e. that this curse excludes from the family of God. It gives also the ultimate object of the mission of the Son, which is not negative, i.e. to save us from death, but positive, i.e. to bring us to God. In order that we might enter His family, God sent His Son to liberate us, at the cost of His own life, from the penalty of the broken Law. Cp. Galatians 3:13, 14.

**Ver. 6.** A spiritual event in the hearts of Paul's readers analogous to, and consequent upon, the above historical event.

Ye are sons: as already stated in Galatians 3:26. This implies that the purpose of the sending of the Son, stated in Galatians 4:5, has been actually accomplished. And, 'because' to be 'sons' of God and yet not have 'the Spirit of His Son' would be incongruous, 'God sent-forth, etc'. Notice the stately parallel of Galatians 4:4 and 6: cp. Romans 1:3, 4.

The Spirit of His Son: so 'Spirit of Christ,' Romans 8:9; 1 Peter 1:11. An uncommon term, yet easily understood. For, that the Spirit is sent both by (John 14:26, 15:26) the Son and the Father, suggests His similar relation to the Father and the Son. And the analogy of our own spirit in 1 Corinthians 2:11 suggests that the Son, like the Father, sends forth, in the person of the Holy Spirit, the animating principle of His own divine life to be the animating principle of His servants' life. Thus the presence of the Spirit is virtually the presence of Christ Himself within us: Romans 8:9f; Ephesians 3:17; John 14:18. That this animating principle is a Person distinct from the Son and the Father, (see under 1 Corinthians 12:11,) belongs to the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

Sent forth: or 'has-sent forth'. The Greek tense does not suggest, as does the English preterite, some definite time, e.g. Pentecost. By personal faith (Galatians 3:26) Paul's readers became 'sons' of God; and, 'because' of this, received 'the Spirit of His Son.' The Spirit, thus received, works a new birth: John 3:5. Consequently, the recipients are born from God: 1 John 3:9; 5:1, 18; James 1:18; cp. 1 Peter 1:23. But of this new birth Paul speaks only in the casual reference in Titus 3:5. He attributes the new life directly to the presence and activity of the Spirit: Galatians 5:16ff. Since the Spirit is the source of this cry, He is said Himself to cry: cp. Romans 8:26. So do evil spirits, in Matthew 8:31. Since men are the mouthpiece of the cry, it is also attributed to them: 'in whom we cry,' Romans 8:15.

Abba, Father: see under Romans 8:15. The Eternal Son, as He looks at God, cries 'Father.' This cry the Spirit of the Son, sent forth by God, puts into the hearts of His people. And, while they utter it, they are conscious that their own cry is the voice in them of the Spirit of the Son of God. This inward voice is thus a proof to them that they are sons of God. See under Romans 8:17.

**Ver. 7.** Logical result of Galatians 4:6.

No longer: in contrast to Galatians 4:3. Although, as doing the work of God, we are (see under Romans 1:1) His servants, yet the word 'servant' is 'no longer' an accurate description of our position. The servant has become an adopted 'son.' And, to be 'a son,' is to be 'also an heir.' In Roman law the adopted sons of an intestate father shared his property equally with the born sons. And they who believe in Christ will enjoy for

ever, in virtue of their relation to God, His infinite wealth. So Romans 8:17.

Through God, or ‘by the agency of God’: cp. Galatians 1:1, ‘through God, the Father, who raised, etc.:’ and see notes. By sending His Son that we might receive the adoption, and by sending the Spirit of His Son to assure us of this, God is not only the ultimate source but Himself an immediate agent of our heirship.

The apparent contradiction between ‘no longer a servant’ and Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 7:22 results from the weakness of human language to set forth the many-sided truths of God; and warns us to use the utmost caution in interpreting solitary statements in the Bible. Neglect of this has given rise to innumerable and serious errors. Fortunately the chief doctrines of the New Testament are stated so frequently that, as here, one statement supplies the imperfection of another.

SECTION 15 completes Paul’s teaching about the sons of God, teaching very conspicuous in Romans and Galatians but elsewhere rare (2 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 1:5; Philippians 2:15) with Paul. It is very similar to John 1:12; 1 John 3:1f, and akin to Christ’s words in Matthew 5:45; Luke 20:36, and to His frequent teaching that God is our Father. We are said to be His children, not by creation but by adoption through faith into His family. Before our faith we were in bondage. But this is not inconsistent with our present relation to God. For even a born son is, during his minority, in the position of a servant. To us now these days of servitude are past. So important in the eyes of God was our new relation to Him that to bring it about He sent forth from the glories of heaven His Eternal Son. And, to make the adopted sons like the Firstborn and to set an inward seal upon their adoption, God sent forth into their hearts the Spirit of His Son. So that now, by the immediate agency of God, we are His sons and heirs of His wealth.

## SECTION 16

### *THEN TURN NOT BACK TO THINGS LEFT BEHIND*

#### CHAPTER 4:8-11

*Nevertheless at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage to those who by nature are not gods. But now, having come to know God, or rather having become known by God, how are ye turning again to the weak and poor rudiments to which, beginning anew, ye wish to be again in bondage? Days ye observe, and months, and seasons, and years. I fear you, lest in any way I have in vain labored for you.*

Practical and personal application to the Galatian Christians, closing the argument introduced in Galatians 3:1.

**Ver.** 8-9. Startling and sad contrast to Galatians 4:7. The contrast is to be sought, not in the bygone detail ‘ye were servants,’ but in ‘turning back again to the rudiments,’ which is the chief matter of 16 and indeed (Galatians 1:6; 4:21; 5:4) of the whole Epistle, and which was actually going on as Paul wrote, in almost tragic contrast to Galatians 4:7. Paul might have said ‘nevertheless ye are turning back:’ but, as his manner (e.g. Romans 6:17; 8:15) was, he preludes his chief point by other matter which throws it into stronger relief. Then, after the interval thus caused, instead of an assertion, he puts in Galatians 4:9 his chief point in the form of an astonished question.

Not knowing God: 1 Thessalonians 4:5; John 17:25; contrast Romans 1:21. In each case the extent of the knowledge is determined by the context. The personal God who revealed Himself to Israel (Psalm 76:1) was not known, in the same sense, to the heathen. Yet they derived from Nature such knowledge of Him as should have prompted further search, and actually left them without excuse. On the other hand, only they who believe the Gospel, and in proportion to their faith, know God so as to rest and rejoice in Him. Cp. John 17:3. The heathens’ scantier opportunities of knowing God, as compared with the Jews’, were a

palliation of their service of idols: but this palliation 'at that time' aggravates by its absence 'now' the guilt of turning back to 'the' old 'rudiments' of heathenism.

Were-in-bondage or 'were-servants': same word in Galatians 4:25; 5:13; Romans 6:6; 7:6, 25; Ephesians 6:7. It involves the two ideas of doing work (cp. Galatians 5:13) for others and of being (cp. Galatians 4:25) under others' control. By performing the ritual of idolatry, the heathen acknowledged themselves to be servants under the control of their supposed deities. And whether idols be looked upon as mere images or as demons, idolatry is service and bondage to objects which 'by nature,' i.e. by their mode of existence, 'are no gods.' The word 'nature' (see under Romans 2:14) suggests the essential and infinite difference between 'God' and the 'no-gods.'

**Ver. 9.** But now; a marked feature of Paul's phraseology and thought, the contrast of past and present; see under Romans 6:22.

Having-come-to-know God: as implied in Galatians 4:6.

Known by God: see under 1 Corinthians 8:3. Paul remembers that the change has its ultimate source, not in the mind of man as though by his intelligence he had found out God, but in the mind of God who in mercy has looked upon man. Therefore, leaving out of sight for a moment God's eternal knowledge of all men, which lay at that time outside his readers' thought, Paul speaks here as though they had lately come within the embrace of this divine knowledge. They can now say, as once they never said, 'God knows me.'

How: as in Galatians 2:14: 'by what process is so remarkable a retrogression taking place?'

Are turning: the apostacy now going on, and therefore not yet complete. See under Galatians 1:6. Same word in 2 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:9: often used of turning to God, here the opposite.

Again; recalls Galatians 4:3.

Weak: unable to achieve results.

Poor: unable to enrich.



Again... again: emphatic reference to Galatians 4:3, reminding us that to go to the Law for salvation was to go again to something already tried and found unable to save.

Beginning-anew: as though recommencing the severe discipline of their spiritual childhood.

To-be-in-bondage: as in Galatians 4:8. Cp. Galatians 5:1. Since to seek salvation from law is essentially bondage, (for it is a vain effort to free ourselves from a terrible curse,) all desire for the Law as a means of salvation is practically a 'wish to be again in bondage to' it. Cp. Acts 15:10. And this practical result of the present conduct of the Galatian Christians reveals its folly. They deliberately prefer 'now' a path already tried, for which the only excuse 'at that time' was their then ignorance of God.

Paul assumes that both himself (Galatians 4:3) and his Gentile readers (Galatians 4:8, 9) were formerly under the same 'rudiments,' and in 'bondage' to them. This implies, not only that Judaism was powerless to save and to enrich, but that heathenism, as well as Judaism, was in some sense and measure a preparation for the Gospel. Heathen sages taught the great principles of right and wrong, and that God's favor was to be obtained only by doing right: and even the rites of heathenism, deeply corrupt as many of them were, contained elements expressive of man's felt need of salvation and of God. In other words, the Old Covenant did but reveal, with greater distinctness and depth and certainty, truths already revealed, in Nature and in the law written on the heart, to the nations around; and added to these moral truths a prophecy of future salvation of which only the faintest outline was known to the heathen world.

Consequently, to seek salvation by the Mosaic Covenant of works, was to go back, ignoring the noblest element in the earlier revelation, e.g. Genesis 15:6; Habakkuk 2:4; Jeremiah 31:31ff; Ezekiel 36:25ff, to that which in a lower degree heathenism had in common with Judaism, to that which both Jews and Gentiles had found unable to save them. That the Law is here called 'weak and poor.' (cp. Romans 8:3) does not deny its infinite worth as a means (Galatians 3:24) of leading men to Christ. Cp. Romans 7:12. It is good as a stepping stone to the Gospel; but is utterly ruinous when

chosen as a means of salvation in preference to the salvation proclaimed in the Gospel.

This assumption that to go to the Mosaic Law for salvation was a return to the moral powerlessness and poverty of heathenism, although perfectly true and embodying a principle of immense importance, helps to explain the intense hatred of the Jews to a teacher of Jewish race who used such words.

**Ver. 10.** Simple statement of fact. It explains and justifies the charge involved in the question of Galatians 4:9.

**Days:** cp. Romans 14:5: the weekly Sabbath; but including probably the great days (John 7:37; 19:31) of the yearly festivals. Cp. Colossians 2:16; where, in the inverse order of frequency, we have the weekly sabbath indisputably, the beginnings of months, and the yearly 'feasts.' It is thrown conspicuously forward to the beginning of Galatians 4:10, suggesting that these sacred 'days' were a chief feature of the Jewish ritual adopted by the Galatian Christians.

**Observe:** attend to them with scrupulous care. Same word in Josephus, 'Antiq.' bk. iii. 5. 5, "to observe the seventh days;" in reference to the fourth commandment.

**Months:** probably the new moons, which are constantly mentioned with the weekly Sabbath; Numbers 28:11; Isaiah 1:13; Hosea 2:11; 1 Chronicles 23:31, also Numbers 10:10; Psalm 81:3. Philo speaks (vol. ii. 286) of the seventh month as specially honored by containing "the greatest of feasts." But he says this chiefly to glorify the number seven. Moreover, this long festival is included in the 'seasons:' and the new moons, a conspicuous feature of Jewish ritual, are unmentioned unless referred to as 'months.' That only the beginnings of the 'months,' but the whole of the 'days' and 'seasons,' were sacred, is an unimportant difference.

**Seasons:** same word in Leviticus 23:4, introducing regulations for the Passover, Pentecost, and feast of Tabernacles. And to these feasts occupying several days, Paul probably refers here.

**Years:** the seventh Sabbatic year. The plural number, making the reference general, forbids us to infer that Paul wrote during a sacred year. He merely

says that, to observe the year when it came round, was part of his readers' Judaizing programme.

**Ver. 11.** Result, in Paul's heart, of the conduct described in Galatians 4:10. His own converts were objects filling him with 'fear.' For, their present conduct threatened to render fruitless his toil for them and thus to inflict upon him, eager for success, i.e. for their salvation, a severe blow. He was therefore in some sense at their mercy. This 'fear' reveals their tremendous danger and Paul's deep interest in them.

In-any-way: as in Galatians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 3:5. He thinks of the variety of ways in which his labors may become fruitless. The emphatic word is 'in-vain:' cp. Galatians 3:4. For the result is still contingent; whereas Paul's labors are already matter of fact, and therefore beyond reach of fear. [This explains sufficiently the perfect indicative, without supposing that Paul assumes that his fear is already realized.]

VERSE 10 is Paul's first plain statement of the nature of the incipient apostasy from which in this Epistle he seeks to recall his readers. Observance of the Jewish festivals and even of the Jewish Sabbath, though all these were ordained by God, is described as a turning back to the powerless rudiments of spiritual education and as a desire to return to bondage, and is said to inspire in Paul fear lest his labors for them be in vain. This reveals the vast issues at stake in this observance, and its tremendous significance. Evidently it implied that the Law of Moses was still binding as a condition, and therefore the only means of obtaining, the blessings of the New Covenant. This inference from the observance of Jewish ritual is plainly stated in Galatians 5:3. Cp. Acts 15:1, 5. It explains the question in Galatians 3:2, and the argument following; and is the only conceivable explanation of them.

This logical inference from these Jewish practices would produce various results in various persons. Since the Law contains moral precepts involving broad principles which reach to the inmost sources of human action, and thus reveals a morality far beyond reach of the best men who come to the Law for salvation, the result to earnest seekers would be a sense of condemnation deepening into despair. Of this, Paul had himself been an example: cp. Romans 7:24. Others would direct and limit their attention to those parts of the Law which seemed easy of fulfilment,

especially the details of its ritual, e.g. observance of sacred days. And on such observance they would rely for the favor of God, silencing the voice of conscience by increased punctiliousness in small details. Of this false reliance a lowered moral tone is an inevitable result. In each case the result would be subversive of the Gospel and of Christianity. Yet these sacred days were ordained by God, in order to prepare a way, both as means of spiritual education and by their felt inability to save, for the salvation revealed by Christ. To retrace our steps in the path of life, is the way to destruction.

In Acts 21:24 we find Paul himself doing that which in the Galatian Christians caused him so much fear. See Diss. i. 5. As a born Jew, to conciliate Jews and to avoid appearance of denying the divine origin of the Mosaic Law, Paul himself obeyed its requirements. But he taught strenuously that such observance was not needful for salvation, or in any way binding on Gentile converts. Thus Paul's conduct and teaching were consistent, although easily misunderstood and misrepresented.

## REVIEW OF 9-16, THE CENTRAL ARGUMENT OF THE EPISTLE

Some men in Galatia had taught that Christians are bound to be circumcised and to keep Jewish sacred seasons. Without discussing these details, Paul goes at once to a broad and erroneous principle underlying them, viz. that observance of the Law is still a condition of the favor of God. In disproof of this, he appeals to his readers' earlier Christian life which was derived, as memory testifies, not from obedience to law but from belief of a preached word. He asks whether a life begun by reception of the Spirit is to be perfected by ordinances pertaining to mere bodily life. With his readers' experience agrees the story of Abraham, who obtained by faith blessings for himself and promises for all nations. These promises are fulfilled in those who believe the Gospel, and in them only. For, on all who come to it for salvation the Law pronounces a curse. From this curse Christ bought us off, by Himself undergoing it, that by faith we might obtain the blessings promised to Abraham. if the Law be a condition of salvation, God has nullified His promises to Abraham by adding to them a later and impossible condition; which even human morality forbids. Paul notices incidentally that the heirs of the promises are uniformly designated by a word in the singular number, in close harmony with the fulfilment of these promises in Christ. The real purpose of the Law was to create in man consciousness of helpless bondage under the power of sin, in order to compel him to seek salvation by faith in Christ. The days of bondage are now past. By union with Christ we are sons of God, a relation in which all human distinctions fade; and heirs of Abraham's promises. The former days were the bondage of childhood: but now that the set time has come we are adopted sons of God; and, in token of this, God has put in our hearts the filial cry of His Firstborn Son. In view of all this, Paul asks why his readers wish to begin over again the discipline and bondage of their earlier days, and expresses a fear lest they will rob him of the fruits of his toil on their behalf.

THE weekly SABBATH is, as we have seen, included, and probably referred to specially, in the evidently sad statement of Galatians 4:10. This agrees with Colossians 2:16, where the 'Sabbath,' which must be chiefly the weekly rest, is joined to feasts and new moons and distinctions of food

as a matter in which sentence must not be pronounced upon Christians; and with Romans 14:5, where the superiority of one day above another is left an open question. The relation therefore of the Jewish Sabbath to Christianity demands our attention.

The word 'Sabbath' is an English form of a Hebrew word denoting always a sacred rest. The corresponding verb denotes sometimes simply to cease or rest, as in Genesis 8:22; Joshua 5:12; Jeremiah 31:36; Proverbs 22:10; Job 32:1; Nehemiah 6:3; and sometimes to keep a sacred rest, as in Genesis 2:2 'and He kept Sabbath on the seventh day from all His work which He did,' Exodus 16:30; 23:12; 34:21; Leviticus 23:32; 25:2.

Although there are several festal days in which 'servile work' was forbidden, e.g. Leviticus 23:7f, and in a few places, e.g. Leviticus 23:11, 15, these seem to be called Sabbaths or are indisputably called (so Leviticus 23:24) by the cognate name Shabbathon, yet the weekly Sabbath and the Day of Atonement are raised above all other 'days as (Leviticus 3, 31f) a cessation from all work and are designated by a special superlative name 'Sabbath of Sabbath-keeping' or 'Rest of Resting,' in A.V. 'Sabbath of Rest.' When not otherwise defined, the word 'Sabbath' is a sufficient and frequent designation of the weekly rest. Thus the usage of words gives to the seventh day a unique place of honor among the many sacred days of the Law of Moses.

Amid many other ordinances, the weekly Sabbath is very conspicuous as being the special sign of the Mosaic Covenant: Exodus 31:12-17; cp. Ezekiel 20:12. It thus takes in some sense the place of circumcision (Genesis 17:10-14) in the covenant with Abraham. The frequent and regular recurrence of the weekly rest made it a very appropriate test and visible expression of loyalty to the covenant with God.

Still further is the weekly Sabbath raised above all other ritual prescriptions by its place in the Decalogue, among commandments valid every one for all time and all men; and by being based in the Decalogue and in Genesis 2:3; Exodus 31:17 upon God's work in creation. Of the close relation of the Sabbath to moral precepts, Isaiah 56:1-6 affords remarkable proof.

That the weekly rest was ordained before Moses, is not proved by Genesis 2:3: for even after a lapse of time an institution may have been ordained to commemorate a bygone event. Against this, the consecutive order of Gen. 2 cannot be appealed to for after the ordinance of the Sabbath in Genesis 2:3 we have in Genesis 2:7 the creation of man. Nor is it disproved by Ezekiel 20:12: for an already existing institution might at the Exodus have been made by God a sign of the new covenant then given to Israel. That the princes of Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 16:22) did not understand the double supply of manna, suggests perhaps that the Sabbath was not then known to them. On the other hand, Genesis 8:10, 12 and 29:27 suggest that a period of seven days was already used as a Division of time: and, although this does not imply a weekly day of sacred rest, the Division of time into weeks is much more easy to understand if the weeks were separated by a sacred day. The word 'remember' in Exodus 20:8, if it is anything more than an emphatic form of the parallel phrase 'keep the Sabbath day' in Deuteronomy 4:12, refers doubtless to the institution of the Sabbath in Exodus 16:29, 30. Certainly it is no proof or suggestion that the Sabbath was ordained earlier than the departure from Egypt. Indeed, taken together, the above casual and uncertain notes have little weight as evidence either that the Sabbath was not, or was, ordained earlier than the Exodus. But the double supply of manna on the sixth day with no manna on the seventh, and the solemn ordinance of the Sabbath in Exodus 16:25-30 before the giving of the Decalogue, are additional marks of honor to the weekly Day of Rest

The week itself was unknown to the early Greeks and Romans, and apparently to the heathen world generally. But that something like it was known to the Babylonians and Assyrians, is proved by a Babylonian calendar for a sacred month written in the Assyrian language, in which amid sacrifices for other days, the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, and 28th days have a uniform description as "days unlawful to work on," and the king is forbidden to eat his ordinary food or change his dress or do his ordinary royal duties on them. See Smith's 'Chaldaean Account of Genesis' p. 89; 'Records of the Past,' vol. vii. p. 159; Schrader, 'Keilinschriften und A.T.' 2nd ed. p. 18. Since these were days of a lunar month, which contains 29 days, they would not coincide with the Jewish Sabbath, which is each seventh day all the year round independently of the moon. But the

similarity is worthy of notice. An Assyrian form of the word 'Sabbath' has been found; (see 'Records of the Past,' vol. vii. p. 157; ) and is explained as "day of rest of heart." But it is not used in the calendar mentioned above other Babylonian inscriptions reveal the sacredness of the number seven.

A seven-fold Division of time is also mentioned in the Indian Vedas. So Rig-veda i. 50, in a hymn to the Sun-God: "Clear-sighted God of day, thy seven ruddy mares bear on thy rushing car. With these thy self-yoked steeds, seven daughters of thy chariot, onward thou dost advance." Also Atharva-veda xix. 53, in a hymn to Time: "Time, like a brilliant steed with seven rays.... Time, like a seven-wheeled, seven-naved car, moves on." But I learn from a reliable authority that these are the only references to a seven-fold Division of time in Indian literature earlier than our era; and that there is no reference there to a weekly rest. But in later days the week became known in India. Similar scanty references are found in the literature of China.

Dion Cassius ('Roman History' bk. 37. 16-18) states that in his day the Division of time into weeks was universal, though not of early date among the Greeks and Romans, and that they received it from the Egyptians. But we have not, so far as I know, any reliable traces of a weekly day of rest among the Egyptians. And indeed the evidence of a weekly Division of time earlier than the Christian era and outside Israel is at present very scanty and somewhat uncertain

The early Christian writers assume that the Sabbath did not exist before Moses. So Justin ('Dialogue with Trypho' ch. 19) says in argument with a Jew, referring to Adam, Abel, Enoch, and Melchizedec: "All these were just men and righteous in the sight of God without even keeping the Sabbath." And Irenaeus in his work 'Against Heresies' (bk. iv. 16. 2) writes "Without circumcision and without observance of the Sabbath Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." Probably these quotations represent the opinion of the Apostolic Church. But the distance of time and absence of independent sources of information deprive this opinion of any critical value as evidence of the date of the first institution of the weekly rest.



The above casual references leave us unable to determine with confidence whether the Sabbath was earlier than the Mosaic Covenant. And the matter is unimportant. For, that the Jewish Sabbath rested on a basis broader than the Mosaic Covenant, is proved by its connection with God's work at the Creation.

The importance of the Sabbath in the Old Covenant is attested by Jeremiah 17:21-27; Ezekiel 20:12; Nehemiah 10:31; 13:15-22. Its worth in the eyes of the more pious of the later Jews is seen in 1 Macc. i. 39; ii. 34, 38, 41.

Yet that which to Israel of the Old Covenant was an obligatory mark of loyalty to God, was, in the Gentile Christians of Galatia, called by Paul a return to spiritual bondage. Indeed the prominent position in Galatians 4:10 of the word 'days' suggests that their observance of the weekly Sabbath was a chief mark of their apostacy. And this, Paul's foregoing argument enables us to understand. For it implies that the Galatian Christians kept the Jewish Sabbath as an essential condition of salvation. But this was an acknowledgment that the Mosaic Law is still binding as a condition of the favor of God. For the entire Law, including ritual and moral commands, was given by the same authority. Now Paul has proved that the Law pronounces a universal curse, and excludes from the blessings promised to Abraham all those under its domain. Consequently, the continued validity of the Law would close to all men the way of salvation. And this was involved in the observance by the Galatians of the Jewish Sabbath. This observance was therefore utterly subversive of the Gospel proclaimed by Christ. Hence Paul's fear lest his labors in Galatia be in vain.

All this implies that, like the distinction of food, (Mr 7:15, 18; Acts 10:15,) so marked a feature of the Mosaic Covenant, also the command to keep sacred the seventh day was in some sense annulled by Christ, and that the great principle of Romans 6:14; 1 Corinthians 9:20, that we are 'not under law but under grace,' includes the Sabbath Law. This inference compels us to consider now the relation of the Lord's day to the Jewish Sabbath.

In marked contrast to the comparative disregard of the day so highly honored in the Old Covenant, we find in the New Testament special honor

paid to another day. On the day following the Jewish Sabbath Christ rose from the dead; and on the evening of the same day (John 20:19) appeared to the assembled disciples. On the same day of the next week He appeared to them again. And on the same day six weeks later He founded His Church by pouring upon the assembled disciples the Holy Spirit. The infinite importance of these events gives to the first day of the week a glory never conferred on the seventh day.

Accordingly we find in Acts 20:7 a Christian meeting held on the first day of the week; and in 1 Corinthians 16:2 Paul prescribes it as the day for laying by money for a charitable purpose. In Revelation 1:10, we read of the Lord's Day, which is honored by a special revelation to John. And the distinction already given to the first day of the week makes us quite certain that this was the Lord's Day.

All this is confirmed by early Christian writers. The lately discovered 'Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,' written probably early in the second century, says in ch. 14: "Each Lord's Day come together and break bread and give thanks," i.e. celebrate the Eucharist. So the Epistle of Barnabas, probably a few years later, ch. 15, where after a long reference to the Sabbath we read: "For which cause also we keep the eighth day for gladness, in which Jesus rose from the dead." Justin writes in the middle of the century, 'First Apology' ch. 67: "On what is called Sunday there is a coming together to one place of all who dwell in town or country, and the memoirs of the Apostles and the writings of the Prophets are read;" and says that this is followed by exhortation and the Lord's Supper, adding: "On Sunday we all make our common gathering since it is the first day in which God changed darkness and crude matter and made the world: and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead." A succession of later writers removes all doubt that the first day of the week was called the Lord's Day, and was a special day of worship in the early Church.

We have already seen that unique honor to one day of the week was a marked feature of the Old Covenant; and that, by its reference to the work of Creation and its place in that Decalogue, the Jewish Sabbath was placed on a basis broader than the Mosaic Law. We now find in the New Covenant still more conspicuous honor paid to one day of the week; but not to the same day. The change of day marks a transition from the Old

Covenant to the New. And the honor paid in each covenant to one day in seven suggests that a common element underlies both, and that the Lord's Day bears to the Jewish Sabbath a relation similar to that of the New Covenant to the Old. That this is actually the case, is, I think, fully proved by the following considerations.

We find by experience that the weekly day of rest is of incalculable and many-sided benefit. The gain to the body of regular intervals of rest from the monotonous toil of daily life can never be estimated. Still more valuable is the leisure thus obtained, amid the imperious demands of the present life, for contemplation of the eternal realities of the life to come. Moreover, the observance of this sacred rest in spite of these pressing cares is an acknowledgment, in view of many who through forgetfulness of God are slaves of the world around, of the greater importance of the world above us. Thus, like the Lord's Supper, the Lord's Day gives visible form to the service of God. Moreover, the observance by all Christians of the same day of rest renders united worship possible; and makes the outward aspect of society a recognition of God. For these reasons, (and they might be multiplied indefinitely and they have much more force than appears on the surface,) were there no divine obligation it would be expedient for our highest interests to keep a frequent and regularly recurring day of rest, and that all Christians should observe the same day. This reveals the gain actually derived from the prevalent belief, whatever be its grounds, that the day of rest was ordained by God. Indeed, it is not easy to conceive how otherwise all Christians would agree to keep the same day. Consequently, either this belief is correct or an error has been to the world a manifold and incalculable benefit. This benefit is an element of good in the Jewish Sabbath suitable to all nations and all ages.

These spiritual gains go a long way to prove, or rather strongly confirm our other abundant proof of, the divine origin of the Mosaic Covenant. Certainly, the teacher who gave to his nation and institution so rich in blessing for all mankind was indeed taught by God.

Admitting now the divine origin of the Jewish Sabbath, as we are compelled to do unless we reject the plain and repeated historical statements of the Old Testament, and observing the immense gain to all men of a weekly day of sacred rest, we are irresistibly driven to infer that

the rest ordained at Sinai was designed for all mankind; or, in other words, that this gain is by divine purpose. While enjoying the benefits of the Lord's Day, we feel that these benefits are God's gift. And this wider purpose of Israel's Day of Rest is the easiest explanation of its place in the Decalogue and of its reference there to the Creation of the World. Indeed we can well conceive that the great benefit it was designed to confer on Israel and on the world moved God to select the Sabbath, whether previously existing or not, as the special sign of the Mosaic Covenant. For, by thus selecting it, He gave it a sure place in the national life.

If the above inference and explanation be correct, by keeping the Lord's Day we are doing the will of God and are receiving benefits designed by Him for us. To neglect it, would be to trample under foot a precious and divine gift. We therefore keep it, not as a condition or means of the favor of God or under fear of penalty, but with gratitude for so great a gift and desirous to obtain all the blessings it is designed to convey. And this desire will determine our mode of spending the Sacred Day.

In the above discussion we have left out of sight the symbolic significance which belongs to the Sabbath in common with the entire Mosaic ritual. This significance is embodied in the words 'holy' and 'sanctify,' which are everywhere given to every part of that ritual. God claimed from Israel for Himself one tribe out of twelve, one day in seven, and one-tenth of all produce, in order to assert His universal ownership. He now claims, in the New Covenant, that every man be His servant and priest, that all our possessions be consecrated to Him, and every day and hour be spent for Him. To us, therefore, in the highest conceivable sense every day is holy to the Lord. But this by no means lessens the benefit of separating, from the secular toil which forms so large a part of the work God has allotted to most of us, a portion of time for meditation and evangelical work. This separation of a part greatly aids us to spend our whole time for God.

We understand now the relation to Christianity of the Jewish Sabbath. Whenever instituted, it was commanded in the Law; and was made a sign, and a conspicuous feature, of the Old Covenant of works. Consequently, as commanded by God, it was binding on every Israelite under pain of God's displeasure. And they who sought salvation by law sought it in part by strict observance of the Sabbath. This is the legal aspect of the Jewish

Sabbath. Again, like the entire Mosiac ritual, the Sabbath was a symbol of the Christian life. In these two aspects, the legal and the symbolic, the Jewish Sabbath passed away; or rather has attained its goal in the fuller revelation of the New Covenant. Instead of one day sanctified for Jehovah, every day is now spent for Christ. The Law has led us to Christ. And the Voice which once condemned us for past disobedience, and made the favor of God impossible by reason of our powerlessness to obey in the future, has been silenced by the Voice from the Cross. In these two senses the Law, even the law of the Sabbath, is to us as completely a thing of the past as is the schooling of our childhood.

But underneath the legal and symbolic aspects of the Sabbath, which pertain only to the Old Covenant, lay an element of universal and abiding value, viz. the manifold benefit of the weekly rest. To secure this benefit for Israel, and through Israel for the world, God embodied the Sabbath in the Law and Ritual of the Old Covenant. And when the Old Covenant was superseded by the New, Christ secured for His Church the same advantages by paying special honor to the first day of the week. But, like everything in the Gospel, the Lord's Day is not so much a law as a free gift of God. While keeping it we think, not of the penalty of disobedience, but of the great benefits received thereby in the kind providence of God: and we spend the day, not according to a written prescription, but in such way as seems to us most conducive to our spiritual growth. Thus the Lord's Day is a Christian counterpart of the Jewish Sabbath; and differs from it only as the Gospel differs from the Law.

Similarly, as a visible embodiment of the truth that our salvation comes through the shed blood of the innocent, the Jewish sacrifices have in some sense a Christian counterpart in the Lord's Supper. And the rite of Infant Baptism, which is not expressly enjoined in the New Testament, reproduces in the Christian Church, by recognising the relation of little ones to the God of their fathers, a part of the spiritual significance of circumcision.

We understand now Paul's indifference in Romans 14:5 whether we esteem one day above another, or all days equally. Seen in the full light of the Gospel, all days are equal: for all are spent for Christ. And the service we render Him in the common duties of daily life is as precious in His

sight and as rich an outflow of Christian life as are the meditation and evangelical activity of the Lord's Day. This is perfectly consistent with the consecration of one day a week for the latter, and the equal consecration of six days for the former, kind of service.

Nor is the absence from the New Testament of any express teaching about the relation of the Lord's Day to the Jewish Sabbath and the Fourth Commandment difficult to understand. Any such teaching in the Epistle before us would have seriously blunted, by inevitable misinterpretation, Paul's resistance to the advocates of the Mosaic Law as still binding on Christians. Abundant proofs of this relation were stored in the sacred volume. The inference from these proofs was left to be observed, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the later ages of the Church. And in the meantime, by Christ and by the apostolic Church an unique honor was paid to the first day of the week which marked it out unmistakably as the Day of Days.

In exact accord with the above exposition is the usage of early Christian writers. The first day of the week is constantly called the Lord's Day, and spoken of as specially honored and as the chosen day of Christian worship. But, so far as I know, not until the Council of Macon in A.D. 585 have we any hint of a transfer of the sacred rest from the seventh to the first day, or of obligation to keep the Lord's Day on the ground of the Fourth Commandment. Very interesting is Augustine's note on Psalm 91:1, where he contrasts the Jews' Sabbath, which he says they waste in bodily idleness, with the Christians' inward rest, which he calls the Sabbath of the heart. The whole note makes us almost certain that Augustine did not look upon the Lord's Day as a Christian counterpart of the Jewish Sabbath. Equally interesting is a treatise of doubtful authorship and date on 'The Sabbath and Circumcision' attributed to Athanasius, in which, although the Lord's Day is not called a Sabbath or placed in any relation to the Fourth Commandment, it is nevertheless shown to stand in close relation to the Jewish Sabbath. See also the much earlier quotation on p. 118 from the Epistle of Barnabas.

The first Christian Emperor, Constantine, decreed, in A.D. 321, that all judges and people residing in cities rest from work on Sunday, permitting

only agriculture. He thus recognised publicly the Day of Rest as a Christian institution.

But neither imperial decrees nor command of the ancient Law of God nor tradition of the Early Church are needed by those who have experienced the great and various benefit of the rest and leisure of the Lord's Day. The greatness of the benefit is to them abundant proof of the divine origin and authority of the Christian Day of Rest.

## SECTION 17

### *PERSONAL APPEAL TO THE GALATIANS*

#### CHAPTER 4:12-20

*Become as I am, because also I have become as ye are, brethren, I beg you. No injustice have ye done me. And ye know that because of weakness of the flesh I preached the Gospel to you the first time: and your temptation in my flesh ye did not despise nor loathe, but as an angel of God ye welcomed me, as Christ Jesus. Where then is your professed holiness? For I bear you witness that, if possible, your own eyes ye would have dug out and given to me. So then am I become your enemy by speaking truth to you?*

*Zealously they care for you, not in a good way: but they wish to shut you out, that ye may care for them zealously. And a good thing it is to be zealously cared for in a good matter always, and not only when I am present with you, my little children, for whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you. I could wish to be present with you now, and to change my voice: because I am perplexed about you.*

After the application to the readers, in 16, of the foregoing argument, now follows (Galatians 4:12-16) a personal and loving appeal based on their welcome to Paul on his first visit to Galatia: then comes (Galatians 4:17-20) the first direct reference, after Galatians 1:7, to the men who were leading them astray.

**Ver. 12.** A direct appeal prompted by Paul's fear lest his labors for his readers be without result.

Become as I am: i.e. free from the legal bondage implied in their observance (Galatians 4:10) of sacred days: not 'do as I do;' for (see under Galatians 4:11) Paul himself kept the Jewish ritual. His motive in so doing differed infinitely from that of his opponents: cp. 1 Corinthians 9:20 with Acts 15:1, 5.



Because also I, etc.: a fact added to the foregoing entreaty, as a reason for it. By recognising the emptiness of Jewish prerogatives and thus laying them aside, Paul, a born Jew, placed himself on the spiritual level of his readers, who were born Gentiles. He now entreats them to come down, by laying aside the fancied superiority of Jewish proselytes, to the common level which he has long ago accepted. Thus Paul brings to bear, on those who as strangers were seeking prerogatives which were his by birth and to which from childhood he had been taught to cling proudly, the example of his own surrender of these prerogatives as worthless. Similar appeals to his own example, in 1 Corinthians 8:13; 10:33. Those to whom he appeals, he, a born Jew, recognises as 'brethren.'

No injustice; so literally: or 'no injury,' without thought of injustice, as in Luke 10:19: for, as the derivation of the words suggests, injury is usually injustice. A close parallel, in 2 Corinthians 12:13. The utter obscurity now of these words points to facts known to the readers but not to us. The emphasis rests, not on 'me' in contrast to others, but on the negative: 'in NOTHING have ye done me injustice.' Nor does this emphatic and unexpected denial refer necessarily to Paul's visit to Galatia. [The Greek aorist covers the entire past to the moment of writing.] This denial was suggested naturally by Paul's loving appeal; and suitably prefaces his mention of the, welcome given to him by the Galatians on his first visit.

**Ver.** 13-14. Not only had his readers done Paul no injustice or injury, but on his first visit, although it was occasioned merely by sickness, they welcomed him with eager affection. This he recalls in order to arouse now a similar affection, and thus strengthen his own appeal.

Weakness: absence of strength, of any kind. It is the usual term for sickness, of which absence of bodily strength is a constant mark: so Philippians 2:26f; 2 Timothy 4:20; Matthew 10:8; Mark 6:56; Luke 4:40; John 11:1-6; Acts 4:9; 5:15f. And this is the only meaning which will make sense here.

Of the flesh: the material of our bodies, which by its nature is in various ways (cp. Romans 8:3; Matthew 26:41) weak or liable to weakness.

Because of weakness, etc.: i.e. detained in Galatia by some sickness. This led him to preach the Gospel and found Churches there. Thus Paul's sickness brought 'good-news' (see under Galatians 1:6) to his readers.

The first time: or literally 'the former-time.' It contrasts a former with a later visit. And, since contrast with the present was needless, (for this is sufficiently indicated by 'preached-the-Gospel, ') it implies that twice Paul had preached in Galatia. If so, these words give definiteness to the statement in Galatians 4:13: otherwise they are meaningless.

The first recorded visit of Paul to Galatia is that mentioned in Acts 16:6, on his second missionary journey. And we have no difficulty in supposing that then he was detained in Galatia by illness. and founded Churches there. Another visit, on his third journey, is recorded in Acts 18:23. And we cannot well conceive any other earlier visit. Consequently, not earlier than this last visit was the letter before us written. See Diss. III.

That the Gospel was first preached to the Galatians by a man who lingered among them merely because of bodily weakness, put to a severe test their readiness to receive the truth. Many hearers would have turned away from a Gospel proclaimed by a sick man. Consequently, the sickness 'in' Paul's 'flesh' was a 'trial' or 'temptation' (see under 1 Corinthians 10:13) to his readers. And, since the afflicted man was an embodiment of this trial, had they turned from him with disgust, they would have 'despised' and 'loathed the temptation' which God had laid upon them. Instead of this, they 'welcomed' him (literally received with outstretched right hand) 'as' though he were a visitant from heaven, 'an angel of' mercy from 'God.' Nay more. They welcomed him with the reverence they would have paid to his divine Master, to 'Christ Jesus.' The words 'despise' and 'loathe' suggest that Paul's sickness was of a kind calculated to evoke contempt and disgust.

**Ver. 15.** Question prompted by the foregoing statement.

Where then: as in Romans 3:27; cp. 1 Corinthians 1:20; 12:17, 19; 15:55. It implies that their gratulation had vanished from view.

Your professed happiness: literally 'your pronouncing-happy,' or 'blessed.' Same word in Romans 4:6, 9; see note: cognate word in Romans 4:7f; Matthew 5:3-11. They pronounced themselves 'happy,' i.e.

fortunate in the highest and holiest sense, because Paul had visited them. Of this felt good fortune, the enthusiasm of their welcome (Galatians 4:14) was proof and measure. Paul therefore supports his question by the following emphatic statement.

Paul is able to 'bear-witness' in his reader's favor. 'Your,' is not emphatic, as though in contrast with Paul's 'eyes.' Consequently, these words in no way suggest that Paul's complaint was in his eyes.

Dug-out your eyes: same words (LXX.) in 1 Samuel 11:2; cp. Judges 16:21: graphic description of a painful and ruinous operation. Even this costly, and in fact impossible, gift would not have been too great in their view to express the benefits they had received from the preaching of Paul. This testimony, the readers knew to be true. Paul asks therefore what has become of this recognition of spiritual benefits.

**Ver. 16.** An inference from Galatians 4:15, thrown because of its unlikelihood into the form of a question.

Your enemy: or 'an enemy of yours': one intent on doing you harm. Paul's earnestness suggests this rather than the weaker sense, 'one hated by you.' The Galatians treated Paul as though he were actually hostile to them. And, since he was formerly so valued a friend, if he be now an 'enemy,' as his readers suppose or act as though they supposed, he has 'become' such: i.e. a change has taken place. Paul asks the reason. He has done nothing but 'speak-truth.' Is this then the cause of the change? The precise reference of Paul's question is unknown to us. It cannot be the letter he is now writing: for he refers to his readers' present judgment about him. The easiest explanation is that on his second visit Paul rebuked a tendency to Judaism then visible: and that this rebuke was used by his enemies to alienate from him the Galatian Christians. He asks whether words which they know to be true have made a valued friend into an enemy.

Review of Galatians 4:12-16. Moved by fear which their observance of Jewish festivals inspires, Paul reminds his readers that he a born Jew has laid aside all Jewish prerogatives; and makes a brotherly appeal to them to lay aside the Jewish entanglements which were bringing them into bondage. He recalls the eagerness with which at the first they welcomed him, when as a sick man he lingered among them. Their devotion to the preacher knew

no limits: and it proclaimed the benefits they had received from his preaching. Since then, all that Paul has done has been to speak what they know to be true. He asks if this has made their former friend into a foe.

The above is, like Galatians 3:1, 2, an appeal to the readers' early Christian life in proof of the truth of the word they then received.

It is also a welcome addition to the narrative of Paul's life. We see him detained by serious illness (for no other would hinder him) among people of strange nationality and speech. We can imagine him preaching to them in great bodily weakness. But his word produced immediate and wonderful results. The preacher was welcomed with enthusiasm. And various scattered but flourishing Churches were formed among the Keltic settlers of Galatia. We have also an indication of a second visit: and Paul's silence suggests that even then his converts' loyalty to their great teacher had begun to decline.

These biographical notes agree with Acts 16:6 where we find Paul passing through Galatia; and with Acts 18:23 where we find him visiting disciples in 'the Galatian country.'

Whether Paul's sickness in Galatia had any relation to his probably much earlier stake in the flesh, is quite uncertain. See Under 2 Corinthians 12:7. But this abiding affliction reveals some kind of bodily unsoundness: and this might easily give rise to a passing illness which would detain the apostle.

**Ver. 17.** A silent reference to Paul's opponents in Galatia. That he does not find it needful to mention them expressly, proves that they are already present to his thought. Cp. Galatians 5:10; 6:12f. And direct mention of them would be unpleasant.

Zealously-care-for you: or 'they-are-zealous' or 'jealous-about you:' same word and construction in 1 Corinthians 12:31, 'Be zealous for the greater gifts;' and 2 Corinthians 11:2, 'I am jealous about you.' 'They are very eager about you;' i.e. for your benefit apparently, and for your favor.

Not-in-a-good-way, or 'manner': expounded by 'they wish, etc.,' which states the motive of their earnest effort. From whom or what, the false teachers 'wish to-shut-out' the Galatian Christians, Paul does not say. He

fixes attention simply on the designed isolation. The practical effect of the false teaching will be exclusion from Christ, from the Gospel and its blessings, and from the community of faithful Christians. But a special reference to these last is not required by the emphatic word ‘them,’ as though the false teachers were compared with those from whom they would shut out the Galatian Christians: for it is simply a contrast to ‘you,’ the excluders and the excluded being thus brought face to face. And Paul’s exact reference remains uncertain, and not very important. If the Galatian Christians yield to the disturbers and become circumcised, they will be ‘shut out’ of that element in which they have found life and peace; and will become dependent on the favor and help of those who have led them astray. Consequently, the seduced will be compelled to court their seducers. And this Paul declares to be (‘that ye may, etc.’) the purpose of the seduction.

Since the last word of Galatians 4:17 is the first word of 1 Corinthians 12:31, the four Greek-Latin uncials insert after it ‘But be zealous for the better gifts:’ an interesting example of the way in which error has crept into our MSS.

**Ver. 18.** A general statement suggested by the zealous efforts of these false friends to gain the Galatian Christians. It glides imperceptibly into a description of Paul’s own zeal for them, which is an example of the general statement. ‘A good thing it is to be an object of earnest attention,’ provided it be ‘in a good matter,’ i.e. with a good aim, this aim looked upon as the element of the earnest effort. Paul’s aim is (2 Corinthians 11:2) to present a pure maiden to Christ. The word ‘always’ has no perceptible reference to the false teachers, (for we have no hint that their zeal was not constant,) but completes the transition, through this general remark, from Paul’s opponents to himself; and records a marked feature of his own zeal, viz. its constancy. This thought is further developed, without any reference to the false teachers, in the words following. Paul’s care for his readers is not limited to his presence with them. Indeed it prompts him now to write this earnest letter, and makes him wishful (Galatians 4:20) to be with them again.

[ζηλουσθαι is passive, corresponding to the active forms in Galatians 4:17, and in the same sense: for a change of sense would need to be clearly

marked, as in Romans 14:13, to avoid mistake; especially here where the same sense gives an intelligent meaning. Moreover the middle voice of this verb is unknown elsewhere; and would have here practically the same sense as the active voice, and be therefore inexplicable. The emphasis is not on **με**, as though contrasting Paul with the false teachers, but on **παρεῖναι**, contrasting Paul's presence with his absence. This is confirmed by the appearance of the same word in Galatians 4:20.]

**Ver. 19.** An expression of Paul's love for his readers, and a proof of the intensity of his effort on their behalf. As being a sort of climax, it is most easily joined to the foregoing sentence. [And the preposition **δε** in Galatians 4:20 suggests, but does not prove that it begins a new sentence.] The Vat., Sinai, and Greek-Latin MSS., a combination seldom in error, read 'my children,' as in 1 Corinthians 4:14, using a word very common with Paul. But the Alex., Ephraim, and later MSS., a combination often in evident error, read 'my little-children,' as in 1 John 2:1: cp. 'little-children' in John 13:33; 1 John 2:12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21. The difference is only one small letter. So appropriate here is the tender expression 'little-children,' nowhere else found in Paul, and so easily changed to the common word 'children,' that Westcott prefers it, placing in his margin 'my children,' which last, is read by Tischendorf and without note by Tregelles. Thus external and internal evidence are at variance, which rarely happens. Perhaps probability inclines to 'my little-children.' But certain decision is impossible. Paul's earnest and constant efforts for his readers remind him that they are helpless as 'little children' needing a parent's care, and that they are his own little children. He therefore accosts them with a father's affection and solicitude. Cp. 1 Corinthians 4:14; Philemon 10.

The undeveloped spiritual life of the Galatian Christians, Paul compares to the undeveloped state of an unborn embryo; and compares his own painful anxiety for them to a mother's birth-pangs, which can cease only when the development of the embryo is complete. For, till his readers show a Christian character in some degree mature, Paul's anxiety will continue.

Again: as though a mother were twice enduring birth-pangs for the same offspring. The desired development, Paul describes as

Christ formed in you: i.e. the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them (Galatians 2:20) changing their outer life into moral likeness to Christ. Thus in them men will see the 'form of Christ,' a visible manifestation of His actual inward presence. See under Romans 2:20: cp. Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 2:6f; 2 Timothy 3:5. This comparison reveals how intense is Paul's effort (Galatians 4:18) for his readers, and how pure his motive.

**Ver. 20.** A 'wish' prompted by the readers' undeveloped state and by Paul's anxiety about them. 'Would that I were present with you now!' a wish, felt to be vain, suggested by the words 'present with you' in Galatians 4:18, which recall Paul's earnest efforts for their good when he was in Galatia. He 'could wish' to be with them now, (this last word emphatic,) instead of merely writing to them from a distance.

And to change my voice: purpose of this impracticable wish. Paul's love suggests that if he were himself with his readers he could bring them to a better mind, which would enable him to speak to them in a 'voice' different from his present severity.

Perplexed: not knowing which way to go. Same word in 2 Corinthians 4:8; Luke 24:4; Acts 25:20; John 13:22. That Paul does not know what to do to restore his relapsing converts, is the 'cause' of his consciously futile wish to be with them now. Thus, like 16, so 17 closes with dark foreboding.

Only for a moment does Paul refer to the false teachers, as though reluctant to give them a place on his pages. But his few words lay bare the selfish motive of their earnestness. Still greater earnestness for the Galatian Christians, with a motive as pure as theirs is selfish, does Paul whether present or absent ever cherish. For they are his own children. And till they bear the image of Christ there is nothing but anguish for him. His present perplexity makes him long to be with them now, hoping that his presence would effect the change he so earnestly desires.

## SECTION 18

### THE COVENANTS OF BONDAGE AND OF FREEDOM

#### CHAPTER 4:21-5:1

*Tell me, ye who wish to be under law, do ye not hear the Law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the maid and one by the free woman. Yet he by the maid was born according to flesh: but he by the free woman, through promise. Which things contain an allegory. For these women are two covenants; one from Mount Sinai bearing children for bondage, which is Hagar. Now this Hagar: Mount Sinai in Arabia; and stands in line with the Jerusalem that now is: for she is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, barren one that bearest not; burst forth and shout, thou that dost not travail in birth. For many are the children of the desolate woman, more than of her who has the husband." (Isaiah 54:1). And we, brethren, like Isaac are children of promise.*

*But just as then he that was born according to flesh was persecuting him born according to Spirit, so also now. So But what says the Scripture? "Cast out the maid and her son: for the son of the maid shall not inherit with the son of the free woman." (Genesis 21:10.) For which cause, brethren, we are not children of a maid but of the free woman. For freedom, Christ has made us free. Stand then, and be not again held fast by a yoke of bondage.*

Another appeal, an argument based upon facts recorded in the Book of the Law taken in connection with the teaching in Galatians 3:23; 4:1-3 that all who are under law are in bondage.

**Ver. 21.** Law: the general principle, 'Do this and live.'

Under law: as in Galatians 4:4; Romans 6:14.



Wish to be under law; describes suitably an apostasy now going on, as do the present tenses in Galatians 1:6; 4:9; 5:3, 4; 6:12, 13. They desire to have as the basis of their relation to God, and as the means of obtaining His favor, a prescribed rule of conduct, viz. the rule embodied in the five Books of Moses: i.e. practically, they 'wish' to stand, or rather to lie in helpless bondage, 'under' the authority of 'law.'

Hear the Law: cp. Romans 2:13, John 12:34. It recalls vividly the public reading in the synagogues, when this was, for Jews and proselytes, the chief means of acquaintance with the Jewish Scriptures. Paul asks of those who wish to be under a prescribed rule, Do you not hear what is said by those Books which are an authoritative embodiment of such rule?

**Ver.** 22-23. The foregoing question will now be justified by a fact about Abraham recorded in the Books of the Law.

Two sons; prepares us for a difference between them.

Maid: same word in Genesis 16:1, 3, 5f, 8; 21:10, 12f; Matthew 26:69; Acts 12:13; 16:16: in N. T. always a maid-servant, but not so Ruth 4:12. The word 'free' implies that here 'the maid' was a slave. 'Abraham had one' son 'by the' well-known 'maid'-servant, 'and one by the' well-known 'free woman.'

According to flesh: the process of birth corresponding to the constitution of human or animal bodies. This reminds us that Ishmael stood to Abraham in the same relation as the Jews of Paul's day, viz. that of natural descent. This is embodied in the argument of Romans 9:8. [The Greek perfect tense intimates that the birth of Ishmael 'according to flesh' has abiding significance. So 1 Corinthians 15:4, 14, 27. In reference to events so definite, the English language, which has no tense corresponding to the Greek perfect, uses the preterite, 'was born.']

Through, or 'by means of,' promise. Not only was Isaac's birth a fulfilment of promise, but the faith elicited by the promise was an essential condition, according to the principles of the kingdom of God, of the putting forth of divine power and of the fulfilment of the promise. Hence 'the promise' was the channel 'through' which the power of God operated, producing first faith, in Abraham, and then the birth of Isaac. Similarly, in the birth of Jesus a promise to Mary was the vehicle through

which the Spirit of God operated. 'Although both were sons of Abraham, 'yet' the offspring of 'the slave girl' was born (and the significance of this fact remains) according to the ordinary laws of human bodies, the offspring of 'the free woman' was produced by the special voice of God, by the word of 'promise' which Abraham believed.'

**Ver. 24.** Which things: or rather, 'which class of things.'

Contain an allegory, or 'are-allegorized': they have another meaning beside the historical one. Same word and tense in Philo, vol. i. p. 143: "The cherubim are, according to one manner, in this way allegorized." So Clement of Alex., 'Exhortation' ch. xi. "The serpent is allegorized as pleasure, crawling upon its belly, an earthly vice, turning to matter." That the narratives of Genesis are fact, Paul ever assumes: see my 'Romans,' Diss. III. He now declares that under the facts (as Philo says of the cherubim) lies spiritual significance. This significance, the rest of Galatians 4:24 explains.

Are two covenants: cp. 1 Corinthians 11:25. 'This cup is the New Covenant.' In a mutual relation similar to the relation of 'these' two 'women' there actually 'are two covenants.' Therefore, in Paul's thought, and in objective reality, (for the relationships are real,) the women and the covenants are the same. So the word 'is,' denoting practical identity, in Romans 1:12, 16; 1 John 5:3, 4; Matthew 13:37-39.

The two covenants; recalls 2 Corinthians 3:6, written probably shortly before this letter.

Of these 'two covenants,' one is expounded in Galatians 4:24b, 25; the other, under an altered form of speech, in Galatians 4:26-28. The Old Covenant, an abiding possession, was received 'from' God speaking on 'Mount Sinai.'

Bearing children for bondage: just as children of a slave-mother are also slaves. This metaphor is the more easy because the word rendered 'covenant' is feminine. They who accept the Law as the basis of their relation to God, and whose religious life is derived from and determined by it, are children of the Covenant (cp. 'sons of the Covenant,' Acts 3:25) which had its origin at Sinai. And Paul has shown (Galatians 3:10-4:3) that, in consequence of the nature of the covenant then given, such persons

are, and must be, in bondage. Thus their position is analogous to that of the boy who, though Abraham's offspring, yet, because his mother was a servant, was not a sharer of the rights of Abraham's son. For, the religious life derived from the Law, a life of bondage, was derived from God who gave the Law at Sinai. That Ishmael was not actually a slave, does not weaken this comparison. For, because he was a slave's child, he could not claim a son's rights. And this defect of Ishmael, the Jews eagerly asserted.

**Ver. 25.** Between readings (1) Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and (2) 'For Sinai is a mountain in Arabia,' evidence is almost equally balanced. We find r. 1 in the Vat. and Alex. MSS., the Latin part of the Clermont MS., and the Coptic version; evidence perhaps slightly stronger than that for r. 2, viz. the Sinai and Ephraim MSS., two Greek-Latin uncials, and the Latin Vulgate Version. Uniting these two readings, the later Greek MSS. and the Syriac Version which often accompanies them read (3) 'for this Hagar is Mount Sinai, etc.' Chrysostom read, as the tenor of his exposition proves, 'this Hagar is Mount Sinai.' And existing copies of his exposition read also 'for this Hagar, etc.' But the difference between 'now' and 'for' does not affect his argument. Consequently, in view of the great frequency of this last reading in later copies, we cannot be sure that Chrysostom himself accepted it. It seems to me that the documentary evidence for r. 1 preponderates slightly over that for r. 2. The difference is only three Greek letters, which must have been wrongly either inserted or omitted. Their accidental insertion is perhaps rather the more easy to conceive. For the insertion of  $\alpha$ , making  $\gamma\alpha\rho$  into  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\rho$ , might have been suggested by the same word at the end of Galatians 4:24: and the need for a particle would suggest the insertion of  $\delta\epsilon$ . But this possibility only counterbalances the slightly preponderant documentary evidence.

Of Critical Editors, Lachmann gives r. 2 in his text, r. 1 in his margin. Tischendorf gave r. 3 in his 7th, and gives r. 2 in his 8th, edition. Tregelles places r. 3 in his text and r. 1 in his margin. Even the joint editors part company here, Westcott preferring r. 2 and Hort r. 1: but, like the R.V., their joint text gives r. 1, with r. 2 in the margin.

Amid this conflict of evidence and opinion, I shall further test the readings by endeavoring to expound them.

Reading 1. This Hagar: i.e. Hagar looked upon, not as a woman, but simply as an abstract object of thought and comparison. Already Paul has said that one covenant 'is Hagar.' With Hagar he now links in his allegory 'Mount Sinai,' from which (Galatians 4:24) the covenant was received.

Is: as in Galatians 4:24: in the allegory, Hagar and Sinai are the same. To assert this practical identity, is the purpose of Galatians 4:25a.

In Arabia; recalls the geographical position of 'Sinai,' where in solitary grandeur, away from the land promised to Abraham, the rugged mountain looks down upon the wilderness home of the children of Hagar. The position of Sinai reveals the appropriateness of the allegory. And this sufficiently accounts for these words, without the exposition of Chrysostom: "The bondwoman was called Hagar; and Mount Sinai is thus interpreted in the language of the locality." For this last statement we have hardly any confirmatory evidence. Some Arabian tribes bore their mother's name: e.g. Psalm 83:6; 1 Chronicles 5:10, 20; Eratosthenes in Strabo bk. xvi. 767. Possibly this tribal name may have been heard by Paul during his sojourn in Arabia, and have suggested the contrast of the sons of Hagar and of Sarah. But even this supposition is needless. We notice, however, that the Epistle which tells of Paul's journey to Arabia contains this comparison. It may have been suggested by meditations on the spot.

Goes in the same line: like soldiers in file. It recalls (Aristotle, 'Nicom. Ethics' bk. i. 6. 7) the Pythagorean Lists of corresponding Opposites. In such a list, Hagar, Ishmael, Sinai, the Old Covenant, the now Jerusalem would stand opposite to Sarah, Isaac, Golgotha, the New Covenant, the Jerusalem above. Paul has just said that in his allegory Hagar, the mother of the alien race, is identical with Mount Sinai whence they who trust in the Law derive their spiritual life. He now takes the allegory a step further by saying that Hagar is in the same line with 'Jerusalem that now is,' or 'the now Jerusalem,' the metropolis of the Jewish state and seat of the old Theocracy. This statement, the following words prove.

Is in bondage: viz. 'Jerusalem,' as proved by the contrast with 'Jerusalem above' which 'is free.' Moreover, to say that Hagar is in bondage, etc., would merely and needlessly repeat Galatians 4:24b, and would do nothing to prove that either she or Mount Sinai goes in the same line with the now Jerusalem: whereas, that Jerusalem is in bondage, etc., as practically

proved in Galatians 3:23-4:9, places the Mother-City of the Jews in line with Hagar and her banished offspring; which is the chief point of this allegory.

With her children: cp. Matthew 23:37: with those who look up to the old Theocratic state as their political and spiritual mother. For these are under the Law, and therefore (cp. Galatians 3:23ff) in spiritual bondage; by the very nature of the Theocracy to which they owe their spiritual life.

Reading 2 should probably be rendered 'For Sinai is a mountain in Arabia.' It calls attention to the geographical position of Sinai, giving definiteness to our conception of the great mountain and silently reminding us that it was the home of Hagar's children. Paul then, without further mention of Hagar, says that Sinai belongs to the same category as the present Jerusalem. For this statement, the following proof still holds good: for, that Jerusalem 'is in bondage with her children,' places her in the same line both with the mother of the exiled race and with the 'mountain in Arabia' whence Israel derived its spiritual life.

Since it was more important, for Paul's argument, to place Jerusalem in relation with Hagar, whom all Jews regarded as an alien, as in r. 1, rather than with Sinai, on which all looked with reverence, and since for r. 1 the documentary evidence slightly preponderates, we may perhaps accept it, with the R.V., as slightly the more likely.

If we had proof that Sinai was actually called Hagar, we might take Galatians 4:25a to mean that in Arabia Hagar is a name given to Sinai. But, as we have seen, this is needless for the argument. For, that Mount Sinai is in the land of Hagar's children, whether or not the mountain bore her name, reveals in clear light the appropriateness of Paul's allegory.

**Ver. 26.** The second of the 'two Covenants,' described in an altered form suggested by the foregoing words.

Jerusalem above: or 'the above Jerusalem.' Cp. 'the heavenly Jerusalem,' Hebrews 12:22; 'the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven,' Revelation 21:2; 'the city having the foundations,' Hebrews 11:10; 'the city to come,' Hebrews 13:14. It is the future home of the saved, looked upon as a city and a metropolis. The above different conceptions of it, we may harmonize by conceiving it as already existing in the purpose and

forethought of God and influencing the thought and action of men. This city is 'free,' with all that pertains to it. Restraint is needless there, and unknown.

Our mother: that city is a mother, and we are her children. For it is the source, by the laws of spiritual generation, of our spiritual life; a life which partakes the nature of its source: in other words, our spiritual life is an outflow of the eternal and divine forces which will find their visible and necessary manifestation in that future city. Moreover, the city will be an integral part of the place of glory where already, surrounded by angels, the Risen Savior sits enthroned. Therefore, to that future city we already look up as our mother. That city is no mere idea we are endeavoring to realise, and whose realisation is contingent; but actual reality, infinitely more real than the things we see around us. This eternal and spotless City stands in absolute contrast to that towards which the men of the Old Covenant looked up with filial reverence or fanatical devotion.

**Ver. 27.** Proof that the Jerusalem above is a mother, and we her children. It is word for word (LXX.) from Isaiah 54:1; and recalls Isaiah 49:17-23; 51:17-20; 52:1, 2; 54:4-13; 60:4; 62:4, 5; 66:7, 8. It is also an outburst of song evoked by this momentary vision of the heavenly city, and suitably clothed in the language of ancient prophecy.

Barren: a past state spoken of as if now present, for vivid contrast with the actual present.

She that does not bear: an abiding and melancholy characteristic.

Burst forth: with joy, as implied by the word 'rejoice.' The Hebrew reads 'shout for joy... break forth a joyful shout.'

Does not travail with child: more graphic than 'does not bear.' (Cp. Isaiah 66:7.)

Desolate: not only barren but without a husband, in lonely solitude. Yet she has 'many children,' more even than some other woman who with her husband are (in the LXX.) definite objects of the prophet's thought.

After his vision of the smitten Servant of Jehovah, who 'bore the sin of many,' Isaiah bursts into song, in view of the glory which will follow. In this song he bids Jerusalem join, describing her as a woman once without

children and even without husband, but now having many sons. For, God (Isaiah 54:5) is her husband: and her sons will be taught by Him and have great peace. The prophet's words imply sudden and unexpected and great increase of the citizens of the Kingdom of God; and infinite splendor and blessing awaiting them. These words found no adequate fulfilment in the exiles returning from captivity. But Paul had seen thousands of aliens and heathens turning to God, entering by the power of God a new life derived from above, and becoming children of God. And he looked forward to the day when these lately born children of the one Father will tread the streets of that city which from afar Isaiah saw. Already, in the unchangeable purpose of God, and to the eye of faith, the city stands secure in heaven, the eternal home of freedom, its future inhabitants look up to it with longing eyes; and from it derive all their hopes. In this wondrous accession to the people of God Paul sees fulfilled the ancient prophecy: and the vision moves him to re-echo the prophet's song. The prophecy also justifies his assertion that Jerusalem above is mother of his readers and himself.

Whatever may have been Isaiah's own thought, Paul's exposition points to the reality which in indistinct and distant outline the prophet saw. His exposition is, therefore, in the highest sense correct. it is reproduced by Justin, 1st 'Apology,' ch. 53.

**Ver. 28.** As Galatians 4:27 justified the word 'mother' in Galatians 4:26, so Galatians 4:28 justifies the word 'our' by proving that Paul and his readers are among 'the children' foretold by Isaiah. The reading 'we' or 'ye' is uncertain and unimportant.

Like Isaac: on the model of Isaac, our birth corresponding with his.

Children of promise: almost the same words in Romans 9:8, proving how familiar to Paul was this thought. it recalls Galatians 4:23b.

Of promise: viz. the Gospel, the instrument by which God brought into being His children in Galatia. Cp. 1 Corinthians 4:15; James 1:18. Now, only in those whom by the Gospel promise God adds to His family does the above-quoted prophecy of Isaiah find fulfilment. Consequently, not only is (Galatians 4:26) 'the Jerusalem above' a 'mother' but she is 'our mother.'

**Ver. 29.** A further development of the analogy, a contrast and a comparison.

But, or ‘nevertheless’: although children of promise, yet, ‘just-as’ Isaac was ‘then,’ so we ‘also now’ are exposed to persecution.

Born according to flesh: the point of contrast (Galatians 4:23) with Isaac.

According to Spirit; Romans 8:4, 5: the Holy Spirit as a standard determining the manner of birth. For He (John 3:5) is the agent of the new birth: and all His works correspond with His nature. (Notice that whatever comes through belief of a promise is wrought by the ‘Spirit,’ the divine Agent of all supernatural good.) The word here is suggested by Paul’s constant contrast of ‘flesh’ and ‘Spirit:’ Galatians 3:3; Galatians 5:16, 17; 6:8; Romans 8:4. The Hebrew text of Genesis 21:9 reads, ‘Sarah saw the son of Hagar... mocking:’ but the LXX. reads, ‘playing with Isaac her son.’ Sarah’s demand, made at the festival, implies some aggravation from Ishmael: and her comparison of the two boys suggests that the aggravation was something done to Isaac. And this idea was taken up by Jewish tradition. This ridicule from Ishmael Paul describes, in order to place the Christians of his day in line with Isaac, by the word persecuted, which recalls the many persecutions aroused against Christians by Jews: cp. 1 Thessalonians 2:14; Acts 13:50; 14:5, 19.

**Ver. 30.** But: or ‘nevertheless,’ as in Galatians 4:29: a complete and now triumphant contrast. The words of Sarah, (Genesis 21:10 nearly word for word from the LXX.,) inasmuch as her request was approved by God, are introduced simply as the Scripture says: so Romans 9:17; 10:11; cp. Galatians 3:8, 22. This implies that for Paul ‘the Scripture’ had the authority of God. He quotes that authority in the literary form in which it lay before him. That Sarah’s petulant request obtained God’s sanction, and that a trifling sport of Ishmael caused his expulsion from Abraham’s home lest his presence should interfere with the unique honor due to Isaac, reveal in clearest light the infinite difference of position between the ‘two sons.’ This difference gives great force to the contrast in Galatians 4:23-28. The last words of Galatians 4:30 are changed from ‘with my son, even with Isaac’ to with the son of the free woman, to suit Paul’s quotation. The change also places the two mothers in conspicuous contrast, ‘the maid’ or ‘slave girl’ and ‘the free woman.’



Inherit: Genesis 15:3, 4, 7, 8; 17:8; receive, in virtue of relation to Abraham, the blessings promised to Abraham's children.

**Ver. 31.** Result, not inference, from Galatians 4:30. [For δ<sub>10</sub> always points back to a cause or motive, of which it introduces an actual or desired result.] Galatians 4:30 embodies an essential principle of the Kingdom of God which found historic expression in the story of the two sons of Abraham, viz. that the blessings of the Kingdom are for the free and for these only, and that freedom or bondage depends upon the source of our spiritual life. 'For' this 'cause,' i.e. that we may obtain the inheritance possessed only by the free, God gave us a spiritual life derived from the Gospel, the mother of freemen, not from the Law which by its nature can produce only slaves. The negative side is put generally: 'we are not a slave girl's children,' i.e. our relation to Abraham and to God is not derived from a source which involves us in bondage, as the Law would. The positive side is definite, 'the free woman:' for there is only one mother of spiritual freemen.

**Ver. 1.** General statement linking the allegory to the general teaching of this Epistle. The transition is indicated by the word 'Christ,' not found in 18 till now.

For freedom: in order that we may enjoy 'the' Gospel 'freedom.'

Us: emphatic, revealing our great privilege as compared with others. That we may be free is the aim of (Galatians 4:4) the mission, and (Galatians 3:13) the death, of Christ.

Stand then: practical application of Galatians 4:1a, and of the foregoing allegory.

Stand: maintain your position of erectness; cp. Romans 11:20; 1 Corinthians 15:1; 2 Corinthians 1:24. It courteously assumes that the readers, although on the eve of falling, have not yet fallen. So Galatians 1:6; 4:9.

Not again: recalls Galatians 4:9, 'ye wish to be again in bondage.'

Yoke of bondage: 1 Timothy 6:1; cp. Acts 15:10. It is, like 'maid' in Galatians 4:31, quite general.

That Christ has made us free, is a motive for not being again held in anything which destroys Christian freedom.

THE ARGUMENT of 18, we will now endeavor to understand as a whole, and to estimate.

Paul recognised (Romans 4:11f) in believers a spiritual offspring of Abraham, in whom, and in them only, will be fulfilled the promises to Abraham and to his seed. Consequently, Abraham has a double offspring, the Jewish nation and the Christian Church, each looking up to him as father, and claiming inheritance through him. The Jewish nation based its claim on ordinary bodily descent: the Christian Church owes its existence to supernatural power working out in those who believe it, a fulfilment of the Gospel promise. And Paul has proved (e.g. Galatians 3:10) that they whose claim rests on bodily descent are outside the blessings promised to Abraham; which are therefore reserved for those who are sons by supernatural birth. All this recalls, and corresponds with, the historical facts of Abraham's family. For he had two sons, one born according to the ordinary laws of human generation, the other by the extraordinary power of God in one who had believed a promise: and the older was expelled from the home in order that the inheritance might belong only to the younger. Consequently, the Jewish nation and the Christian Church correspond, in these particulars, to Ishmael and Isaac.

Nay more. The Jewish nation owes its spiritual life to the Covenant received from Sinai, a covenant which from its nature can produce only bondmen. For, as Paul has proved, a spiritual life derived from law is helpless bondage. Consequently, Mount Sinai may be called the mother of Judaism, a mother whose children are slaves: and Paul remembers that she raises her rugged head amid the scattered and disinherited sons of Hagar.

Again, for many long centuries the Jewish nation had been looking up to Jerusalem as its mother-city. And this ancient city gives form, not merely to the visions of the old prophets, but to the hopes of the Christian Church. Even to this day we sing of "Jerusalem the golden:" and its foreseen glory and rest have been to Christians in all ages a refuge from fiercest storms. But the city we look for is above. And though actually a place of the future, it is nevertheless the birthplace of our present spiritual life, our home, and our mother. That City and her children, wherever they

be, are essentially and for ever free. The wonderful and unexpected increase of her children in Paul's day was the beginning of the fulfilment, of the only worthy fulfilment, of the glorious visions of Isaiah. The Jerusalem above is, therefore, the city he beheld.

This close parallel, like the similar argument in Romans 9:7-9, overthrows completely the claims of the Jewish disturbers in Galatia. For their relation to Abraham is simply that of Hagar's descendants. And this reply is made the more crushing by the geographical position of the mountain whence they received the Law in which they trust. The worthlessness of such claims is revealed by the expulsion from Abraham's home, at the bidding of the mother of the true seed, of Hagar and her son. So far then this historical comparison serves well a legitimate purpose.

But this is not all. Under this apparently accidental coincidence lie important and eternal truths.

Paul has taught (Galatians 3:22-24) that the Law is a necessary preparation for the Gospel. Consequently, the Jewish nation and the Christian Church represent two stages in the development of the kingdom of God, and indeed two stages in the spiritual history of every Christian. And we cannot doubt that the sequence of events was controlled by God to embody in historic form great spiritual realities. Already in Romans 4:10ff, we have seen the significance of God's Covenant with Abraham, immediately after his faith and many years before the command to circumcise. Similarly, the long delay in the birth of Isaac is analogous to the delay in the mission of the divine Son into the world. And, without assuming any sanction of God for Abraham's relation to Hagar, we may yet believe that the two sons of Abraham were designed by God to prefigure, even in the order of their birth the spiritual offspring of the two Covenants of God with man. In other words, abiding truths find expression in historical facts. And this involves the deeper truth that throughout the universe of God great and broad principles find various embodiments, sometimes in trifling details, which details frequently become valuable indications and memorials of the principles they embody.

Probably the above argument was due to Paul's Rabbinical training. And it is an example of the one good element of this training, viz. careful sifting of the spiritual significance of the details of Holy Scripture. Paul's use of

Scripture assumes its historic truthfulness; and rests on broad principles already and independently proved to be true. Moreover, both here and else. where, he points to a correspondence which bears on its face the mark, not of accident, but of divine purpose.

## SECTION 19

### TO RECEIVE CIRCUMCISION, IS TO REJECT CHRIST

#### CHAPTER 5:2-13a

*Behold I Paul say to you that if ye receive circumcision Christ will profit you nothing. And I protest again to every man receiving circumcision that he is a debtor to do the whole Law. Ye have been severed from Christ, whoever of you are being justified in law: from His grace ye have fallen away. For we, by the Spirit, through faith are eagerly waiting for a hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision but faith working through love.*

*Ye were running nobly. Who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth? The persuasion is not from Him that calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. I am confident about you in the Lord that ye will be no otherwise minded. And he that disturbs you will bear the judgment, whoever he be. But I brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then, of no effect has the snare of the cross become. Would that they who unsettle you would even mutilate themselves. For ye were called for freedom, Brethren.*

Galatians 5:2-6 bring the argument of DIV. 2, which has been in part summed up in the allegory of 18, to bear on the matter of circumcision. This practical application betrays a chief point in the teaching Paul combats in this Epistle, viz. that all Christians ought to be circumcised. So Galatians 6:12: cp. Acts 15:1, 5. Then follow in Galatians 5:7-12 sundry appeals.

I Paul: the personal influence of the Apostle brought to bear on the matter in hand. So 2 Corinthians 10:1.

CIRCUMCISION: now first mentioned. But its casual appearance here without explanation, and again in Galatians 6:12, suggests that it has been

in view throughout the Epistle. It was the outward and visible gate into the bondage of the Jewish Law. Circumcision was prescribed by God to Abraham (Genesis 17:10) some fourteen or more years after by faith he obtained (Genesis 15:18) the Covenant, as a token (Genesis 17:11; Romans 4:11) and condition of it. As a rite, it was in some sense a forerunner of the Mosaic ritual: but, as a simple command easily and fully obeyed, it differed altogether from the many-sided Law, to which none could render due obedience. The rite seems (so Joshua 5:5) to have been carefully observed by Israel in Egypt: for we have no hint of a great circumcising at the Exodus. Cp. Exodus 4:25. Once (Exodus 12:48) it is assumed, and once (Leviticus 12:3) expressly though casually enjoined in the Law. Yet, strangely, it was not performed in the wilderness; but was restored (Joshua 5:3, 8) at the entrance into Canaan. In the O.T. the word 'circumcise' is found again only in Jeremiah 4:4; 9:25, in a spiritual significance. But the common use (Judges 14:3; 15:18; 1 Samuel 14:6; 17:26, 36; 18:25, 27; 31:4, 2 Samuel 1:20; 3:14) of the word 'uncircumcised' to distinguish the Philistines from Israel proves that in Israel the practice was universal. Practically, circumcision was a part of the Law of Moses, and was the initial rite of the Old Covenant.

If ye receive-circumcision: not, 'if ye have already been circumcised,' as though past circumcision were a final bar to future salvation; but, 'if ye are now undergoing circumcision,' ye thereby deliberately reject the blessings brought by Christ. [The present subjunctive limits the assertion to the time during which the process of circumcision is going on; this being extended by implication so long as the persons concerned continue in the same mind. Subsequent repentance would remove them from under this tremendous condemnation. But this, Paul leaves now out of sight.] This word implies (so Galatians 6:12) that the Galatian Christians, though already observing sacred days, were as yet only contemplating circumcision. Hence the earnestness of Paul's appeal.

Profit you nothing: cp. Romans 2:25; 3:1; 1 Corinthians 13:3; 14:6; 15:32; Hebrews 4:2; 13:9; James 2:14, 16. They will have no part in the infinite gain bought for men by the precious blood of Christ. This statement will be proved in Galatians 5:3, 4. And if we receive no gain from Christ, 'through whom are all things,' (1 Corinthians 8:6,) we are poor indeed.

**Ver. 3.** Protest: literally call upon some one, especially God, ‘as witness’ in our favor. It introduces a solemn assertion, as if made in the presence of God. Same word in N.T. only in Ephesians 4:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; Acts 20:26; 26:22. That all these are from the pen or lips of Paul, is a remarkable coincidence. If on his second visit to Galatia he had made a similar ‘protest,’ to this the word ‘again’ would naturally refer. But this supposition is by no means necessary. For Galatians 5:3 is a repetition in stronger language of Galatians 5:2.

Debtor to do the whole Law, implies, as Galatians 5:4 will show, that ‘Christ will profit you nothing:’ and ‘every one receiving circumcision’ includes ‘if ye receive circumcision.’ This solemn repetition reveals how terrible is the consequence here deprecated. And we can understand it. For, the only reason for circumcision was its prescription in the Law: cp. John 7:23. Therefore, to undergo it, was to admit that the Law was still binding; and, if so, it was binding as a condition of the favor of God. Hence to undergo circumcision was (Galatians 5:4) to seek to be ‘justified in law.’ But, His favor, none can obtain by law. For none can render to the Law the obedience it requires. Consequently, the continued validity of the Law involves a universal curse. Now, from this curse Christ died to save us. Therefore, to maintain, by undergoing circumcision, a Christian’s obligation to keep the whole Law, is to reject the benefits of the death of Christ.

**Ver. 4.** Severed: so removed from Christ that in them He will produce no results. Same phrase in same sense in Romans 7:2, 6: same word in Romans 3:3, 31; Galatians 3:17; 5:11. It states a fact which justifies the assertion ‘Christ will profit you nothing,’ in a form suggesting that the cause is in themselves and not in Christ.

Justified in law: the Mosaic Law, but looked at in the abstract as a rule of conduct, and as a surrounding element ‘in’ which they receive justification. See under Galatians 3:11.

Are-being-justified: the process now, from their point of view, actually going on. But it can never be completed: Galatians 3:11; Romans 3:20. See note under Romans 2:4. It is practically the same as ‘seeking justification in law;’ but is more forcefully represented. Although actual justification in law is impossible, the mere beginning of the fruitless process, as Paul’s

readers by their observance (Galatians 4:10) of days and seasons had already begun it, had actually separated them from the influences proceeding from the cross of Christ.

From His grace: literally, 'from the grace;' of God (Galatians 2:21) and (Galatians 1:6) of Christ. This undeserved favor is the source of all spiritual good, and especially of the 'profit' which comes through 'Christ.' Justification 'in law' is (Romans 4:4) essentially by merit; and thus excludes the free undeserved favor which comes through Christ.

Fallen-away, or 'fallen-out, from:' James 1:11, 2 Peter 3:17. It is the exact opposite of 'stand in this grace,' Romans 5:1; and suggests complete removal and lower position. [The Revisers' rendering, 'are severed, are fallen,' confuses needlessly the Greek perfect and aorist. The aorist merely records a past event, without thought of its results, and may be accurately rendered 'have been separated, have fallen.']

By preparing to be circumcised, the Galatian Christians were entering a process of justification in law, i.e. of justification by obeying the prescriptions of the Law of Moses. They thus acknowledged that in order to enjoy the favor of God they were bound to keep the whole Law: for the whole was given by the same authority. But Christ died in order that upon men who have broken the Law may come the undeserved favor of God. Consequently, to receive circumcision was to place oneself beyond the benefits which proceed from Christ, to abandon the lofty position in the favor of God enjoyed by those who believe the Gospel.

**Ver. 5.** We: very emphatic, contrasting the spiritual position of Paul and those like him with that of his readers. This contrast proves how far they have 'fallen.'

The Spirit: of God: for this can be no other than the Spirit received through faith in Galatians 3:2, 14; cp. Galatians 4:6. He is looked at here not as a definite person but in the abstract as an animating principle. By Him was prompted this 'eager-waiting:' same word in Romans 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Corinthians 1:7; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 9:28.

Through faith: subjective source of the eager waiting, and (Galatians 3:2, 14) of the Holy Spirit who prompts it. For (Romans 5:1f) 'by faith... we rejoice in hope.' Since 'hope' is a stretching forward to good things to



come, it is here used objectively as itself to come. So Titus 2:13, 'looking for the blessed hope and the appearance, etc.:', Acts 24:15; Colossians 1:5, 'the hope laid up for us in heaven.'

Hope of righteousness: a hope which belongs to, and goes along with, righteousness; cp. Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:23. Grammatically, 'righteousness' might be the object hoped for. But this is unlikely. For, with Paul, the 'righteousness' of 'faith' is always (cp. Romans 9:30; 1 Corinthians 1:30) a present blessing; even though 'righteousness,' in another sense, viz. the eternal principle of right doing, be still (1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22) a matter of pursuit. And, if 'righteousness' were the object 'hoped' for, it would be clumsy to represent this hope as itself eagerly waited for.

No: Paul waits (2 Timothy 4:8) for 'the crown of righteousness,' the eternal reward which belongs to the righteous: and for the realisation of this 'hope' he eagerly longs.

Righteousness: as in Romans 4:11, 13; 9:30; 10:4: the position or condition of one whom the judge approves. Of God's approval, obtained by faith, right doing is a result. This close connection causes occasional ambiguity in the use of the word. 'Righteousness' is the link between our 'faith' and the 'Spirit' who prompts our 'Hope.' By faith we obtain the approbation of the Judge: and in token thereof God gives us the Holy Spirit, who moves us to 'wait eagerly' for the fulfilment of the visions of future blessing opened to our view by His approbation.

**Ver. 6.** A general and contrasted statement, supporting the word 'faith' in Galatians 5:5, and concluding the application to circumcision in Galatians 5:2-4 of the argument of DIV. 2

In Christ: the all surrounding, and yet personal, element of the new life: as in Galatians 2:4; 3:14, 26, 28; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Avails anything: literally 'has any strength,' i.e. is able to produce results.

Neither circumcision... nor uncircumcision: cp. Galatians 6:15; 1 Corinthians 7:19. Therefore, circumcision neither helps nor hinders life in Christ. This is an express abrogation of the covenant with Abraham, of which (cp. Genesis 17:10-14) circumcision was an absolute condition.

Similarly, Christ abrogated the Mosaic Law: Mark 7:15-19; cp. Leviticus 11:42-45.

But faith: avails everything, as proved in the argument of Galatians 3:1-14, and implied in Galatians 5:5.

Working: producing results, an illustration and proof of the validity of faith.

Love; to our fellows, as in Galatians 5:13; its usual sense when not further qualified. So 1 Corinthians 8:1; 13:1ff. It is a principle prompting us to draw others to ourselves, that their interests may become ours. This is the direction of the 'working' of 'faith;' which produces love and through love other results. For saving faith is an active principle moulding conduct and character. Cp. 1 Thessalonians 1:3. It does this (Galatians 5:22) through the Holy Spirit given (Galatians 3:2, 14) to those who believe. That faith produces results which all must approve, reveals its superiority to circumcision; and thus strengthens the contrast here asserted. This reference to 'love' as an effect of faith prepares the way to Galatians 5:13-15; as does the word 'Spirit' in Galatians 5:5 to Galatians 5:16-26. Paul thus approaches the moral teaching of DIV. 3

Notice in Galatians 5:5, 6 faith, hope, and love; and in the same order as 1 Corinthians 13:13.

This description of spiritual life proves how great is the profit through Christ lost by those who undergo circumcision in order to obtain justification in the Mosaic Law.

**Ver.** 7-13a. Sundry direct appeals against the teaching of the disturbers, concluding DIV. 2

Ye-were-running: in the Christian racecourse, recalling the metaphor of 1 Corinthians 9:24: cp. Galatians 2:2.

Nobly: same word in Galatians 4:17.

Hindered: as if by breaking up the path.

You: emphatic. So good was their beginning that Paul asks who (cp. Galatians 3:1) has stopped them by breaking up the path along which they were running so well.

Obey: literally 'be-persuaded-by;' the obedience of persuasion. Same word in Romans 2:8; Hebrews 13:17; James 3:3; Acts 5:36f, 40; Acts 21:14; 23:21; 28:24.

Obey truth: yield to the persuasive influence of the Gospel, this looked upon in its general character as corresponding with eternal reality. The article before 'truth' is omitted in Vat., Sinai, Alex. MSS.; and by all editors later than Lachmann: but is found in almost all other MSS. Its insertion is so easy, its omission so difficult, to explain, that we may accept with some confidence the testimony of the oldest copies.

That ye should not obey truth: actual result, and therefore represented as the purpose, of the hindrance.

Persuasion: a word similar in form to that rendered 'obey;' and suggested by it. Grammatically, it might denote either a persuasive influence, or surrender to such. Probably, the former here. For this is an answer to the question in Galatians 5:7 about the source of the disobedience. They refused to be persuaded by Truth because they had yielded to another 'persuasion.' Close parallel in Romans 2:8. But the difference is very slight. For, passive surrender implies active persuasion. The influence to which they yielded is

not from Him that calls you: i.e. God, as in Galatians 1:6. The present tense implies that the Gospel voice is still sounding. Galatians 1:6 refers to a voice heard in days gone by.

**Ver. 9.** Word for word as in 1 Corinthians 5:6: see note. This suggests that it was a common proverb. Its application was so evident that Paul did not expound it. This proverb is in some sense a positive answer to Galatians 5:7. For it suggests that the source of the persuasion was small either in the number of the false teachers or in the apparent unimportance of their error. The latter is perhaps the more likely reference: for the importance of doctrine is more often overlooked than that of a few false teachers. In all ages, differences of doctrine have been held to be unimportant: whereas the influence of even one man has been felt to be great. The proverb also suggests that the result would be, as of many 'little' things, silent, unobserved, yet pervasive and great. For the unseen 'leaven' changes completely the nature of 'the whole lump.' Paul thus calls attention, as

does his protest in Galatians 5:3, to the importance of what seemed to the Galatians a small matter.

**Ver. 10.** I: emphatic contrast. After speaking of the obedient persuasion his readers refuse to the Truth and of the persuasion which does not come from Him that calls them, Paul gives his own persuasion about the Galatian Christians.

In the Lord: Romans 14:14; Philippians 1:14; 2:24; 2 Thessalonians 3:4. His confidence comes from union with the Master, and has Him for its surrounding element.

Minded: same word in Romans 8:5, (see note,) and Philippians 1:7; 2:2, 5; 3:15.

No otherwise minded: than Paul has just stated. He has a confidence about them which he feels to be an outflow of Christian life that, when they receive this letter, they will share his alarm about the influence of a little leaven and will recognise in the teaching of the disturbers an influence to be feared. This reveals Paul's confidence that this letter will have its designed salutary effect. It is almost the only gleam of light in the Epistle.

He that disturbs you: hardly sufficient (in the absence of any other indication: contrast Galatians 5:12; 1:7; 6:12) to suggest one specially prominent man. Rather, Paul singles out any individual disturber who comes across his path and speaks of him personally.

Bear the judgment: the sentence which will be pronounced upon disturbers, this looked upon as a heavy burden,

Notice that, as in 2 Corinthians 10:2, 6, etc., Paul distinguishes his readers, to whom he speaks and for whom he has hopes, from the disturbers, about whom he writes but to whom he says nothing, thus indicating that for them he has no hope.

**Ver. 11.** An abrupt question, which can be explained only as being a reply to a charge or insinuation, against Paul, of inconsistency. It is to us obscure because we do not know the charge which provoked it.

But I: emphatic, in contrast to 'he that disturbs.'

Still preach: as before his conversion. For ‘circumcision’ was an essential element of that Judaism which Paul then so eagerly advocated.

Why still? logical consequence; ‘why do they go on persecuting me?’ This question implies that the chief ground of the hostility of Paul’s enemies was his denial that circumcision was binding on Gentiles. And naturally so. For they saw that this denial broke down the spiritual prerogative and monopoly which the Old Covenant gave to the Jewish nation.

Made-of-no-effect: shorn of results, as in Galatians 3:17.

Then (or ‘if so’) is made, etc.: correct inference from a false premiss, if I still preach circumcision; revealing its falsity: cp. 1 Corinthians 5:10; 7:14; 15:14, 18.

The snare of the cross: close coincidence with 1 Corinthians 1:23. The crucifixion of Christ led many to reject Him. It was therefore a trap in which they were caught. But Paul declares that if, while preaching the word of the cross, he still preaches the necessity of circumcision, then has the cross lost its power to hinder the faith of the Jews; in other words, that, if the shameful death of Christ is not inconsistent with the continued obligation of circumcision, i.e. with the continued prerogatives of Israel, it is no longer a difficulty to them. This implies that fear of the loss of spiritual pre-eminence lay at the root of that Jewish hatred to Jesus which took the form of bitter ridicule cast upon the mode of His death, a ridicule still recorded abundantly on the pages of ancient Jewish writers. Paul thus silently uncovers the wounded national pride which hid itself under the veil of refusal to believe in a crucified Messiah. His readers would understand the reference. See further under Galatians 6:12.

**Ver. 12.** A mere passing wish. The almost unknown Greek construction rather suggests that the wish will not be gratified.

Even; introduces a very extreme wish.

Mutilate themselves, or ‘cut themselves off:’ used in the former sense, without any further explanation, in Deuteronomy 23:1 and Strabo, bk. xiii. p. 630, and Justin, 1st ‘Apology’ ch. 27, “Some men mutilate themselves; and ascribe the mysteries to the mother of the gods,” i.e. to the goddess Cybele. This meaning is adopted here without question by Chrysostom

and most Fathers. And it alone suits the extreme and unpractical form of this wish. Merely to desire the disturbers to leave the Church, would be an ordinary and moderate wish; and could not have been expressed in so remarkable a form. Of course, separation from the Church is included in Paul's desire. But this would follow at once from heathen mutilation. Self-mutilation in honor of Cybele was practiced at Pessinus in Galatia, which was indeed a chief seat of her worship. Paul wishes for a moment that the disturbers would go so far as to join the ranks of the heathen devotees around them. He thus compares circumcision with idolatrous mutilation. And rightly. For, although once commanded by God as a sign of His Covenant, yet to do it when no longer required, was but to imitate the needless self-inflictions of heathenism.

Unsettle: same word in Acts 17:6, 21:38.

**Ver.** 13a. A link binding 19 to 18, bringing Paul's teaching about freedom to bear on the matter of circumcision; and a stepping stone to the moral teaching of 20.

For ye: in marked contrast to 'they that unsettle you.' The purpose of the Gospel summons is that we may become and continue 'free.' But the Law brings bondage to all who trust in it. From this bondage Christ died to save us. Therefore Paul is prompted to wish for a moment that they who are causing confusion by endeavoring to lead his readers back into bondage would push their own conduct to its logical result and adopt the hideous mutilations common around them. For, thus, Christians would be saved from their subtle and evil influence. DIVISION 2 is, as we learn from its contents, a disproof of the teaching of some Jewish Christians in Galatia, as at Antioch (Acts 15:1) similar men taught, that 'Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved.'

Against this teaching Paul appeals to his readers' early Christian life, which was derived from faith and not from obedience to law; and to the similar case of Abraham, who obtained by faith his Covenant with God. The promise that in Abraham should all nations be blessed was a foresight of the Gospel: for only through Christ who bore for us the curse of the Law can it be fulfilled. To make its fulfilment contingent on obedience to the Law afterwards given, would destroy the real worth of the promise:

which even human morality forbids. The purpose of the Law was to render salvation impossible except through faith, and thus to force us to Christ. But now this purpose has been accomplished: and by faith we are sons of God. We are, therefore, no longer under the Law. For it belongs to our spiritual childhood: and, now that the set time has come, we are free. The Galatian Christians, however, by their observance of sacred seasons show that they are turning back again to the rudiments of childhood. Paul fears lest his toil for them be in vain. And his fear prompts an earnest appeal. He remembers the warmth of his first reception in Galatia, and asks the reason of the change. He points silently to its authors; and exposes their secret and selfish motives.

The prominence given to the Mosaic Law by the disturbers suggests an appeal to its pages. In the family of Abraham were two sons: but only one was heir of the promise. So are there two Covenants of God with man. And the foregoing argument has shown that the children of the Old Covenant are, like those of Hagar, in bondage. But, in fulfilment of a joyous prophecy of Isaiah, there are now others, an unexpected offspring, who look up to Jerusalem as their Mother, to the free city above. Between the children of the Old and of the New Covenant there is conflict. But, as of yore, the bondmen have no inheritance with the free born. And, because his readers are children of freedom, Paul warns them not to submit to a yoke of bondage.

In plain language Paul states the real significance and consequence of circumcision. To undergo it, is to accept the Law as a condition of God's favor: and, to do this, is to reject the work of Christ and the undeserved favor of God. In complete contrast to all trust in law, Paul cherishes a hope received by faith and from the Holy Spirit, which works in him love and its various manifestations. He warns his readers that an influence not from God is among them, and that a small beginning may be followed by wide-spread results. Yet he has confidence in them. The punishment will fall on the guilty person. Some men charge the Apostle with inconsistency in this matter of circumcision. But the hostility of the Jews disproves the charge. Indeed, their rejection of Christ crucified has its real ground in the overthrow of Jewish prerogatives involved in his death. So damaging is the influence of the disturbers that for the moment Paul almost wishes that

they would relieve the Church of it by joining the ranks of the mutilated devotees of Cybele.



## DIVISION III

### CHRISTIAN MORALS

#### CHAPTERS 5:13b-6

### SECTION 20

#### *LOVE TO OUR NEIGHBOR IS THE SUM OF THE LAW*

#### CHAPTER 5:13b-15

*Ye were called for freedom, Brethren. Only use not your freedom, for an occasion for the flesh: but through love be servants one to another. For the whole Law has been fulfilled in one word, in this, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Leviticus 19:18.) But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed lest one by another ye be consumed.*

After doctrinal exposition follows, as its needful complement, moral teaching. Cp. Romans 12:1ff. Indeed, Paul’s exposition of the Law would be perilously incomplete if he did not show that it produces the highest morality. Oversight of this has again and again led, on the one hand to immorality, and on the other to rejection or mutilation of the teaching of Paul by those whose moral instinct assures them that morality is imperative. Hence Paul is compelled to add to the doctrinal teaching of DIV. 2 the moral development of it in 20, 21. To this he adds in 22 sundry applications of the same. In 23 he closes the Epistle by a few words from his own hand about its chief matter.

**Ver. 13b.** Paul’s passing wish in Galatians 5:12 that the disturbers would join the ranks of heathenism, he justified in Galatians 5:13a by recalling his teaching in 18 that God designs His servants to be free. He did this that in 20 he may defend Christian ‘freedom’ from its most serious abuse. The

word freedom thus becomes a stepping stone to his exposition of Christian morality.

Only; as in Galatians 1:23; 3:2; 6:12, gives special prominence to one thing. Cp. Ph 1:27.

The freedom: this definite liberty, to which God has called you.

An occasion: as in Romans 7:8; 11; 2 Corinthians 5:12; 11:12; a point of departure for a course of activity.

The flesh: the material constitution of our bodies, which determines in great measure our present bodily life, and seeks to rule us entirely; this looked upon collectively and in the abstract as one definite and active power. See note under Romans 8:11. The flesh ever seeks to gratify its own desires and to avoid what it dislikes. Paul warns us not, on the ground that obedience to law is no longer to us a means of obtaining God's favor, to surrender ourselves to the guidance of the flesh, as we shall do if we follow our own inclinations. He thus exposes a subtle foe ever present with us, and a very frequent and terrible abuse of justification by faith. This reference to 'the flesh' prepares a way, as Paul's wont is, to the teaching of 21. Moreover, gratification of bodily desires is essentially and utterly opposed to love, and indeed lies at the root of all selfishness. Therefore, before introducing the Law of Love, Paul warns against the greatest obstacle to it.

By love be-servants: exact opposite of 'an occasion for the flesh.'

Love: as in Galatians 5:6, where it is an outflow of faith.

Be servants: same word in Galatians 4:25; Romans 6:6; 7:6, 25; 14:18; 16:18. It denotes both the position, and the action, of a servant or slave. See under Romans 1:1. As ordinarily used, the word combines the ideas of bondage and of work done for another, both ideas being exemplified in the numerous slaves of Paul's day. Of these two ideas one or other frequently absorbs sole attention, leaving the other almost or quite out of sight. Hence the apparent variety in the use of the word and the apparent contradiction here. God has called us to Himself that we may be absolutely free, i.e. not hemmed in by outward restraint. Yet we love our brethren: and, prompted by this, we cannot but use all our powers for their good, as much as if we

were their slaves. Such bondage is perfect freedom: for it is an unrestrained outflow of our own inmost and highest will. The apparent contradiction results from the poverty of human language. Only by using contradictory terms can we mark out the limits of our thoughts, and thus guard them from overstatement. Compare carefully similar language, evidently familiar to Paul, in Romans 6:18, 22; 1 Corinthians 9:19; 1 Peter 2:16.

**Ver. 14.** The whole Law: of Moses, which contains Leviticus 19:18.

Has been fulfilled: or 'made-full:' same word in Romans 13:8; 8:4; Matthew 1:22, etc. Obedience to the whole Law has been embodied 'in one word,' so that he who has obeyed this one precept has rendered all the obedience the Law requires. For all the commands of the Law are prohibitions of something contrary to love. (Cp. 1 Timothy 1:5.) This implies that even the ritual of the Mosaic Law is subordinate to this great command. And, to work in us love, which is the essence of God and involves all blessedness, is the ultimate aim (cp. Romans 8:4) of both the Law and the Gospel.

**Ver. 14** is a summary of Romans 13:8-10: see my note. That Paul twice quotes Leviticus 19:18, reveals its importance to him. It is the complement of the twice quoted words in Habakkuk 2:4, 'The righteous man will live by faith.' This precept is also quoted in James 2:8, thus forming a link between James and Paul; and in Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27, thus connecting the teaching of Paul and James with the recorded words of Jesus.

That the fulfilment of THE LAW is here given as a motive for conduct, proves that in some real sense the Law has abiding validity. This agrees with Romans 8:4, which says that fulfilment of the Law was a purpose of the mission of the Son of God. For, if so, the Law is an embodiment of God's will about us; and therefore a rule of life to His servants. This is true specially of the deep underlying principles of the Law of Moses, such as that now before us. The mass of moral precepts belongs rather to the alphabet of morality. The ritual has abiding value as an expression of Gospel truth. Therefore, as in this verse, the Law may be quoted as a motive for Christian conduct.

All this does not contradict Paul's teaching in Romans 7:4, 6; 6:14; Galatians 3:25 that we are dead to the Law and no longer under its power. For, obedience to law is no longer to us the condition, and means of obtaining, the favor of God. Else we should never obtain it. For until God smiles upon us we cannot obey Him aright. In the midst of our sins and our moral helplessness we obtain pardon simply by belief of the good news of Him who died for sinners. Pardon is followed by the gift of the Holy Spirit to be in us the motive-power of a new life in harmony with the will of God, and therefore with the Law. Yet, as a condition of the favor of God and consequently an iron gate excluding us from it, the Law has utterly lost its power. In this sense it has completely passed away. The barrier has been broken down by Him who bore our curse and burst for Himself and us the bars of death.

On the other hand, the authority of the Law, which is strengthened immensely by the transcript of it in our hearts, prevents us from believing intelligently that God smiles upon us while we do what He forbids. Consequently, without obedience there can be no abiding faith; and therefore no abiding smile of God. But obedience is a result of His favor; and therefore cannot be a means of obtaining it. Between these views of obedience there is an infinite practical difference.

We see therefore that the Law is no longer a dread taskmaster under whose rule we tremble, but our Father's voice guiding our steps. And every precept is a promise of some good which our Father will work in us by His Spirit. Upon the ancient writing which condemned us has fallen light from the Cross of Christ: and the brightness of that light has changed its condemnation into promises of infinite blessing. It is now a lamp to our feet and a light to our path: and its statutes are our songs in the house of our pilgrimage.

To the advocates in Galatia of the abiding validity of the Law of Moses, this verse would come with special force.

**Ver. 15.** Conduct exactly opposed to love. That the readers were in danger of it, this warning proves.

Bite: like dogs or wild beasts.

And devour, or 'eat-up:' a further stage. Same word in 2 Corinthians 11:20; Mark 12:40; Revelation 11:5.

Consumed: ultimate destruction. Same word in Luke 9:54. [The Greek present tenses describe the process; and the aorist, the result.] This verse suggests that the Judaizers had caused (cp. Acts 15:2) bitter contention between church-members; and reveals the need of the moral teaching of Galatians 5:13, 14. Paul warns his readers that, if they so far forget the Law of love as to act like wild beasts, they will thereby destroy their spiritual life and themselves.

## SECTION 21

### THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH

#### CHAPTER 5:16-26

*And I say, Walk by the Spirit, and the desire of the flesh ye will not fulfil. For the flesh desires against the Spirit; and the Spirit against the flesh. For these are contrary, one to the other; in order that whatever things ye may wish these ye may not do. But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under law. And manifest are the works of the flesh, which are fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of fury, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revelling, and the things like these: of which I forewarn you, as I forewarned, that they who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control. Against such things there is no law. And they that belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the emotions and the desires of it. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.*

After pointing to Love as the disposition of heart from which flows human morality, in contrast to self-surrender to the flesh, which is ever a source of enmity, Paul now still further traces Christian morality to its divine source, viz. the ‘Spirit’ of God, whom he contrasts with the ‘flesh.’ For the love described in 20 is ‘the love of the Spirit,’ Romans 15:30. Already Paul has taught that God gives to His adopted sons the Spirit of the only begotten Son to evoke in them filial confidence in God. He now teaches that the same Spirit will be the guide and strength of their life, neutralising in them the influence of the flesh and producing every form of moral good. In Galatians 5:16, 17, he states the contrast of flesh and Spirit; and makes it more conspicuous by turning in Galatians 5:18-21, 22f, 24, 25 again and again (cp. Romans 1:24-32) from one to the other. Of this comparison the

words ‘Spirit’ and ‘flesh’ in Galatians 5:5, 13 are forerunners. He then concludes 21 with a warning similar to, but milder than, the close of 20.

**Ver.** 16. And I say: as in Galatians 4:1: cp. Galatians 3:17. That Paul refers to the ‘Spirit’ of the Son, is made quite certain by his constant teaching that He is the animating principle of the Christian life: cp. Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19. This constant usage renders the article needless: cp. Galatians 3:3; Romans 8:13. And the absence of the article directs us to the Holy Spirit in His abstract quality as an inward animating principle: so Galatians 5:5, 18, 25; and ‘flesh’ and ‘desire’ here.

By the Spirit: under His active influence, both guiding and strengthening; ideas involved in the word ‘Spirit.’ So Galatians 5:5, 18, 25; 3:3; Romans 8:13, 14; Ephesians 1:13; in all which passages the ‘Spirit’ is much more than (Ellicott and Lightfoot here) “the metaphorical path, manner, or rule of action.” He is the divine Agent of all Christian action. [Cp. Romans 3:24, ‘by His grace;’ 1 Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 2:1, 5.] The Spirit guides us along a path corresponding to His own nature: hence the companion phrase, ‘according to Spirit,’ in Romans 8:4.

Walk: cp. 2 Corinthians 12:18; Romans 8:4. ‘Allow the Spirit to choose your steps.’

Desire is the chief feature of the flesh: Galatians 5:24; Ephesians 2:3; cp. Romans 6:12. In virtue of their common constitution, our bodies yearn for various objects needful or pleasant. See note under Romans 8:11. And these longings of the flesh do not distinguish right from wrong. Consequently, to yield to them, leads inevitably to sin. As in Galatians 5:13, the word ‘flesh’ reveals the source of the contention condemned in Galatians 5:15. See notes under 1 Corinthians 3:3; Romans 8:11.

Fulfil or ‘accomplish’: same word in Romans 2:27. It denotes the attainment of a goal or aim. Cognate word in 2 Corinthians 11:15, see note; Romans 6:21f; 1 Corinthians 10:11; 1 Timothy 1:5. If the Holy Spirit guides our steps, then will the tendencies inherent to the constitution of our bodies be prevented from working out their otherwise inevitable results. (See note under Romans 8:17.) For the Spirit of God, if we yield to His inward guidance, will by His own infinite power defend us against the

power of sin which seeks (Romans 6:12) to erect and maintain its throne in our bodies. Compare carefully Romans 8:13.

**Ver. 17.** Supports Galatians 5:16 by restating, and further expounding, the above contrast.

Desires against: absolute and mutual and active opposition of 'the flesh' and 'the Spirit.' The word 'desires' is in itself neither good nor bad, and may therefore be supplied here as predicate of 'the' Holy 'Spirit;' as in Luke 22:15 it is predicated of Christ, and in 1 Peter 1:12 of angels. Cp. 1 Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 6:11. The rendering 'lust' (A.V. and R.V.) is therefore most unsuitable: for it cannot be predicated of the Spirit, and suggests an idea, viz. sin, not involved in the word. But since 'desire' is a chief element in the practical influence of 'the flesh,' and since in the flesh sin dwells and reigns, we read in the New Testament much more often of bad than of good desires. This implied desire of the Spirit makes the contrast of the two tendencies the more marked.

For these are opposed, etc.; supports the foregoing, by a restatement and further exposition.

In order that... ye may not do: purpose of each of these opposing influences. If we wish to do a good thing, the desire of the flesh tends to lead us the opposite way: and conversely. This inherent tendency of the constitution of our bodies to hinder in us the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit's contrary purpose, are motives for following in all things the guidance of the Spirit; and are an assurance that if we do so this evil tendency will not in us attain its goal. The essential hostility of the two principles compels us to choose sides: and there can be no doubt what our choice should be. Thus Galatians 5:17 supports Galatians 5:16.

We have here no trace of blame; and therefore no hint that these words are true only of immature Christians such as Paul's readers undoubtedly were. And the general terms, 'the flesh' and 'the Spirit,' suggest a universal truth. See under Galatians 5:24. The A.V. 'so that ye cannot do, ', etc., is a serious mistranslation. For it implies that the readers were not able to do what their better judgment approved; whereas Paul speaks only of opposite tendencies, leaving open the possibility of successfully resisting them.



Ga5.

Led by the Spirit: Romans 8:14: parallel and equal to 'walk by the Spirit,' but making more prominent the intelligent activity of the Spirit.

Under law: as in Galatians 4:4, 5, 21; Romans 6:14f; 1 Corinthians 9:20: no longer held in bondage and condemnation under rules of conduct which we have already broken and are still unable to obey. This statement is proved in Galatians 5:23.

**Ver.** 19-21. Catalogue of 'the works of the flesh,' interrupting the argument of Galatians 5:18 to reveal by contrast the excellence of the fruit of the Spirit, which last proves that those 'led by the Spirit are not under law.' It is also a third reason for walking by the Spirit.

Manifest: conspicuous before the eyes of men: see under Romans 1:19. All can see for themselves that the following list is correct.

The works of the flesh: various fulfillments of the 'desire of the flesh,' results of surrender to the influence of our bodily life. Cp. 'works of law' in Galatians 2:16, cp. Romans 2:15; 'of the Lord,' 1 Corinthians 16:10; 'of God,' John 9:3; 6:28f; 'of faith,' 2 Thessalonians 1:11.

Which are: more correctly 'to which class belong,' implying that the following list is not complete. Similar lists in Romans 1:29; 13:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 2 Corinthians 12:20; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5; 1 Timothy 1:9; Mark 7:21; Revelation 21:8; 22:15; 1 Peter 4:3. We note four divisions.

- (1) Sensuality, including fornication, intercourse with harlots; see under 1 Corinthians 5:1: uncleanness; Romans 1:24; anything inconsistent with personal purity: wantonness; Romans 13:13; insolent and open disregard of all restraint. Same three words together in 2 Corinthians 12:21. The last forms a sort of climax.
- (2) Idolatry: and the closely related 'sorcery,' the practice of magical arts; same word in Revelation 21:8; 22:15; 9:21; 18:23; Exodus 7:11, 22.
- (3) Various forms of discord. Strife, jealousies, outbursts of fury, factions: same words in same order in 2 Corinthians 12:20; see notes there and 1 Corinthians 3:3.

Parties: same word in 1 Corinthians 11:18, the Greek original of our word ‘heresy.’ They who adopted error formed themselves in later ages, for the more part, into parties outside the Catholic Church.

Envy: Romans 1:29; Philippians 1:15; 1 Timothy 6:4; Titus 3:3; Matthew 27:18, James 4:5: mere vexation at others’ good; a much worse word than ‘jealousy’ which (see under 1 Corinthians 12:31) has good elements.

(4) Drunkenness and revelling or riotous feasting: same words in Romans 13:13: cp. 1 Peter 4:3. [The plurals in this passage denote various outbursts of drunkenness, etc.]

And the like: added in a consciousness that even the above long list falls short of the infinite variety of sin.

This list begins with sins immediately prompted by the constitution of our bodies; then passes on to idolatry which rules men by gratifying their bodily desires; and to the collision with others which results inevitably from the selfishness of such gratification, and against which Paul has in Galatians 5:15 just warned his readers; and concludes with another class of sins immediately prompted by the appetites of the flesh.

I forewarn, or ‘say-beforehand’: before the penalty is inflicted. Same word in 2 Corinthians 13:2.

Forewarned: on a previous visit to Galatia. Whether the second ‘fore-’ contrasts Paul’s former words with his words now or, like the first ‘fore-,’ with their future fulfilment, is uncertain and unimportant. The previous word ‘forewarn’ suggests slightly the latter reference. Paul reminds his readers that he is only repeating what he has said before.

Such things; reminds us again (cp. ‘and the like’ just above and ‘which sort of things’ in Galatians 5:19) of the infinite variety of sin, reaching far beyond the long catalogue given.

Inherit the kingdom of God: become, in virtue of filial relation to God, citizens of the future and glorious realm over which, in a royalty which His children will share, God will reign for ever. Same words in 1 Corinthians 6:10; 15:50.

**Ver.** 22-23. A fourth argument for Galatians 5:16; also completing the argument of Galatians 5:18.

**Fruit:** visible outgrowth of the unseen and mysterious vital force of the Holy Spirit. Cp. Romans 1:13; 6:21f; Ephesians 5:9; Philippians 1:11, 22; James 3:18. The change from 'works of the flesh' to 'the fruit of the Spirit' accords with Paul's use of the word 'fruit' only for good results. The various virtues following form, in organic unity, each promoting the others, 'the' one 'fruit of the Spirit.' Similar catalogues in Colossians 3:12; 2 Timothy 3:10.

**Love:** put first as the central principle of the Christian life. It is an outflow of the Spirit received through faith: Galatians 3:14; 5:6. And it links 21 to 20.

**Joy:** triumphant overflow of Christian gladness. Cp. 'joy in the Holy Spirit,' Romans 14:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:6.

**Peace:** probably, as suggested by the words following, (cp. Romans 14:17-19,) concord with others, in contrast to the discord of Galatians 5:20.

**Longsuffering:** Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12; 2 Timothy 3:10; 4:2: a long holding back of passion; 'slow to anger,' James 1:19. A frequent attribute of God, Romans 2:4; 9:22; as is 'kindness,' Ephesians 2:7, a gentle mode of dealing with others.

**Goodness:** doing good to others, by methods not necessarily gentle; Romans 15:14; Ephesians 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:11.

**Faith:** probably faithfulness, a disposition on which others can rely, as in Romans 3:3. For, in its usual meaning, viz., assurance that God will fulfil His word, 'faith' holds a unique place as the means by which we receive the Holy Spirit and 'the' entire 'fruit of the Spirit'; and is therefore not likely to be classed as one among many elements of that fruit.

**Meekness:** absence of self-assertion; see under 1 Corinthians 4:21.

**Self-control:** Acts 24:25; 2 Peter 1:6; Sirach 18:29, "self-control of soul after thy desires go not, and from thy passions refrain." A cognate verb in 1 Corinthians 7:9; 9:25.

Against such things: in contrast to (Galatians 5:21) ‘those who practice such things,’ of whom the Law declares that they ‘will not inherit the Kingdom of God.’ Now, since the Spirit produces as His fruit dispositions which the Law does not condemn, they who (Galatians 5:18) ‘are led by the Spirit are not under law.’ The law is no longer a burden under which they groan. Just so, upright citizens think nothing of the criminal law; whereas to those who break or wish to break it, the same law is a terrible reality. Thus Paul completes the argument of Galatians 5:18 in support of Galatians 5:16. This deliverance from the Law by fulfilment of it (Galatians 5:14) was a purpose of the mission of the Son of God: Romans 8:4. The unexpected reference to the Law in Galatians 5:14, 18, 23 reveals its large place in the thought of Paul.

**Ver. 24.** Another argument in support of Galatians 5:16, viz. that to ‘fulfil the desire of the flesh’ is to renounce our own acceptance of the Christian life.

Belong to Christ Jesus, or literally (R.V.) ‘are of Christ Jesus’: 1 Corinthians 3:23; 2 Corinthians 10:7; cp. 1 Corinthians 3:4. They stand in special relation to Christ as His servants, disciples, members of His body, etc.

Crucified: as in Galatians 2:20; 6:14; Romans 6:6. Notice three crucifixions in this Epistle; of Paul, of the flesh and its desires, and of the world. Each of these implies the others. In each case ‘crucified’ denotes death in virtue of Christ’s death on the cross and by union with the ‘Crucified:’ cp. Galatians 2:20 with Galatians 5:19; Galatians 6:14 with Colossians 2:20.

The flesh is dead, i.e. its life, or in other words its activity and power, has come to an end: see note under Romans 7:8, and compare carefully Romans 6:6 and my note. ‘They have crucified the flesh,’ by their own act: for the destruction of the power of the flesh resulted from their own self-surrender and faith. See note under 2 Corinthians 7:1.

The emotions: same word in same sense in Romans 7:5: elsewhere it denotes suffering, as in 2 Corinthians 1:5ff. Compare our word ‘passion,’ which combines both meanings. Objects around first produce in us ‘emotions,’ in which the mind is chiefly passive, acted upon from without: these, taking practical and active direction towards the objects which

produce them, become 'desires.' Desires are a constant accompaniment of 'flesh' so long as it has vitality: and 'emotions' are the beginning of 'desires.' Paul declares that, 'together with the flesh' these 'emotions and desires' have, by self-surrender to Christ and by union with His death, altogether lost their power.

The categorical statement of Galatians 5:24, like Paul's statements about himself in Galatians 2:20; 6:14, can be no less than a description of the ideal and normal Christian life, i.e. of the life which God designs us to live and which He is ready to work in us from this moment by His own infinite power and in proportion to our faith. At first sight this statement seems inconsistent with Galatians 5:17. For if the flesh has desire and purpose, it must be alive, whereas here Paul implies that it is dead. But this inconsistency is but the poverty of human language, which often compels us to state opposite sides of the same truth in terms apparently contradictory. Each statement admits an interpretation in harmony with the other. The flesh is still alive in the sense that it exerts upon us an influence towards forbidden objects which can be effectually resisted only by the presence of the Spirit of God within us. And this is a reason for following ever the guidance of the Spirit. On the other hand, if in all things we accept His guidance, this hostile influence of the flesh will be neutralised so completely that it will no longer influence our conduct or defile our thoughts. And, in view of this complete victory which Christ has gained for us by His death, and which God is ready to work now, in all who venture to believe His promise, by joining them to the Crucified One, Paul says correctly that to those who belong to Christ the flesh and its desires have passed away, that their life has altogether ceased. By so saying he greatly helps our faith to grasp and appropriate the victory here described. The discrepancy is not greater than that between Galatians 2:20, 'I live in the flesh' and Romans 8:9, 'ye are not in the flesh.'

Notice that just as the flesh is the link uniting us to the material world around and the medium through which, by its susceptibility to material influences and by its desire for material objects, the world acts upon us, so it is also the link uniting the unsaved to sin and the avenue through which operate the evil influence and the domination of the material world. Christ died in order that by His death this link may be practically broken and this avenue closed, that by union with the Crucified we may be set free from

this influence and bondage. Virtually, we were set free when Christ died: formally, when we joined His Church: actually, when, and so far as, we venture to believe that this inward crucifixion is already ours.

**Ver. 25.** Concluding argument in support of Galatians 5:16, which verse it recalls. It is a practical application of the foregoing doctrinal teaching.

By the Spirit: as in Galatians 5:16; under the influence of the Holy Spirit acting upon us from within as an animating principle.

If we live by the Spirit: an assumed fact: for He is in us the breath of immortal life. Therefore, Paul says, we should allow Him to direct our steps. For, in proportion as we yield to His influence, will the life He imparts be rich. Similar thought in Romans 8:2: for 'the law of the Spirit' is the Holy Spirit guiding our action; and since He has made us free from the law of sin and of death, He is to us 'the Spirit of life.'

Walk: different from the word in Galatians 5:16, but found in Galatians 6:16; Romans 4:12; Philippians 3:16; Acts 21:24; all very instructive parallels. It calls attention to the path in which we walk.

**Ver. 26.** Steps in which the Spirit will never guide us, a negative specific application of the doctrinal teaching of 21 and a transition to the positive specific application of the same in 22. This application was prompted doubtless by the disposition in the readers which suggested the similar application (Galatians 5:15) of 20.

Vainglorious: Philippians 2:3, cherishing empty opinions about ourselves: further expounded in Galatians 6:3. From this root spring as offshoots mutual provocation and envy. Paul warns against both root and offshoots. [The present subjunctive suggests that the vainglory was already creeping in.]

Provoking (or 'challenging') one another: a frequent outcome of 'envy,' i.e. of vexation at the superiority of others.

SECTION 21 implies that the great contrast of 'flesh' and 'Spirit' so familiar to Paul, (cp. Romans 8:4-13,) a contrast underlying and pervading both the natural and the moral constitution of man, is also the basis of his moral probation. See notes under Romans 8:11, 17

The flesh is the visible side of man, animated matter. Mysteriously pervading it, preserving it from corruption and giving to it growth and well-being, is the invisible spirit. Thus in man meet and at every point interpenetrate, the seen and unseen worlds; the one destined to crumble soon into its original dust, the other created for endless life. We have thus the unseen world within us, actually present to our inmost consciousness. Now each of these elements claims to rule our entire action and to mould our inner life. And they are in absolute opposition. The flesh, acting upon us through desires aroused by material objects around, tends to beget various kinds of actions, many of them indisputably bad. Such actions will exclude us from the glory of the coming kingdom. But in absolute opposition to the flesh is the one Spirit of God, whom God has given to dwell in the hearts of His people, that thus their spirit may have (Romans 8:10) immortal life, and to be in them an all-wise guide. The Spirit is the living and divine seed from which springs a harvest of moral excellence. This excellence is all that the Law requires. Consequently, for those under His influence the Law has no terrors. And in proportion as they follow His guidance is the life which He imparts rich and strong.

The evil influences of the flesh are still a power against which the Christian must needs be ever on his guard. But his warfare is shared by the Spirit of God, against whom even the flesh is powerless. Consequently, the presence of the Spirit in our hearts has already in us put an end, as we abide in faith, to the rule of the flesh. We may therefore say that in us, through the death of Christ, the flesh itself is already dead, that our old selves and our old life have been buried in His grave. All this is abundant reason for complete self-surrender to the guidance of the Spirit. He will inspire that love which is fulfilment of the Law, and which alone will save Christian liberty from degenerating into hurtful licence.

Notice the massive simplicity and grandeur of Paul's double foundation of Christian morality. He lays down first the one precept of love, in the very words of the ancient Law, a precept including all others. But even this, if it stood alone, would but reveal our inability to do what God requires, and thus condemn us. Paul therefore invokes the Spirit, the seed divine from which grows, by its unseen and mysterious vitality, the fruit of love and of all virtue. A specimen of the superstructure this foundation is capable of supporting, Paul will erect for us in 22.

## SECTION 22

### SPECIAL APPLICATIONS

#### CHAPTER 6:1-10

*Brethren, if a man be even overtaken in some trespass, ye spiritual ones restore such a one in the Spirit of meekness, looking to thyself lest also thou be tempted. Bear one another's burdens; and thus fulfil the laws of Christ. For if an one thinks himself to be something, while he is nothing, he deceives his own mind. But let each one prove his own work: and in reference to himself alone he will have his ground of exultation, and not in reference to another man. For each one will bear his own load.*

*Let him that is instructed in the word take part with him that instructs, in all good things. Be not deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. Because he that sows for his own flesh, will from the flesh reap corruption: and he that sows for the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Moreover, in doing well let us not fail. For in due season we shall reap, if we do not faint. Therefore, as we have opportunity let us do good towards all men, and especially towards those of the household of the faith.*

Already, in Galatians 5:26, Paul has given a negative application of the teaching of 21. This is now followed by the sundry positive applications of 20 and 21, chiefly in the direction of mutual help.

**Ver. 1.** Brothers; introduces suitably an appeal for brotherly aid.

Overtaken: as though the evil deed, i.e. strong temptation to it, had come suddenly upon him; and he had been surprised into sin. Paul thus softens the case he supposes.

Trespass: Romans 4:25; 5:15ff: a moral fall.



Ye, the spiritual ones: 1 Corinthians 2:15; 3:1: men under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in contrast to the man who has fallen. This title recalls the special teaching of 21. Each reader would judge whether it describes himself and is here reminded of the obligation it involves. Cp. Romans 15:1; Philippians 3:15.

Restore: so as to be again fully equipped for the service of God: same word in 1 Corinthians 1:10, see notes. [The present tense here and in 2 Corinthians 13:11, pictures the restoration as gradual.] Paul bids his fellow-Christians aid the recovery of their fallen brother.

In the Spirit of meekness: 1 Corinthians 4:21: the Holy Spirit, as the unseen root and seed (Galatians 5:23) of meekness, and as the all-surrounding element of Christian correction. The conspicuous place of the Holy Spirit in 21 permits no other exposition. The inserted word 'Spirit' was suggested probably by 'spiritual.' Never are we in greater peril of undue self-assertion, and therefore in greater need of 'meekness,' than in reproving others. For their fall evokes in us a sense of superiority. How deeply Paul felt this, we learn here and in 1 Corinthians 4:21; 2 Corinthians 10:1; 2 Timothy 2:25.

Looking: more fully, 'looking with a purpose:' see note, 2 Corinthians 4:18. The purpose is immediately stated.

Tempted: our loyalty to Christ subjected to a test: see under 2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Corinthians 7:5. These words further soften the supposed case by suggesting that if others had been similarly tempted they might also have fallen. A remembrance of this will mingle meekness with our reproof. The change from ye to thou suggests how personal and solitary is temptation. In the hour of trial we stand or fall alone.

The exceptional case suggested in this verse implies the moral soundness of the Galatian Christians generally, in striking contrast to the doctrinal unsoundness which evoked in Paul fear lest his labors for them should be in vain. This implies further that morality, apart from correct doctrine, is not sufficient for the vitality of a Church.

**Ver. 2.** Burdens: literally 'heavy-weights:' same word in 2 Corinthians 4:17; Matthew 20:12; Acts 15:28; Revelation 2:24; 1 Thessalonians 2:6.

One another's: emphatic, in contrast to bearing only our own burdens.

Bear: same word in same sense in Romans 15:1. Galatians 6:1 suggests that Paul refers chiefly to loving and intelligent sympathy with a fallen brother, making his spiritual loss our own loss and sorrow, and using our powers to raise him when pressed down under a consciousness of his own sin. An example of such sympathy we find in 2 Corinthians 11:29. These words imply that this sympathy and aid may involve us in difficulties, like the carrying of a heavy 'burden;' and exhort us to submit to such for our brother's good.

The law of Christ: the rule of conduct supported by His authority; cp. 'the Law of Moses; in Luke 2:22; 24:44; John 7:23; Acts 13:39; 15:5; 27:23. It refers evidently to the precept quoted in Galatians 5:14. And the phrase confirms the historical correctness of Matthew 22:39, etc. where Christ is recorded to have paid to this precept special honor.

Fulfil: or, 'fill up to the full:' same strong word in 1 Thessalonians 2:16, 'fill up their sins;' 1 Corinthians 16:17; Philippians 2:30. To sympathise with, and endeavor to raise, the fallen, is a genuine mark of Christian love. Just as the words 'spiritual' and 'spirit' bring to bear upon the exhortation of Galatians 6:1 the teaching of 21; so this phrase brings to bear upon it the teaching of 20. Thus Paul exemplifies each of these foundation principles of Christian morality.

**Ver. 3.** To be something: of intrinsic worth: same words in Galatians 2:6; cp. Acts 5:36.

He being nothing: a suggestion which each reader would test in reference to his own case. It was Paul's judgment about himself: 2 Corinthians 12:11. The wisest and best cannot in the least degree, by his own skill or strength, avoid the perils which surround him and attain his highest interest. To think we can, is to inflict on ourselves 'mental-deception:' a word akin to this last, in Titus 1:10; cp. James 1:26.

By making Galatians 6:3 a reason for Galatians 6:2, Paul suggests the all-important lesson that an inflated self-estimate makes us careless about the burdens of others, and thus hinders us from fulfilling the law of love. Similar teaching is suggested in Galatians 5:26; 1 Corinthians 4:6; 5:2. Vainglory is a subtle and dangerous form of selfishness; and always

obscures moral vision and weakens brotherly affection. There is therefore no need to join Galatians 6:3 to Galatians 6:1, making Galatians 6:2 a sort of parenthesis: and the importance of Galatians 6:2 forbids this.

**Ver. 4.** His own work: looked upon as one whole, (cp. 1 Corinthians 3:13ff; 9:1,) including (2 Corinthians 11:15) various ‘works.’ Conspicuous contrast to the mental hallucination of Galatians 6:3.

Prove: test with good intent; see under 2 Corinthians 13:5. Paul bids us, instead of indulging in vain subjective dreams, to put to the test, and thus discover the worth of, the total objective result of our labors.

And then; emphasises the above exhortation as the condition of what follows.

Exultation: see under Romans 2:17.

Ground-of-exultation in-reference-to: similar words in same sense in Romans 4:2. We are all prone to indulge in an exultation based upon a comparison of ourselves with others who seem to be inferior to us. A conspicuous example of this, was the Pharisee of Luke 18:11. All such exultation is delusive: for the inferiority of others is no measure of our absolute worth. But a consideration of God’s ‘work’ in us and through our agency, leaving out of sight all comparison with others, may justly give rise to deep gratitude and exultant joy that He has condescended to use us as agents of good: for all such is exultation in God. Of this, a conspicuous example is Paul himself: cp. Romans 15:17; 1 Corinthians 9:15f; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 11:10. Moreover, if we limit our exultation to actual results, (‘each one his own work,’) our exultation will frequently be turned into deep self-abasement. In 2 Corinthians 10:12-18 we find the same thought as in this verse, more fully developed.

**Ver. 5.** Load: something to be carried, whether heavy or light; akin to a verb denoting ‘to carry.’ Hence we have, with the same word, both light and heavy loads: Matthew 11:30; 23:4; Luke 11:46. It thus differs from the word in Galatians 6:2, of which the chief idea is heavy weight. In Acts 27:10, it denotes a ship’s cargo. Paul’s exhortation to cease comparing ourselves with others and look at ourselves alone, he now supports by saying that there is a load from which no one can release us, a ‘load’ of ‘his own’ which in spite of all brotherly help ‘each one will himself bear.’ This

is the solitary side of every one's Christian life. Remembrance of it should deter us from comparisons with others, all which overlook our solitary personal responsibility, And, that the help we can render is thus limited, should move us to render to our brethren all the help we can.

**Ver. 6.** From a specific exhortation in Galatians 6:1 to aid the fallen, Paul passed on in Galatians 6:2 to a more general exhortation to help the burdened ones, and supported this in Galatians 6:3 by a warning against inflated self-estimate and in Galatians 6:4 by a suggestion that each test his own work apart from comparison with others and in view (Galatians 6:5) of his own personal and solitary responsibility. He now goes a step further from the specific to the general, by bidding all his readers, whom he divides into two all-inclusive classes, to join together in doing every kind of good.

Let-him-take-part or 'be-partner-with': either join with others in some action, or share with them something belonging to them or to him. Same or cognate word in Romans 12:13; 15:26f; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:16; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 8:4; 9:13; 13:13.

Instructed: the Greek original of the English word 'catechumen:' same word in Romans 2:18; 1 Corinthians 14:19; Luke 1:4; Acts 18:25; 21:21, 24. From the standpoint of Galatians 6:5, Paul looks at each one, 'instructed' or 'instructing,' singly cp. Galatians 6:1. The simple term, 'the word,' (Colossians 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:6,) reveals the unique grandeur of the Gospel as the one Word of God and of life.

Him that instructs: including Paul himself and all those who, church-officers or others, exercise the gift of teaching. This Division of church-members implies that regular instruction was even then a part of church order.

All good things: either material good; as in Luke 1:53; 12:18f; Luke 16:25; or good actions, especially beneficence, as always with Paul, e.g. Galatians 6:10; Romans 10:15; 12:10; 13:13; 14:28; 15:11; Romans 12:9, 21; 13:3f; 14:16; 15:2; 16:19. The plural number suggests the variety of good things. To these belong (1) the restoration of the fallen and (2) the bearing of others' burdens. This exhortation is included in the final exhortation of Galatians

6:10. Paul intimates that they who teach others must practice good things; and that in this they are to be joined by their pupils.

Following Chrysostom and Jerome, many expositors suppose that 'all good things' denotes liberal maintenance for Christian teachers; chiefly on the ground that the word rendered 'take-part' has the sense of Christian liberality in three of four other places in Paul's Epistles, and that not otherwise can we account, for the unexpected mention here of the teachers and the taught. But it is inconceivable that Paul would touch for a moment, in language altogether indefinite and ambiguous, and then leave, a matter so definite and specific, and one of which there is no hint in the foregoing or following context. Moreover, the tremendous warning of Galatians 6:7 leads us to expect in Galatians 6:6 some indication of an error or peril proportionately great, as we find in the other places where similar though less solemn language is used; and a correction of the error in the words following, i.e. in Galatians 6:7b, 8. Again, the maintenance of those set apart from secular work to serve the Church is not liberality but payment of a just debt. It is most unlikely that Paul would urge his readers to this duty by bidding them share with their teachers all their earthly goods. Indeed, he seems rather to dissuade from having many paid teachers in the infant Church. Although claiming for himself and others a right to be paid, he refused (1 Corinthians 9:15) to assert his claim; and in this he was setting (2 Thessalonians 3:9) an example for others. Once only (1 Timothy 5:17f) apparently, near the close of his life, Paul refers to the maintenance of ordinary church-teachers. And, in the absence of other proof, this general and sweeping exhortation cannot be accepted as evidence that such teachers were supported in the Churches of Galatia. For it gives good sense, as shown in the above exposition, without supposing any such reference.

Paul divided his readers into teachers and taught in order perhaps to say that restoration of the fallen and help for the burdened must not be left to the shepherds of the flock, but that all must join in all such works of mercy. That the metaphor of seed (Galatians 6:7) refers in 1 Corinthians 9:11; 2 Corinthians 9:6 to liberality, has little weight: for it is very common in various applications. And the tremendous language which introduces the metaphor suggests that Paul was thinking of something more solemn than maintenance of Christian teachers.

The spread of the other exposition is easily explained by its usefulness to Church authorities.

**Ver. 7.** Be not deceived: 1 Corinthians 6:9; 15:33, in each case introducing a safeguard against a serious moral error referred to in the foregoing words: cp. James 1:16.

Is-not-mocked: treated with open ridicule and contempt: same word in Proverbs 1:30; 15:20; Job 22:19; Psalm 80:6; Jeremiah 20:7; 1 Macc. vii. 34; 2 Macc. vii. 39. It implies that to disregard what follows is outrageous insult to God, and declares solemnly that such insult God will not tolerate. Verse 7b justifies this solemn protest, by stating a great principle worthy of it.

He will also reap: same words in 2 Corinthians 9:6, referring to the measure of the harvest. But here Paul refers to its kind. If we sow wheat, we shall reap wheat, etc. A universal principle of widest application, viz. that actions are seeds reappearing in a harvest of results, by the outworking of their own organic laws, to be their authors' abiding possession. Thus (cp. 2 Corinthians 5:10) a man's own actions become, in their developed consequences, their own exact retribution. Same favorite metaphor in 2 Corinthians 9:6, where see notes, 1 Corinthians 9:11; James 3:18; Job 4:8; Psalm 126:5; Hosea 8:7.

**Ver. 8.** Restatement of the metaphor of Galatians 6:7 in view of the contrast of 'the flesh' and 'the Spirit' asserted and expounded in 21. The metaphor was introduced 'because' two widely different harvests are possible.

[The all-important Greek word εἰς, which I have here rendered 'for,' (see under Romans 1:1,) denotes in its simple local sense movement towards the inside of something, e.g. Galatians 1:17 'into Jerusalem, Arabia, Damascus,' Galatians 4:6 'into our hearts;' then a tendency of action whether desired or not, e.g. Galatians 4:24, 'brings forth children for bondage;' and is a favorite word for mental direction, or purpose, i.e. for the aim of action, some desired object towards which the actor looks, e.g. Galatians 2:8, 'for apostleship... for the Gentiles.' Sometimes, as in Galatians 6:4 'in reference to himself alone,' it is still less definite noting

merely a point of view from which an object is regarded. But in every case it denotes direction, either of actual movement, or tendency, or thought.]

In the words 'for his own flesh' Paul forsakes the form of his metaphor in order to describe more clearly and fully the reality underlying it. Had he continued the form adopted in Galatians 6:7, he would have written 'he that sows carnal things will also reap carnal things.' But he describes the only two kinds of action and result possible to men not (as in Galatians 6:7) by their nature but by their aim, suggesting that this is the true test of conduct. Yet he retains the words 'sow' and 'reap' to keep before us the great truth that, by the outworking of their own nature, actions will reappear, multiplied, in their results.

The flesh: not the organized body with its various members; but the material constitution of the body, common to men and animals and desiring (Galatians 6:16) various material objects needful or pleasant to it. The seeds sown 'for the flesh' are actions designed to gratify desires prompted by bodily life.

His own flesh; suggests the essential selfishness of these desires.

From the flesh: or 'out of the flesh:' same transition of prepositions in Romans 1:17. If to gratify our 'own flesh' be our aim, the flesh will be to us a source of 'corruption.' For corruption is inseparable from flesh of all kinds: by its own nature it goes to ruin, and in repulsive forms. For this reason (1 Corinthians 15:50: cp. 1 Corinthians 15:42) it cannot enter the kingdom of God. It is needless to say that Paul refers here to the ruin of eternal death. On the principle that a man's actions will reappear in their results, Paul declares that they who choose as their aim gratification of the flesh will as an appropriate and inevitable consequence receive back from the flesh that corruption which essentially belongs to it.

It is useless and needless to make this important and clear teaching fit in at all points with the metaphor of seed and harvest. See under Romans 11:24. All suggestions about different fields in which the seed is sown fail utterly: for the kind of harvest depends not on the field but on the seed. The metaphor simply teaches that actions, like seeds, reproduce themselves in their results. This great truth justifies and satisfies the metaphor.

The Spirit, can be no other than the Spirit of God, as throughout Div. 3. Like the material of our bodies, He claims that the aim of our life be to follow His guidance and to work out His purposes. To act with this in view, is to 'sow for the Spirit.' And such action will, in virtue of the essential nature of the Spirit, be followed by 'eternal life.' For He is 'the Spirit of life' who makes 'free from the law of sin and of death.' Cp. Romans 6:21-23, where, without the metaphor, we have the same thought.

In this verse Paul teaches that the consequences of actions, and therefore their moral worth, are determined by their aim: a truth indisputable and of the highest importance. Many actions in themselves good are yet, because of a selfish aim, universally condemned and despised. By associating this truth with the metaphor of seed and harvest, Paul teaches that the consequences which follow different aims do so by organic and essential laws of human action. And he places the same truth in a more conspicuous light by deviating in some measure, in order to assert it in plainest terms, from a favorite metaphor.

**Ver. 9.** Another point in the same subject, viz. continuance, even under difficulties.

Well-doing: or 'doing the excellent thing,' that which is morally beautiful. Same word in Romans 7:21.

Fail: turn out badly in something, lose heart and give up through weariness or fear; as in 2 Corinthians 4:1, 16. It suggests that circumstances may arise to test our perseverance.

In due season: literally 'in' its 'own season,' the set time when, in virtue of the laws of the moral world, the seed will produce fruit.

Faint not: through failure in spiritual strength. The parallel term 'fail' denotes rather failure in Christian courage. Each term involves the other: for the brave heart will find strength. We have no hint that Paul refers to the weariness of sowing; and toil is not specially conspicuous in the sower. Certainly he does not refer to the weariness of harvest: for in the eternal harvest there will be no toil.

**Ver. 10.** Practical inference, summing up 22.



As we have, etc.: let our action correspond with our ‘opportunity.’ [ὡς combines here the senses of ‘inasmuch as’ and ‘while:’ cp. John 12:35, 36. For, although grammatically it merely denotes that the ‘opportunity’ is looked upon from the speaker’s subjective point of view, yet evidently the opportunity is mentioned as a motive, and as one which will last only for a time.]

Opportunity: same word as ‘season’ in Galatians 6:9. The harvest has a season of its ‘own,’ and so has the sowing.

Do good, literally ‘work the good:’ same words in Romans 2:10; Ephesians 4:28. Contrast Romans 13:10. It suggests the labor of doing good.

Good: including (Galatians 6:1) the restoration of the fallen brother, bearing (Galatians 6:2) the burdens of others, joining (Galatians 6:6) with teachers in all good works, sowing (Galatians 6:8) for the Spirit, and (Galatians 6:9) continuing in all this without weariness.

To (or ‘towards’) all men: the direction of our beneficence.

They of the household of faith, or ‘those belonging to the house of faith:’ same word in Ephesians 2:19; 1 Timothy 5:8; in 1 Samuel 10:14 for a male domestic servant, and in Leviticus 18:6, 12f, 17 for relatives in blood or law. The word is sometimes used in a more general sense for any close relationship; and for those who devote themselves to some special matter, e.g.. γεωγραφίας οικειος, belonging to the household of geography, in Strabo bk. i. p. 13. But here it reminds us that the Church is the house (1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:6; 10:21; 1 Peter 4:17) and family of God. Paul bids us use ‘towards all’ within our reach the ‘opportunity’ which ‘we’ all ‘have’ of ‘doing good;’ and recalls the special claim of our companions in the household bound together by our common faith.

In 22 Paul illustrates the two great principles of Christian morality expounded in 20 and 21 respectively, by applying them to the mutual intercourse of members of a Christian Church. These he exhorts to show Christian love by bearing burdens one for another, e.g. by restoring any one who has fallen; and warns against inflated self-estimate, a chief hindrance to mutual help, urging rather a reasonable estimate of each one’s own work and independent responsibility. This thought reminds Paul that life is a seed time to be followed by harvest, a truth which he applies to

the two principles of action expounded at length in 21, the Flesh and the Spirit; as already while speaking of a brother's fall he has pointed, to the Spirit as the source of the meekness needful in those who try to restore him. And upon all his readers, teachers and taught, he urges good doing of all kinds; and patient continuance therein. While all men have a claim to help, our fellow Christians have a special claim.

Division 3 is the needful complement of the doctrine of Justification by Faith asserted in its native ruggedness in Div. 2: This doctrine, Paul does not qualify by expounding at length what he means by faith and by justification, lest by so doing he should weaken its force or perplex his readers; but guards it from abuse by placing beside it the moral teaching of Div. 3.

Although none can, by good works, obtain the favor of God, and although all who believe the Gospel are already sons of God and heirs of His kingdom, yet from that kingdom will be excluded all who commit sin and consciously or unconsciously make self-indulgence the aim of life. This plainly asserted truth makes intelligent belief of the Gospel promise impossible except to those who earnestly resolve to forsake sin. On the other hand, the immovable certainty of the promise assures us that God will work in us the victory over sin needful for its fulfillment. In this way we have a practical harmony of these all-important doctrines. And neither of them invalidates or dilutes the other. This harmony is further discussed in Diss. vi.

Christian morality is here, made to rest on two massive pillars: (1) the great commandment which in the Mosaic Law sums up our whole duty to our fellows, viz. to love them as ourselves; and (2) the Christian doctrine that the Holy Spirit given to those who believe the Gospel seeks to guide their steps and is essentially hostile to the influences of bodily life. These great principles of morality Paul expounds; and in a few words gives examples, both general and in detail, of their application to matters of daily life.

## SECTION 23

### THE ADVERSARIES ARE INSINCERE

#### CHAPTER 6:11-16

*See with how large letters I have written to you with my own hand. So many as wish to look well in the flesh, these are commanding you to receive circumcision; only in order that they may not, through the cross of Christ, be persecuted. For neither do they who are receiving circumcision themselves keep law. But they wish you to receive circumcision, in order that in your flesh they may exult. But far from me be it to exult except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; through which to me the world is crucified, and I crucified to the world. For neither circumcision is anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And so many as walk by this rule peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*

**Ver. 11.** With how large letters: so R.V. This rendering is determined by the Greek dative which denotes the instrument with which Paul wrote, viz. large characters, not the epistles written; by the word rendered 'large' which denotes not number but size, whereas a long epistle would involve merely the number of characters used; and by Paul's constant use (17 times) of another word, the Greek original of our word 'epistle,' to denote a written communication. That Galatians 6:11 refers to Galatians 6:11-18, and not to the foregoing Epistle, is suggested by Paul's custom of adding to each Epistle (2 Thessalonians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 16:21; Colossians 4:18) a short autograph, as a mark of genuineness and perhaps also as an expression of warm friendship. If so, the past tense,

I-have-written, may have been suggested to Paul by the four preceding words lying already written before him while writing this word; and by easy transition of thought to his readers' point of view. Cp. 'sent,' in Acts 15:27; 23:30. But we cannot safely quote Philemon 19, 21 as examples: for these refer in each case to foregoing words. The general usage of the Greek

language forbids us to accept the word 'I-have-written' as proof that the whole Epistle was written in large characters by Paul's own hand. And his custom suggests that only this closing paragraph was so written. The size of the letters used proclaims, like capitals in modern printing, the earnestness of this concluding summary of the foregoing Epistle.

**Ver.** 12. To-look-well: literally 'to-put-on-a-good-face;' cp. Galatians 2:6; 2 Corinthians 5:12; 10:7; Matthew 16:3.

In-the-flesh: in outward bodily life, the element of the desired good appearance.

Are-commanding-you: so Galatians 2:3: by proclaiming (Acts 15:1) that in order to be saved you must be circumcised; and by a personal influence which the Galatian Christians seemed unable to resist. [The Greek presents in Galatians 6:12, 13 direct attention to a process going on, but which Paul hopes to stay. So Galatians 1:6; 3:3; 5:3, 4.]

That they may not be persecuted: their 'only' aim.

For the cross of Christ: on the ground that they preach a crucified Messiah. A close parallel in Galatians 5:11. It implies that the seducers were professed Christians; that of Christian teaching the death of Christ was an essential and conspicuous element; and that this element (cp. 1 Corinthians 1:23) was the professed ground of the Jews' hostility to the Gospel. But that the seducers hoped to escape persecution on this ground by proclaiming the necessity of circumcision, suggests that the real ground of the Jews' opposition was that the Gospel overturned the exclusive spiritual prerogatives claimed by them under the Old Covenant, of which covenant circumcision was a conspicuous element; and that their scorn of the Crucified One was chiefly a means of pouring contempt on those who were breaking down, by a Gospel free for all men, the Jewish wall of partition. And we can well conceive the mass of the Jews looking with indifference or with favor on a profession of Christianity which did not interfere with, but rather exalted, their fancied spiritual pre-eminence. Possibly, the early success of the Gospel at Jerusalem (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:1) was aided by oversight on the part of all concerned, of the logical consequence of the Gospel so boldly preached by Jews and so numerous accepted.

The word 'only' implies that the men referred to cared nothing for circumcision in itself, (or for the Old Covenant,) that their apparently eager advocacy of it was 'only' a means by which they hoped to escape persecution while yet remaining members of the Church of Christ. To believe in Him while preaching circumcision, was thus a safe and cheap form of religion. Such an aim Paul properly calls a desire to make a good appearance in outward bodily life, i.e. in that side of life which is under the eyes of men around. And since their aim was to avoid, while yet believing the Gospel and thus as they vainly thought securing the blessings of the life to come, the bodily hardship and peril which otherwise, Jewish hostility might cause them; their conduct was really a sowing for the flesh, and their actions were works of the flesh. For, protection of the body was to them a guiding principle. Paul thus reveals the secret and unworthy thought of the seducers, and brings to bear upon it (hence the word 'flesh') the teaching of 21, 22. And this personal and skilful application reveals still further the appropriateness and value of that teaching.

The men referred to here were probably Jewish Christians chiefly. For such were most likely to press Gentile converts to be circumcised, and to look upon this as a way of escape from persecution by non-Christian Jews. But, since even Gentile Christians may have been exposed to the same persecution, some circumcised Gentiles may have joined their Jewish brethren in eagerness for the rite as a means of escape from Jewish hostility.

**Ver. 13.** Proof of the foregoing unworthy motive.

They who receive circumcision: Gentile converts made from time to time by the false teachers.

Not even do these themselves keep prescriptions of law: although they are enrolling themselves among the people of the Old Covenant. Whether this refers to ritual or moral prescriptions, is not stated: and it does not affect the argument; for both elements had the same authority. It implies that some of these Gentile converts to Judaism lived in evident disregard of Jewish legal restrictions, or possibly of morality. And that their seducers tolerated this neglect proves that regard for the Law was not the motive of this zealous advocacy of circumcision.

But they wish: including probably the seducers and referring chiefly to them. For, to them chiefly refers the same word 'wish' in Galatians 6:12: they are the chief matter of Galatians 6:12, 13, their converts being introduced only casually in proof of the motive of the seducers: and theirs chiefly must have been this desire and exultation, though shared by their Gentile converts. The change of subject between Galatians 6:13a and 13b is but an easy return to the chief matter of the paragraph. And it would be the more easy because the class referred to in Galatians 6:13b included some, or most, of those referred to in Galatians 6:13a; for Gentiles undergoing circumcision would themselves wish other Gentiles to follow their example, feeling that each fresh circumcision was a tribute to their recently adopted principles. Thus all the Christians in Galatia eager for circumcision, whether Jews or Gentiles, would form practically one body in opposition to the teaching of Paul.

The reading in the R.V. text, 'they who receive' (or 'are receiving') 'circumcision,' is preferred by all editors since Lachmann, and has rather better documentary evidence than that in the R.V. margin, 'who have been circumcised.' And this latter looks suspiciously like a correction by copyists who could not understand the other reading. The above exposition gives to the reading adopted its most natural meaning. Certainly it is easier to suppose a return, after the parenthesis of Galatians 6:13a, to Paul's chief matter than to expound 'they who receive circumcision' as "the advocates of circumcision."

In order that, etc.: selfish purpose of the seducers.

Exult: see under Romans 2:17; 1 Corinthians 1:29.

Your flesh: your circumcised bodies. These were the sought for element of exultation. They wished to point in triumph to the visible mark of proselyting success, as a tribute to their personal influence and to the grandeur of Jewish privileges; and to use this mark as a shelter for themselves against Jewish persecution. The word 'flesh,' instead of 'body,' reminds us that the matter of their triumph belonged to the outward and perishing and seductive side of human life. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:18, 'boast according to flesh;' and Philippians 3:3f, 'confidence in the flesh.' Thus, as in Galatians 6:12, this word keeps before us the teaching of 21, 22.

**Ver. 14. Me:** in emphatic contrast to ‘those who boast in circumcision; literally, ‘to me let there be no exultation.’

In the cross: a marked contrast to ‘in your flesh.’ Various matters, e.g. those quoted in 2 Corinthians 11:22; Philippians 3:4ff, and Paul’s matchless mental and moral power, might have aroused in him emotions of confidence and joy. But to him all these were nothing. Yet the heart which was indifferent to them was kindled into a glow of emotion by a symbol of his nation’s degradation, (for the cross was a Roman punishment,) by ‘the cross’ on which his beloved Master died a death of pain and shame.

The above wonderful statement, Galatians 6:14b explains. Paul cannot boast except in the cross of Christ because on that cross himself has been crucified.

Through which, or ‘whom’: each rendering grammatically correct; and certain decision impossible. But since these words evidently explain Paul’s exultation, of which not Christ but ‘the cross of Christ’ is the specific and astounding element here, this is probably his precise reference. By means of the cross on which Christ died the ‘world’ itself ‘has been crucified.’

Crucified: as in Galatians 2:20; 5:24. It gives vividness to the mode of Christ’s death, and declares that in some real sense both the world and Paul have shared that death.

The world: the entire realm of men and things around. [The absence twice of the Greek article bids us look at the ‘world’ qualitatively, i.e. in view of its magnitude, variety, and power: to Paul ‘a world has been crucified.’] The world was once to him a living and vast and tremendous reality, Upon its smile hung all his hopes: its frown was ruin. Consequently, he was the world’s servant and slave: and the world was his absolute and imperious and cruel Lord. This service was hopeless and degrading bondage. But now, through the death of Christ upon the cross, it has utterly and for ever passed away. The world can no longer terrify or beguile him. Thus Paul is free. Just so, around the corpse of Henry VIII., his courtiers felt themselves to be for the first time free; and breathed more freely because those lips and that brow and arm were henceforth silent and still and powerless. Also through death came Paul’s freedom; through Christ’s death upon the cross, which had brought about the death of Paul’s

tremendous tyrant. But the world was dead relatively, not absolutely. To thousands it was still, and is now, a master possessing irresistible power. Only to those joined to Christ Crucified is the world dead. Hence the word to me, thrust to the front for conspicuous emphasis.

And I to the world: added to remind us that, although it is the world which through Christ's death has lost its vital power and may therefore be said to be 'crucified,' yet the real change has taken place in Paul. By union with the Crucified his own past life of bondage and sin has come to an end. By his own, as well as by his Master's death the captive has become free. Thus we have a triple crucifixion. Christ has set up His cross between Paul and the world: and they are separated completely and for ever. This triple crucifixion and its mysterious instrument evoke joy and a shout of liberty. And they forbid all other boasting: for all else belongs to 'a world' which 'has been crucified.' Thus the astounding statement of Galatians 6:14a is explained by the more astounding statement of Galatians 6:14b.

**Ver. 15.** Galatians 6:14 is practically a refusal to boast in any way about circumcision. This refusal Paul now supports by again saying that circumcision is neither gain nor loss. Since it can (Galatians 5:6) do nothing, it is (cp. 1 Corinthians 7:19) worth nothing. And therefore Paul cannot boast in it.

New creature, or 'new creation': see under 2 Corinthians 5:17; cp. Ephesians 2:10; 4:24. So utterly lost is man that nothing less than a new putting forth of creative power can save him.

This verse implies that circumcision was not a condition of the putting forth by God of this creative power; as it was a condition (Genesis 17:10) of the covenant with Abraham. That it was a condition also of the New Covenant, the false teachers evidently asserted. And of this Better Covenant Baptism and the Lord's Supper, also outward rites, are conditions: for they were expressly ordained by Christ, and therefore refusal of them is disobedience to Him: cp. Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:25. But circumcision belonged to the earlier and now abrogated Covenant. To assert its perpetual obligation was to set up again the Mosaic Covenant which made the favor of God contingent on obedience to a multitude of moral and ritual prescriptions. No such obligation was involved in the requirement of Baptism. In the baptism of



converts Paul might justly exult, as a triumph of the Gospel and such exultation would be an exulting in God. So might others in earlier days exult in the circumcision of born heathens, as a turning to the God of Israel. That to Paul 'circumcision is nothing,' proves how completely in his view the Old Covenant had passed away. Thus these words are a summing up, at the close of the Epistle, of its chief argument, which, by their similarity to Galatians 5:6 at the close of that argument, they recall.

**Ver. 16.** Walk: same word in Galatians 5:25; Romans 4:12. Thus, just as Galatians 6:15 sums up the argument of Div. II., so Galatians 6:16, which bids us make the principle asserted in Galatians 6:15 our rule of conduct, recalls the summary in Galatians 5:25 of the argument of Div. III.

Rule: literally, 'canon:' see under 2 Corinthians 10:13. It keeps up the metaphor suggested by the word 'walk.' The principle in Galatians 6:15 was a marked out line along which Paul's readers should direct their steps.

Shall walk: throughout all future time.

Peace: as in Romans 1:7, where see notes; cp. Ephesians 6:23; 2 Thessalonians 3:16. It is a profound calm and rest, a consciousness of absolute security, derived from the presence and smile of God; the opposite of discord and of fear.

Upon them: for this peace comes down from heaven.

Mercy: Ephesians 2:4; 1 Timothy 1:2: that which prompts help to the helpless. That we need 'mercy,' implies that we cannot save ourselves from wretchedness. Paul's thought rises from the 'peace' which fills and keeps our hearts to the 'mercy' of God from which it flows.

The Israel of God: that which God recognises as His chosen people: either the entire Church of God, or the Jewish part of it. The latter exposition would mark out (cp. 'and' in Mark 1:5; 16:7) the Jewish Christians as being specially objects of this good wish: the former would imply that they who accept the principle announced in Galatians 6:15 occupy now the place of honor granted of old to the sacred nation. And this latter is probably Paul's meaning. For it is most unlikely that in this farewell blessing he would separate the Jewish Christians from, and raise them above, their Gentile brethren, when it has been the purpose of the whole

Epistle to place Jews and Gentiles on the same level as equally children and heirs of Abraham: see Galatians 3:7, 9, 14, 28; 4:31; cp. Romans 4:11, 16f. Whereas, to speak of uncircumcised Gentile believers as 'the Israel of God,' is a triumphant practical application, at the close of the Epistle, of its chief argument which has just been summed up in the assertion of Galatians 6:15. And it is a suitable conclusion of 23 which is specially directed against Jewish opponents.

These words recall Psalm 125:5; 128:6.

After proving by the arguments of this Epistle that the teaching of the disturbers is false, Paul now covers them with confusion by revealing the secret and unworthy motives of their apparent loyalty to the Law of Moses. Indeed, the proved falsity of the teaching prepares us to find that the teachers are insincere. Paul says that their professed loyalty is for the sake of appearances, a means of shielding themselves against persecution from the acknowledged enemies of the Crucified One. Such fear of men he disowned for himself utterly in Galatians 1:10, before he began the argument of the Epistle, as though indicating beforehand the secret source of the teaching he was about to combat. And to this way of escape from persecution he referred again in Galatians 5:11 at the close of his chief argument. A proof that this is his opponents' real motive, Paul finds in the conduct of the Gentiles who from time to time receive circumcision. For, as matter of fact, they do not keep the Law. Consequently, desire that the Law be kept cannot be the motive of those who are so eager for the circumcision of Gentiles. Another motive for this eagerness is the tribute to the spiritual prerogatives of Israel, and to the personal influence of the proselyters, involved in the reception of the rite by fresh converts from heathenism. Probably, Galatians 6:12, 13 would come to all parties concerned with an overwhelming force which we cannot now appreciate. For, doubtless, Paul's charge would be confirmed in various ways unknown to us. His outspoken accusation would explain conduct otherwise inexplicable. For unworthy motives, however carefully concealed, reveal themselves in a multitude of casual indications.

These hidden and base aims, thus brought to light, Paul puts utterly to shame by pointing to the Cross of Christ as his only ground of boasting; and to the total separation from the world, from its allurements and its

terrors, which that Cross has wrought in him. And this exultation rests on the doctrines advocated throughout the Epistle. Upon all who hold them and make them their rule of life, Paul pronounces a rich blessing from God.

In 21, 22 we learn that the Holy Spirit given to believers is designed to save them from the rule of the flesh. The word 'flesh' twice in 23 brings this teaching to bear upon the disturbers in Galatia. For, their unworthy motives belong altogether to the domain of bodily life. They exult in a merely outward rite deprived now of all inward and spiritual significance, because it offers them deliverance from the bodily affliction with which they are threatened by the enemies of Christ. Consequently, their eagerness for circumcision is but a sowing for the flesh.

## SECTION 24

### FAREWELL

#### CHAPTER 6:17, 18

*Henceforth let no one cause me trouble. For I bear the brandmarks of Jesus in my body. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Spirit, Brethren, Amen.*

Henceforth: the past troubles being more than sufficient. Let no one trouble me: literally, 'labors let no one afford me,' viz. such toil and weariness as that imposed on Paul by his opponents.

The marks: a technical term for tattoo or brand marks, which were frequent with slaves, criminals, soldiers, and even votaries of some particular deity. E.g. Herodotus (bk. vii. 233) says of the Thebans who at Thermopylae turned to the Persians; "the more part of them, by Xerxes command, they marked with royal marks." So 3 Macc. ii. 29, "marked in the body by fire with the ivy-leaf sign of Dionysus." Such marks were forbidden to Israel: Leviticus 19:28. Since these 'marks' were evidently a badge of honor, and since there is no reference here to military life, whereas Paul ever rejoices to call himself a servant or slave of Christ and speak of him in Galatians 6:14 and 18 as his Lord, it is easier to understand the word here in this last sense.

In my body; suggests that he refers to the scars received in the many scourgings, imprisonments, and other hardships, (2 Corinthians 11:24,) endured in the service of Christ. These scars proclaimed, in contrast to the disturbers whose chief thought was to escape persecution, how faithful that service had been. Therefore, as insignia of his Master, Paul bore them in triumph. And, because of the sufferings of which these marks were witnesses, he claimed immunity from the weariness caused him by the contention of the Judaizers.

The advocates of circumcision point with pride to the circumcised bodies of their converts. Paul points to his own body which bears marks of

hardships endured for Christ, these hardships testifying the faithfulness of his service. This was no mere exultation in the flesh: for these scars in the flesh had deep spiritual significance, inasmuch as they reveal the work in Paul's spirit of the Spirit of God. They place Paul and his career in significant contrast to his opponents. Than this silent comparison, no appeal could be more forceful.

**Ver.** 18. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: as in (1 Corinthians 16:23; ) 2 Corinthians 13:13.

Your spirit: as in Romans 1:9; 8:10, 16; 1 Corinthians 2:11; 5:3-5; 14:14-16, 32; 16:18, 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:13. It is perhaps suggested here by the contrast of 'my body:' although in 2 Timothy 4:22; Philemon 25 we have similar words without any such contrast. Paul desires that in the noblest element of his readers' nature, in that part of them which is nearest to God and most like God and on which the Spirit of God directly operates, the smile of Christ may shine upon them. Parting with them, after a letter of severe condemnation, he calls them 'brothers.' And with a concluding 'Amen' he confirms his parting benediction.

### **THE DISTURBERS IN GALATIA**

The letter before us is evidently an attempt to recall the Galatian Christians from an apostacy already making progress among them and threatening to destroy utterly the Churches of Galatia. Such a letter can be understood only so far as we understand the errors it was designed to correct. We will therefore gather together, before reviewing the Epistle, all indications, which are found chiefly in the Epistle itself, of these errors; and endeavor thus to gain a view of the teaching which Paul here combats.

Beside the errors prevalent in Galatia, we meet in this Epistle with three types of Jewish error, viz. in certain 'false brethren' at Jerusalem, Galatians 2:4; in some men who came from Jerusalem to Antioch, Galatians 2:11, 12; and in the Jews resident at Antioch, Galatians 2:13. (1) That the false brethren at Jerusalem are said to have crept secretly into the Church in order to understand the Gospel that thus they might overthrow it, proves that their Christian profession was only a mask, that they were simply traitors in the camp. They were Jews who rejected Christianity and used against it weapons of deceit. Similar men, apparently connected

with the Church at Corinth, are described and denounced in 2 Corinthians 11:13ff. (2) That the Jews whose arrival at Antioch (cp. Acts 15:1) wrought so marked and evil a change there were guilty of like deception, Paul gives no hint. They may have been men who, after Jewish birth and training, finding the Law insufficient to save them, had accepted Jesus as the promised Messiah, had bowed to Him as their Lord and still clung to Him as their Savior; but who nevertheless felt themselves bound by their ancient Law and believed that without obedience to its prescriptions they could not enjoy the favor of God or obtain the Eternal Life promised by Christ. Possibly, sincerity of belief and purity of life gave weight to their influence. Of the terrible logical consequence of such belief, their Jewish training and surroundings and their sincerity would easily make them unconscious. They looked up to James as their leader: for his teaching was in less marked opposition to their views than was that of Paul. Similar men we find on a visit to Antioch in Acts 15:1; and others at Jerusalem in Acts 15:5, these latter being called believers. But their faith was evidently immature. (3) From these we must distinguish the Jews already at Antioch, who yielded, under Peter's example, to the influence of the new comers. These last, Paul calls 'hypocrites.' For, living as they did among uncircumcised Gentile Christians, they knew in their hearts that the distinction of meats had passed away; and yet acted as though it were still binding. They did so apparently without any definite aim, influenced merely by the Jewish Christians lately come from Jerusalem who represented, and by their presence brought to bear at Antioch, the weight of the entire Jewish nation.

The foregoing varieties of error had in common the assertion that circumcision and the prescriptions of the Law were still binding on all Christians.

Paul's condemnatory description of these Jewish Christians at Jerusalem and Antioch was evidently designed to be a mirror in which the Christians of Galatia should see reflected the Jewish teachers who were leading them astray. By these teachers they were treated with (Galatians 4:17) the greatest attention, were led to observe (Galatians 5:10) Jewish festivals, and were strenuously urged (Galatians 6:12) to receive circumcision. But in all this the false teachers were simply endeavoring to shield themselves from persecution. That they were in danger of it, proves that they were, in

some imperfect and vain sense, believers in Christ. For against mere hypocrites, like those mentioned in Galatians 2:4, no persecution would be directed. Or, certainly, they might at once have escaped it by proclaiming themselves enemies of Christ. Their danger suggests that in their heart of hearts they believed that Jesus is the Messiah and were hoping for the blessings He promised to bestow. Their religion seems to have been a compromise between desire for the favor of Christ and a wish to propitiate His enemies. The former they sought by professing themselves Christians: the latter by eager advocacy (Galatians 6:12) of Jewish prerogatives. And Paul declares (Galatians 5:11) that he might escape persecution in the same way.

That even in heathen countries the hostility of Jews was an element of danger to Christians, is proved by the ill treatment Paul received, at the instigation of Jews, at Antioch in Pisidia, at Iconium, and at Lystra, cities on the borders of Galatia. And the motive mentioned in Galatians 6:12 suggests that this hostility arose from jealousy for the peculiar spiritual prerogatives claimed by the Jews on the ground of the Old Covenant and strenuously asserted, of which prerogatives circumcision was a conspicuous badge. These prerogatives, the Gospel as preached by Paul utterly trampled under foot.

This motive also suggests that, like the Jewish Christians residing at Antioch, the disturbers in Galatia did not themselves believe their own teaching that circumcision was needful for salvation. Or possibly the convenience of the compromise gradually perverted their judgment. If so their religious belief, and in any case their action, were controlled by care for their bodily life, i.e. by the flesh. That their zeal for circumcision was not prompted by genuine loyalty to the Law, Paul proves by their converts' practical disregard of its requirements, which they evidently tolerated.

Paul's assertion and careful proof of his apostolic authority and of his independence of the earlier apostles can be explained only by supposing that these were denied by the disturbers in Galatia. And this we can easily understand. For the Gospel he preached repudiated utterly the compromise by which they hoped to escape persecution: and his teaching and influence could be withstood only by saying that he had himself

perverted the Gospel of Christ. The distance of the other apostles made possible an insinuation that his authority as a Christian teacher was derived from them, and that he had been unfaithful to the charge thus received. The men before us were thus compelled, by the false position they had taken up, to place themselves in opposition to the greatest of the Apostles.

Paul declares in Galatians 1:7; 5:10, 12 that his opponents were unsettling the Christians in Galatia, and were wishing to overturn the Gospel. They even threaten to destroy (Galatians 4:10) the Churches he had planted. For, by asserting the perpetual validity of the Law they proclaimed implicitly a universal curse which shuts out all men from the blessings promised by Christ and renders the death of Christ meaningless and useless. Against such teaching and teachers Paul pronounces a tremendous and repeated Anathema; and almost hopes that they will join the ranks of heathendom. This proves that their conduct was inexcusable and sinful, that their faith in Christ did not influence their inner life, and that their profession of Christianity was an empty name. That Paul, while writing about them, never speaks to them, but only to their victims, proves that in his view their case was utterly hopeless.

All this we can best harmonise by supposing that the disturbers in Galatia had honestly accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the foretold Messiah, had believed His promise of eternal life, and had enrolled themselves among His professed followers. But the words and Spirit of Jesus had not permeated and renovated their heart and thought and life; or had ceased to do so. Consequently, as the first impulse which led them into the Church waned, they yielded to fear of the hostility of their fellow-countrymen. And the Gospel, which would have given them victory over all adverse surroundings had they accepted it without reserve, itself fell, in their conception of it, under the control of the needs of their bodily life and sank into an empty profession powerless to save. Yet the first influence did not altogether leave them. While pursuing eagerly a course subversive of the Church of Christ, they nevertheless called themselves His servants and hoped for a place in His eternal Kingdom. How vain were their hopes, the whole tenor of the Epistle afford tremendous proof. They are to us an abiding monument of the peril of permitting our belief and practice to be



molded by the needs or convenience of our present bodily life; of all compromises between the Spirit and the flesh, between truth and error.

## REVIEW OF THE EPISTLE

To a Church in which it had been questioned, Paul begins his letter by asserting his independent apostolic authority; and in the greeting of an Epistle devoted chiefly to the doctrine of justification by faith he weaves the correlative historical fact of Christ's resurrection and the doctrine that He gave Himself for the sins of men. The gratitude with which in other Epistles he turns to his readers gives place here to wonder that they are so soon turning away from God, and to a repeated curse on any who lead them astray. And, in view of the secret motive of the false guides, he declares that to make the favor of men our aim is to renounce the service of Christ.

Paul then proves from known facts that the Gospel he preaches is independent of human authority. His previous life attests the divine source of the revelation which has wrought in him so great a change. For three years after his conversion he did not so much as see the other apostles; and then saw only Peter and James, and for a short time. And when, many years later, he went up to Jerusalem and expounded to the apostles his teaching among the Gentiles, they desired no change in it, but recognised at once his independent mission. Indeed, some time afterwards, at Antioch, he publicly reproved Peter for action similar to that of the disturbers in Galatia; and supported his reproof by an appeal to the past inward experience of Peter and of himself and to his own present life in Christ.

Having thus proved by known facts that his teaching is independent of human authority, Paul now comes to defend the teaching itself. That salvation is by faith, he proves from his readers' own experience, which he shows to be in harmony with the story of Abraham. The Law cannot save: for it pronounces a universal curse, from which Christ saved us by Himself bearing it. Had God made obedience to law a condition of the fulfilment of His promise to Abraham, He would have invalidated the promise by a subsequent addition to it; which even human morality forbids. Yet the Law must have a worthy purpose. It was designed to force us to Christ for salvation by faith. And this purpose has in us been accomplished. The Law belongs to spiritual childhood, which is a state of bondage. But now

the set time has come, and we are free: for in our hearts the Spirit proclaims that we are sons of God. Yet, by seeking salvation in sacred seasons, the Galatian Christians are turning back to the bondage of childhood.

This complete argument is followed by a direct appeal recalling the joyous founding of the Galatian Churches and revealing the unworthy motive of the earnestness of the disturbers. This again is followed by an historical application of the main argument. Since the Law brings bondage, they who look to it for salvation are in the position of the children of Hagar. And the expulsion of Hagar and her son from the family of Abraham proclaims the exclusion of these their modern representatives from the blessings promised to Abraham's seed.

The entire foregoing argument, Paul then brings to bear on the matter of circumcision by asserting that to receive the rite is to accept obligation to keep the whole Law. With such obligation he contrasts his own religious life; and concludes the matter of circumcision by sundry appeals.

The doctrine of justification by faith apart from works renders absolutely needful an exposition of Christian morals: and this exposition Paul throws into a form specially suitable to the case of his readers. To advocates of the abiding validity of the Mosaic Law, who yet needed to be warned against mutual conflict, he points out the sum of that Law, viz. love to our neighbor: and, in the presence of men whose teaching was molded by care for the flesh, he proclaims the ceaseless antagonism of the flesh and the Spirit. These two great principles of Christian morality he applies to sundry details.

A mark of his earnestness Paul gives by recurring, at the end of the Epistle, in his own hand-writing, to its chief matter; and reveals the real and specific motive of these eager advocates of circumcision. This evokes an exultant boast in that cross of Christ which his opponents practically trampled under foot.

# EXPOSITION

## OF THE

# EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

### SECTION 1

#### *THE GREETING*

#### CHAPTER 1:1, 2

*Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus and the believing ones in Christ Jesus, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

To the Churches ‘at Ephesus’ and at Rome, and to these only ‘Paul’ writes simply in his own name. In all his other letters, for special reasons, he joins others with himself as approving what he is about to say. But there are no such reasons now. It is true that Timothy was (Acts 19:22) with Paul at Ephesus. But we have no proof that he took any prominent part in the work there. Consequently, the special interest in him which led, apparently, to his association with Paul in the Epistle to the Philippians was not present in this case.

An apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God: word for word as in Colossians 1:1.

The saints: as in Romans 15:25, 26. See under Romans 1:7.

Which are or ‘exist’: calling attention to the existence of saints ‘at Ephesus.’

Believing: same Greek word as in Colossians 1:2, uniting the senses of 'faithful' and 'believing.' Nothing here suggests the meaning 'faithful' or 'trustworthy.' And, as the exposition 'believers in Christ Jesus' would give good sense as a specially Christian designation, this is perhaps the sense intended.

In Christ Jesus: as in Ephesians 1:15; see under Colossians 1:4.

Grace, etc.: word for word as in Romans 1:7.

The words 'in Ephesus' are, in the two oldest and best copies, which very seldom agree in error, found only inserted by a much later hand. Basil says ('Against Eunomius' bk. ii. 19) that they were absent from the earliest copies he had seen. Origen, followed by Jerome, gives an exposition of this verse which suggests that the words were not in the copies used.

Tertullian, who holds firmly that the Epistle was written to the Ephesians, charges Marcion ('Against Marcion' bk. v. 11, 17) with interpolating the words 'to the Laodiceans;' and appeals against him to the 'truth of the Church,' but not expressly to the wording of the superscription. This suggests that in the copies he had seen these words were not actually found in the text of the Epistle, but as we may suppose only in the title.

All this proves that at a very early date the words were absent from some copies of the Epistle. They are, however, found in all later copies, and in all versions. And, as by Tertullian so by all writers, the Epistle is universally quoted without a shadow of doubt as written to the Ephesians.

Of these remarkable facts, two explanations have been given. (1) That the words are genuine, and were omitted by some copyists because it seemed unlikely that to a Church in which he had lived three years Paul would write a letter without any personal references. But that in the infancy of literary criticism this was detected, that a scribe would dare to omit words for this reason, and that the omission spread so far as the above facts testify, is most unlikely. (2) That copies of this Epistle were sent to other Churches in the province of Asia, each bearing the name of the Church to which it was sent; that the copies bearing the names of other towns have without exception vanished; but that the observed difference between the copies led some early scribes, in uncertainty about the Church intended, to omit altogether the name of any specific town. This would agree with our explanation of 'the letter from Laodicea' in Colossians 4:16. That all

copies with names other than Ephesus should vanish completely, seems unlikely. But copies in the metropolis would be more likely to survive than those directed to small towns in the interior such as Laodicea. This view is not discredited by the unanimity with which the Epistle is designated as that to the Ephesians. For it would naturally become known, and take its name, chiefly from the capital of the province: cp. Tertullian quoted in *Introd. ii.* of my 'Romans.' On the whole, this latter seems the easiest explanation of the facts of the case.

This latter suggestion will also account for a letter so general being written to a Church so well known to Paul. In a letter designed also for other Churches in Asia Paul may well have written only words suitable for all, leaving personal matters (Ephesians 6:21) to be conveyed by Tychicus.

# DIVISION I

## DOCTRINE

### CHAPTERS 1:3-3:

## SECTION 2

### *PRAISE FOR GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE OF MERCY TO JEWS AND GENTILES*

#### CHAPTER 1:3-14

*Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, according as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him, in love having foreordained us to adoption through Jesus Christ for Him, according to the good pleasure of His will, for praise of the glory of His grace, which grace He gave to us in the Beloved One.*

*In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to the good pleasure which He purposed in Him, for the dispensation of the fulness of the seasons, to gather up together all things in Christ, those in the heavens and those on the earth; in Him, in whom also we were made a heritage, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we should be for praise of His glory who had before hoped in the Christ.*

*In whom also ye, having heard the word of the truth, the Gospel of your salvation-in whom also having believed ye were sealed with the Spirit of promise, the Holy Spirit, which is an earnest of our inheritance for redemption of the possession, for praise of His glory.*

Section 2 contains three clearly marked divisions, each closing with a solemn refrain: Ephesians 1:3-6; Ephesians 1:7-12; Ephesians 1:13, 14.

**Ver. 3.** An outburst of praise, beginning word for word as in 2 Corinthians 1:3.

God, the Father: or more literally 'God and' the 'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The Object of Paul's praise unites in Himself two titles: He is 'God' and He is 'also' the 'Father of Christ.' See under Romans 15:6. Christ, our Master, spoke constantly of 'God' as His 'Father.' and thus gave to men a new conception of God, and to God a new name among men.

Blessed: literally 'spoken-good-of:' see under Romans 1:25. Paul desires that the goodness of God be recognized by the praises of His creatures. The word 'blessed' introduces a song of praise.

We bless God because He first 'has blessed us.' The meaning of blessing from God to man may be learnt from the O.T. where the phrase is frequent; a good example in Deuteronomy 28:36. It there denotes enrichment with the highest good, especially with such good as only God can give. The form of the Greek word 'bless' reminds us that these benefits are conveyed to us by the speaking voice of 'God.'

Spiritual: pertaining to the Spirit of God; the usual meaning of the word. See under Romans 1:11.

Spiritual blessing: enrichment wrought by the Holy Spirit and therefore pertaining to the realm of spiritual things.

Every spiritual blessing: suggests variety of such benefits, and asserts that no kind of spiritual enrichment is wanting to us.



Heavenly-places or 'heavenly'-things, literally 'the heavenlies': same word in 1 Corinthians 15:40, 48, 49 where evidently it denotes things pertaining to heaven. So Philippians 2:10.

In the heavenly places: Ephesians 1:20; 2:6; 3:10, 6:12, denoting in each case the supramundane world, and in all but the last the world of heavenly blessedness. And this gives good sense here. The good things with which God has enriched us belong to heaven, and will be there enjoyed. And since already (Philippians 3:20) our citizenship and (Matthew 6:20) our treasure are in heaven, Paul could say that 'God has' already 'blessed us in the heavenly' places. By forming the purpose expounded in Ephesians 1:4, 5, He has already enriched us: and the riches thus given are laid up for us amid the good things in heaven, where neither accident nor decay can destroy or lessen them.

To the locality of this blessing, viz. in heaven, Paul adds its personal element: 'in Christ.' Our spiritual enrichment is a result of events which took place 'in' the personality of 'Christ,' His birth, death, resurrection, and ascension, a result conditioned by inward spiritual contact with Him. Cp. 2 Corinthians 5:19, 'God was, 'in Christ,' reconciling the world to Himself.'

It is needless to ask whether Paul refers here to blessing given to men once for all when God gave Christ to die, or given when each one appropriates by faith the various blessings resulting from the events of His human life. For both personal faith and the historic facts are essential links of the chain of blessing: and therefore in Paul's thought they were indissolubly joined.

**Ver. 4.** According as He chose us, etc.: traces up this blessing, given by God to men in time, to its eternal source and counterpart, viz. a corresponding purpose of God before time began.

Chose us, or more fully, 'selected for-Himself': He took a smaller out of a larger number. See note under Romans 9:13.

Us: further defined in the fundamental Gospel of Paul, Romans 1:16, 17; 3:21, 22, as those who believe the Gospel. Not that their foreseen faith in any way moved God to save them; but that, moved only by pity for lost man, God resolved to save men by means of the good news announced by Christ, and to save those who should believe it.

In Him; expounds and justifies 'in Christ' in Ephesians 1:3.

Before the foundation of the world: same words in John 17:24; 1 Peter 1:20; instructive parallels. Before God began to make the great platform on which have lived the successive generations of men, all future ages were present to His thought: and in view of the sin and ruin which He foresaw, He resolved to save men; not all men indiscriminately, but those who should believe the Gospel; and to place these in special relation to Himself as His own. An interesting parallel in 2 Timothy 1:9. Of that eternal purpose, the salvation of each man is a corresponding realization in time: 'according as, etc.' And, inasmuch as this purpose could be accomplished only through the agency and the death of Christ and by spiritual contact with Him, it has special reference to Him. In this sense, 'God chose us for Himself in Christ.'

Holy: subjectively holy, as in 1 Corinthians 7:34; see note under Romans 1:7. For it describes here God's purpose touching what we are to be, viz. unreservedly loyal to Himself; not, as in Ephesians 1:1, a character already possessed, viz. that of men whom God has claimed for His own and who, by that claim, whatever their actual conduct may be, are placed in a new relation to God. Cp. Ephesians 4:27, Colossians 1:22; 1 Peter 1:15, 16; 1 Thessalonians 5:23. In each case, whether used objectively or subjectively, the word 'holy' denotes a special and sacred relation to God.

And blameless: same word and connection and meaning as in Colossians 1:22. It is the negative side of holiness. For all sin opposes God; and is therefore inconsistent with unreserved devotion to God.

Before Him: i.e. God, who chose us for Himself, formed for us this purpose of holiness and purity, and watches its accomplishment. Same words in Colossians 1:22.

In love: may belong either to Ephesians 1:4, asserting that love to our fellows is the surrounding element of the holiness which God designs for His chosen ones, or to Ephesians 1:5 asserting that God's love to man is the element and source of his predestination of believers to sonship. The latter exposition is the more likely. For there is nothing in the context suggesting, or seeming to require mention of, Christian love. Whereas, in praise to God for blessing received, mention of His love as the ultimate

source of all blessing is specially appropriate. By placing these words first, Paul throws into great prominence the ‘love’ which prompted the predestination to sonship.

**Ver. 5.** A participial clause, describing in further detail the foregoing statement, ‘He chose us.’ A similar participial clause in Ephesians 1:9.

Foreordained, or ‘predestined’: marked out beforehand a path along which, and a goal to which, He would have the chosen ones go. See under Romans 8:29. The syllable ‘fore-’ denotes a destination ‘before’ the time when it can be accomplished. So “‘before’-hoped’ in Ephesians 1:12.

For adoption: the marked out goal, viz. reception into the family of God as His sons. See under Romans 8:15.

Through Jesus Christ: expounded in Galatians 4:4, 5. Through the agency of the Eternal Son we become sons.

For Him: probably, for God. It denotes the intimate relation to God, the Father of the whole family of heaven, in which as His sons, God designs the predestined ones to stand. Notice that adoption is the immediate aim of this divine purpose, holiness is its ultimate aim: ‘He chose us to be holy, having foreordained us to adoption.’ And the Agent of holiness is the Spirit of adoption.

We have here in close connection election and predestination. The former marks out the objects of salvation; the latter, the goal to which God purposes to bring them.

Good-pleasure: same word in Philippians 1:15; 2:13, where see notes. In the case of God, the two senses of benevolence and free choice coalesce. Perhaps here the latter is more conspicuous.

Of His will; represents God contemplating and approving His own resolve.

According-to: a favorite word of Paul to describe a correspondence between action and some underlying principle. This clause traces up to the divinely-approved will of God the foregoing predestination to adoption. Paul remembers with gratitude that this purpose of mercy seemed good in His sight.

**Ver. 6.** Further and final aim of the predestination: viz. in order that the ‘splendor’ which belongs to the free undeserved ‘favor’ of God may evoke recognition and ‘praise.’

Glory: as in Philippians 1:11.

Grace: see under Romans 1:5.

Which grace He gave, or ‘which He graciously gave’; lays stress by repetition on the undeserved favor of God.

In the Beloved One: parallel with ‘chosen in Him’ in Ephesians 1:4. Cp. Colossians 1:13, ‘Son of His love.’

Paul here represents Christ as a special object of the eternal love of God, and ourselves as united to Christ and therefore sharers of the love with which God regards Him. Thus the love of God to Christ becomes undeserved favor towards those who are united to Christ. God purposed that the grandeur or ‘glory’ of this ‘grace’ should appear, and thus evoke ‘praise.’ To this end, acting in harmony with a divine resolve approved by Him, and in infinite love, God marked out for us, to be appropriated by faith, an entrance into His family as His sons. In this way He chose us for Himself, that we may stand before Him as sacred and spotless men.

**Ver. 7.** Second part of 2. It is a further exposition of the ‘grace given in the Beloved One.’

We have: actual incipient accomplishment of God’s purpose of mercy.

In whom... redemption: as in Colossians 1:14.

Through His blood: as in Colossians 1:20, ‘through the blood of His cross:’ practically the same as Romans 5:9, ‘justified in His blood.’ These words assert in the clearest manner that our liberation from the penalty and bondage of sin comes through Christ’s death upon the cross. The need for this costly means of redemption, Paul expounds in Romans 3:26. Notice that liberation was wrought out for us ‘in’ the personality of Christ, and is ours by inward union with Him; and that His violent death is the channel ‘through’ which it comes forth from God to us.

Forgiveness of sins: as in Colossians 1:14. It is in harmony with, and must be measured by, the abundance which characterizes God’s favor towards

us: 'according to the riches, etc.' Cp. Colossians 1:27; 2:2; Romans 11:33; 2 Corinthians 8:2: favorite phraseology of Paul. Thus God has made us (Ephesians 1:6) objects of His 'grace.' Notice the emphatic repetition of this last word, after its use twice in Ephesians 1:6. It is the source of all blessing from God to us.

**Ver. 8.** Further elucidation of the grace of God, showing the specific form it took.

Which grace He made to abound towards us: i.e. gave to us in abundant measure, or so as to work in us abundant results. Same phrase in 2 Corinthians 9:8: cp. Romans 5:15. It expounds 'the riches of His grace' in Ephesians 1:7.

All wisdom: every kind of wisdom: see under Colossians 1:9.

Prudence: a practical faculty enabling men to select, in the various details and emergencies of life, the most profitable line of action. The connection of the two words reminds us that in Christ acquaintance with the eternal realities has practical worth as a guide in the details of life; and that among these details we can choose our steps aright only in the light of the eternal realities. Evidently this 'wisdom and prudence' are God's gift, making us wise and prudent, as we learn from Ephesians 1:9 where the knowledge imparted is specified. Paul here asserts that the undeserved favor of God given to us so abundantly has been clothed with every kind of 'wisdom and discretion.' These are the forms in which the grace of God was manifested. Cp. Colossians 1:9: 'all wisdom and spiritual understanding.'

**Ver. 9.** A participial clause explaining the assertion in Ephesians 1:8. By making known to us the mystery, God gave to us in abundant measure His undeserved favor clothed in wisdom and prudence.

Mystery: as in Colossians 1:26.

Of His Will: the contents of this mystery. It is further described in Ephesians 1:10. This will of God was kept secret during long ages, and is known now only by those to whom God reveals it. It is therefore the mystery of His will. Cp. Romans 16:25.

To us: to Christians generally: Colossians 1:26. Another aspect of the same revelation is given in Ephesians 3:3. It was made known to Paul and through him to his hearers and readers.

According to His good pleasure: as in Ephesians 1:5. It is not clear whether this refers to 'the mystery' or to the 'making-known' of it. But, since both are included in the same divine purpose, possibly in Paul's thought they were not distinguished.

He purposed: as in Romans 8:28; 9:11; important parallels. That which was well-pleasing to God He deliberately purposed to effect.

In Him: either in Christ or in God. In the former case it would be rendered (R.V.) 'in Him:' in the latter (A.V.) 'in Himself.' Although the foregoing possessive pronouns refer to the Father, a comparison with Ephesians 1:4, 'chosen in Him,' suggests that Paul refers here to Christ. Moreover, to say that God's purpose was formed in God, is tautology: to say that it was formed in Christ, adds an important thought kept before us in Ephesians 1:10, viz. the relation of this divine purpose to the Son of God.

**Ver. 10.** Exposition of the foregoing.

With-a-view-to, etc.: in forming this purpose God was looking forward to the time of Christ.

Dispensation: same word as 'stewardship' in Colossians 1:25; 1 Corinthians 9:17. It denotes the management of a house. And, since this was frequently committed to a superior servant, or steward, it denotes frequently the office of a steward. So always elsewhere in the N.T. It cannot be so here. For, evidently, God is represented as administering His own household. The word falls back therefore on its original meaning of house management. It is the government of God represented as a householder managing his property and servants.

Seasons: portions of time, looked upon not as periods passing by but as opportunities for action. Same word in Ephesians 5:16; also 1 Thessalonians 5:1; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1, etc. The plural suggests that in the Gospel age several ages had their consummation.

Fulness: see under Colossians 1:19.

The fulness of the seasons: the time in which the various ages of the kingdom of God find their end and goal, and the accomplishment of the purpose which underlays them. And this can be no other than the Gospel age, and the glorious ages to follow it. Consequently, 'the dispensation of, etc.' is the mode of divine government which belongs to that age. All this God had in view in forming His purpose of salvation.

To-sum-up-again (same word in Romans 13:9) all things in Christ: God's purpose touching the final administration of His kingdom.

All things: men and things, as in Colossians 1:20. God resolved to unite together 'in Christ' the dissevered elements of His universe, thus making Him the center and circumference of all.

Sum-up-again; suggests an original harmony. This, God purposes to restore. [The middle voice suggests that God will do this to work out His own pleasure.] 'All things' include 'the things upon the heavens and those upon the earth.' So 1 Corinthians 1:20; a close parallel. In the one passage Christ is an instrument of universal reconciliation; in the other, a center of universal harmony.

This verse teaches that the eternal purpose which prompted, as the means of its accomplishment, the mission of the Son of God embraced both earth and heaven; that God has resolved to unite into one whole the various elements in these realms of His empire; and to make Christ the surrounding element and the center of this all-embracing union. In other words, God's purpose to save man is part of a purpose earlier in time, and wider in extent, than the human race.

In Him: emphatic repetition of 'in Christ,' as a transition to the relative sentence following in which the same idea is again prominent.

**Ver. 11.** A new thought: in Christ 'we have also been-made-heirs.' This last word is the passive form of a verb denoting to allot something to some one, and especially to allot as an inheritance. In Greek, such a passive may mean either 'to be allotted as an inheritance,' or 'to receive such an allotment.' The latter sense is the more likely here. For, that believers are themselves an inheritance is not taught elsewhere in the N.T. In Ephesians 1:14 they are represented as God's own possession, but not as an inherited possession. But, that they are heirs, is plainly asserted in

Ephesians 1:14; Romans 8:17; Galatians 5:29: and some are said in Colossians 1:12 to have been made partakers of the allotted portion of the saints. And this allotment of inherited blessing has been made to us in Christ. For, only through His agency and by inward union with Him is the inheritance ours.

The participial clause following traces this allotment of an inheritance to a definite and eternal purpose of God.

Having-been foreordained: passive form of the word used in Ephesians 1:5. We have been made heirs in time because before time began we were in the mind of God marked out for heirship.

According to purpose: same words in same sense in Romans 8:28. They give prominence to the chief element in the foreordination, viz. purpose, and tell us that it was a purpose of Him whose deliberate resolve controls and moulds 'all things.'

Works: as in Philippians 2:13.

Works all things: same words in 1 Corinthians 12:6.

Counsel: a deliberate purpose taking into account ways and means. This deliberate purpose has its source in 'the will' of God. The idea of deliberation distinguishes this phrase from the similar phrase in Ephesians 1:5 where God's satisfaction with His own purpose is more prominent.

**Ver. 12.** A refrain marking the close of the second part of 2, similar to that in Ephesians 1:6 at the close of the first part. This fuller refrain tells us that God intended us to be a means of evoking praise of His splendor; and that this praise is an aim of the purpose described in Ephesians 1:11. God resolved so to bless us that all us others should see and acknowledge His grandeur.

Up to this point Paul's words have been true alike of Jews and Gentiles. He now mentions the two great divisions of mankind which were ever present to his thought. In Ephesians 1:12 the Jews, and in Ephesians 1:13, 14 the Gentiles, are specified.

Before-hoped: i.e. before 'the Christ' came. This hope of a coming deliverer was a distinguishing feature of the Jews: Acts 26:6, 7; 28:20;



Luke 2:25, 38. It was a bond uniting together the scattered members of the nation; and an inspiration moulding the piety of the more devout. The Gentiles had no such hope: Ephesians 2:12. The word 'Christ' is both a designation of the hoped-for Deliverer (Daniel 9:25; John 1:20; 4:25) and a proper name of the Incarnate Son. The latter is naturally the usual use of the word. But here the mention of a hope earlier than the incarnation suggests the former use. The Messiah, who was the great object of Jewish hopes, is represented as the ground of their hope: so 1 Corinthians 15:19; Philippians 2:19. For, long before He appeared, the Jews clung to the hoped-for Deliverer and built upon Him their expectations.

**Ver. 13-14.** Third part of 2.

In whom: parallel with the same words in Ephesians 1:7 at the beginning of the second part.

Also ye: the Gentile Christians at Ephesus, as well as the Jews referred to specially in Ephesians 1:12.

Having heard, etc.: means by which salvation had reached the Ephesian Christians, viz. 'the word' spoken and 'heard.'

The word of the truth: as in Colossians 1:5. It is a verbal expression corresponding to the eternal realities.

The Gospel of your salvation: 'the good news which has been and is the means of your salvation.' So 1 Corinthians 15:2. The word preached was an assertion 'of the truth:' it was also 'the good news' which had been the means of rescuing the Ephesian Christians from the penalty and power of sin.

After the participial clause we expect a finite word. But instead of this we have another participial clause: in whom also having believed. Apparently the construction of the sentence is broken off. The relative, 'in whom' or 'in which,' is repeated, disturbing the orderly course of the sentence. But the irregularity throws into prominence the truth that the sealing afterwards mentioned was in Christ. Paul wishes to say that in Christ the Gentile Christians, 'having heard the Gospel,' and 'having also believed' it, 'were sealed, etc.' This surrender of grammar to emphasis is a conspicuous feature in Paul: so Ephesians 2:1-5; Romans 5:12; Galatians 2:6.

The Spirit of promise: the gift of the Spirit foretold by the prophets, e.g. Joel 2:28, 29; Ezekiel 36:26, 27. The Spirit of promise is then identified as 'the Holy' Spirit. With this Spirit as an instrument the Gentile Christians had been 'sealed:' close parallel to 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22. Paul asserts that his readers, whom he distinguishes from the Jews, had 'heard the Gospel and' had 'believed' it; that through faith they had received 'the Holy Spirit' as foretold by the ancient prophets; and that the Spirit thus received was a 'seal,' i.e. a divine attestation of the word believed. And he declares with emphatic repetition that this sealing had taken place in virtue of their inward union with Christ. He thus joins the believing Gentiles to those who when Christ came were waiting for His appearance. Notice that the gift of the Spirit proves that the Gentiles are sharers of the blessings brought by Christ: Acts 11:17, 18. This proof is strengthened by the word 'promise,' which reminds us that the Holy Spirit given to the Gentiles was a fulfilment of ancient Jewish prophecy.

This verse is in close harmony with the constant teaching of Paul that they who believe the Gospel are justified, and adopted into the family of God, and receive the Holy Spirit: e.g. Galatians 2:16; 3:2, 26.

**Ver. 14.** Further teaching about the Holy Spirit, and about God's purpose in sealing us.

**Earnest:** a part of the price paid at the time of purchase as a pledge of the whole. See under 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5: close and important parallels.

**Our inheritance:** the benefits of the New Covenant looked upon as coming to us in virtue of our relation to God our Father. Close parallels in Romans 8:17; Galatians 3:29; Colossians 3:24. Of these benefits, the gift of the Spirit is a part given to us when we are received into the family of God. And inasmuch as this gift is a proof that we are children of God, it is also a pledge that the entire inheritance will some day be ours. The word rendered 'possession' denotes in 1 Thessalonians 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:14 the 'obtaining' of salvation and of the glory of Christ; and in Hebrews 10:39 the 'preserving' of the soul. But in Malachi 2:17 and in a quotation in 1 Peter 2:9 from Exodus 19:5 it represents a Hebrew word denoting a peculiar possession or treasure. God declared that Israel, if faithful, should be His own peculiar treasure. And such are they who believe in Christ. They will be God's own for ever.

Redemption; includes the ideas of liberation and price, and is therefore not complete till actual liberation is effected. Cp. Ephesians 4:30, 'the day of redemption;' Luke 21:28; Romans 8:23: see under Romans 3:24. An aim of the gift of the Spirit is the liberation in the great day from the bondage of death of those whom God has chosen to be specially His own.

For praise of His glory: nearly word for word as in Ephesians 1:12. It is a third refrain closing the third part of 2. Each refrain represents, as the final purpose of man's salvation in its various parts, an admiring recognition by God's creatures of His essential grandeur. Cp. 1 Peter 2:9. The threefold refrain makes this final purpose very conspicuous.

## REVIEW

Section 2 is throughout a song of praise for blessings given by God to Paul and his readers, a song rising in each of its three parts till it seems to lose itself in the eternal song of earth and heaven. In the first part we have blessing from man to God for blessing given by God to man in fulfilment of an eternal purpose that men should be sons of God. In the second part we are reminded that the objects of this purpose are sinners.

Consequently, God's favor towards them took the form of rescue, through the death of Christ, from the penalty and bondage of sin. Moreover, His favor came to them clothed in a gift of wisdom revealing God's long-hidden purpose to bring men into His family and to make them His heirs, this being part of a wider purpose to unite the creatures of God in heaven and earth into one great whole of which Christ is to be the Head and Center and Circumference, a purpose of Him whose counsels rule and mould the universe.

Up to this point, in the light of a divine purpose wide as the universe and earlier than time, all human distinctions have been forgotten. But at the close of the second part of the section, we meet the all-important distinction of Jew and Gentile so deeply interwoven into the thought of Paul. The above purpose of God embraces the Jews, who before Messiah came had built their hopes on His expected appearance. And it embraces the Gentiles: for they have not only heard and believed the Gospel but have received the seal of the Holy Spirit promised to ancient Israel, who is Himself a pledge that they will share the inheritance of the sons of Abraham and the deliverance which awaits those who are the peculiar treasure of God. This specific mention of the Gentiles as sharers of the heritage of Israel forms the third and last DIVISION of the section. Each DIVISION concludes by pointing to the eternal recognition of the greatness of God as the ultimate aim of the blessing and favor so richly poured upon man

In this section we have a restatement of Paul's teaching in Romans 8:28, 29; 9:11 that salvation is an accomplishment of a divine purpose and choice and predestination. The restatement has the emphasis of conspicuous repetition. The purpose to save man is traced back to

eternity; is shown to be part of a purpose embracing both earth and heaven; and is placed in closest relation to Christ. In other words, Paul's earlier teaching has received rich and harmonious development. We have again his favorite thought that the Gospel contains a secret known only to the initiated; as in Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Colossians 1:26. The gift of the Spirit is again appealed to as a proof of the favor of God and as a pledge of a share in the inheritance awaiting the sons of God; in close harmony with Romans 8:16, 17; Galatians 3:29, 4:6, and with Acts 11:17, 18. A marked feature of this section is the occurrence in it ten times of the phrase 'in Christ' or its equivalents, noting an inward union with Him as the all-embracing and all-pervading element both of salvation and of the eternal purpose to save. This we have already noticed as a conspicuous feature of the writings of Paul, a feature not found elsewhere in the N.T. except, in a peculiar form, in the Gospel and First Epistle of John. Its presence here in so great frequency, but never without meaning, is a clear indication of genuineness: as are the coincidences noted above. We notice the word 'redemption' used to describe the deliverance wrought through the death of Christ, as in Romans 3:24; and with special reference to the final deliverance, as in Romans 8:23. Also the word 'wealth,' as in Romans 2:4; 9:23; 11:33; Colossians 1:27; and the word 'earnest,' as in 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5.

As we rise from the study of this section we are conscious that we have heard the tones of a familiar voice, and have learnt from the lips of a revered teacher new lessons equal to the most valuable we had learnt before.

## SECTION 3

### **PRAYER THAT THE READERS MAY RECOGNISE IN THEMSELVES THE GREAT POWER WHICH RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD**

#### CHAPTER 1:15-23

*For which cause also I, having heard the faith among you in the Lord Jesus, and the faithfulness towards all the saints, do not cease giving thanks on your behalf making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Him having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, in order that ye may know what is the hope of your calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance among the saints, and what the surpassing greatness of His power towards us who believe, according to the working of the might of His strength which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His right hand in the heavenly places beyond and above all principality and authority and power and lordship and every name named not only in this age but also in that which is to be. And He subjected all things under His feet; and gave Him, as Head above all things, to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all things in all.*

Paul began his Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians , after a few words of greeting, with thanks to God for his readers' Christian life. The Epistle before us, he begins with a glorious psalm of praise for blessings given to the whole people of God, which he expounds at some length, followed by specific mention of Jewish and Gentile Christians. The mention of these last suggests now definite thanks to God on his readers' behalf, thanks which pass easily into a wonderful prayer for their further progress. His thanks and prayer occupy this section.

**Ver. 15.** For which cause: because you have been sealed by the Spirit as heirs of the inheritance of God.

Also I: Paul placing himself alongside these Gentiles, as interested in their welfare.

Having-heard: cp. Colossians 1:4, to a Church Paul has never visited; and contrast Philippians 1:3, where the absence of this word suggests that he writes from personal knowledge. That Paul speaks only of 'having heard' about people among whom (Acts 20:31) he labored three years, is certainly remarkable. It can hardly be explained by tidings received since he left Ephesus four or five years before. For it was nearly as long since he was at Philippi; and after leaving Philippi he met the Ephesian elders at Miletus. More likely is the suggestion (see under Ephesians 1:1) that this letter was written to other Churches besides that at Ephesus, Churches which Paul had never visited; and that chiefly to tidings about these last, together with later tidings about the Ephesians, the word 'have-heard' refers. This word therefore supports the suggestion just mentioned.

The faith among you: differs very slightly from 'your faith,' by making 'faith' and the believer distinct objects of thought.

Faith in the Lord Jesus: similar phrase in 1 Timothy 3:13; 2 Timothy 3:15. It represents Christ, the personal object and ground of our faith, as also its surrounding element.

The word 'love,' omitted from the text of the R.V., is not found in any Greek copy earlier than the Clermont MS. in the sixth century, and in a correction of the Sinai Ms. made perhaps in the seventh century. It is absent entirely from the Vat. and Alex. MSS. and from the Sinai MS. as originally written; and seems to have been unknown to the early Biblical scholars, Origen and Jerome. But it is found in the Latin, Syriac, and Coptic Versions. If spurious, the insertion of the word is easily accounted for as a reminiscence of Colossians 1:4. But, if genuine, its omission is very difficult to explain. This likelihood of insertion and unlikeliness of omission, together with the united testimony of the ancient Greek MSS., our best witnesses for the text of the N.T., testify strongly that the word was not written by Paul. And that without it the sentence gives a good meaning, I shall endeavor to show.

In the sense in which Paul writes 'faith in the Lord Jesus,' we cannot possibly have 'faith... in all the saints.' Certainly these last cannot be the object or element of Christian faith. But the common classic meaning which I have given to the same word in Philemon 4, and which is found in a few places in the N.T., viz. 'faithfulness,' would give a good meaning here. That one word would then be used in the same sentence in two senses, need not surprise us. For each use of the word was common, the first in the N.T. and the other in the Greek spoken everywhere in Paul's day. And the context makes quite clear that the word cannot have in the second clause the meaning which it undoubtedly has in the first. In such cases the mind passes almost unconsciously from one sense of the word to another. Moreover, faith and faithfulness have much in common. They who rest with confidence upon the word and character of God become themselves a rock on which others rest. Hence, in Greek the same words, substantive and adjective, denote 'faith' and 'faithfulness,' 'believing' and 'trustworthy.' Between these meanings it is frequently difficult to decide: e.g. Colossians 1:2; 4:9. An example of transition from one to the other, we have in Romans 3:3. 'What if some did not believe? Shall the want of faith make of no effect the 'faith' (or 'faithfulness') of God?' We may therefore accept this meaning as not unlikely. And it enables us to accept also the reading so strongly supported by the best ancient copies. But since no English word combines the two meanings of the Greek word, we can reproduce Paul's full sense only by using two words. The passage may fairly be reproduced, 'faith in the Lord Jesus and faithfulness towards all the saints.' The assurance of which Christ was the personal Object and Ground and Sphere produced as its natural result trustworthiness 'towards all the saints.' These last words as in Colossians 1:4.

**Ver. 16.** Do not cease giving thanks: cp. Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:3, 9; Romans 1:8, 9. Paul's constant attitude of mind, since he heard about his readers, has been thankfulness to God for them. For he knew that their faithfulness was God's work and gift.

**Ver. 17.** As ever, Paul's thoughts pass imperceptibly into prayer for further blessing. The good he hears prompts him, while giving thanks, to ask for more.



In order that, etc.: matter of the prayer, given as its aim and purpose. So frequently: cp. Philemon 6. For Paul's prayer is a means to a definite end. Knowing that God answers prayer, he prays 'in order that God... may give.'

The God of our Lord Jesus Christ: who on earth addressed Him as 'My God,' John 20:17; Matthew 27:46. The word 'God' here notes a relation of the Father, not only to men, but to Christ. And the entire teaching of Paul and John assures us that this relation extends, not only to the Incarnate, but to the Eternal, Son. As supreme in the Godhead, the Father occupies, even to the Eternal Son, a relation suitably described by the word 'God.' Hence this word is the frequent title of the Father even as distinguished from the Son: see under 1 Corinthians 3:23, 8:6. For to Him, as 'God,' the Son is and ever will be subject: 1 Corinthians 15:28. A genitive following the word 'father' usually describes his children. But the abstract term 'glory' cannot do this. It is evidently a characterizing quality of 'the Father' of Christ and of us. So 2 Corinthians 1:3, 'Father of compassions;' Acts 7:2, 'God of glory,' 1 Corinthians 2:8, 'Lord of glory.' Paul prays to Him to whom the divine Head of the Church bows as 'God, to the Father,' clothed in infinite grandeur, of Christ and of us.

Spirit of wisdom: the Holy 'Spirit,' as an animating principle possessing and imparting 'wisdom.' See under 1 Corinthians 4:21, 'Spirit of meekness;' 2 Corinthians 4:13; Romans 8:2, 15. For the word cannot denote here a human spirit: nor does it ever, apparently, denote mere disposition of mind. [The absence of the Greek article is frequent even when the one Holy Spirit is indisputably referred to: e.g. Romans 8:9-11, 14, 15. For where a word is in itself sufficiently definite, the Greeks frequently omitted the article, in order to direct attention to the qualities implied in the anarthrous word; in this case, to the Holy Spirit as an animating principle characterized by wisdom.]

Wisdom and revelation: see under 1 Corinthians 2:5; Romans 1:17. It is a characterizing, prerogative of the Spirit of God to impart a knowledge of eternal realities; and, more definitely, to lift a veil which no hand but that of God can lift and which hides from us the unseen things of God. The former term is general: the latter specific. Paul prays that the Father who is characterized by infinite grandeur, who has already (Ephesians 1:13) sealed

his readers with the Spirit of promise, may give to them the same Spirit as an inward source of wisdom and as One who reveals the things unseen. His prayer reminds us that each new influence and work of the Spirit is a fresh gift from God.

Knowledge: literally, 'full-knowledge;' as in Colossians 1:9, 10; 2:2; 3:10.

Of Him: of God, to whom here Paul prays. The Spirit of wisdom comes to us clothed 'in' a deep and real 'knowledge' of God; and makes Himself known to us by imparting such knowledge. For God is Himself the great Reality, and the great Object which appears when the veil is lifted.

**Ver.** 18. Enlightened: as in Hebrews 6:4; 10:32.

The heart: the inmost center of human life, and the source of action: see under Romans 1:21.

The eyes of the heart: the faculty by which knowledge enters into and illumines this inmost chamber.

Having the eyes of your heart enlightened: connecting link between the gift of the Spirit and the personal knowledge which Paul desires for his readers. [The accusative case puts these words in apposition, not as we might have expected to the preceding words 'give to you,' but to those following 'that ye may know:' in order, apparently, to suggest that only by enlightenment of the heart can we receive this desired knowledge. This use of the accusative is made somewhat the more easy by the occasional use of the accusative absolute, as in Romans 8:3.] Before expounding the ultimate aim of his prayer, viz. knowledge of three things pertaining to the Christian life, Paul states conspicuously a condition on which alone this aim can be attained, viz. the entrance of light, ever the condition of knowledge, into the inmost chamber of our nature. This light he hopes for as a result of the gift of the Spirit of God whose special work is to impart wisdom and to unveil mysteries. For He is the one principle of spiritual life. And, always, life is an essential condition of sight.

That ye may know, etc.: ultimate aim of the gift of the Spirit, and of inward enlightenment. So Philippians 1:9; Colossians 1:9. This earnest prayer reveals the infinite importance of knowledge as a condition of

Christian life. Three matters, Paul desires his readers to know: two in Ephesians 1:18, and a third in Ephesians 1:19.

His calling: a favorite word of Paul, Romans 1:6; 8:28, 30; 1 Corinthians 1:9, 26; 7:18, 20-22, etc; 'the high calling of God,' Philippians 3:14. It is the Gospel summons to salvation, to the service of God, and to eternal glory. To this 'calling' belongs 'hope:' for it gives to those who hear and obey it an expectation of infinite blessing to come. Paul desires that his readers may know how great these blessings are. And to this end he has already prayed that they may receive the Spirit of wisdom. For only the Spirit of God can reveal the greatness of the blessings awaiting the sons of God: cp. 1 Corinthians 2:10, 12.

And what, etc.: second matter which Paul desires His readers to 'know.' It is also the object of the 'hope' just mentioned.

His inheritance: the good things of God which will pass to 'the saints' as His children. For they are 'heirs of God,' Romans 8:17. Of these good things the Spirit of Adoption is the first: cp. Ephesians 1:14. This inheritance has an abundance of splendor which will make truly rich all who receive it. Paul desires his readers to know how great is the abundance of this splendor.

Among or 'in the saints': cp. Colossians 1. 27, 'among the Gentiles.' 'The saints' are represented as standing round their own inheritance. Heirship to the wealth of God is located by God in and among the sacred people of the New Covenant.

**Ver.** 19a. A third ultimate aim of Paul's prayer.

Surpassing: Ephesians 2:7; 3:19: a similar form of the same word, in 2 Corinthians 3:10; 9:14; the corresponding substantive in Romans 7:13; 1 Corinthians 12:31; 2 Corinthians 1:8; 4:7, 17; 12:7; Galatians 1:13, and a corresponding adverb in 2 Corinthians 11:23. This family of words is peculiar to this Epistle and to the undisputed Epistles of Paul. It embodies a thought evidently familiar to him; and is thus a note of genuineness.

Us that believe: Cp. Ephesians 1:13: another important harmony with Paul's doctrine of salvation through faith. It tells us the aim and direction

of this mighty power. Paul desires his readers to know what, in its operation in the hearts of believers, the greatness of that power is.

**Ver.** 19b-20. According to, etc.: a standard by which they may measure it.

Working: or 'energy:' see under Philippians 3:21. Notice the accumulation of synonyms representing different sides of one conception. The word rendered 'power' denotes ability to produce results. That rendered 'might' is the last part of the words autocrat, democrat; and suggests a controlling influence. The word rendered 'strength' is frequently used of muscular force. It suggests the inherent capacity of God for breaking down obstacles and working out His will. 'The energy of the might of His strength' is the activity of the all-controlling and inherent capacity for action which dwells in God. Same words together in Ephesians 6:10.

Which he wrought: specific activity of the power of God to which Paul has just referred as a measure of the power at work in us.

Wrought or 'energized': cognate to 'working' in Ephesians 1:19. It is used in Galatians 3:5; Matthew 14:2 for the putting forth of miraculous power.

In Christ: objectively and historically, in the personality of the God-Man. Similarly, Romans 3:24; cp. 1 Corinthians 15:22, 'in Adam all die.'

When He raised Him, etc.: specific manifestation of the energy of God. Close parallel in Philippians 3:10, 'the power of His resurrection.' Notice that, as ever, Christ is said to have been raised by the power of the Father: so Colossians 2:12; Galatians 1:1; Romans 4:21; 8:11; 10:9.

At His right hand: see under Colossians 3:1. Christ's session in glory is here represented as being, like His resurrection, a work of God.

In the heavenly places: word for word as in Ephesians 1:3. It depicts further the surroundings of the Risen Lord.

**Ver.** 21. Further delineation of the position of the Risen One.

Beyond and above: movement upwards going beyond even the most exalted.

All principality and authority: word for word as in Colossians 2:10. Same words in the plural in Colossians 1:16; where see note. They evidently describe successive ranks of angels.

Power: same word as in Ephesians 1:19. In 1 Peter 3:22 we have ‘angels and authorities and powers,’ made subject to the Risen Savior.

Lordship: same word in Colossians 1:16, but there placed immediately before ‘principalities or authorities.’ This change of order makes it impossible to determine whether the order here given is ascending or descending. All that we can infer with certainty is that Paul’s faith saw the Risen and Rising One passing through and beyond and above successive ranks of angelic powers until there was in heaven no grandeur which He had not left behind. Then, after naming heavenly powers known to him, he uses a universal phrase covering ‘not only’ those known by men living on earth ‘in the’ present ‘age, but also’ those names which will be needed and used to describe men and angels throughout the eternal future. Whatever may be thus designated, Christ has already passed.

Every name named: a close parallel in Philippians 2:9. It includes every kind of character and position as recognised by intelligent persons.

Not only, etc.; emphasises the universal expression by specifying two component parts of it. So Colossians 1:16. Same Division of time in Matthew 12:32

This age: same words in Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 2:6; Galatians 1:4; where see notes. It is the present course of things.

That which is to come: the new course of things to be introduced by the coming of Christ, this looked upon as one definite whole.

**Ver.** 22a. Further delineation of the exaltation of Christ. For greater emphasis, it is added as an independent sentence.

All-things; keeps up the idea of universality already expressed by the words ‘all’ and ‘every.’

All things He subjected under His feet: word for word as in 1 Corinthians 15:27, which is almost word for word from (LXX.) Psalm 8:6. What the Psalmist asserts of man, in poetic ideal, Paul claims in each passage to have

been fulfilled in Christ. And rightly. For, as Son of man, He is heir of whatever belongs to man.

**Ver. 22b.** The exalted Savior's relation to the Church. Notice also a fuller statement of His relation to the universe, this including evidently the angelic powers just mentioned. Christ is not only above the angels, but above all created things as their 'Head,' i.e. as the seat of supreme authority: see under Colossians 1:18.

Above or rather 'beyond all things': recalling Ephesians 1:21, 'above and beyond all principality, etc.' We have here the historic exaltation of the human body and nature of the Son, and His original relation to the universe: see Colossians 1:16-18. In this supreme dignity, raised above and controlling all things, God 'gave Him to the Church;' evidently in order that the Head of the universe may be also Head of the Church, thus making the universe an ally of the Church.

**Ver. 23.** Two important relations of the Church to Christ.

Which is, or, more fully, 'inasmuch as it is': a reason why God gave Christ to the Church.

His body: as in Colossians 1:18. See note under 1 Corinthians 12:30. In Ephesians 1:20-22 we saw the mighty power of God raising Christ from the grave in which He lay dead and raising Him through the successive ranks of angels until He sits in glory at the right hand of God. We now learn that the Risen and Enthroned One is God's gift to the Church, to be its Head, i.e. to be Himself a part of the Church and occupying in it a unique and supreme place as that part which directs the whole and is essential to the vitality of the whole. In other words, He who is above everything created is in closest union with the Church.

The fulness, etc.: farther description of the Church. It is 'the body' of Christ, an outward and visible form consisting of various and variously endowed members all animated by the one Spirit of Christ, of which body He is Himself the Head, the supreme and controlling member.

It is also His fulness: see under Colossians 1:19.

Him who fills all things with all things: Christ, who gives to the universe in its various parts the fulness with which every part is full.

Fills, or more accurately ‘fills for Himself’ or ‘from Himself’: Christ being enriched by the fulness with which He makes the universe full. This keeps before us the similar relation of Christ to the universe and to the Church. In what sense are these words true? The Church can hardly be the fulness with which Christ is Himself full as in the ordinary use and construction of the word. Rather it is that which Christ makes full; according to a less common classic use in which a fully manned ship is sometimes called a fulness, as though in its full equipment the idea of a ship found its full realisation. He who fills the universe and by its abundant contents reveals Himself as one ‘who fills all things with all things,’ fills also the Church, making it a receptacle of every blessing which proceeds from Him. Somewhat similar is the common use of the same word by the Gnostics, as quoted frequently by Irenaeus, in a local sense to describe the abode of blessedness, which they called ‘the fulness’ in contrast to ‘the void’ or abode of darkness. Also closely akin to the word before us is the verb in Colossians 2:10, ‘in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are ‘made-full’ in Him.’ He who has so joined to Himself the Church as to make it His body, the visible organ of His self-manifestation, and Himself its Head, has also made it His ‘fulness,’ the receptacle and embodiment of His own abundance, of the infinite blessings He is able to bestow.

## REVIEW

That his readers have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and that He is an earnest of the inheritance awaiting them, moves Paul, on hearing of their faith in Christ and their faithfulness towards all Christians, to give ceaseless thanks on their behalf in his approaches to God in prayer. His thanks pass imperceptibly into prayer that God would give to them that Spirit who is the Bearer of the wisdom of God and the Agent of His revelations to men, this gift assuming the form of imparted knowledge of God, in order that they, receiving light where the heart sees things unseen, may know what blessings await those who have heard and obeyed the Gospel summons, how abundant is the splendor of the inheritance which already belongs to the saints, and how surpassingly mighty is the power which is already at work upon them and will ultimately realise their hopes. Paul gives them a measure by which they may estimate the greatness of this power, viz. the power which raised Christ from the dead to the throne of God, far beyond the shining ranks of heaven and beyond whatever dignity is known in the age now passing or will be known in the ages to come. The exaltation of Christ rivets the Apostle's wondering gaze. He remembers that not only is Christ raised above all angelic powers, but that all things good and bad, personal and impersonal, are put under His control; that the humanity of Christ, itself a part of the created universe, holds in it a place of unique dignity as the supreme part which controls all else; that this supreme Ruler of the universe has been given to the Church to be a part of it, viz. the one supreme and controlling member without which the others cannot live; and that the Church is both His body, the visible organ of His self-manifestation, and His fulness, the receptacle of the effulgence and wealth which ever flow from Him.

Notice carefully that, in consequence of the close relation between Christ and His peoples the splendor given to Him and the power which rescued Him from death and gave Him that splendor are a measure of the splendor awaiting His people; and that the power which raised Christ is already at work in those who believe, and will ultimately raise them to the throne of their Risen Lord. A similar argument in Philippians 3:21. This exaltation above even the highest created beings assures us that no created power will



prevent or lessen the glory awaiting us. Notice also the appropriateness here of Paul's favorite metaphor of the Church as the body of Christ. If we are members of His body, where the Head is we must some day be. Therefore, since the Head cannot descend, the exaltation of Christ is a pledge that we shall reign with Him. The Church is also the self-development of Him who fills the universe with His own life; as though apart from the Church our conception of Christ would be incomplete.

## SECTION 4

### **PAUL AND HIS READERS WERE ONCE DEAD BY REASON OF THEIR SINS**

#### CHAPTER 2:1-3

*And you, being dead through your trespasses and sins, in which formerly ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the authority of the air, of the spirit which now works in the sons of disobedience; among whom also we all lived formerly in the desires of our flesh, doing the resolves of the flesh and the thoughts: and we were by nature children of anger as also the rest.*

In 3 Paul prayed that his readers might know the great power of God at work towards those who believe; and, as a measure of it pointed to Christ raised from the dead and enthroned with God. He sees Christ not only raised above all but the Head of all, and given to the Church to be its Head and the Church His body and His fulness. The original purpose of this reference to Christ's resurrection and ascension, viz. as a measure of the power at work in us, now reappears. In Ephesians 2:1, (4,) Paul turns suddenly to his readers and declares that, like Christ, they once were dead: in Ephesians 2:2, 3 he proves this. in 5 he goes on to say that in Christ they also have been raised and enthroned.

**Ver. 1.** And you: the Christians at Ephesus and elsewhere, in contrast to the Risen Savior.

Being: as in Colossians 1:21.

Dead through trespasses: as in Colossians 2:13, where see note.

'Trespasses' are moral falls: 'sins' are moral failures. This twofold description of the same actions emphasizes the cause of spiritual death. Their former position was analogous to that of Christ in the grave. For they 'also' were 'dead;' and their death, like His, was caused by human sins. These sins had robbed them of the only true life; and had given them

up, unless rescued by Him who raises the dead, to eternal corruption. Such was their awful state, utterly beyond reach of human help.

The words in italics (A.V. and R.V.) are an anticipation of Ephesians 2:5, inserted to complete the English sentence. The verb governing the accusative you in Ephesians 2:1 is pushed back to make way for the relative sentences in Ephesians 2:2, 3, which describe further the sad condition of the persons referred to, until in Ephesians 2:4 its place is supplied by a new sentence. All this is characteristic of Paul: a close parallel in Romans 5:12. Paul keeps us under the shadow of death that the darkness of the shadow may throw into greater prominence the splendor of the light of life.

**Ver.** 2. In which sins: as the surrounding element of their life and movement. Cp. 1 Corinthians 15:17.

Ye walked: see under Colossians 3:7.

Of this world: the whole realm of men and things around, looked upon as existing in space and as hostile to Christ.

The course, or 'age': the whole stream and tendency of things around, looked upon as moving forward in time.

According to the course, etc.: carried along by the moving current of men and things around, all belonging to 'this world.' The two words 'course' and 'world' represent the same idea in its reference to time and space respectively. And each word recalls the vast complexity of things and movements around. The combination presents this idea with a completeness not found elsewhere.

Ruler, or 'prince': same word in Romans 13:3; 1 Corinthians 2:6, 8, of earthly rulers; in Revelation 1:5, of Christ as 'the Ruler of the kingdoms of the earth;' and in John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11, of Satan.

According to the ruler, etc.: parallel with 'according to the course, etc.,' and another view of the same truth. Steps guided by the current of things around are guided by the unseen 'ruler' of that current. For the visible stream is animated and directed by an unseen spirit.

Authority: a controlling influence, as in Colossians 1:13. A genitive after this word usually denotes either the person exercising authority or those under authority. But we cannot conceive 'the air,' the imponderable element around and above us, as either ruling or being ruled over. It must therefore be the locality of this controlling influence. The authority which directs the course of those who float down the stream of things around must be that of evil spirits. That these were conceived, both by Jews and by others in the ancient world, as having their abode in the air, we have in Rabbinical literature and elsewhere, e.g. Diogenes Laertius bk. viii. 32, abundant proof. And this agrees with their comparative power, greater than men and less than the powers of heaven. Apparently, Paul accepted and used this common conception as sufficiently embodying a truth he wished to teach. His Words remind us that all around are spiritual enemies, as near as the air we breathe. Over these reigns a tremendous potentate. Along a path marked out by him, led by unseen powers who do his bidding and by the current of things around, once walked the Christians to whom Paul now writes.

The spirit which now works, etc.: parallel with 'the authority of the air,' and further describing the agency which does the bidding of 'the prince' of darkness, as an animating principle moving men from within in contrast to 'the course of this world' which carries them along as an influence from without. With 'the spirit,' contrast 'the Spirits' in 1 John 4:1. This latter passage looks at the infinite variety, the former at the essential oneness, of these evil influences. A variety of spiritual foes is also portrayed in Ephesians 6:12.

Works, or 'inworks': as in Ephesians 1:11, 20; Philippians 2:13. This interior working is a characteristic of spirit. To the Christians at Ephesus this inward influence is past: to others it 'now works.'

Sons of disobedience: Ephesians 5:6. See note under Colossians 3:6. As a description of the unsaved, it prepares the 'way for the fuller description in Ephesians 2:3.

After asserting that his readers were once dead through their sins, Paul further describes their former state of death. The sins which had been the means of their destruction were also an element in which they moved. And their path was guided by the current around them, a current belonging to

the present material world. It was guided, not by a blind force or unconscious influence, but by a personal ruler, under whose sway was a controlling power as pervasive as the air. This power Paul speaks of as an active animating principle, prompting disobedience to God and making those who yield to it personal embodiments of the principle of disobedience.

**Ver. 3a.** To the foregoing description of the former state of the Gentile Christians, Paul now adds an equivalent description including himself and the Jewish Christians: ‘also we all.’ He thus completes his picture of unsaved mankind. By now including ‘all’ men, he brings the Jews specially before us.

Among whom: as belonging to their number. Paul thus asserts that all men, Jews and Gentiles, were once ‘sons of disobedience.’

Lived: same word as ‘behaved-ourselves’ or ‘had our manner of life in’ 2 Corinthians 1:12; also 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 1:17. It denotes life not as an inward principle, but as an outward activity and movement; and is thus parallel and similar to the word ‘walk’ in Ephesians 2:2.

Formerly: parallel to the same word in Ephesians 2:2.

In the desires: same words in Romans 1:24.

The desires of our flesh: see under Galatians 5:16, 24; cp. 1 John 2:16. The plural number recalls the variety of tendencies inherent to the constitution of our bodies and going out after objects pleasant to the senses. These tendencies are the world in which the unsaved move.

Doing the resolves, etc.: further description of the ‘manner of life in the desires of the flesh,’ asserting the fulfilment of these desires in action.

The resolves: Acts 13:22: the plural form of the word rendered ‘will’ in Ephesians 1:5, 9, 11. It denotes a deliberate wish. The plural number corresponds with the foregoing plural ‘desires.’ ‘The resolves’ differ from ‘the desires’ of the flesh as a definite wish differs from the general liking from which it springs. The repetition of the word ‘flesh’ is emphatic.

The minds: same word in the singular in Colossians 1:21, where see note, and in Matthew 22:37. The plural number reminds us that, whereas all

men have one 'flesh,' they have many 'minds.' Moreover, our 'minds,' like our flesh, have 'wills' of their own. The condemnation implied in this verse teaches that these 'wills' do not bow to the will of God; and that, consequently, they who 'do' them come under the anger of God. On 'the flesh,' see note under Romans 8:11.

**Ver.3b.** The last detail in Paul's description of the unsaved. In order to show its importance as in itself claiming attention, Paul adds it as an independent statement: 'and we were, etc.' He declares that in former days his readers 'were children, by nature, of anger,' i.e. exposed to the anger of God. Cp. John 17:12, 'the son of destruction:' close Hebrew parallels in Deuteronomy 25:2, 'a son of stripes;' 1 Samuel 20:31, 26:16; 2 Samuel 12:5, 'a son of death,' i.e. doomed to death. So terrible was the position of those about whom Paul writes that to his vivid thought they seemed to be an offspring of the anger of God. And they were this 'by-nature:' i.e. their exposure to the anger of God was an outworking of forces born in them. Same word in Romans 2:14, where see note; Galatians 2:15; 4:8.

As also the rest: i.e. of men. Paul solemnly concludes his description of the former state of his readers and himself by saying that the description is or has been true of all men.

These last words must be read in the light of the statement in Ephesians 1:1 that the Ephesian Christians were formerly dead by reason of their own personal sins. All is explained if we assume that men are born in such position that, apart from the salvation wrought out for them in Christ, none can avoid committing actual sin, and that in Christ salvation is offered to all men. If so, the universality of actual sin is a result of the lost state into which we were born. But, to those who have heard the Gospel, present condemnation is a result of rejection of offered salvation, and of actual sins from which Christ would have saved us. This evil nature is easily explained by Paul's teaching in Romans 5:12. By his first trespass Adam sold himself into bondage to sin and death. This double bondage his children inherit. No power of theirs can save them from actual sin and from the grave. But in Christ God offers to men deliverance now from the bondage of sin and ultimately from the grave. They who continue in sin do so because they reject the offered salvation. The word 'by-nature' inserted at the close of Paul's picture of lost humanity increases the darkness of the

picture. For it tells us that not only are all men sinners but they are so in consequence of the position in which they were born. None can save them except one who can change their inborn nature.

Notice that, without professing to do so, Paul has virtually in Ephesians 2:2, 3 explained and justified Ephesians 2:1, 'dead through your trespasses.' For he has asserted that his readers went once with the mass of mankind along a path marked out by the prince of evil, and were animated by an evil influence under his direction. The lower side of human nature was the element in which they lived: all men are or were numbered among the sons of disobedience, and were under the anger of God. If so, all men are guilty of actual sin; and all are dead except those whom God has raised from the dead. For the anger of God involves exclusion from the only real life, and leads inevitably to eternal corruption. Consequently, they who thus live are dead through their own sins.

This section is Paul's fullest description of unsaved mankind. And it is a picture of utter and universal ruin. He assumes in Ephesians 2:1 that all men have committed 'trespasses and sins;' and in Ephesians 2:3 that all were once numbered among 'the sons of disobedience' and were under the 'anger' of God. We have here universal sin and universal condemnation. This moral ruin Paul traces to a cause common to all men, viz. their 'flesh,' the material and lower side of their nature, this being to the unsaved the encompassing and determining element of their life and activity. In harmony with this, the anger of God resting upon all men is traced to the constitution received at birth. This inherited evil is further traced to a personal source mightier than man, viz. to a ruler from beneath who leads men along from within by an animating principle under his direction. Naturally, this inward force of evil operates on man through the lower and material side of his being, giving to it power to control his entire activity. It thus impresses its will on man's own nature, and forces him along a path on which God frowns.

A further analysis of sin is given in Ephesians 4:17-19.

## SECTION 5

### **GOD HAS MADE US SHARERS OF THE RESURRECTION LIFE OF CHRIST**

#### **CHAPTER 2:4-10**

*But God, being rich in mercy, because of His much love with which He loved us, and we being dead through our trespasses, has made us alive together with Christ-by grace ye are saved-and raised us with Him and made us sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that He may show in the ages coming on the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by grace ye are saved, through faith and that not of yourselves; the gift is God's; not of works, that no man may glory. For His workmanship we are, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God before prepared in order that we may walk in them.*

**Ver. 4-5.** But God: in conspicuous contrast to lost and sinful mankind. This new sentence supplies the place of the grammatical conclusion of the foregoing sentence, which was postponed to make way for the further delineation of those dead in sins, and not afterwards added. Similarly, the sentence broken off in Romans 5:12 has its virtual completion in Romans 5:18. This delineation is a dark background for the glory which suddenly and majestically now bursts upon us.

Mercy: compassion for the helpless. It recalls the helplessness of those under the anger of God, and thus completes the picture given in 4.

Rich in mercy: cp. Ephesians 1:7, 18.

Because of His much love; traces this mercy to its source in the central attribute of God. Upon this unique attribute Paul lingers: 'His much love with which He loved us.' The past tense refers to the love manifested in the salvation of Paul and his readers.



And we being dead, etc.: a repetition of Ephesians 2:1, for vivid contrast with the foregoing description of God and His love. A close parallel with Romans 3:23, where for a similar contrast we have a similar summary of foregoing teaching. This love of contrast, especially of contrast between past and present, is an almost certain mark of Pauline authorship.

Has-made alive-with-Christ: as in Colossians 2:13, where the same word is explained by 'having forgiven you all the trespasses.' It reverses all that is implied in the words 'dead through trespasses.' We were once, in consequence of our sins, a spiritual corpse given up to corruption utter and helpless, from which nothing could save us except the life-giving power of God. But God has pardoned our sins and given back to us the eternal life for which we were created. This eternal life is already our assured possession: and the witness of it is the Holy Spirit, the Breath of immortality, already moving our hearts with the pulse of divine life and prompting all Christian activities.

With Christ: as in Colossians 2:13. Our new immortal life is an outflow of the life breathed on the first Easter morning into His sacred corpse. For, had He not risen, there had been no saving faith, no Gospel, and no life eternal.

By grace (cp. Romans 3:24) ye-are saved: each word emphatic. Salvation is by the undeserved favor of God: it is already actual: and this is emphatically asserted. Contrast Romans 5:10; 13:11. We are already saved from the sinking wreck into a lifeboat which cannot sink: but we are not finally safe until the perilous voyage of life is past. Hence Paul can say as here we 'are saved;' or as in 1 Corinthians 1:18 we 'are being saved;' or as above we 'shall be saved.'

**Ver. 6.** Raised with Him: as in Colossians 2:12; 3:1. It further pictures the new life as a participation in the act of God which raised Christ from the grave and brought Him back to the land of the living.

Made-to-sit-with Him: only here and Luke 22:55. A new feature of the Christian life. We are not only made alive, and raised from the surroundings of death, but are also sharers of the throne of Christ. Cp. Ephesians 1:20: 'raised Him from the dead and made Him sit.' Notice the

close connection between the Christian's life on earth and the life of his risen and glorified Lord. See under Colossians 2:12.

In the heavenly places: same words as in Ephesians 1:3, which they expound. They give further definiteness to the picture of Christ's enthronement in heaven, and declare that already we share even its glorious environment. This resurrection and enthronement are 'with' Christ and 'in Christ.' For He will be both the companion and the encompassing element of our future glory. And whatever we shall be, to Paul's faith, believers already are. Thus (Ephesians 1:3) has God 'blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.'

**Ver. 7.** Aim of God in raising and enthroning us. Close harmony with Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14.

That He-may-show: more fully 'show' something 'in Himself' i.e. reveal His own inner nature. Same word in Romans 2:15; 9:17, 22; 1 Timothy 1:16.

The ages coming on: beginning with the coming of Christ. For only then will God's kindness to men be worthily manifested. To the prophetic eye of Paul, successive ages of future glory are already approaching, like successive waves of blessing; an endless vista of splendor. That this manifestation is to take place during the ages of glory, suggests that it will be for angels as well as men: cp. Ephesians 3:10.

The surpassing riches of His grace: a superlative term embracing and surpassing Ephesians 1:7, 19.

Kindness: so Romans 2:4, 'riches of His kindness;' also Romans 11:22. It is 'mercy' and 'grace' represented as gentleness.

In Christ Jesus: objectively, through His death and resurrection, as in Ephesians 1:20; Romans 3:24; and subjectively through inward contact with Him, as in 2 Corinthians 5:17. This aim of God in raising us together with Christ proves the infinite greatness of the blessing thus conferred on men. For the means must be sufficient for the end in view. God resolved to manifest the surpassing abundance of His grace; and, to this end, loaded us with kindness. A similar, but further, purpose in Ephesians 3:10.

**Ver. 8-9.** In order to justify and expound ‘the riches of His grace,’ Paul now repeats and amplifies a few words which, in Ephesians 2:4, burst through the grammatical order of the sentence.

By-grace: ‘by the grace of God’; referring definitely to the grace mentioned in Ephesians 2:7.

Through faith: added in order to give a more complete account of salvation. It embodies a thought ever present to Paul, and ever ready to find expression: compare the casual mention of faith in Romans 3:25, 26. ‘The favor’ of God is the divine source, and ‘faith’ is the human channel, of salvation.

This or ‘this thing’; refers almost certainly to the salvation just mentioned. For it is neuter, whereas ‘faith’ and ‘grace’ are feminine. Moreover, ‘not from works,’ which must refer to ‘ye are saved,’ is evidently parallel to ‘not from yourselves,’ and thus gives to these words the same reference. They are added as an emphatic exposition, negative and then positive, of the words ‘by grace.’ ‘You are not the source of your own salvation: it is a gift: and ‘the gift is God’s.’ It is ‘not from’ human ‘works.’”

Not from works, that no one may glory: marked characteristics of Paul: Romans 4:2, 6; 9:11; 11:6; 3:27; 1 Corinthians 1:29; Galatians 6:14 From every side, Paul shuts out, as his wont is, all self-salvation.

**Ver. 10.** Proof and amplification of the statement that our salvation is not from ourselves or from works, but from God; viz. that we are ourselves God’s ‘workmanship.’

Having-been-created, etc.: proof of the foregoing. Paul refers evidently, in words taken from the old creation, to the new creation of the spiritual life. Cp. 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15. Another trace of the hand of Paul.

Created: a word predicated only of God, and thus denoting a putting forth of power possessed only by God. Even when creating out of existing materials, as in Genesis 1:21, God breathed into them new life; which man cannot do. The word here teaches that the Christian life is not only a ‘workmanship’ of God but is a new putting forth of creative power.

In Christ: as in Ephesians 2:6, 7. Notice the emphatic and characteristic repetition.

Good works: as in Romans 2:7; 13:3; 2 Corinthians 9:8: a phrase found only with Paul. The word 'good' includes beneficence and intrinsic worth: another word, noting only excellence, in Matthew 5:16. Just as God created certain animals for certain activities which were a part of His creative purpose, so He designs the new life in Christ to reveal itself in good works. The words following lay further stress on this definite purpose of God.

Before-prepared: in eternity, when the new life was only a thought in the mind of God. He then designed that 'good works' should be its environment and outward expression. Same word in Romans 9:23, "before-prepared" for glory.'

That we should walk in them: God's purpose touching these good works. He designs them to be the surrounding element of our movements; in absolute contrast to 'in which sins ye walked.'

It is now quite clear that salvation is in no way from ourselves or from works. For even our own good works are a part of God's eternal purpose to give spiritual life to those who believe in Christ. And if they are an outworking of His purpose of mercy, they cannot be a ground of merit, or a source of salvation.

Notice here another reference to the eternal purpose of salvation already mentioned in Ephesians 1:4, 5, 9, 11; also in Ephesians 3:11. It is a conspicuous feature of this Epistle, and a fuller development of teaching already found in Romans 8:28, 29; 9:11, 23.

The chief significance of 5 is derived from its relation to 3. Paul there prayed that God would reveal to his readers the glory awaiting them and the great power of God which some day will realise their hopes and which already is at work in them. As a measure of that power and of that hope, he pointed to the power which raised Christ from the grave and set Him at the right hand of God. In order to make practical use of this comparison, Paul showed in 4 that all the unsaved are in a position analogous to that of the body of Jesus as it lay 'dead' in the grave. For, through their sins, they were separated from the only real life and were doomed to corruption. This state of ruin Paul further described. Although dead, they were capable of movement: but it was a mere floating down a stream, in a channel

marked out by the great enemy, under influences directed by him; a mere surrender to the promptings of the lower side of their nature. That the prince of darkness and their own nature led them along the same path, proved that their nature is corrupt, and that they who follow it are under the anger of God. Now the anger of God is death in its worst form.

At the beginning of 5 we see God looking down with compassion and infinite love upon the lost human race. Paul asserts that He who gave life to the lifeless body of Christ has made alive those who once were dead through their sins. This can only mean that He has rescued them from the corruption which was their inevitable doom and has given back to them spiritual activity and growth. This life is an outflow of that which entered into the silent body of Christ. And, as with Christ so with them, life has been accompanied by removal from the surroundings of death and by exaltation to heaven. All this God did in order to reveal His infinite favor to men. The same truth Paul repeats for emphasis in another form. Since his readers have been made alive, he can rightly say that they have been saved. And, since their resurrection with Christ is an outflow of the mercy and love of God, they are saved by grace. To make this the more conspicuous, Paul adds that salvation is not from themselves or their works, but is the gift of God; and that it has come in this way in order that no one may boast. And he cannot forbear to remind his readers that it is through faith. To complete his proof that salvation is altogether from God and not at all from man, he says that the new life is a work of the creative power of God and an accomplishment of an eternal purpose.

Thus Paul, after raising his readers to the throne of God and setting them beside their risen Lord, leads their thoughts back to the eternal purpose of which the actual salvation of men is an historic realisation. This tracing of the phenomena of time to their source in the eternal thought of God is a conspicuous feature of Paul, a feature nowhere so conspicuous as in this Epistle.

## SECTION 6

### THROUGH CHRIST, BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES HAVE BEEN BROUGHT NEAR TO GOD

#### CHAPTER 2:11-22

*For this cause remember that formerly ye, the Gentiles in flesh, those called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in flesh, made by hands- that ye were at that time separate from Christ alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who formerly were far off have become near in the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, having made of no effect the enmity, in His flesh, even the law of commandments in dogmas; in order that He may create in Himself the two into one new man, making peace; and that He may reconcile both in one body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. And He came and announced peace, as good news, to those far off and to those near; because through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. Therefore no longer are ye strangers and sojourners but fellow-citizens of the saints and members of the household of God, having been built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the chief corner stone being Christ Jesus Himself in whom every building, being fitly framed together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom also ye are being built together for a dwelling-place of God in the Spirit.*

Like 4 and 5, 6 depicts the contrast of past and present. This is indicated by the word ‘formerly’ in Ephesians 2:2, 3 and in Ephesians 2:11, 13. But the earlier contrast was that of men once dead through their sins but now reigning in life. The contrast here is of the same men once far off from the people of God but now united with them in the one rising temple. The first contrast was personal and spiritual: this one is social and in a sense

ecclesiastical. Paul comes now to look at salvation in its bearing on the great distinction of Jew and Gentile, a distinction ever present to his thought and already faintly indicated by the change from 'we' to 'you' and 'you' to 'we' in Ephesians 1:13; 2:3. This distinction, and the equal importance here given to Jew and Gentile are indications both of early date and of Pauline authorship. For no such conspicuous distinction is found in sub-apostolic writings; nor can we conceive it coming from a writer of the second century: and even in the N.T. it is peculiar to Paul.

As containing respectively the dark and bright sides of the contrast, Ephesians 2:11, 12 correspond to 4, Ephesians 2:13-22 to 5.

**Ver. 11.** For which cause: 'because God has so wonderfully saved you, 'remember' what you once were.'

Formerly: placed for emphasis at the beginning of the clause. It recalls the same word in Ephesians 2:2, and resumes conspicuously the contrast of past and present.

The Gentiles: the well-known class to which they belonged. Its distinguishing mark, viz. absence of circumcision, is in the perishing body: 'in flesh.' These added words give definiteness to the distinction.

Who are called; further depicts the readers as they were looked upon by those who with some right claimed to be the people of God. Cp. 1 Corinthians 8:5.

Uncircumcision... circumcision: abstract terms put for the persons in whom the abstract quality is found: close parallel in Romans 2:26, 27. They who, with evident contempt, 'called' the Gentiles 'uncircumcision, called' themselves 'circumcision.' That the distinction is said to be, on both sides, a matter of a name, suggests that it was now practically only a name.

In flesh, made by hands: not governed by the word 'called:' for Jews would not so speak of circumcision. It is rather Paul's own reflection, confirming the above suggestion. He remembers that circumcision was, in the case of those who spoke of the Gentiles as uncircumcised, a mere cutting of the flesh by the hand of man. Yet such was once his readers' position that men who had nothing better than this could speak of them as

lower than themselves: for the absence even of this external rite marked them out as destitute of the many advantages of the ancient people of God. The repetition of the words 'in flesh' and the added word 'made-by-hands' keep vividly before us that the vaunted rite was in the lower side of man's nature and was only a work of man.

**Ver. 12.** The grammatical order is broken by a repetition of the word 'that,' added for the sake of greater clearness after a rather long description of 'the Gentiles.'

At that season; corresponds to 'formerly' in Ephesians 2:11, referring to the readers' heathen life. Contrast Romans 3:26; 11:5, 'in the present 'season.'

Separate from Christ: destitute of all the spiritual blessings which flow from inward union with Him. This full sense is required by the very conspicuous contrast in Ephesians 2:13, 'but now in Christ Jesus;' and by the contrast maintained throughout this chapter between the past and the present. But the words following show that this spiritual destitution is here looked upon in the light of the separation of the Gentiles from the nation to which the ancient promises were given. In those days they had not so much as heard the name of the promised Messiah.

Now follow four further descriptions of those Gentiles, arranged in two pairs. The relation of these items to the main assertion, 'ye were separate from Christ,' is left to the readers.

Commonwealth: either a community of citizens looked upon as definitely constituted, or the rights of its members. Same word in this last sense in Acts 22:28. The former sense here, and, with a cognate word, in Philippians 3:20: but in these two passages the difference is not great.

The commonwealth of Israel: the nation looked upon as a community in which each citizen had personal rights. The whole tone of the verse reminds us that Israel possessed the highest spiritual advantages on earth. Cp. Romans 3:1; 9:4.

Israel: a name of honor, as in Romans 9:4; 2 Corinthians 11:22, etc. Before Christ came there was a privileged community: but its members looked upon the Gentiles as aliens.



Alienated: same word and form in Ephesians 4:18; Colossians 1:21. [The perfect participle does not imply that they had once been citizens; but simply calls attention to the process of alienation, thus depicting more vividly the sad state of those alienated.]

The Covenants: the mutual engagements into which God entered with Abraham, and through Moses with Israel. From these covenants came all the spiritual advantages of the Jews. Same word in same connection in Romans 9:4: a close coincidence of thought. A conspicuous feature common to these covenants, and the source of their value, was 'the promise.' It is here spoken of as one because all the promises looked forward to one glorious consummation. Otherwise in Romans 9:9, which recalls the many 'promises.' To these 'covenants' and to this 'promise,' the Gentile readers of this Epistle were once 'strangers:' same word in Hebrews 11:13.

Now follows an awful result of the foregoing. The only hope on earth worthy of the name rests upon 'the' great 'promise' given in outline to Israel. Consequently, they who have not this hope 'have no hope.' To them the roughness of the present life is not cheered by any reasonable and assured prospect of good things to come.

Without-God: literally 'atheists,' i.e. destitute of all the help and peace and joy which comes through knowledge of God and faith in God. This subjective absence of God is quite consistent with the objective truth (Acts 17:28) that 'in Him we live and move and are.' The lack of conscious intercourse with a personal God is a marked feature of the best classic writings as compared with the Old Testament. The heathen have no Father in heaven on whose bosom they can rest.

In the world: the locality of this destitution. In the seething mass of sinful humanity, dominated by the God of this world, away from the brightness of the smile of the God of heaven and from the joy of hope, these Gentiles were: for they had no part in the covenants which God made with Israel nor place in the sacred nation.

**Ver. 13.** But now: a conspicuous and favorite phrase of Paul recalling the contrast, ever present to his mind, of the past and the present. Same words

in same sense in Colossians 1:22, 26; 3:8; Romans 3:21; 6:22; 7:6; 11:30, etc. They are another note of authorship.

In Christ Jesus: objectively, in the actual and historic person born at Bethlehem, whom Paul acknowledges to be the hoped-for Messiah. Hence the fuller title. Same words and sense in Romans 3:24. They are more fully expounded at the end of the verse.

Ye who formerly were far off: sums up the description in Ephesians 2:12. This summing up of the lower side of a contrast is, as in Ephesians 2:5, an indisputable trace of the hand of Paul.

Become near: to God and to the people of God. For distance from Israel and from God are the chief points of the description in Ephesians 2:12. And in Ephesians 2:14, 15 we have peace between Jews and Gentiles given as an explanation of this verse, and in Ephesians 2:16, 18 reconciliation and approach to God through Christ.

In the blood of Christ: more specific than 'in Christ.' It suggests (cp. Ephesians 1:7) the continued validity of the violent death of Christ as the means of salvation.

**Ver. 14-15.** Explanation and justification of the triumphant assertion in Ephesians 2:13, and especially of its last words.

He is: each word very emphatic, pointing conspicuously to Him in whose blood the Gentiles have been brought near.

Our peace; implies that the distance involves hostility. The words following prove that Paul's first thought is peace between Jews and Gentiles. But the words 'reconciled to God' in Ephesians 2:16 followed by 'access to the Father' in Ephesians 2:18 prove that this involves peace between men and God. In both references, Christ 'is our peace.' For where 'He is,' and there only, is 'peace.' Cp. John 11:25, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.

The plain statement 'He is our peace,' which explains and justifies Ephesians 2:13, is itself expounded and supported in Ephesians 2:14b-18. The result of the whole is stated triumphantly in Ephesians 2:19-22.

Made or 'has-made': simple statement of fact without reference to any definite time.

Both one: literally 'the both things' into 'one thing.' As in Colossians 1:16, etc., the neuter looks upon persons merely as objects of thought without reference to personality.

And has broken down, etc.: additional detail explaining the general assertion.

Middle-wall: between houses or courts. Found elsewhere only once: but the meaning is clear. It is further defined by the addition, 'of the partition' or 'fence.' Same word in Matthew 21:33. It denotes something designed to keep away intruders. Here the 'fence' is represented as a 'wall' between the men to be kept apart. The whole phrase unites the ideas of separation and solidity. This barrier, Christ has broken down. He has thus made the two hostile divisions into one whole.

At the Temple of Jerusalem, between the court of the Gentiles and that of the women, the latter being a part of the sacred enclosure, was a dividing wall on which were inscriptions in different languages warning foreigners, on pain of death, not to pass: Josephus, 'Wars' bk. v. 5. 2. This was a visible embodiment of the barrier which Paul here depicts in the metaphor of a 'wall;' and helps us to realise the spiritual separation of Jews and Gentiles. But his words do not betray any direct reference to it.

Having-made-of-no-effect (as in Romans 3:3) the enmity: means by which Christ has broken down the barrier. Consequently, the enmity is that between Jew and Gentile; especially as the aim of its removal is to 'create the two into one new man.'

In His flesh: evidently our Lord's crucified flesh and blood: so Ephesians 2:16.

The law of commands in dogmas: in apposition to 'the enmity.' By rendering invalid 'the Law,' Christ brought to nothing 'the enmity.'

The commandments or 'commands': definite prescriptions of the Law. An example is quoted in Romans 7:8-13. These were a characteristic feature of the Law. And they took the form of 'dogmas,' i.e. decrees by a superior authority: same word in Colossians 2:14, where see note. This 'Law' can

be no other than that of Moses. In what sense Christ has made it invalid, we learn from Galatians 3:25, 26. As first given, obedience to the prescriptions of the Law was a condition of the favor of God: Leviticus 18:5. This Condition made the favor of God impossible. For none can keep the Law, as it claims to be kept. By proclaiming righteousness through faith, Christ set aside, as a condition and means of the favor of God, the ancient Law. Paul says here that by doing so He removed also the hostility between Jew and Gentile. This we can understand. For the Law of Sinai, given only to a part of mankind, became a separation between those who had, and those who had not, received it. And this separation was followed by mutual hatred and hostility. This hatred and its occasion, Christ removed. In Him, both Jew and Gentile, the Law now powerless to condemn or to separate them, become brethren.

That He may create, etc.: purpose for which Christ has set aside the Law and its decrees, viz. to unite by creative power into one new unity the two parts into which the Law divided mankind. In Ephesians 2:14 this unity is represented as already attained: 'who made both one.' For it will infallibly result from what Christ has already done. It is here represented as a purpose: for its full realisation is still future, dependent on each one's faith.

Create; recalls the same word in Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 1:16. It implies that this unity is wrought by the creative power of God, breathing 'new' life and order into hitherto discordant elements. Creation always produces something 'new.' Same thought in 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15: an important coincidence.

The two persons into one new man: the masculine form calling attention to the personality of the reconciled ones. So, but less conspicuously, in Galatians 3:28.

In Himself: Christ being the surrounding element in which the new creation takes place, and in which the resulting unity abides. While cherishing and working out this purpose, Christ is 'making peace.' These words, which describe the entire process of salvation from its conception in the heart of God to its full accomplishment, link the new creation to the 'peace' mentioned in Ephesians 2:14, thus keeping it before us.

**Ver. 16.** And that He may reconcile, etc.: a second purpose of Christ, parallel with 'that He may create, etc.' He designed not only to unite together the two hostile divisions of mankind but to 'reconcile' the united race 'to God.' This implies that, behind the hostility of man against man there was also hostility between man and God. Each kind of hostility Christ resolved to remove. The two reconciliations are so closely related that either may be placed before the other, according to the point of view chosen. In this section and Epistle Paul's chief thought is unity of Jew and Gentile. He therefore mentions first peace between man and man. But he remembers that this can be only by peace between man and God. Hence these words. Reconcile to God: cp. Colossians 1:22, where see note. Another mark of Pauline authorship: Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20. Both persons, or 'the two' persons: a mode of thought different from Ephesians 2:14 'the two things into one thing,' and keeping before us the personality of those to be reconciled. In one body: viz. the Church, which is the body of Christ. It is thus parallel to 'one new man' in Ephesians 2:15; and keeps up the dominant thought, viz. the unity of Jews and Gentiles. This exposition agrees better with the tenor of the context than to interpret the 'one body' as that nailed to the cross. Moreover, nowhere in the N.T. is attention directed to the oneness of the human body of Christ. Through the cross: as the instrument of reconciliation: so 'through His death' in Colossians 1:22; Romans 5:10. Having-slain, etc.: mode by which Christ purposed to reconcile men to God. It thus expounds 'through the cross.' The enmity: probably, of Jews and Gentiles. For this is at once suggested by the same word in Ephesians 2:15; and is the chief thought of this section. And the removal of this ancient enmity, itself a result of man's sin, comes through the death of Christ. For, had He not died, its removal would have been impossible. While writing about Christ's purpose to break down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, Paul remembers that this can be done only by breaking down another barrier, that between man and God. Now man can be reconciled to God (see my 'Galatians' Diss. vii.) only through the death of Christ. Consequently, 'thereby' or 'therein,' i.e. in the cross on which He died, Christ slew not only the enmity between man and God but that between man and man, in order to bring in universal harmony. For had He not died, this unity would have been impossible: now it is certain.

**Ver. 17.** Another detail in this reconciliation, added as an independent assertion. And He came: at His incarnation. And announced-good-tidings-of-peace: on earth before His death. Cp. Luke 4:21. For the words then spoken were a proclamation of peace for all mankind, and, in view of their subsequent announcement throughout the world by the Apostles, may be said to have been spoken to all mankind. This is better than to understand these words as referring to the preaching of the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost under the influence of the Holy Spirit whose descent is in John 14:18 spoken of as a coming of Christ. For the preaching of the Apostles was but a re-echo of the words spoken by Christ on earth, who not only obtained for us peace through His death but ‘announced’ through His own lips the ‘good-tidings-of-peace.’ To this end He ‘came’ from heaven to earth. Good-tidings: see under Romans 1:1; cp. 1 Thessalonians 3:6. Peace: between man and man, as throughout the section. This implies peace with God. But to this last we have no need to assume any direct reference here. Those far off: put first, although the Gospel came first to the Jews, because the entrance of the Gentiles into the one fold of Christ is the chief matter of this section. This order shows that Paul is thinking of Christ’s words, not as spoken to those who heard them on earth, but as spoken virtually to the whole world. Far off: as in Ephesians 2:13. Those near: the Jews who from childhood had heard of the coming Messiah and of the blessings He would bring. They were ‘the sons of the Covenant:’ Acts 3:25.

**Ver. 18.** A fact, later in date, yet virtually underlying the assertion of Ephesians 2:17. It is practically a re-statement of Ephesians 2:13. Through Him: the emphatic words of the verse. Access: same word and almost the same phrase in Romans 5:2, ‘through whom we have obtained access; a very close parallel. A cognate verb in 1 Peter 3:18. Christ took us by the hand and led us ‘to the Father.’ Similarly Ephesians 2:13: ‘made near in the blood of Christ.’ It includes the whole work of salvation. We both: Jews and Gentiles, whose union in Christ is the dominant thought of this section. In one Spirit: the divine Agent of all abiding harmony of man with man. So Ephesians 4:4; Philippians 1:27; 1 Corinthians 12:13: important coincidences. Notice here the relation of each Person of the Trinity to the work of salvation. Both Jews and Gentiles were far away from God; and consequently each far from the other. Through the agency of the Son, and

in the Holy Spirit dwelling in the hearts of all His people, they have been led into the presence and smile of God, and into the harmony of spiritual brotherhood. And to this end the Son Himself came into the world and proclaimed peace to men. Notice also that of this salvation the death of Christ is conspicuously pointed to as the means. In His blood we have been made near. And Christ's aim is to reconcile us to God through the cross, and in that cross to kill the previously-existing enmity.

**Ver. 19.** Argumentative summing up of 6.

Therefore: two Greek words, a collocation favorite with, and peculiar to, Paul. It sums up the foregoing and draws from it an inference. A close parallel in Romans 5:18.

Strangers: as in Ephesians 2:12.

Sojourners: foreign residents without civic rights. Same word in Acts 7:6, 29; 1 Peter 2:11. Even in this summing up Paul states, as his wont is, the full contrast of past and present.

But ye are: solemn repetition of the verb, stating not only what they have ceased to be but what they actually 'are.'

Fellow-citizens: sharing all municipal rights. It represents the Church as a city.

The saints, or 'holy ones': the sacred people of God. Israel at Sinai was called 'a holy nation:' Exodus 19:6.

The priests were specially holy: Numbers 16:3, 5. In the New Covenant, they who believe the Gospel become the peculiar people of God, and receive as their usual designation the name 'saints:' see under Romans 1:7; cp. Acts 9:13, 32, 41. Of this sacred company, the earliest members were Jews. Then Samaritans were added to it; and now these far off Asiatic Greeks.

Members-of-the-household: same word in Galatians 6:10, where see note. In the great 'household of God,' all are both sons and servants. And to this house and home belong now these far off Gentiles.

**Ver. 20.** Process by which these aliens were received into the city and house of God. It further describes their present position. 'The household

of God' suggests easily a favorite metaphor, viz. the Church as a building, and more specifically as the temple of God. In this splendid metaphor culminates Paul's teaching here about the union in Christ of Jews and Gentiles. Cp. Matthew 16:18 from the lips of Christ; 1 Corinthians 3:9-17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Romans 15:20; 1 Peter 2:5. It underlies the word rendered 'edify' or 'build'. The composite word here used is found also in 1 Corinthians 3:10, 12, 14; Colossians 2:7; and denotes to carry up a building already begun.

The foundation of the Apostles: that laid by them. So 1 Corinthians 3:10, where Paul stated his own relation to this foundation. And nothing more is suggested now. Another conception in Matthew 16:18. But of this there is no hint here. Upon Christ rests firmly, and rises, the Church. By preaching Christ and leading men to Him, the Apostles laid this foundation in actual human life. See under 1 Corinthians 3:11. Now the Apostles, in laying this foundation, were building the house and city of God. To it therefore belong those who were being built into the rising walls.

Prophets: conspicuously mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28 as holding the second rank in the Church. And this is indisputably the meaning of the same word in Ephesians 3:5; 4:11. As in O.T., they were men who spoke under special inspiration: see note under 1 Corinthians 14:40. Had the reference here been to the O.T. prophets, the order would have been inverted, 'prophets and apostles.'

Corner-stone: 1 Peter 2:6, quoted from Isaiah 28:16; but not found elsewhere. Same idea in Psalm 118:22, quoted in Matthew 21:42. Christ is both the foundation underlying the entire building and a conspicuous corner stone uniting its walls and thus giving solidity to the whole. This word, which recalls an ancient prophecy touching the Church of Christ, is very appropriate here in a summary of Paul's teaching that in Christ Jews and Gentiles are united into one whole.

Christ Jesus Himself: cp. Ephesians 2:14, 'He is our peace.'

**Ver. 21.** Further account of this building and of its relation to Christ.

Every building: various parts of the one great structure. Such were the various Churches, Jewish or Gentile. So Matthew 24:1, 'the buildings of the Temple:' i.e. the various parts of the Temple at Jerusalem. Frequently



a great building is begun at different points; and in the earlier stages its parts seem to be independent erections: but as it advances all are united into one whole. So there were in Paul's day, as now, various Churches. But, to his eye, they were parts of, and were advancing towards, one great temple. The separation was apparent and passing: the unity was real and abiding.

Being-fitly-joined-together: as a living body is united by its joints. Same word in Ephesians 4:16. [The present participle describes the process of union as now going on. So does the next word.]

Is-growing: for the progress of the building is a development of its own inner life. This word supplements the metaphor of a building by that of a tree. Similar metaphor in 1 Corinthians 3:6 9; Romans 11:16-24, John 15:1-8.

A holy temple: a conception familiar to Paul: see 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17, and my note. The various buildings, separate as they are during erection, are designed to become one great temple. And the temple is essentially 'holy:' for it belongs to God. Consequently, they who are built upon the one foundation are numbered among (Ephesians 2:19) the citizen 'saints.'

A holy temple in the Lord or 'a temple holy in' the 'Lord': Christ Himself being the surrounding element of this holiness. It notes a closer relation than the O.T. phrase, 'holy to the Lord.' In virtue of their inward union with the one Master, the Jewish and Gentile Churches are growing into one holy temple.

**Ver. 22.** In whom: as in Ephesians 2:21. It keeps before us Christ as the element of growth.

Also ye: as in Ephesians 2:3; 1:13. It brings the Christians at Ephesus conspicuously under the foregoing general assertion; a thought present throughout the Epistle.

Are-being-built-together: as stones in a rising building. It is, under another metaphor, practically the same as 'fitly joined together,' in Ephesians 2:21, which suggests the union of bones and members in a living body.

Dwelling-place (same word in Revelation 18:2) of God: parallel with 'holy temple' in Ephesians 2:21. For this is the central idea of a temple: 1 Corinthians 3:16, where see note.

In the Spirit: the Agent of this indwelling of God in man. They in whom the Spirit dwells are also in the 'Spirit:' Romans 8:9. For the Spirit within raises them into a new element of life. Thus these last words connect Paul's teaching about the holy temple with His frequent teaching about the Holy Spirit. Cp. 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19. They are also parallel to 'in one Spirit' in Ephesians 2:18. For the Spirit is the surrounding element both of man's approach to God and of God's presence in man. Same words also in Ephesians 3:5. In view of the great work wrought in them by God, Paul reminds his readers of their former heathen state. Even before Christ came there was an organized community on earth in special covenant with God, holding special promises and cherishing glorious hopes. By its members, the readers of this Epistle were looked down upon as aliens. And, having no share in its hopes and in its covenant with God, they were without hope and without God. Through the death of Christ, all this is changed. The barrier between Jew and Gentile, which separated both Jews and Gentiles from God, Christ has through His own death broken down; in order that, by creative power, He may make out of two enemies one new man reconciled to God. Of this peace, He is not only the Author but the Herald. And of this approach to God the Holy Spirit is the Agent and Element. Then all is changed. The aliens have become members of the sacred commonwealth and of the family of God. That city and family are a temple whose foundations have been laid by men divinely sent and inspired, and whose conspicuous corner stone is Christ Himself. On this foundation day by day living stones are being laid and fitted together. And thus, in virtue of its own inherent life, the temple is growing. It seems to consist of various separate buildings. But, as it rises, these various parts are becoming, through the one indwelling Spirit, one holy temple of God. Very conspicuous in this section is the death of Christ as the means by which (Ephesians 2:13) the far off ones have been brought near, the barrier between Jew and Gentile broken down, and both Jew and Gentile reconciled to God. The barrier thus broken down is the Law with its prescriptions. Similarly in Ephesians 1:7 the violent death of Christ is the means of the forgiveness of sins. All this is in close harmony with Paul's

constant and varied teaching that salvation comes through the death of Christ upon the cross. It can be explained only on the principle asserted in Romans 3:26, viz. that God gave Christ to die in order to harmonize with His own justice the justification of believers, or in other words that the need for this costly means of salvation lay in man's sin viewed in the light of the justice of God. The union of Jews and Gentiles suggests the unity of the Church, a thought already implied in the universal purpose asserted in Ephesians 1:1ff. To and further developed in Ephesians 4:3-6. This unity is a conspicuous feature of the Epistle.

## SECTION 7

### THE GOSPEL OF PEACE BETWEEN JEWS AND GENTILES HAS BEEN COMMITTED TO PAUL

#### CHAPTER 3:1-13

*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you the Gentiles- if, at least, ye have heard the stewardship of the grace of God given to me for you, that by way of revelation was made known to me the mystery, according as I wrote before in short space, whereby ye can, as ye read, perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as now it has been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit: that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel, of which I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God, the grace given to me according to the working of His power.*

*To me, the less than least of all saints, was this grace given, to announce to the Gentiles as good news the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to enlighten all what is the stewardship of the mystery hidden from the ages, in God who created all things, in order that there may be made known now to the principalities and the authorities in the heavenly places through the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to a purpose of the ages which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him. For which cause I ask that ye faint not at my tribulations on your behalf which is your glory.*

**Ver. 1.** For this cause: because, on the foundation laid by the Apostles, Paul's readers had been built into the rising walls of the temple of God. Same words in Ephesians 3:14; Titus 1:5; not elsewhere in the N.T. As in Ephesians 1:15, so now, a recital of blessings already given moves Paul to

pray for more. I Paul: as in Colossians 1:23. Prisoner of Christ Jesus: as in Philemon 1, 9. The definite article suggests that he looked upon his imprisonment as placing him in a unique position among the servants of Christ. And this is easily explained. He was a 'prisoner... on behalf of the Gentiles:' for his loyalty to their spiritual rights as fellow-heirs of the Kingdom of God had aroused the hostility of the Jews and thus brought about, after many earlier troubles, his arrest at Jerusalem. He had pursued his path in full view of the peril to which it exposed him, knowing that this loyalty was demanded by the highest interests both of Jews and Gentiles. Same thought in Ephesians 3:13, 'afflictions on your behalf,' and in Colossians 1:24, where see note. At this point the grammatical construction is broken off, as in Ephesians 2:1, by a long parenthesis explaining these last words by an account of the Gospel committed to Paul. The close of the parenthesis is marked by a return in Ephesians 3:13 to the thought now before us; and by a repetition in Ephesians 3:14 of the first words of Ephesians 3:1, for which cause. But, instead of completing the broken-off sentence, Paul begins in Ephesians 3:14 as in Ephesians 2:5 a new sentence.

**Ver. 2.** In Ephesians 3:2-12 Paul expounds at length the relation implied in Ephesians 3:1, 'on your behalf.' If at least: not suggesting uncertainty, but asserting that if, as is the fact, the readers have heard about Paul's commission, they cannot doubt that his imprisonment is on their behalf. Have-heard: either from Paul's lips when at Ephesus or by report from others. The grace given to me: the undeserved favor with which God had smiled on Paul; as in Romans 12:3, 6; 15:15; 1 Corinthians 3:10. Cp. 1 Corinthians 15:10. This favor prompted Christ's appearance to Paul and the commission then given to him. And Paul never forgot the responsibility to God and to the Gentiles thus laid upon him. The spiritual wealth thus entrusted to him for their good was a 'stewardship of the grace of God... for you.' Similar thought in Colossians 1:25. But here stress is laid upon the undeserved favor to Paul involved in his commission to the Gentiles. So are all tasks given by God to man marks of His favor. For they bring great reward. This sense of responsibility finds expression in Galatians 1:16; Acts 26:16-18.

**Ver. 3.** Further account of the stewardship committed to Paul. 'The mystery made known' (as in Ephesians 1:9) to Paul was spiritual wealth

entrusted to him for distribution to others. It was therefore a stewardship. By way of revelation: mode in which it 'was made known' to Paul, viz. by spiritual enlightenment. See under Romans 1:17. 'Mystery' and 'revelation' are constant correlatives: Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7, 10. For the secrets of God are known only by those for whom God lifts the veil which hides them from unaided human vision. I have before written: apparently in this Epistle. For Ephesians 3:6 which gives the contents of this mystery is a summing up of Ephesians 2:13-22. Moreover, the present tense, 'reading,' in Ephesians 3:4 suggests that Paul refers to something new. To the same teaching refer also the similar words in Ephesians 1:9, 'having made known the mystery.' For the union of Jews and Gentiles is part of God's larger purpose (Ephesians 3:10) to unite in Christ the whole universe. In short space: viz. in Ephesians 2:13-22, words very few for the truths so great, and to Jews so astounding, therein set forth.

**Ver. 4.** Whereby: more accurately, 'to which referring as a standard of comparison.' Understanding: ability to interpret the significance of things observed: see under Colossians 1:9. The mystery of Christ: expounded in Colossians 1:27. The presence of Christ in His people, as a pledge of the splendor awaiting them, is a secret known only to those specially taught by God. This secret, which is the matter understood, is here represented as the surrounding element of the spiritual insight which Paul's readers would recognise in his teaching about the union in Christ of Jews and Gentiles.

**Ver. 5.** Generations: the successive courses of men living at one time. So Philippians 2:15; Colossians 1:26. Other: more correctly 'different.' It calls attention to the different and less favored position of those who lived before the Gospel age. The words are here a note of time. The sons of men: men looked upon in the light of their human origin: so Genesis 11:5; Psalm 8:4; 11:4. 'While the successive 'generations' of the past, so 'different' in their lower privileges from the men of Paul's day, followed each other from the cradle to the grave, the great secret now revealed was not made known to the offspring of human parents.' Revealed; takes up 'made known by way of revelation' in Ephesians 3:3, and asserts that others shared with Paul the truth supernaturally communicated to him. Apostles and prophets: as in Ephesians 2:20. These were 'holy' because in virtue of their office they stood in special relation to God. Cp. Luke 1:70. In the

Spirit: same words and sense as in Ephesians 2:22. Close parallel in Matthew 22:43: for David was (Acts 2:30) a prophet. Both ‘Apostles and Prophets’ were specially inspired by the Holy Spirit, who made known to them truths till then not known to men. They held respectively (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:28) the first and second ranks in the universal Church; differing in the supreme authority exercised by the Apostles.

**Ver. 6.** Statement of the mystery now revealed. That the Gentiles are, etc.: objectively in Christ, subjectively through each one’s faith. Fellow-heirs: same word and sense in Romans 8:17; Hebrews 11:9; 1 Peter 3:7. To Gentiles, as to Jews, belongs, in virtue of their filial relation to God, the wealth of heaven. Fellow-members-of-the-body: a word not found elsewhere and probably coined by Paul. It presents the union of Jews and Gentiles under Paul’s favorite metaphor of the Body of Christ.

Fellow-partakers: same word in Ephesians 5:7. These three words, beginning with the same syllable, proclaim very clearly the equal rights of Jews and Gentiles. The promise: as in Ephesians 2:12. It was designed for, and will be fulfilled in, Jews and Gentiles alike; and therefore belongs to both. In Christ Jesus: as in Ephesians 2:13, which is explained in Ephesians 2:14, 15. The above was God’s purpose from eternity: Ephesians 1:4. Therefore in His eternal purpose, which is more real than any creature, already Jews and Gentiles are, in virtue of their relation to Christ, sharers of the one inheritance, members of the one body, and sharers of the one promise. Through the Gospel: means by which this objective right is subjectively and personally appropriated, and this purpose of eternity accomplished in time. As Abraham, in the day when he believed the promise, stood before God as already father of many nations, so before time began the believing Gentiles stood before God, as, by means of the good news announced by Christ and His servants, sharers with the believing Israelites of the blessings promised to Abraham. The union of Jews and Gentiles in the one Church may seem to some unworthy to be called ‘the mystery of Christ.’ But this union is a logical result of the central doctrine of the Gospel, viz. that God accepts into His favor all who believe. Consequently, in the extension to the Gentiles of the rights of the New Covenant, was involved the essence of the Gospel. Hence the strong language of Galatians 5:2; 4:10, 11. Moreover, to Paul, a zealous Jew, it was the most conspicuous feature of the Gospel, and at

one time the most serious objection to it. And, in all ages, the universality of the Gospel, embracing on the same terms men of all kinds, is one of the clearest proofs that it comes from the common Parent of all. This universal destiny of the Kingdom of God was in great part veiled under the Old Covenant. But to Paul and his colleagues, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, it had been revealed. A remembrance of these long ages of silence, of his superior privilege, and of the special honor put upon him as an Apostle filled him with wonder and gratitude. See further in Ephesians 3:8-11. This verse is another plain note of genuineness. For it gives to the union of Jews and Gentiles an importance in complete harmony with Paul's position, history, and mode of thought; but inconceivable in the second century, when the Gentiles had obtained a secure and predominant position in the Church.

**Ver. 7.** Of which I became a minister: as in Colossians 1:23; stating in each case Paul's relation to a foregoing general statement. According to the gift, etc.: close parallel to Colossians 1:25. The appointment of Paul as a minister of the Gospel is traced to its source in the favor with which God smiled on him. And this 'grace' was in harmony with 'the working' or activity 'of His power.' Otherwise the grace would have been ineffective. As in Galatians 2:8, 9, Paul felt that in his labors the might of God was at work.

**Ver. 8-12.** A new sentence, reasserting and amplifying the statements in Ephesians 3:2-7. The less-than-least: a combination, not found elsewhere, of superlative and comparative: close parallels in 1 Corinthians 15:9; 1 Timothy 1:13. These two passages explain Paul's self-depreciation here and they reveal his profound sense of the awful sin of lifting a hand against the Church of God. Not merely below the Apostles, as in 1 Corinthians 15:9, but far below 'all saints,' i.e. Christians, Paul places himself. Was given, etc.: a remarkable re-echo of Ephesians 3:2, 7, revealing Paul's deep sense of the undeserved favor of God which committed to him so glorious a commission. 'This grace' is further expounded by the words 'to announce to the Gentiles as good tidings, etc.' Unsearchable: whose footsteps cannot be traced. So in Romans 11:33. The 'riches of Christ' extend, in their abundance, farther than the mind of man can follow. When the Gospel went forth to enrich the Gentiles, it passed the thought of



Israel. And, to announce as good news this infinite wealth for all that believe, was the mission given to Paul by the undeserved favor of God.

**Ver. 9.** And to enlighten, etc.: another item of the grace given to Paul, or rather another view of the grace just described. Enlighten, or 'shed light upon': as in Ephesians 1:18; 2 Timothy 1:10; Hebrews 6:4; John 1:9. The light may be conceived as cast, either upon the person seeing, who finds himself surrounded by light, or upon the object seen. A cognate word in 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6. All: probably not more than our phrase 'all of them,' viz. the Gentiles. For its position is not emphatic; nor have we here the universal phrase found in Romans 5:12, 18, etc. Stewardship of the mystery: as in 1 Corinthians 4:1, 'stewards of the mysteries of God.' It combines the ideas separately expressed in Ephesians 3:2 and 3. The great secret revealed to Paul was, in reality, spiritual wealth entrusted to him for distribution to others. To make this secret known to the Gentiles, was to give them light. To do this by announcing the unsearchable riches of Christ, was Paul's joyful task. Hidden from the ages: from the beginning of time, as in Colossians 1:26. In God: whose all-knowing mind is the treasury in which this wealth lay hidden. This suggests, as is clearly implied in Ephesians 3:10, that the mystery was not known even to angels. Who created all things; links together the purpose kept secret for ages with the creation of the universe: so Ephesians 1:4; Colossians 1:16, 17. And this suggests that the world was created with a view to the realisation of this purpose.

**Ver. 10.** Purpose, not of the creation of all things nor of the concealment of the mystery during long ages, but of the chief matter of the sentence, viz. the commission to Paul to proclaim the mystery. For the mention of creation is only passing: and the revelation, which is itself a part of the original purpose, can hardly be said to be the aim of the concealment. Whereas, as expounded above, this ultimate aim increases immensely the grandeur of Paul's commission. The Gospel he preaches is designed to 'make-known' even to angels something about God not known before. Cp. 1 Peter 1:10. Now: in contrast to the ages of silence. The principalities and the authorities: as in Ephesians 1:21. The mention of two ranks of angels throws into bolder relief the greatness of this revelation. In the heavenly places: as in Ephesians 1:3. Through the Church: as a visible embodiment of God's eternal purpose. Wisdom of God: as in Romans 11:33; 1

Corinthians 2:7; 1:24. It is God's perfect knowledge of whatever is and can be, enabling Him to select the best ends and means. Manifold or 'many-colored'; suggests an extreme variety of means used. As the various ranks of angels contemplated the Church on earth, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, of every nationality, rank, degree of culture, and previous character, yet now saved from their sins by the one Gospel of Christ united into one living body with Christ as its Head, and as they observed the combination of various means by which this great consummation has been accomplished, they see, as even angels never saw before, the infinite wisdom with which God selects ends worthy of Himself and the most fitting means. Thus the Church becomes a mirror in which the bright ones of heaven see the glory of God. And, in order to show them this glory, God committed the Gospel to Paul. This teaches that heaven and earth are one great whole; and that good done on earth extends to heaven.

**Ver. 11.** According to purpose: same words and sense as in Ephesians 1:11; Romans 8:28; 2 Timothy 1:9. A cognate word in Ephesians 1:9. Of the ages; keeps conspicuously before us the idea of a long-cherished purpose. Paul here asserts that the ultimate aim described in Ephesians 3:10 was in harmony with, i.e. was a part of, the one eternal purpose. Grammatically, the words which follow may mean either that God 'made,' or 'accomplished,' in Christ His great purpose. As matter of fact, both are true. But, inasmuch as the full title 'Jesus Christ our Lord' calls very marked attention to the historic Savior and as Ephesians 3:12 speaks of actual access to God through Christ, it is perhaps better to understand Paul to refer here to the virtual accomplishment in Jesus of Nazareth of the eternal purpose.

**Ver. 12.** A new statement proving from spiritual matter of fact the statement in Ephesians 3:11. In whom we have: as in Ephesians 1:7. Boldness: or rather 'the boldness,' i.e. the well-known confidence which does not fear to speak the whole truth. Same word and sense in Philippians 1:20. Access: as in Ephesians 2:18; Romans 5:2. In confidence: our state of mind in approaching God. Same word in Philippians 3:4. Through faith: as in Ephesians 2:8; Romans 3:22, etc. A favorite phrase of Paul.

Faith in Him: literally, ‘the faith of Him;’ i.e. the faith of which He is the personal object. “Through’ our assurance that the words of Christ are true and will come true, and ‘in’ virtue of our relation to Him, we have a confidence which enables us to speak unreservedly to man and to approach God without fear.’ By giving to us this confidence, God has, in the historic Christ, accomplished a purpose formed before time began.

**Ver. 13.** In Ephesians 3:12, Paul completed his account, begun in Ephesians 3:2, of the stewardship committed to him. This prompts a request bearing upon Ephesians 3:1, a reference indicated by the words ‘on your behalf’ which recall the same words in Ephesians 3:1. They mark the close of the long parenthesis, Ephesians 3:2-13. Paul then takes up the thought interrupted by the parenthesis, noting the resumption by the words ‘for this cause’ carried on from Ephesians 3:1 to Ephesians 3:14.

For which cause: because of this boldness towards men and God which Christians have in Christ and through faith.

I ask: more fully, ‘ask as a favor to myself:’ so Colossians 1:9. It is a courteous request suggesting the pleasure and profit which the Christian courage of his readers will give to Paul.

My afflictions on your behalf: cp. Colossians 1:24, ‘my sufferings on your behalf;’ and see note.

Not to faint: same word and sense in 2 Corinthians 4:1, 16; Galatians 6:9. Paul begs his readers, as a personal favor to himself, not to lose courage in the great fight through the hardships which he endures in order to preach the Gospel to them. This request, his own confidence in Christ emboldens him to make. For he is sure that Christ is able to make them also brave. Then follows a reason for not losing heart: ‘which are your glory.’ Paul declares, conscious that his own brave perseverance is a manifestation of the grace of God, that his sufferings are an ornament to his readers. They can point to his unfaltering courage under great hardships as a confirmation of the Gospel which he preaches and they believe. Surely, their hearts need not sink because of afflictions which bring honor to the whole Church.

Glory: as in 1 Corinthians 11:7; 2 Corinthians 8:23.

## REVIEW

Paul's recital in 2 of blessings conferred, in accomplishment of an eternal purpose, upon Jews and Gentiles, prompts him in 3 to pray that God may reveal to the Ephesian Christians His own great power already at work in those who believe. As a measure of this power, he points them to Christ raised from the dead and seated at God's right hand. And, that his readers may apply to themselves this standard of measurement, Paul teaches in 4 that they once were dead, and in 5 that Christ has breathed into them new life, thus saving them through faith. This salvation he further describes in 6 as bringing near those who once were far off not only from God but from the ancient people of God, and as reconciling to God Jews and Gentiles united into one body. The various parts of the Church, however separate they may now seem to be, are destined to become one temple, one dwelling-place of God. All this moves Paul to pray for his readers' further development. But, while preparing to pray, the prisoner remembers his bonds, and that they were caused by his loyalty to the truth which brought salvation to the Gentiles. He delays for a moment his prayer that he may set forth his relation to the Gospel which has brought this unexpected salvation. And this delay interrupts the grammatical sequence of his letter. In undeserved favor, God has made Paul a steward of good things for the Gentiles, by revealing to him a secret kept in silence while successive generations of men passed to the grave. But the secret has now been revealed to certain men whom God has made the mouth-piece of His Spirit. The secret is that through the Gospel the Gentiles are to share all the spiritual privileges of the people of God. Of this Gospel, Paul is a servant. With profound gratitude for God's kindness to one so unworthy, he repeats what he has just said. It is his happy lot to announce as good news the wealth entrusted to him for others, viz. the secret so long hidden in the mind of God. The ultimate aim of the trust reposed in Paul reaches even to the bright ones of heaven, to whom God has purposed to reveal through His united people on earth His own many-sided wisdom. This purpose God has carried into effect in Christ. Its effect is seen in the confidence towards man and God already enjoyed by those who believe. In view of all this, Paul begs his readers, as though half apologizing for

mention of his imprisonment, not to be discouraged by his hardships but rather to rejoice in the divinely-given endurance they evoke.

## SECTION 8

***PAUL PRAYS THAT HIS READERS MAY KNOW CHRIST AND  
THUS ATTAIN THE CONSUMMATION DESIGNED BY GOD***

### CHAPTER 3:14-21

*For this cause I bow my knees to the Father from whom every family in heaven and upon earth is named, in order that He may give to you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit to the inward man, that Christ may dwell through faith in your hearts; in order that, being rooted and foundationed in love, ye may be strong to apprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge; in order that ye may be filled to all the fulness of God. To Him that is able to do beyond all things abundantly beyond the things which we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, to all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen.*

This section contains in Ephesians 3:14-19 a sublime prayer for the readers, consisting of three petitions, viz. Ephesians 3:16, 17 and Ephesians 3:18, 19a and Ephesians 3:19b, each leading up to the petition following; and in Ephesians 3:20, 21 a doxology of praise to Him who is able to surpass in fulfilment our loftiest prayer or thought.

**Ver.** 14-15. For which cause; takes up the same words in Ephesians 3:1, after the digression prompted by the latter part of Ephesians 3:1, and continues the line of thought there broken off. That the Christians at Ephesus who were once far off; are now (Ephesians 2:21, 22) stones built into the rising walls of the temple of God, was prompting Paul in Ephesians 3:1, while in prison through his loyalty to their spiritual interests, to pray for them. But his prayer was delayed to make way for an account of his Apostolic commission for the Gentiles. This account he

closes by an assertion that in Christ his readers and himself have confident access to God. He begs them not to lose heart through his persecutions; and declares that these, by revealing the grandeur of the grace of God, cover them with splendor. And now comes the postponed prayer, introduced by a repetition of the words of the broken-off sentence, for this cause: i.e. because of his readers' confident access to God by faith and the glory which is theirs through the sufferings of Paul. Thus both 7 and 8 were prompted by the actual spiritual life of those to whom he writes.

Bow... knee: same phrase in Romans 11:4; 14:11; Philippians 2:10: slightly different from Acts 7:60; 9:40; 20:36; 21:5. So intensely real, so deliberate and solemn, is Paul's approach to God for his readers that even while writing he forgets his actual posture and says 'I bow my knees.' He turns in prayer 'to the Father from whom etc.'

Family: same word in Exodus 6:15, 'These are the families of the sons of Simeon;' and in Numbers 1:16, 'leaders of the tribes according to their families,' etc.

Every family in heaven: the various classes of angels, e.g. those mentioned in Ephesians 1:21. So in Job 1:6; 2:1 the 'sons of God' can be no other than angels: and the word is so rendered by the LXX. They are sons of God as sharing, by derivation from Him, His moral and intellectual nature; not by adoption, which is always the reception of a stranger's child, but by creation and continuance in the image of God.

Every family... on earth: Jews and Gentiles, or any other classes into which the race is divided. Not all men indiscriminately, but the adopted sons, according to Paul's constant teaching: see under Romans 8:17. With the various families of heaven are associated, as children of one divine Father, families of adopted sons on earth. And, from the one Father, all these bear the same 'name:' cp. Ephesians 1:21. Notice that, in harmony with the exalted standpoint of the whole Epistle, when Paul approaches God in prayer his eye passes the limits of earth and sees other races sharing with himself a name which enables them to call God their Father. Thus the cry, My Father God, unites earth to heaven

**Ver.** 16-19. Contents of Paul's prayer. It consists of three parts, Ephesians 3:16, 17; Ephesians 3:18, 19a; Ephesians 3:19b; each under the

same conjunction, which represents the contents of the prayer as also its aim; ‘in order that God may give... in order that ye may be strong... in order that ye may be filled.’ Verse 16.

In order that He may give to you: same words and sense in Ephesians 1:17.

The riches of His glory: the abundance of the splendor of God. Same words in Romans 9:23. Similarly Ephesians 1:7; Philippians 4:19.

Conscious that the answer to his prayer will reveal the grandeur of God and thus evoke the admiration of men, and that there is in God an infinity of grandeur ready to reveal itself, Paul asks that this infinite grandeur may be the measure of the answer to his prayer.

Strengthened: fitted for the intellectual and moral effort and work and battle of the Christian life. Same word and sense in 1 Corinthians 16:13; Luke 1:80; 2:40. It is practically the same as the similar word in Colossians 1:11; Philippians 4:13. This strengthening is to come by contact ‘with’ divine ‘power,’ which enters into us and makes us strong. Similar connection of thought in Colossians 1:11. Through (or ‘by means of’)

His Spirit: the Bearer of the presence and power of God. Same or similar words and same sense in Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 12:8; 2 Timothy 1:14.

The inward man: that in man which is furthest removed from the outer world and its influence, the secret chamber in which man’s personality dwells alone. Same words and sense in Romans 7:22; 2 Corinthians 4:16. Paul prays that, by contact with the might of God and by the agency of the Holy Spirit, the inward Bearer to man’s spirit of all divine influences, divine strength may reach and fill this inmost chamber, making his readers strong indeed.

**Ver. 17.** A clause exactly parallel to that preceding it.

Dwell: or ‘make’ His ‘home:’ same word in Colossians 1:19; 2:9; Hebrews 11:9; Matthew 2:23; 4:13. In Romans 8:9, 11 and 1 Corinthians 3:16 cognate words describe the indwelling of the Spirit of God: cp. also 2 Corinthians 6:16 and Colossians 3:16.

In your hearts: the locality of spiritual life: same words and sense in Colossians 3:15, 16; Romans 5:5; cp. Ephesians 1:18; 4:18; 6:5; Galatians



4:6. The heart is the inmost chamber of our nature, whence come our thoughts, words, and actions: see under Romans 1:21. It is, therefore, practically identical with 'the inner man.' Moreover, the Holy Spirit is the divine person through whose agency Christ dwells in man. For the coming of the 'other Helper' is the coming of Christ to His disciples: John 14:18. Hence the indwelling of the Spirit is practically the indwelling of Christ: Romans 8:9-11; cp. Galatians 2:20. Now Christ has all power. Therefore, for Him to make His home in our heart, is for God to give us, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, the Bearer of the presence of Christ, a strength reaching to the inmost chamber of our being. Moreover, faith is the constant condition of the gift of the Spirit: Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 3:2, 14. Consequently, it is 'through faith' that 'Christ' makes His home 'in' our 'hearts.' Thus each of these parallel clauses explains the other. This unexpected reference to faith is in complete accord with Ephesians 2:8, and with the importance everywhere given to faith in the theology of Paul as the means of salvation. The above exposition is better than to take the indwelling of Christ as a result of the strengthening wrought by the Spirit; a connection of thought not found elsewhere. The presence of Christ in us is not a result, but a means, of the spiritual strength for which Paul prays.

**Ver. 18-19a.** Second petition of Paul's prayer.

Love: to our fellows, as always when not otherwise defined: see under 1 Corinthians 13:1. It is a reflection in man of God's love to man.

Rooted: same word and sense in Colossians 2:7. Foundationed, i.e. 'placed upon a solid foundation:' same word in Colossians 1:23; Hebrews 1:10; Matthew 7:25. Notice the double metaphor: a similar combination in Colossians 2:7. A man animated by Christian love has therein good soil in which his spiritual life may take firm hold and raise its head securely, and from which it may derive nourishment and growth. He has also a firm rock on which may rest and rise a solid structure of immoveable perseverance. Cp. 1 John 2:10. Where love does not reign, the Christian life is always unstable. The above words may grammatically be joined either to those preceding or to those following. In the former case, they would further describe the state of those in whom Christ dwells: in the latter, they would state a condition needful in order 'to comprehend the love of Christ.' The latter seems the more likely: so A.V. and R.V. For the strength implied in

this 'root' and 'foundation' seems to lead up to the strength needful 'to comprehend, etc.'

[This would also more easily explain the nominative participles, 'rooted and foundationed.' For the construction, cp. 2 Corinthians 2:4; Galatians 2:10.]

But the difference is slight. For Paul's first petition, in Ephesians 3:16, 17, leads up to the second as a means to an end; so that in any case the firmness developed by Christian love is a condition of the spiritual strength needful to comprehend the love of Christ.

That ye may, etc.: immediate object of the second petition.

May-be-strong: an emphatic Greek word, found in the Greek Bible only here and Sirach vii. 6, denoting strength to carry us through and out of difficulty. It suggests the difficulty of comprehending the love of Christ.

Comprehend: same word and sense in Acts 4:13; 10:34; 25:25. It denotes firm mental grasp. And what Paul desires for his readers he desires for 'all the saints.' This desire is prompted by remembrance that it is designed equally for all.

What is the breadth, etc.: an indirect question suggesting wonder and adoring curiosity.

Breadth and length, etc.: as though Paul attempted to measure 'the love of Christ' in each direction, e.g. how wide is its compass, how far it will carry us, how high it will raise, and from what depth it will rescue. But these must not be taken as the intended distinction of the four dimensions. They are altogether indefinite, simply noting measurement in every direction. Cp. Job 11:7-9. What Paul desires his readers to 'comprehend,' he does not in Ephesians 3:18 say, but interrupts his sentence to suggest its manysidedness and vastness. The matter to be grasped is stated in Ephesians 3:19a.

To know: already implied in comprehend, but inserted for marked contrast to the words which follow.

The love of Christ: to us, revealed (2 Corinthians 5:15) in His death for all, and well known to Paul as a constraining power and as the ground (Galatians 2:20) of his faith in Christ.

Surpassing: as in Ephesians 1:19; 2:7: passing all limits and all measurement; and doing this, as implied in Ephesians 3:18, in every direction. This 'love surpassing knowledge,' Paul desires his readers 'to comprehend and to know.' Nor was this an empty wish. For, though human knowledge cannot fathom it, a determined effort to fathom it ever leads to blessed result by revealing its immeasurable depth. Thus in a very real sense men may know that which in its fulness surpasses knowledge. The greatness and difficulty of this attempt to fathom the unfathomable prompted the emphatic word rendered 'may-be-strong.' And, since this strength is possible only to those whose Christian life is made firm by, and draws nourishment from, love to their brethren, and rests upon this love as on a solid foundation, Paul prefaces this second petition by the words 'rooted and foundationed in love.'

**Ver.** 19b. Third and culminating petition. Paul desires his readers (1) to be strengthened by the indwelling of Christ, in order that thus (2) they may know the love of Christ, and in order that thus finally (3) they may be filled, etc. Filled: made full or fully developed so as to attain the goal of their being. Fulness: result of being 'filled' or 'fulfilled:' see under Colossians 1:19.

The fulness of God: either that with which God is Himself full or the fulness which He gives, filling others or working in them a realisation of the possibilities of their being. These senses are closely allied. For all good in man is an outflow of the eternal excellence of God. And only by being filled with blessing from God can we attain our own complete development. This divinely-given and full development is the measure and aim of the fulness with which Paul prays that his readers 'may be filled: to all the fulness of God.'

[The preposition εἰς has the same sense of a goal to be reached in Ephesians 4:13.]

Such fulness leaves in man no aching void and no defect. It is God's gift and is an impartation to man, according as he is able to contain it, of that

infinite abundance in which every desire of the nature of God finds ever complete satisfaction. Such is Paul's prayer. It begins and ends with an appeal to the infinite wealth of God. This is, as he approaches the one Father of angels and men, the measure of his desire and his faith. For, to answer his prayer, will reveal the abundance of the splendor of God. His first petition is that his readers be strengthened by the agency of the Holy Spirit, even to the inmost chamber of their being: or, what is practically the same, that Christ may make His home in their hearts. He remembers that this inward presence of Christ is, like all Gospel blessings, through faith. This first petition is but a stepping stone to others greater. Paul desires that Christ may dwell in his readers' hearts in order that by personal and inward contact with Him they may know the infinite greatness of His love.

To form any worthy conception of this love, passes so completely all human intellectual power that before asking for this knowledge Paul prays that his readers may receive from the Spirit of God divine strength for this arduous spiritual task. And he reminds them that this strength needs the nourishment and support found in Christian love. He wishes them to measure in every direction the love of Christ, that the failure of their measurement may reveal a vastness which leaves behind the utmost limits of human and created thought. Yet even this is not the ultimate aim of Paul's prayer. Knowledge, even of God, is but a means to a further end. Paul desires his readers to know in order that thus they may be made full, or rather that thus they may attain the goal of their being. And this goal is God Himself. He prays that, by the impartation of that fulness in which are realized the possibilities of God's own nature, his readers may attain the satisfaction of every spiritual instinct and the aim of their being.

**Ver. 20.** Rising by three successive stages, Paul has now reached the summit of his mighty prayer. Conscious of the greatness and difficulty of that for which he has asked, he remembers that the omnipotence of God passes infinitely all human word or thought. In this surpassing power of God his faith now takes refuge.

To Him that is able: cp. Romans 16:25; Jude 24. Paul has prayed that his readers be strengthened by the power of God so as to have strength to comprehend the surpassing love of Christ. He now appeals to the only source of this strength, the infinite power of God.

Beyond all things: passing all limits. This is further expounded by the parallel phrase, 'exceedingly beyond, etc.' The things which we ask or think: specific details included in all things. God's power 'to do' goes not only beyond these but 'exceedingly beyond' them.

Think: as in Romans 1:20: a looking through things around to the realities underlying them. Of such mental sight, Paul is conscious: 'we think.' His thoughts go beyond his prayers. But God's ability to perform goes infinitely beyond both prayers and thoughts. This appeal to the power of God to perform this great petition is in harmony with the truth that already His power is at work in His people's hearts: 'according to the power which is at work in us.' Close parallel of thought and expression in Ephesians 1:19, 20. The power already at work in them, a power surpassing all word and thought of man, stimulates Paul's faith that the great prayer just offered will be answered.

Glory: manifested grandeur evoking admiration. See under Romans 1:21. The infinite power of God assures Paul that his great prayer will be answered. He knows that the answer will be an outshining of the grandeur of God and will evoke the adoring admiration of His creatures. And this is his heartfelt desire: 'to Him be the glory.'

In the Church: the human locality of this admiration. Only in the company of the saved is the grandeur of God recognised. To the outer and human sphere of this praise is now added its inner and divine sphere: 'and in Christ Jesus.' A somewhat similar combination in Ephesians 1:3. Only through the historic facts of Christ and so far as we are inwardly united to Him do we recognise the grandeur of God.

The age of the ages: Hebrew superlative, like 'song of songs.' Eternity is here represented as one superlative 'age;' the one age in which all ages culminate. Slightly different in Galatians 1:5. Generations: as in Ephesians 3:5. Since the men living together on earth are ever changing by death, this word receives sometimes a temporal sense. And Paul here projects into eternity the most conspicuous feature of our conception of time, viz. the passing by of successive generations. Even where generations cannot pass away, and where we cannot easily conceive fresh generations rising, Paul uses a term derived from human life on earth in order to describe in the clearest colors possible the endlessness of the song of praise which the

manifested power of God will evoke: 'to all the generations of the age of the ages.'

The mention of 'the Church' in this endless song implies that it will itself endure for ever. This is also clearly implied in Ephesians 5:27. For the bride of the eternal King can never die. We may therefore conceive the glorified human race to continue for ever as a definite and glorious part of the Kingdom of God. This doxology is the climax of the Epistle. Taking up his pen to write, the prisoner's first thought is praise to God for blessings already given to his readers. All these he traces to their ultimate source in an eternal purpose of God, a purpose embracing the universe. In the spiritual life of the servants of Christ, the realisation of this purpose has already begun. This moves Paul to pray that his readers may know the infinite greatness of the power already at work in them. As a measure of it, he points to the power which raised Christ from the grave to the throne of God; and declares that spiritually they are already raised from the dead and seated with Christ in heaven. Having thus described their salvation from beneath upwards, Paul further describes it laterally as a bringing near those who were once far away from the people of God, and as a building together of Jews and Gentiles upon one foundation into one glorious temple.

All this moves Paul again to pray for his readers. But he delays his prayer, in view of the just-described union of Jews and Gentiles, to expound his own commission to the Gentiles. Like the blessings for which Paul gave thanks in his first outburst of praise, this commission also has its source in an eternal purpose; and is wider in its scope than the human race, embracing even angels in their successive ranks. The Apostle then, deliberately and solemnly, betakes himself to prayer. He prays to the Father of angels and of men; and appeals to the wealth of splendor ever waiting to reveal itself in Him. He prays that, by the agency of the Spirit and by the indwelling of Christ, his readers may receive, in the inmost chamber of their being, strength to grasp the immeasurable love of Christ, that thus by knowing that which passes knowledge they may themselves be made full to an extent measured by the fulness which God waits to give. The vastness of his prayer compels Paul to appeal to the all-surpassing power of God: and this power evokes from him a song of adoring praise. Thus from praise to prayer and prayer to praise, in the light of the eternal

past and the eternal future and in view of a universe to be united under the sway of Christ, in stately and increasing grandeur, rolls forward this glorious anthem, till it culminates in a song of praise begun in the Church on earth but destined to continue through the successive periods of the age of ages. Notice that each of the two prayers is dominated by thought of the power of God (Ephesians 1:19; 3:20) already working in Christians and able to work in them blessings beyond their utmost thought.

## DIVISION II

### MORAL TEACHING

#### CHAPTER 4-6

#### SECTION 9

#### UNITY AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

#### CHAPTER 4:1-16

*I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk worthily of the calling with which ye were called, with all lowliness of mind and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body there is and one Spirit, according as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us has been given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

*For which cause one says, “When He went up on high, He led captive a captivity and gave gifts to men.” (Psalm 68:18.) Now this, “He went up,” what is it but that He also went down into the lower parts of the earth? He that went down is Himself also He that went up beyond and above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.*

*And Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, with a view to the full equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the oneness of the*



*faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we may no longer be babes, wafted about and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking the truth in love may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ, from whom all the body, being jointed together and knit together through every joint of supply, according to the working in measure of each one part, makes the increase of the body for the building up of itself in love.*

Since only upon revealed truth can morals rest securely, the moral teaching of this Epistle is not only preceded by the profound doctrines of DIV. 1, but is also in this section, after an introductory exhortation in Ephesians 4:1-3, intertwined with more specific teaching about (Ephesians 4:4-6) the unity of the Church arising from the unity of God, and about (Ephesians 4:7-11) the variety of gifts with which the Risen Savior has endowed it, in order (Ephesians 4:12-16) to further the harmonious development of all the members of the Church. Ver. 1. I exhort you, then; introduces, as do the same words in Romans 12:1, a practical application of the foregoing teaching. The great truth that God is working in us beyond our thought ought to mould our conduct. Prisoner in the Lord: Christ the Master being the element in which Paul lives, and so living finds himself in prison at Rome. For all that he is and does is 'in' the 'Lord.' Similar thought in Philippians 1:13: a slightly different conception in Ephesians 3:1. I, the prisoner: Paul's own personality and circumstances appealing to his readers: so Ephesians 3:1; Galatians 5:2; 2 Corinthians 10:1. Walk worthily: same words and sense in Colossians 1:10; similar words in Philippians 1:27. Calling: as in Ephesians 1:18. The grandeur of the Gospel call lays upon us an obligation to choose such steps in life as are in harmony with the prospect of blessing which that call opens to our view

Ver. 2. Lowliness-of mind, meekness, long-suffering: same three words together in Colossians 3:12, where see note. The first two are joined under one preposition and strengthened by the word 'all.' Our 'walk' in life must be accompanied by a correct estimate of our utter powerlessness for good and by a consequent absence of self-assertion; and this at all times and in all circumstances. And with this must be a disposition slow to give way to

unfavorable influences from without. Forbearing one another: same words in same connection in Colossians 3:13; see note. This participial clause both continues Paul's account of the disposition he desires in his readers and describes the practical working, and the source, of 'longsuffering,' the point last mentioned. If Christian 'love' be the element of our life, we shall refrain from anything which would injure or grieve our brethren, whatever provocation they may give.

**Ver. 3.** A second participial clause giving a motive for the forbearance just described, viz. that want of it may endanger Christian unity.

Giving-diligence: same word and sense in Galatians 2:10; a cognate word in 2 Corinthians 7:11, 12; 8:7, 8, 16. It suggests difficulty, and a resolute effort to overcome it.

The Spirit: of God; see Ephesians 4:4.

The unity of the Spirit: harmony wrought by the Spirit among the members of the one Body of Christ. Similarly, the spirit of life produces harmony in the variously endowed members of the human body, making each member helpful to all the others. In a dead body this harmony is lost; and each member pursues its own way along the path of corruption. Since this 'unity' is a work 'of the Spirit' of God, but is conditional on man's self-surrender to the Spirit, we are bidden 'to keep' it. And, since this is sometimes difficult, inasmuch as everything which needs forbearance tends to destroy unity in the Church, Paul bids us 'to give diligence to keep, etc.'

Peace: harmony with those around us: so Ephesians 2:14, 15, 17; Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 14:33; Acts 7:26. It is represented as a silken cord binding into one the members of the Church: 'in the bond of peace.'

Contrast Acts 8:23, 'bond of injustice.' This mutual peace, which is the encompassing element of the unity of the Spirit, has the same source as the peace of God which fills the breast of each believer: Colossians 3:15; Philippians 4:7.

**Ver. 4.** Seven objective unities, underlying the subjective unity which Paul desires his readers to maintain.

One body: the Church, which occupies a unique relation to Christ as His Body. So Ephesians 2:16; Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13.

One Spirit: the Holy Spirit, the one animating principle of the Church, giving to it life and unity as the one Body of Christ. Thus every living human body is a pattern of the Church. And this unity is in harmony with the truth that the good news of salvation opens, to all who receive it, the same prospect of good things to come: 'according as ye were called in one hope.' Cp. Ephesians 1:18. This 'one hope' animates all the members of the 'one body,' and has its source in the 'one Spirit.' Cp. Colossians 3:5. So in secular matters the uniting power of a common hope often binds together a company of men, and makes it a living unity.

One Lord, or 'Master': whom all obey. So 1 Corinthians 8:6, cp. 1 Timothy 2:5.

Each of His servants relies upon the same Gospel promise: 'one faith.' And each has entered the company of His professed followers by the 'one' gate of 'Baptism.' One God: final and supreme unity. So 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Timothy 2:5. Since the word 'God' does not need a defining genitive in order to give a complete sense, it is perhaps better to understand it absolutely: there is 'one God' who is 'also Father of all.' Grammatically, the word 'all' three times repeated, may denote all things, or men, or believers. Probably here the last. For Paul is evidently thinking about members of the one body. Throughout 9 we have no reference to the outside world.

Above all: reigning supreme over all His people: so Romans 9:5.

Through all: using them as instruments to work out

His purposes: cp. Romans 11:36; an important parallel.

In all: dwelling in, and filling, their hearts. Notice here seven unities, arranged in two groups of three and surmounted by one supreme unity presented in a threefold relation to us. Among these unities are the three Persons of the Trinity, each possessing a unity of His own and Himself a center of unity to the servants of God: 'One Spirit... One Lord... One God.' Same order in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, a close parallel. As ever, Paul rises from the Son to the Father: and in the presence of the Father he lingers. For all unity in the creature has its source in this Supreme Unity.

**Ver. 7.** After the unity of the Church, based upon the eternal unities of the Godhead, now follow the manifold gifts to the various members of the Church. To each one of us: no member left without an endowment. Was given grace: the undeserved favor of God revealed in the gift of capacities for usefulness: a thought frequent with Paul, e.g. Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:4, also 1 Peter 4:10. The kind and degree of 'the grace given to each one' is determined by 'the measure of the free gift of Christ,' i.e. by His wisdom and love: a close parallel in Romans 12:3, 6. We may therefore cheerfully acquiesce in the absence of some gifts which others have, knowing that other gifts have been chosen for us by the unerring wisdom of Christ.

**Ver. 8-10.** A parenthesis, in thought though not in form. It links the spiritual endowments given by Christ to all His servants with the historic facts of His life on earth; a connection ever present to the thought of Paul. This is introduced by a quotation connecting the deliverance wrought by Christ with deliverances wrought by God for ancient Israel and celebrated in their ancient songs. The speaker of the words here quoted is not mentioned: and, since no one is suggested by the context and God is addressed in the second person, it is best to understand the speaker to be the Psalmist. Cp. 1 Corinthians 6:16; Hebrews 2:6.

The introductory formula, 'For which cause one says,' occurs again in Ephesians 5:14; James 4:6, and not elsewhere in the N.T. It asserts that the words quoted were in some sense prompted by the gifts of Christ to the Church. This demands explanation. Psalm 68:1f is evidently a song of triumphant praise to God for a great deliverance from enemies of Israel and of God: cp. Ephesians 4:1, 12, 20, 21. The Psalmist compared it to that wrought by God when He led Israel through the wilderness and revealed Himself in majesty on Sinai. He accosts the conqueror as, after complete victory, returning in triumph to heaven, whence He came in power to save His people: 'Thou hast gone up on high.' The triumphal procession is, as usual, accompanied by captives, these attesting the greatness of the victory: 'Thou hast led captive a captivity.' As usual, there are also 'gifts' which the conqueror has 'received,' either from the gratitude of those whom He has rescued or from others who seek His favor. And we are told that these gifts were received by Him 'among men;' who are represented as standing round and observing the triumph of God. Among these astonished

observers are ‘the rebellious ones,’ who had vainly refused to bow to His yoke but now witness His complete victory. Of this victory, a purpose is that God may reign securely, undisturbed upon His throne, as King among men. The truth underlying this poetic imagery is that, by conspicuously rescuing His people, God has manifested His power in a way which even His enemies cannot fail to recognise and that, the victory being now complete, His power is again hidden from the eyes of men. This truth, the Psalmist has represented under the figure of a conqueror’s return from the field of victory.

Now Paul saw that all such earlier deliverances culminated in the deliverance wrought by Christ, through His life and death and resurrection among men on earth, for those who believe the Gospel. In Him, God had come conspicuously forth from His unseen dwelling place in heaven; and had wrought for His people complete salvation by victory over their spiritual enemies. The ascension of Christ marked the completion of this victory; and was thus the triumphant return of the Conqueror to His home on high. Whatever therefore the Psalmist said about an earlier deliverance was true in still greater measure of the ascension of Christ. Moreover, whatever God did for ancient Israel was made possible only by the death of Christ on the cross, which reconciled mercy to sinful man with the justice of God. Consequently, the deliverance celebrated by the Psalmist was due, and is here attributed by Paul, to the incarnate Son of God. Hence the introductory formula: ‘for which cause’ one says. Among many songs of praise for deliverances wrought by God, Paul chose one containing a poetic figure which has an exact and literal counterpart in the ascension of Christ from earth to heaven. And since, through the victory over the powers of darkness gained by Christ on the cross, multitudes of His enemies had been brought to bow to Him in cheerful submission, Paul was able appropriately to retain in his quotation the word ‘captivity,’ which belongs only to the drapery of the Psalm. Moreover, the practical gain to men of Christ’s victory, of which gain the gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:7 were a part, suggested retention of the word ‘gifts,’ which also belongs to the drapery of the Psalm. And, in order to make clear the relation of Christ’s victory to the spiritual gifts about which he is here speaking, Paul does not hesitate to change the form of the quotation and to write ‘He gave gifts to men.’ For the word altered is only a part of the dramatic picturing

of the passage quoted. And the alteration makes at once evident the connection between the quotation and the matter which in this section Paul has in hand. The 'gifts received' by the Conqueror revealed the completeness of His victory: the 'gifts' which the ascended Savior 'gave' to His servants on earth revealed the completion of His work for them. The essential point of connection between the quoted Psalm and the gifts bestowed by Christ is that, just as in ancient days God sometimes came forth from the unseen world and manifested Himself to men by working for His servants unexpected deliverance, and then again retired from their view, so still more conspicuously in Paul's day He had wrought deliverance by the incarnation and death and ascension of Christ. A Targum reads in Psalm 68:18 'Thou hast given to them gifts;' as does the Syriac Version. If this reading was known to Paul, it may have suggested the change here adopted. But this is not needful to explain the change. It was justified by the fact that the alteration pertains only to the drapery of the Psalm. And it was needful in order to show the bearing of the quotation upon Christ's gifts to the Church.

[In the LXX., the Sinai MS. reads ἄνθρωποις. If this reading was in Paul's mind, it might possibly have made easier to him the change from the singular number in the Psalm to the plural in the quotation.] This quotation is the first we have met with in the four Epistles now before us; a marked contrast to the Epistles of his third missionary journey, already annotated. Or rather, in its abundance of quotations from the O.T., the second group of Paul's Epistles differs greatly from all his other Epistles. This difference, we cannot explain. For reasons unknown to us, the O.T. was, during his third missionary journey specially near to the Apostle's thought.

**Ver. 9.** Now this, He went up: viz. Christ. For Paul has asserted, and now assumes, that in His ascension Psalm 68:1f finds its most complete fulfilment. Inasmuch as the original dwelling place of God and of the Son of God is the highest heaven, Paul justly points out that the ascent of Christ implies that He had already come down from heaven to save His people. This is asserted by God in Exodus 3:8; and by Christ in John 3:13; 6:62. Certainly Christ's return in triumph to the skies implies His previous incarnation. Moreover, all this reminds us at once that Christ's ascent was preceded by a still deeper descent, that before He 'went up' to

heaven He 'went down' into the realms of the dead. And Paul taught that He died in order to make mercy to the guilty consistent with the justice of God, and therefore possible. Consequently, had He not gone down into the grave, there had been no triumphant ascent of Christ as (Acts 5:31) a Prince and Savior. And so closely was this thought interwoven into the whole teaching of Paul that we cannot doubt that he here refers to it.

The descent of Christ into the abode of the dead is also the simplest explanation of the words 'into the lower parts of the earth.' For this can hardly mean that 'earth' is 'lower' than heaven, which is self-evident. It recalls rather the constant conception of the ancient world that just as the bodies of the dead are beneath the earth so even their souls are in the under-world. So in Philippians 2:10 dead persons capable of worship are described as 'under the earth.' The same thought underlies the O.T. conception of Hades. If this exposition be correct, we have here an express assertion that Christ went down into the world of the dead. And this agrees with John 20:17 where Christ risen from the dead says that He had not yet ascended to God, thus implying that His Spirit did not go from the cross to the throne. But, apparently, the chief significance of these words is not so much the descent of Christ into the realms of the dead as a tremendous fact involved in this descent viz. that He who ascended in triumph had previously died. The readers of the Epistle knew well that He died for their sins and to save them from sin. Had He not died, there had been no spiritual gifts for men. For these were the purchase of His blood. The descent of Christ into Hades is mentioned here, apparently, as a strong pictorial contrast to His triumphant ascent to heaven. The connection between His death and triumph is also plainly stated in Colossians 2:14, 15. The words before us do not imply that Christ went to the abode of the lost awaiting their final doom.

For even the righteous dead are in the under-world: so Acts 2:34.

**Ver. 10.** Linger upon the contrast between the death and ascension of Christ, Paul asserts the identity of the dead and the risen Savior; and further describes the grandeur and the aim of His ascension.

Beyond-and-above all the heavens: until the loftiest seat on high became lower than the ascended Lord. Same word and same thought in Ephesians

1:21. Similar thought in Hebrews 4:14. It depicts an extreme contrast to 'the lower parts of the earth.'

All the heavens: suggesting a variety of abodes in heaven. Cp. John 14:2. This variety is closely related to the various ranks in Ephesians 1:21.

May fill all things: primarily the palaces of heaven. These the Son, at His incarnation, left. At His ascension He returned to claim His own again. He now fills all things, not only as the Eternal Son but as the God-Man, the slain Lamb. His return to heaven marked the completion of the work for which He came to earth. And we can easily conceive that for this completion it was needful that His spirit, driven through man's sin into exile from its body, should descend to the lowest depth reached by His servants, in order that from that depth He might raise them to be sharers of His throne. To this end He must needs claim for His own, by entering its gloomy chambers, even the realms of the dead. Therefore, in order that the whole universe might become 'the fulness of Him who fills all in all,' He both descended and rose. Verses 8-10 teach the important truth that the inward experiences of Christians rest upon the outward historic facts of the human life of Christ. His descent into the grave has for us the deepest personal interest: His triumphant ascent to heaven was our spiritual enrichment. That this truth is embodied in an O.T. quotation, reminds us that the greatest deliverances in the sacred songs of Israel have been surpassed by the mightier work wrought by Christ. Led from step to step by this quotation, we have followed the Savior into the dark regions of the dead; and from afar have witnessed His exaltation until the brightest abodes of heaven have been left behind in His triumphal progress. A close parallel in Philippians 2:9-11.

**Ver. 11.** And HE gave: emphatic addition to 'is Himself also, etc.' in Ephesians 4:9. It also takes up the thought in Ephesians 4:7 which was interrupted by the reference to the ascension and descent of Christ, 'to each one has been given grace.'

Apostles... Prophets: close parallel in 1 Corinthians 12:28, 'first apostles, secondly prophets.'

Apostles: see under 1 Corinthians 15:7; Romans 1:1: the highest rank in the Church.



Prophets: the second rank. See under 1 Corinthians 14:40. Evangelists or ‘gospellers:’ see under Romans 1:1. Only found in 2 Timothy 4:5; Acts 21:8. Its position here after ‘apostles’ and ‘prophets’ suggests a definite order of men: its form suggests an order of preachers. That they are called a gift of Christ, implies that they were endowed with special capacity for usefulness, as were the apostles and prophets.

Shepherds, or ‘pastors’: same word in Luke 2:8. A frequent and appropriate metaphor for those who have charge of others in the Church. So Ezekiel 34:2, 9, 10, 23; John 10:16; 1 Peter 2:25; Hebrews 13:20: cognate verb in John 21:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2. It denotes evidently a class of men whose work is to find food for, to protect, and to guide, the members of the Church.

Teachers: men whose work is to impart Gospel truth. Close parallel in 1 Corinthians 12:28, ‘thirdly teachers.’ Cp. Acts 13:1, ‘prophets and teachers.’ The ‘pastors and teachers’ are grammatically closely joined as describing either the same office or offices closely allied. Since the food of the flock of Christ is Gospel truth, these two words describe probably the same office. Now in Acts 20:25 the elders or bishops are exhorted to shepherd the flock of God. And in 1 Timothy 3:2 Paul requires that a bishop be ‘apt to teach.’ We may therefore take these titles as describing the elders, not however as filling an office but as endowed by Christ with capacity fitting them for it. Such capable officers are indeed Christ’s best gifts to His Church. Moreover, if outside the circle of the elders there were others possessing in a marked degree the gift of teaching, these would come under the assertion of this verse. For all capacities for Christian work are gifts of the Risen Lord. Notice here not only gifts for each member but special gifts fitting certain members for special offices. Such gifts are an enrichment to the whole Church, which needs for its various officers divinely-given capacities corresponding to the work of each.

**Ver. 12-16.** Aim of the gifts just mentioned, viz. the full development of the Church in every part; with an exposition in detail of this development.

Full-equipment: for the work and battle of the Christian life. Cognate words in 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:9, 11: see notes.

Of the saints: a title noting the sacred relation to God of all Church-members. This first clause states the general aim of Christ's gift of officers to His Church. Then follow subordinate aims needful for its attainment.

Ministry: see under Romans 12:8. The absence of any reference here to the specific office of a deacon, the mention above of various Church officers, and the frequency of this word in the general sense of any office, suggest that it is here used in this more general sense. So 1 Corinthians 12:5, 'varieties of ministries.'

Work of ministry: result to be attained by this official ministration. For this practical end, Christ endowed certain Church-members with special capacities.

For building up, etc.: further aim, parallel with and defining that just mentioned. It reproduces the metaphor of Ephesians 2:2-22. As in English, so in Greek the same word, 'building,' denotes both the structure erected and the act of erection.

The body of Christ: Paul's favorite metaphor, found already in Ephesians 1:23. This combination of two metaphors links with the idea of the progress of a rising building that of the growth of a living body and the vital relation of the Church to Christ. Similar combination in Ephesians 4:16. This 'work of ministry' and 'building of the body of Christ,' we may perhaps understand as means leading to 'the full equipment of the saints.' [The prepositions προς and εις are used here together, as in Romans 15:2, apparently for the further and nearer objects in view.] God designs that, through the agency of the officers of the Church and through the consequent progress of the Church as a whole, each individual Christian, standing as he does in special relation to God, may attain his full development.

**Ver. 13.** In Ephesians 4:13 Paul stated that the gifts of Christ to the Church were designed to continue till all His servants attain full development. This was really a statement of Christ's purpose in bestowing these gifts. Grammatically, Ephesians 4:14-16 announce a further purpose to be attained by the purpose implied in Ephesians 4:13 or by the purpose asserted in Ephesians 4:12. Practically, they expound in

detail these purposes; negatively in Ephesians 4:14, positively in Ephesians 4:15, 16.

**Ver. 14.** A state from which Christ designs to save His people. The word ‘no-longer’ implies that it was actual and frequent among the Christians of Paul’s day. Babes; keeps up by contrast the metaphor of ‘full-grown’ in Ephesians 4:13. So 1 Corinthians 3:1 in contrast to Ephesians 2:6, where we have the same words. Then follows a picture of spiritual babyhood.

Wafted-about: like a wave of the sea. Same metaphor in James 1:6, ‘he who doubts is like a wave of the sea carried by wind:’ a close parallel. Instability under external pressure is a mark both of weak faith and of spiritual childishness. Carried-about or ‘around’; emphasises an idea already present in ‘wafted-about,’ viz. useless movement hither and thither.

Every wind of teaching: the changing cause of this ceaseless and useless motion. On ‘babes, teaching’ operates like ‘wind’ on water.

Every wind: recalling the infinite variety of such influences. The immature Christian is carried along by what he hears, good or bad. He is therefore at the mercy of every influence brought to bear upon him, and is born hither and thither in ceaseless and useless movement.

In the trickery of men: the source of this teaching, represented as the surrounding element and atmosphere of this vain movement.

Trickery: literally ‘dice-playing,’ the gamester’s art.

In craftiness, etc.: parallel with, and expounding, the foregoing.

Craftiness: as in 2 Corinthians 4:2: a disposition to do anything to gain one’s ends. ‘The wiles,’ or ‘deliberate-system,’ literally ‘the method,’ of ‘error:’ a way of working peculiar to those who are away from the truth. This is the path and goal of those by whom the immature ones are led. This verse opens a dark picture of the Churches in Paul’s day: for this teaching of error must be that of professed Christians. But the picture is no darker than that in 2 Corinthians 12:21. We have here men wandering in, and dominated by, error. While professing to teach Divine truth, they do anything to gain their ends, using even the trickery of a dice-player. By such teachers, some immature Christians are carried about from one belief

to another like the tossing waves of the sea. Against their craft nothing can stand firmly except robust Christian manhood. To guard His servants from this peril, by raising them to men in Christ, the Risen Lord has enriched His Church with abundant and various spiritual gifts.

**Ver. 15-16.** Positive side of Christ's purpose for His people.

Speaking-truth: either statements corresponding with fact, as in Galatians 4:16; or teaching or belief corresponding with reality. This latter sense is at once suggested here by the contrast with 'error' in Ephesians 4:14, and by the whole context. [The participle preceding a finite verb recalls the same construction in Ephesians 3:18.] Paul teaches that knowledge of the truth is a necessary condition of Christian growth. Consequently, it matters little whether the words 'in love' be joined to the words preceding them or to those following, i.e. whether 'love' be the surrounding element of the 'truth' we speak or of our 'growth.' In either case Paul teaches that for growth there must be both love and knowledge of the truth. Cp. Ephesians 3:18. We-may-grow; keeps before us the idea of progress. So Ephesians 4:13, 'come to a full-grown man.'

Into Him: our spiritual development bringing us into closer inward contact with Christ.

In all things: every part of our nature being, by this development, united more closely to Christ.

Who is, etc.: Christ into whom we are to grow is related to the Church as is 'the head' to a living body. Same favorite metaphor in Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18. And He it is 'from whom' the Church, His 'body,' derives unity and growth.

All the body: parallel with 'we all' in Ephesians 4:13. Same words in same connection in Colossians 2:19. They represent the entire Church as one whole.

Being-fitted-together: same word and same present participle in Ephesians 2:21. It suggests harmonious and close union like the various parts of a living body.

Knit-together: same word in Colossians 2:19; a close parallel to this verse. It adds to the idea of adaptation that of actual coming together.

Joint: same word and sense as in Colossians 2:19, 'through the joints and bands receiving supply and being brought together.' The similarity of these verses seems to compel us to understand 'through every joint' as the means by which this close union of the various members is brought about; rather than as the means of the growth afterwards mentioned. The added words 'of the supply' teach that the manifold contact of member with member in the Church, which binds these members into one compact body, is also a means of supplying the spiritual needs of the Church and thus helping its spiritual growth. Same thought in Colossians 2:19.

The working in measure of each one part: each member of the Church being active for the general good, according to the spiritual endowment of each. Cp. Romans 12:3. Just so, in a healthy body, each member is active, and the activity of each contributes to the general good. And in proportion to this activity of the several parts is the health of the whole: 'according to the working, etc.'

Makes the increase (or 'growth') of the body: chief assertion of Ephesians 4:16, corresponding to 'may-grow' in Ephesians 4:15. This growth is derived from Christ, and is conditioned by compact union of the members and by the normal activity of each.

For the building-up of itself: the metaphor of a rising building added, as in Ephesians 4:12, to that of a living and growing body.

In love: the encompassing element of Christian progress. Same words in Ephesians 4:15; 3:18. In 9 Paul enters upon the moral teaching of this Epistle. After praise and prayer on his readers' behalf in Ephesians. 1-3, interwoven with loftiest doctrinal teaching, he now exhorts them to action worthy of the Gospel call. Of such worthy conduct, the first point emphasised is Christian unity.

Paul suggests that the preservation of unity requires effort, and a mutual forbearance possible only to the lowly in heart. Then follows a statement of the objective and eternal unities which underlie all Christian unity. From these he passes to Christ's various gifts to the members of the Church. He reminds us that these gifts were from the ascended Savior; and that His ascension was a triumph grander than the many triumphs of God celebrated in the ancient songs of Israel. After this passing reference to

Christ's ascension and to His previous descent into the grave, Paul specifies further His gifts to the Church, mentioning specially the various grades of Church officers. These were given for the full development of the Church, which is the body of Christ. It can rise above the vacillations of childhood only by spiritual growth derived from Christ its Head, a growth uniting it more closely to Him, and nourished by the active co-operation of each member in compact union with his fellows.

That in this Epistle the spiritual union of believers with Christ and with each other is treated of before morality, reveals Paul's estimate of its importance. The new life in Christ ever draws together those united to Him; and is therefore hindered by all disunion. Therefore, since the mind of Christ moulding human conduct is the one source of the highest morality, whatever separates Christians is hostile to morality.

## SECTION 10

### A TOTAL CHANGE OF LIFE NEEDED

#### CHAPTER 4:17-24

*This then I say and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk according as the Gentiles walk in vanity of their mind, being darkened in the understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them because of the hardening of their hearts; men who, being past feeling, have given up themselves to wantonness for the working of all uncleanness with greediness. But not so have ye learnt Christ; if indeed ye have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according as it is truth in Jesus that ye must needs put away, as concerns your former manner of life, the old man which is corrupting according to the desires of deceit; and be renewed by the Spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which, after God, has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.*

After emphasising the need of unity and mutual help among Christians, Paul now asserts the need of a total change of life, a complete renunciation of the sins of heathenism. This he prefaces in Ephesians 4:17 by a solemn protestation; and then in Ephesians 4:18, 19 depicts, as a warning, the moral and spiritual state of the heathen. He then says that Christ (Ephesians 4:20, 21) requires a complete surrender (Ephesians 4:22) of the old life and (Ephesians 4:23, 24) a life altogether new. Ver. 17. This then I say; resumes the exhortation interrupted by the assertion in Ephesians 4:4 of the great unities underlying the unity which in Ephesians 4:3 Paul bids his readers endeavor to maintain.

Protest: as in Galatians 5:3. He calls God to witness the truth of what he is about to say.

In the Lord: like 'in Christ' in Romans 9:1. This protest is an outflow of Paul's union with Christ. That ye no longer walk; recalls their earlier contrary life. Along the same path 'also the Gentiles' now 'walk.' This

path Paul bids his readers henceforth avoid. Now follows — as a warning, a description of the forbidden path.

Vainly: cp. 1 Corinthians 3:20, 'the reasonings of the wise... are vain.' 'Their mind' is at work, but with no good result. And this useless activity is the mental element of their action: 'in the vanity of their mind.'

**Ver.** 18. In two parallel participial clauses this useless mental effort is traced to its source. The understanding: the mental eye which looks through objects around to their underlying significance. Same word in Colossians 1:21. Upon this mental eye falls no light: therefore the heathen are in this all-important faculty 'darkened.' This statement, the rest of Ephesians 4:18 further develops.

Alienated: same word in Ephesians 2:12.

The life of God: the immortal life which God Himself lives and which He gives to His servants. Cp. 'the peace of God,' in Philippians 4:7. To this, the only real life, the heathen are strangers. So terrible is their position. 'The ignorance which is in them:' stronger than their ignorance. In their hearts dwells an absence of knowledge of all that is best worth knowing. And, since knowledge of God is the channel of life, ignorance results in separation from life: 'alienated from the life.... because of the ignorance.' Cp. John 17:3: 'this is the eternal life, that they may know Thee.' A keen rebuke to the vaunted knowledge of the Greeks. Then follows the cause of their ignorance.

Hardening: as in Romans 11:8. Same phrase in Mark 6:52; 8:17; John 12:40. 'The heart' is 'hardened' when it becomes less sensible to influences from without; in this case, influences from God. These are designed to fill and mould and raise the whole life. But the heart of the heathen is unmoved by these good influences. And, since they are the one source of the only real knowledge, hardening produces 'ignorance.' Moreover, since knowledge is the avenue of spiritual life, the hardened and ignorant ones are destitute of that 'life.' Thus the two clauses, each introduced by the word 'because-of,' are successive links of causation. Such is the inward State of the heathen. Their heart is insensible to things divine; therefore ignorance reigns in them, and the true life is far off. No



wonder that in these darkened ones the mind works to no purpose, and that their path in life is wrong.

**Ver. 19.** Further description of the same men, setting forth the immoral result of this 'hardening.' Past feeling: literally 'having-become-insensible-to pain,' i.e. sin no longer painful to them. Gave-up: surrender to a hostile power. Same word and sense in Romans 1:24, 26, 28: an important parallel and complement to this passage. By willingly embracing sin they 'gave up themselves' to its power: and by decreeing that sinners fall victims to the power of their own sin 'God gave them up.' Themselves: the most tremendous sacrifice ever laid on the altar of sin. Wantonness: insolent casting aside of all restraint. Uncleaness: anything inconsistent with personal purity. Same words together in 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19. 'Wantonness' is almost personified as a power to which these men surrendered themselves in order to work out everything which defiles men. Insolence is their master: and 'every' kind of 'impurity' is their aim. Covetousness: desire of having more, an inordinate longing for the good things of earth. See under Colossians 3:5. As a conspicuous form of selfishness, it stands in close relation to bodily self-indulgence. So here and Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5. This close relation makes it needless to give to the word here any other than its ordinary meaning. Such is the state of the heathen. The darkening of their minds has made them in some measure insensible to the evil of sin. They have therefore given themselves up to gross and defiling sin and to the worship of material good.

**Ver. 20-21a.** Ye not so: conspicuous and double contrast to the Gentiles. Christ: Himself the matter of the knowledge they have acquired. So in Galatians 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:23. He is the matter revealed and preached. If at least, etc.; strengthens the foregoing assertion by adding a condition within which it is undoubtedly true. 'If' they have 'heard' Christ, etc., then certainly they 'have not so learnt Him.' Heard Him: by hearing they received not merely His words but Christ Himself. So in Ephesians 4:20 they 'learnt Christ.' And He is not only the matter heard but the personal encompassing element of the teaching received: 'taught in Him.' They first 'heard' the truth of Christ and thus received Him; and then, abiding in Him, received further instruction.

Put-away: as clothes are laid aside. Same word and idea in Colossians 3:8; Romans 13:12.

That ye put away: this moral truth brought to bear on the Christians at Ephesus.

Manner-of life: same word and sense in Galatians 1:13, 'my manner of life formerly.'

In-view-of the former manner-of-life: aspect of their case which makes it needful to 'put away, etc.'

The old man: same words and sense in Colossians 3:9, where we have the same metaphor of laying aside clothing: see note.

Which is corrupting: moral deterioration and destruction going on day by day. Of this, eternal death is the awful consummation. So is the corruption of a corpse a consummation of mortification before death. The abstract principle of 'deceit' with its tendencies is represented almost as a person cherishing 'desires.' In the unsaved, these are a ruling power. And the corruption now going on is what we should expect when such a principle guides the steps of men: 'according to the desires of deceit.' These last words keep before us the teaching in Ephesians 4:18 that ignorance and error are the treacherous basis of human life without Christ. A building erected on such a foundation is doomed to fall.

**Ver. 23.** Positive side of the moral 'truth in Jesus.'

And be renewed: from day to day, in contrast to the advancing corruption of the old man. Similar word, and same idea of progressive renovation, in Colossians 3:10; Romans 12:2.

The Spirit of your mind: the Holy Spirit looked upon as enlightening the mind. Similarly, in Romans 7:23 the law of God is called 'the law of my mind.' Nowhere else in the Bible is the Holy Spirit spoken of as belonging to man or to man's mind. But the phrase is intelligible and appropriate. Whereas, to understand it as describing the human spirit, is to make the collocation of 'spirit' and 'mind' unmeaning. The Holy Spirit is the Agent of the renewal: Titus 3:5. And He renews men by enlightening their intelligence. Paul could therefore say, 'be renewed by the Spirit of your mind,' and 'the Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind.'

**Ver.** 24. And put on: once for all in contrast both to cut off' in Ephesians 4:22 and to the gradual renewal in Ephesians 4:23. Same word in Colossians 3:10, where we have also a term equivalent to 'the new man.'

After God: Himself the pattern, as He is also the Author, of this new creation. Cp. Colossians 3:10, 'according to the image of Him that created Him.' The new man has already 'been created,' and is therefore waiting to be put on.

In righteousness: right doing, the surrounding element of this new creation.

Holiness: not the very common word usually so rendered, but a rare word found, in conjunction with 'righteousness,' in Luke 1:75. Cognate words in Acts 2:27; 13:34, 35; 1 Timothy 2:8; Titus 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:10. It denotes agreement with the eternal sanctities of right. This 'righteousness and holiness' belong to the truth, just as 'the desires' which lead to moral corruption belong to 'deceit.' The moral teaching which found utterance in Jesus, and which because it corresponds with the eternal realities is 'truth,' finds its outward expression in conduct agreeable to the Law and to the eternal principle of right. Such conduct is the surrounding element of 'the new man which has been created' in the likeness of 'God' and which Paul bids his readers 'put on.'

[Notice carefully the tenses in Ephesians 4:22-24. The old man is day by day corrupting: we are therefore bidden to lay it once for all aside. The new man has already been created: we are therefore bidden once for all to put it on. But the renewal wrought by the Holy Spirit operating on our mind progresses day by day.]

Such is the broad platform which Paul lays for his subsequent moral teaching. He points to the heathen, to their moral insensibility and to the consequent darkness which has clouded their minds and reduced to worthlessness their mental efforts, and to their reckless self-abandonment to every kind of sin; and silently reminds his readers that this was once a picture of themselves. But the truth which spoke in Jesus has changed all this. The old corrupting life, Paul bids them lay aside; and bids them put on the new life breathed into man by the creative power of God, in the likeness of God, and receiving daily progressive renewal by the mental illumination of the Holy Spirit.

## SECTION 11

### SUNDRY PRECEPTS

#### CHAPTER 4:25-5:21

*For which cause, having put away falsehood, Speak ye truth each with his neighbor For we are members one of another. Be angry and sin not: let not the sun go down on your provocation; neither give place to the devil. He that steals, let him steal no longer; but rather let him labor, working with his hands that which is good, that he may have to impart to him who has need. Let no corrupt speech go forth from your mouth, but if anything is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to those that hear. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God in whom ye have been sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and fury and anger and clamor and railing be put away from you, with all badness. And become kind one to another, compassionate, forgiving each other, according as God in Christ forgave you.*

*Become then imitators of God as beloved children: and walk in love according as Christ loved you and gave up Himself on our behalf an offering and sacrifice to God for an odor of perfume.*

*But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let them not be named among you, as becomes saints: and shamefulfulness and foolish talking and jesting, which are not fitting, but rather thanksgiving. For this ye know being aware that no fornicator or unclean person or covetous one, which is an idolater, has inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words. For because of these things comes the anger of God upon the sons of disobedience. Become not then partakers with them.*

*For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord. As children of light walk, (for the fruit of the light is in all*

*goodness and righteousness and truth,) proving what is well-pleasing to the Lord. And be not sharers with others in the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For the things secretly done by them, it is a shame even to Speak of. But all things when reproved are made manifest by the light. For everything which is made manifest is light. For which cause he says, "Rise up, sleeper and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give light to thee."*

*Look then carefully how ye walk, not as unwise but as wise, buying up the opportunity, because the days are bad. For this cause be not senseless, but understand what is the will of the Lord. And be not drunk with wine, in which is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another with psalms and hymns and Spiritual songs, singing and chanting in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God even the Father; subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.*

After asserting in 10 the broad underlying principles of Christian morality, Paul comes in 11 to apply them in detail to various specific vices and virtues. Without my formal divisions, his discourse flows on with orderly sequence, shedding light on each point it touches. In Ephesians 4:25-31 we have a series of prohibitions; and in Ephesians 4:32-5:2 positive injunctions supported by the example of God and of Christ. Then follow in Ephesians 5:3-7 other prohibitions, supported by threatenings. These are further supported in Ephesians 5:8-14 by a comparison of the past and present under the aspects of darkness and light. In Ephesians 5:15-21 we have sundry exhortations culminating in an exhortation to spiritual song and praise. A word about mutual subordination closes 11, and becomes the key-note of 12.

**Ver. 25.** For which cause: a desired practical result of the foregoing general moral principles.

Falsehood: in all its forms. [The Greek article looks upon it as a definite and well-known object of thought.]

Having-put-away: once for all. [The participle does not imply that this had already taken place, but merely makes it a necessary preliminary to the truth-speaking to which Paul here exhorts his readers. See under Romans 5:1.]

Speak ye truth each with his neighbor: almost word for word from Zechariah 8:16, the prophet's word correctly expressing Paul's thought. That this exhortation comes first, was probably suggested by the last word of 10.

Members one of another: same words in same sense in Romans 12:5. They bring Paul's favorite metaphor of the Church as the body of Christ, asserted in Ephesians 1:23 and further expounded in Ephesians 4:12, 16, to bear upon this detail of practical morality. If we are members of one body, we have one interest. And, where this is recognised, falsehood is impossible. For it is only a cloak to hide our selfish disregard of the interests of others.

To limit the word 'neighbor' to fellow-Christians, would contradict both the broad compass of the word itself and the plain teaching of Luke 10:29. And the same width must be given to the words following which support this exhortation. If so, all men are here said to be members of one body. And, in a very real sense, this is true. The whole human race, like a human body, is so joined together that benefit or injury to any one member is done to the whole, and thus indirectly done in some measure to each other member. They who know this have nothing to hide; and will therefore speak the truth. Notice here an application of Paul's favorite metaphor wider than is found elsewhere in his Epistles.

**Ver.** 26-27. Be angry and sin not: word for word from Psalm 4:4. Grammatically each word conveys an exhortation. But practically the whole force of the exhortation falls upon the second verb. The first exhortation implies that anger may sometimes be right; and is therefore practically permissive. Paul bids us see that our anger be ever joined to sinlessness. Then follow two warnings against dangers which always attend anger. It is always wrong when it becomes an abiding state of mind: and in all danger Satan is near, seeking for entrance.

The sun go down: the solemn close of the day. Even nature, by dividing life into short portions; suggests retrospection as each portion passes. And such retrospection is a safeguard against sinful anger.

Your provocation, or 'any provocation of yours': cognate word in Romans 10:19. It is therefore not necessarily sinful. It denotes a rousing of the emotion of anger.

Give place: as in Romans 12:19. Paul suggests that when anger continues Satan is near; and warns that we be careful not to afford him an opportunity of doing us spiritual harm.

The devil: see under Ephesians 6:11.

**Ver. 28.** He that steals, etc.: a general precept which all Paul's readers must obey. For Christ bids every sinner to put away his sin.

But rather let him labor.... that he may have to impart, etc.: exact opposite to stealing. To avoid 'labor,' a thief impoverishes others. He must now work 'that' by possessing 'he may' be able 'to impart,' i.e. to give a portion of his own possession, 'to him that has need.'

Working with his hands: vivid picture of actual toil.

That which is good: in contrast to the evil of theft.

**Ver. 29.** Every corrupt (or 'bitter') word: put conspicuously first as the serious matter of this prohibition.

Out of your mouth: graphic delineation of speech, revealing the inappropriateness of such talk from the lips of Christians. Then the prohibition: 'let it not go forth.'

But if any discourse be good, etc.: the contrasted positive exhortation.

For edification: i.e. tending to 'build-up' the spiritual life, and thus to supply 'the need' (same word as above) of men. A further purpose, explaining the foregoing words, is 'that it may give grace to the hearers,' i.e. convey to them the favor of God and its consequent benefits. In James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5; Psalm 84:11; Exodus 3:21, God 'gives grace.' This last passage denotes the favor towards Israel wrought by God in the hearts of

the Egyptians. The others refer to His own favor with which God enriches the lowly: a meaning practically the same as here.

**Ver. 30.** A fifth prohibition.

The Holy Spirit of God: full and solemn title.

Grieve: literally 'cause-sorrow-to:' same word several times in 2 Corinthians 2:25; 7:8, 9. It is here a strong anthropomorphism. They who resist the Spirit and thus provoke His displeasure are here said to cause Him sorrow. Only thus can we conceive the influence of man's sin upon the mind of God. If it stood alone, this phrase would not in itself necessarily imply that the Spirit of God is a Person distinct from the Father. For it might be understood as a mere circumlocution for Him. But when we have learnt this doctrine from John 16:13; Matthew 28:19, (see under 1 Corinthians 12:11,) it sheds new light upon, and thus receives confirmation from, these words.

Ye were sealed: same phrase in same connection and sense in Ephesians 1:13.

Redemption: as in Ephesians 1:14; Romans 8:23. The great day will be a final and complete deliverance of the servants of Christ, and in this sense a 'day of redemption.' And the gift of the Spirit has that day in view: 'sealed for the day, etc.' God has given to believers 'the Holy Spirit' that in their hearts. He may be a divine testimony that in the day of days they will be rescued from death and the grave. Now all sin tends to deface that seal and thus to destroy this divine attestation. Consequently, this last prohibition contains a strong motive for obedience to those foregoing.

**Ver. 31.** A compact group of prohibitions. Notice its comprehensiveness: 'all... all.'

Bitterness: cognate to a word in Colossians 3:19; see note.

Fury and anger: see under the same words in Colossians 3:8.

Clamor: a loud or earnest cry. Same word in Acts 23:9; Matthew 25:6; Hebrews 5:7. Both anger and clamor so easily pass the bounds of right that the words are, as here, often used in a bad sense.



Railing... badness: as in Colossians 3:8, in the same connection. This last term is separated from the others as generic and inclusive.

**Ver.** 32-Ch. 5. Ver. 2. A group of closely allied positive exhortations, inserted as a conspicuous contrast among these warnings against sin.

Become: in contrast to 'put away from you.' It implies that the readers are not yet what Paul desires them to be.

Compassionate: literally, 'good-hearted.'

Forgiving each other: as in Colossians 3:13, where the same motive is given.

God forgave you: (cp. Colossians 2:13:) as the ultimate source of the grace of pardon. But it reaches us 'in Christ, i.e. through the facts of His human life and through inward union with Him. Outside of Christ there is no forgiveness from God.

**Ver.** 1-2. On this divine pattern Paul lingers. We must be 'imitators of God.' And this because we are His 'children,' objects of His tender 'love.' For children are expected to bear their father's likeness: and loved ones are influenced by those who love them. 'And' love is to be the encompassing element and directive principle of their steps in life: 'walk in love.' Similar phrase in Romans 14:15. To the example of the Father, Paul adds that of the Son: 'according as also Christ, etc.'

ve up himself on your behalf: as in Romans 8:32; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:25. Grammatically, these words mean simply self-surrender for our benefit. But the following word 'sacrifice' and Paul's constant teaching about the purpose of the death of Christ prove abundantly that he refers here to Christ's self-surrender to death for our salvation: an infinite contrast to the self-surrender in Ephesians 4:19.

Offering: a general term for everything given to God.

Sacrifice: a more specific term for the gifts laid upon the altar. It is a frequent translation of the ordinary Hebrew word for bloody sacrifices; but is sometimes used in the LXX. (e.g. Leviticus 2:1, 3) for unbloody offerings. Wherever used in the N.T., it has reference to the ritual of the altar: e.g. Romans 12:1; Philippians 2:17; 4:18. The two words are

together, in reversed order, in Psalm 40:6, quoted in Hebrews 10:5, 8. The psalmist's thought there passes from the specific to the general, denying that either one or other is desired by God.

To God: most easily joined to the words immediately foregoing. For the mention of sacrifice recalls at once the deity to whom it is offered.

An odor of perfume: as in Philippians 4:18, where the gift from Philippi is said to be a sacrifice pleasant to God as perfume is fragrant to man.

**Ver. 3-4.** Another group of warnings against sin.

Fornication, uncleanness: as in Galatians 5:19. Paul passes from the specific to the general, to which last he gives the widest latitude: 'all uncleanness.'

Covetousness: as in Ephesians 4:19. By the conjunction 'or' it is separated, as belonging to a different class, from the two foregoing sins.

As becomes saints: their relation to God making it unfitting that the sins of heathenism should be 'even named among' them.

Shamefulness: a wide term including (Colossians 3:8) 'shameful speaking.'

Jesting: literally quick versatility of speech which easily degenerates into evil. Since the last two prohibitions seem to relate only to trifles, Paul pauses to say that 'foolish-speaking' and 'jesting are not fitting.' Instead of such inappropriate mirth he proposes the gladness of 'thanksgiving.' So Philippians 4:6; Colossians 2:7; 4:2.

**Ver. 5.** A solemn assertion supporting the three prohibitions in Ephesians 5:3. The word I have rendered 'being-aware' denotes the process of 'coming to know,' and is almost equal to 'perceiving.' 'Ye know this' that I am going to say, 'perceiving that every fornicator, etc.' The three sins are in the same order as in Ephesians 5:3. On the last sin Paul lingers to assert again, as already in Colossians 3:5, that the 'covetous' man is an 'idolater.'

Has no inheritance in the kingdom: close parallels in 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Galatians 5:21.

Of Christ and God: climax, rising as ever with Paul from the Son to the Father. These last are here placed in closest relation. But we have no proof that they denote the same divine Person.

**Ver. 6.** Further support of the above prohibitions. Paul warns his readers against some who will say that sin is a trifle: 'let no one deceive you.' In a heathen city, and to converts from heathenism, persuasion to sin would most frequently come from heathens. And to such probably Paul chiefly refers. But his words are quite general.

Empty words: mere sounds destitute of truth. Cp. 'empty deception' in Colossians 2:8. A similar compound word in 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 2:16.

For because, etc.: solemn confirmation of the foregoing, and proof that the 'words' are 'empty.'

Comes the anger of God: word for word as in Colossians 3:6.

The sons of disobedience: as in Ephesians 2:2, and Colossians 3:6 where see note.

**Ver. 7.** Become not; courteously suggests that they were not such already.

Partakers-with them: joined with them as sharers of their sin and of the anger of God which falls upon sinners. Same word in contrasted surroundings in Ephesians 3:6.

**Ver. 8-10.** For ye were, etc.: an appeal to the readers' former life, supporting the foregoing dissuasive. This contrast of past and present is a genuine trait of Paul: cp. Romans 3:21; 11:30; 16:26. 'Darkened in mind (Ephesians 4:18) 'ye were' yourselves 'formerly' an embodiment of 'darkness.'" Cp. 2 Corinthians 6:14. "But now the light' which has illumined your path has transformed you into its own nature.'

In the Lord: the change has come in virtue of their inward union with the Master.

Children of light: cp. 1 Thessalonians 5:5, 'sons of light and sons of day;' Luke 7:35, 'children of wisdom.' Contrast Ephesians 2:3, 'children of anger.' 'Light' is a condition of sight and therefore of knowledge. In darkness we know not where we are going: 1 John 2:11. The Gospel gives

light: for it reveals to us our own nature and our environment. And, to those who believe, it becomes the mother of a new nature: ‘children of light.’ Moreover, since the light enters into them and becomes in some sense a part of themselves, they are themselves ‘light.’ This lays upon them an obligation to choose such steps as are in harmony with the light which has transformed them. Similar thought in Romans 13:13.

**Ver. 9.** A parenthesis explaining and thus justifying the foregoing metaphorical exhortation. The Gospel, which to those who believe it is a ray of light, bears fruit, i.e. produces by the outworking of its own life good results: ‘fruit of the light.’ See under Romans 1:13. Cp. ‘fruit of the Spirit’ in Galatians 5:22.

Goodness: practical beneficence, as in Galatians 5:22.

Righteousness: conduct in agreement with the Law, as in Romans 14:17.

Truth: moral agreement with the eternal realities. In each of these directions and in every form of them, the light bears fruit. That the light works these good results is a reason why we should ‘walk as children of the light.’

**Ver. 10.** A participial clause collateral to, and supplementing, the exhortation of Ephesians 5:8. ‘Children of light’ ought, in virtue of the new life they have received, ever to put to the proof, and thus find out, ‘what is well-pleasing to the Lord,’ i.e. to their Master Christ.

Well-pleasing: same word and thought in Colossians 3:20; Philippians 4:18; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Romans 12:1, 2; 14:18.

Proving: same word and thought in Romans 12:2; Philippians 1:10. This putting to the proof will unmask the deception of empty words: Ephesians 5:6.

**Ver. 11.** Another exhortation, added to that in Ephesians 5:8.

Partakers-with others: same word in Philippians 4:14; a cognate word in Philippians 1:7; Romans 11:17; 1 Corinthians 9:23.

The works... of darkness: as in Romans 13:12. These are ‘fruitless;’ in marked contrast to ‘the fruit of the light.’ They produce no good result. Cp. Romans 6:21.

But rather even reprove: something more than mere refusal to participate.

Reprove: or 'convict,' i.e. prove to be wrong. Same word in 1 Corinthians 14:24; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:9, 13; Luke 3:19, and especially John 3:20.

**Ver. 12.** Justifies the foregoing by pointing to the need for reproof.

Secretly: in conspicuous prominence. The secrecy of these sins makes more needful their public reproof.

Done: more fully 'being-done,' i.e. from time to time. These are sins so bad that 'even to speak' of them is polluting, and therefore 'shameful.' Paul suggests that, bad as is the outward conduct of the heathen, under the surface lie still worse sins which in their vileness pass description.

**Ver. 13.** Another reason for reproving sin. Not only are there sins needing reproof but to reprove them is an appointed work of Christians.

All things: all sorts of sin, as is proved by the word following, 'when-they-are-reproved.'

Manifested: set conspicuously before the eyes of others, in contrast to things 'done secretly:' see under Romans 1:19. Whenever a sin is proved to be such, the reproof is caused by 'the light' falling upon it and thus making its true character conspicuous.

For all that is from day to day manifested, etc.: proof of the foregoing. Every conspicuous object is in a true sense luminous. For it partakes the brightness which makes it conspicuous. And that conspicuous objects shine, proves that to reveal the nature of whatever is illumined is the specific work of light: 'by the light it is manifested.' Now Christians are 'children of light.' Therefore the presence of a Christian among sinners ought to reveal to them their sin.

**Ver. 14.** For which cause he (or some one) says: same form of quotation as in Ephesians 4:8; James 4:6. That these two passages are express quotations from the O.T., suggests very strongly that the quotation before us was so intended. But no such passage is found. Nor is there anything in the O.T. which these words recall. On the other hand they give a complete and harmonious sense. In an ordinary document we should guess that in a moment of forgetfulness a passage from some other work was quoted as

Holy Scripture. And perhaps this is the best explanation here. We may reverently suppose that the Spirit of inspiration, which even in this quotation guarded the Apostle from doctrinal error, did not think fit to protect him against this trifling oversight. See under Galatians 3:18. Or possibly, without thinking of the author, Paul merely quotes a familiar passage from some author unknown to us.

For which cause: because to bring to light things hidden in darkness is a specific work of Christians.

Up, sleeper: the sinner, who needs arousing from his deep sleep. A frequent metaphor, suggested by the metaphor of darkness: cp. Romans 13:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; 1 Peter 2:9.

Arise from the dead: a still stronger metaphor. Notice the climax: ‘up, sleeper.... arise from the dead.’

Christ shall-give light to-thee: a motive for rising from the sleep of sin, viz. that light is waiting for the sleeper. And this is also, since Christians are a medium through which the light shines, a reason why (Ephesians 5:11) they should reprove the sin which (Ephesians 5:12) exists all around them.

**Ver. 15-16.** Further exhortations; after the parenthesis in Ephesians 5:12-14, which supports the concluding exhortation of Ephesians 5:11.

Look then: practical application of the teaching in Ephesians 5:12-14.

Carefully or ‘accurately’: same word in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, ‘ye know accurately.’ It suggests the need of extreme care in choosing our steps in life.

How ye walk; recalls Ephesians 5:8, ‘walk’ as children of light.’ It is further expounded by ‘not as unwise but as wise.’ This implies that Christian wisdom, which is a knowledge of that which is most worth knowing, is a practical guide in life. See under 1 Corinthians 2:5.

Buying up the opportunity: as in Colossians 4:5, in a very similar connection. It is parallel to ‘not as unwise, etc.’ as a further description of ‘how’ Paul would have his readers ‘walk.’ A reason for this last injunction is added: ‘because the days are evil.’ Cp. Genesis 47:9. ‘Evil’ is in power.

It is therefore important to seize every opportunity for good. In Ephesians 6:13, 'the evil day' is a definite time of special peril.

**Ver. 17.** Because of this: because evil around makes it needful to 'walk as wise men.' In view of his readers' peril, Paul points to a means of wisdom: 'understanding what is the will of the Lord.' Not to use this means of divine guidance, would be 'senseless.'

Do not become: as in Ephesians 5:7; cp. Ephesians 5:1; 4:32. Perhaps it was suggested, instead of the simpler words 'be not,' by a half-conscious remembrance that human character is ever developing, for good or bad.

Senseless: a man without brains; a worse term than 'unwise.'

What is the will of the Lord: close parallel to Ephesians 5:10; cp. Acts 21:14. That the will of God must ever be the directive principle of human life, was ever present to the thought of Paul: Romans 12:2; Ephesians 1:1, 5, 9, 11; Colossians 1:9. The same honor he here gives to 'the will of the Lord' Jesus Christ. He thus recognises the Crucified One as still his Master.

**Ver. 18.** To the foregoing general precept Paul now adds a prohibition of a definite sin specially inconsistent with it. He thus illustrates the general principle, and looks at this sin in the light of it.

In which: in being drunk with wine, the sin here prohibited.

Dissoluteness: a reckless waste of money and of life itself. A typical example is the prodigal son, touching whom a cognate word is used in Luke 15:13, 'living dissolutely.' Paul says that in drunkenness is reckless waste of all we have and are.

Filled with the Spirit: every thought, purpose, word, act, prompted and controlled by the Holy Spirit. [The present imperative describes this all-pervading influence as ever going forth from the Spirit. The aorist in Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9 describes a sudden and all-controlling impulse.] This salutary influence from above filling and raising man is an absolute antithesis to the destructive inspiration of strong drink. That both influences operate on man from within, justifies the somewhat strange contrast here.

With the Spirit: literally 'in' the 'Spirit:' a form of speech chosen possibly because they whom the Holy Spirit fills live and move in Him as their life-giving environment. We obey this command when we claim by faith the influences of the Holy Spirit and surrender ourselves to His guidance.

**Ver. 19-21.** Four participial clauses containing exhortations collateral to the foregoing exhortation, 'be filled with the Spirit,' and thus completing the contrast to 'be not drunk with wine.'

Speaking to yourselves, etc.: very close parallel to Colossians 3:16, where see note. With 'psalms' and 'songs' correspond respectively the cognate verbs 'chanting' and 'singing.' The second participial clause is parallel to the first. Paul first bids his readers speak in their songs 'one to another;' and then bids them sing 'to the Lord.' To Him they can and must sing in their 'heart,' both in vocal praise and when their song is silent.

Giving thanks, etc.: a third co-ordinate participial clause still further defining what Paul desires in his readers.

Thanks always for all things: a constant thought of Paul: so Colossians 3:17, a close parallel, Colossians 1:12; 2:7; 4:2; Ephesians 5:4; 1:16. It specifies the contents of these songs 'to the Lord.' And our 'thanks' are 'given in the name of Christ,' in acknowledgment that only through Him comes all real good; to 'God' our 'Father,' the ultimate source of blessing.

Grammatically, the three foregoing participial clauses describe accompaniments of being 'filled with the Spirit.' Actually, they describe its results. Instead of riotous songs stimulated by the wine cup, Paul desires the vocal and silent praise to God which the Holy Spirit ever prompts.

The last participial clause is the key-note of 12-14.

Submitting: as in Colossians 3:18.

One to another: according to their various relations, as Paul now proceeds to expound.

Fear of Christ: cp. 'the will of the Lord' in Ephesians 5:17. It is another note of the majesty of Christ, and in no small degree a proof of His divinity.



## REVIEW OF 11

Without any marked order, but each thought suggesting that which follows, compactly yet clearly, Paul touches and illumines, in the light of the essential principles of the Gospel, many practical duties of life. He warns his readers against falsehood by reminding them that all men are members of one body and therefore have one interest, and that therefore nothing is to be gained but much lost by one man deceiving another. He gives a safe and easy guard and limit to anger: it must not continue to the morrow. The man who, in order to live in idleness, robs others must now work in order to help others who are in need. All evil talking is shut out by a precept that we are so to speak as to edify those who hear us. And all this is strengthened by reference to the Holy Spirit, the seal of our future deliverance, who observes all we say or do and is grieved by evil. All bitterness of temper or word must be laid aside: kindness and forbearance must take their place. For we are beloved children of God, and must therefore imitate our Father and walk in the steps of Christ who so loved us as to give up Himself for our salvation.

All impurity and covetousness must be banished even from the lips of the sacred people: foolish talking must be superseded by thanksgiving. For, whatever men may say, sensuality, and covetousness which is a form of idolatry, will exclude their votaries from the kingdom of God. With those guilty of such sins, we must have no part. For, our life is altogether changed. Once darkness we are now children of light: and spiritual light produces, by the outworking of its own nature, moral excellence. Our only relation to the works of darkness must be reproof. For the hidden sins of heathenism need it. And light reveals, by its own nature, in their true colors objects otherwise hidden. We must therefore carefully and wisely choose our steps. Because the times are bad, we must embrace every opportunity of doing and saying good. This, i.e. to learn the will of Christ, will need all our intelligence. Paul warns against drunkenness, which ever leads to ruin. We need to be filled and stimulated not with wine but by the Spirit of God. His inspiration prompts, not the loud voice of revelry, but sacred song, sometimes inaudible but always heart-felt, and ever assuming

the form of thanks to Christ. This will be accompanied by mutual subordination, a duty to be further discussed.

## SECTION 12

### *DIRECTIONS TO WIVES AND HUSBANDS*

#### CHAPTER 5:22-33

*Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord. Because man is head of the woman, as also Christ is Head of the Church. He is Savior of the Body. Nevertheless, as the Church submits to Christ, so also the wives to the husbands in everything.*

*Husbands, love your wives, as also Christ loved the Church and gave up Himself on its behalf that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the bath of water, with the word, that He may Himself present to Himself the Church glorious not having spot or wrinkle or any of the suchlike things, but that it may be holy and blameless. So ought the men to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loves his own wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it as also Christ does the Church. Because we are members of His Body. “For this cause, a man will leave father and mother and will be joined to his wife; and the two will become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24.) This mystery is great. But I speak in regard to Christ and in regard to the Church. Nevertheless, also ye severally, let each one thus love his own wife, as himself; and the wife that she fear the husband.*

The implied general exhortation at the end of 11, ‘submitting yourselves one to another,’ is now specialised in reference to the three most conspicuous relations of social life; in 12 to wives and husbands, in 13 to children and parents, in 14 to slaves and masters. The same three relations are discussed in the same order in Colossians 3:18-4:1. But the discussion here is much more full and valuable; especially that of the first pair, which is developed under the influence of the dominant thought of this Epistle.

**Ver. 22-24.** The wives to their own husbands: similar injunction to Colossians 3:18. Their ‘own’ husbands: noting a peculiar and intimate

relation. The words in italics, ‘be subject’ are supplied from the close of the foregoing sentence.

As to the Lord: slightly different from as is fitting in the Lord’ in Colossians 3:18. The wife must recognise that her position of subordination is ordained by Christ and that in bowing to her husband she does but submit to her Master in heaven. Thus the Gospel lays upon her a new obligation. But, as we shall see, by laying upon the husband a like obligation it gives to the wife new rights.

Because man is, etc.: a fact containing a reason for the foregoing injunction.

Head of the woman: as in 1 Corinthians 11:3, a close parallel. The head and body are vitally united, and share the same nature. But the one is placed above the other to direct its action. Paul asserts that this is the relation of ‘man’ to ‘the woman.’ To this metaphor is added another similar metaphor which still further expounds the subjection of the woman to the man: ‘as also Christ’ is ‘Head of the Church.’ Same favorite metaphor in Ephesians 1:22; 4:12, 16. Its frequency is explained by the ideal aspect of the Church which is the dominant thought of this Epistle.

He is Savior of the Body: an important assertion thrown in, which practically limits the foregoing comparison. From the ‘head of the woman’ the ‘Head of the Church’ differs in that HE (very emphatic) is ‘Savior of the Body.’ This completes the foregoing metaphor by calling the Church ‘the Body’ of Christ; and makes conspicuous a difference between the metaphors by an assertion about Christ and the Church quite inapplicable to the relation of man and woman. ‘The Body’ of which ‘Christ’ is Head, He has ‘Himself’ rescued from bondage and death.

Nevertheless, etc.; reasserts, in spite of the difference just mentioned, the primary injunction of Ephesians 5:22.

In everything: a subjection universal within the limit fixed by its aim, viz. ‘as to the Lord.’ She must do nothing even in obedience to the husband which she cannot do for Christ.

5.24

**Ver. 25.** Husbands, love the wives: word for word as in Colossians 3:19.

According as also, etc.: ground of this exhortation. If the woman's relation to the man resembles that of the Church to Christ, the love with which 'Christ loved the Church' must be a model of man's love to his wife. This comparison is the more natural in Greek because the word 'Church' is feminine.

And gave-up Himself on its (or 'her') behalf: historic manifestation and proof of this pattern love.

ve-up on-behalf of: same words in Ephesians 5:2; Galatians 2:20. It is Christ's self-surrender to death.

In this verse and in John 3:16 we have two aspects, each supplementing the other, of the love which prompted the death of Christ. Since the purpose of salvation embraced the world, and since God brings to bear on every man an influence which unless resisted will lead him to salvation, Christ said to Nicodemus, in a general statement about the Gospel, that 'God so loved the world that He gave, etc.' But the eternal love of God foresaw all who would accept the Gospel and be finally saved.

Consequently, this foreseen result of the gift of Christ may be spoken of as the aim of His self-surrender, and therefore as the object of the love which prompted it. Each of the saved can say He 'loved me and gave up Himself for me.' And the lost will know that their destruction was due, not to a limitation of God's love, but to their own rejection of His offered mercy.

**Ver. 26-27.** A digression expounding the moral aim of Christ's self-surrender. Cp. Titus 2:14. It is very appropriate in this exposition of Christian morality.

May-sanctify it: subjective holiness, i.e. the actual and unreserved devotion and loyalty of the Church to Christ. For this is clearly implied in the words following. So the word 'holy' in Ephesians 5:27. This is here represented as an aim of the death of Christ. And rightly so: for without it there can be no full blessedness. And an intelligent purpose includes all means necessary to the end in view. In 1 Corinthians 1:2, the same word denotes the objective holiness of all the people of God, i.e. His claim that they live only for Him. In this sense even the carnal Corinthian Christians were already 'sanctified.' Wherever sanctification means more than this,

viz. the actual devotion which God claims, it is represented, not as attained, but as a divine purpose. So 1 Thessalonians 5:23; John 17:17; cp. 1 Corinthians 7:34; 2 Corinthians 7:1. Since loyalty to God is ever the work of the Holy Spirit, since the gift of the Spirit implies pardon of sin, and since Christ died in order to harmonize the justification of believers with the justice of God and thus make it possible, Paul here asserts that 'Christ... gave up Himself 'in order that He may sanctify" the Church. See a close and important parallel in 2 Corinthians 5:15, where we are taught that Christ died in order that we may live a life of devotion to Him.

Having-cleansed it by the bath of water: a necessary preliminary to the actual devotion to God which Christ purposes to work in His people. For all impurity is opposed to unreserved devotion to God, and must therefore be removed before subjective holiness can be realized. So Romans 6:11, 'dead to sin, but living for God.' Similarly, in symbolic ritual, the priests in the Temple washed themselves at the brazen laver before they approached the altar: Exodus 30:18-21.

Cleanse: same word in 2 Corinthians 7:1; Titus 2:14'; Hebrews 9:14; 1 John 1:7, 9; Acts 15:9; important parallels. It denotes removal of the stain which mars the moral beauty of sinners.

Bath: same word in Titus 3:5, 'bath of the new birth;' and Sirach xxxi. 30, 'one who is baptized from a dead body and again touches it, what has he been profited by his bath?' in reference to ceremonial purification. It denotes, as does the English word 'bath,' both the act of washing and the vessel in which we wash. In view of these two other passages and of Acts 22:16, we can hardly doubt that Paul refers here to Baptism. And such reference presents no difficulty. As commanded by Christ, Baptism was binding on all who had not received it and who sought deliverance from the stain of sin; and was therefore in this sense a condition and instrument of spiritual purification. This does not imply any magical efficacy in the outward rite, but only its divine obligation in all ordinary cases. In Paul's day, the peril frequently involved in outwardly confessing Christ made this obligation a most serious element in the way of salvation. Hence the language of these three passages.

This reference to Baptism was probably suggested by the metaphor in Ephesians 5:27. Paul silently reminds his readers that Baptism, which to

many of them had been so perilous, was but the bride's bath on the eve of marriage, in their case a necessary precursor of the joy of eternal union with the great King.

With the word: joined most naturally to 'that He may sanctify it.' For the intervening words give a complete sense, and describe a necessary preliminary to the sanctification which Christ designs. Having noted this preliminary, Paul adds the instrument of sanctification, viz. the 'word' of the Gospel, God's chosen instrument of salvation. Cp. John 17:17, 'sanctify them in the truth. Thy word is truth.' Same word, in the singular number as here, and referring to the Gospel, in Ephesians 6:17; Romans 10:8, 17; Hebrews 6:5; 1 Peter 1. 25. In eternity the Son of God purposed to draw men, 'by a' spoken 'word,' viz. the Gospel, to bow to God with unreserved and joyous devotion. Similarly, by a "word" of God the world was made: Hebrews 11:3.

**Ver.** 27. Further and ultimate aim of the purpose described in Ephesians 5:26. It is clothed in a not unfrequent metaphor: 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7, 9; 21:9; John 3:29; Matthew 25:1.

Present: same word in Colossians 1:22, 28; Romans 6:13, 16, 19; 12:1; and, in the same connection as here, 2 Corinthians 11:2.

Himself to Himself: emphatic assertion that the Giver and Receiver are the same. For the Bride has been rescued and purified by the self-surrender of the Bridegroom.

Glorious: clothed in splendor exciting universal admiration; cp. Revelation 21:11, 'having the glory of God.' Christ designs 'the Church' to be 'glorious,' and as such to be His own for ever.

Spot: any blemish.

Wrinkle: a mark of decay. Maintaining his metaphor, Paul describes moral imperfections as bodily blemishes.

But that it may be, etc.; completes the description of the glorious Church.

Holy: subjectively: for, objectively, as claimed by God, Paul's readers were (Ephesians 1:1) already holy. This word keeps before us the subjective sanctification of Ephesians 5:26. Instead of 'having spot or

wrinkle,' Christ designs 'the Church' to be 'holy and blameless:' same words together in the same connection in Ephesians 1:4. They are added in the form of a purpose in order to throw emphasis on the holiness and blamelessness of the Church as specially designed by Christ.

Notice that 'present to Himself' corresponds to 'sanctify' and 'holy:' for that is holy which is devoted to God. 'Not having spot or wrinkle' corresponds, as a negative element implied in holiness, to 'cleanse' and 'blameless.'

**Ver. 28a.** Application of the foregoing metaphor to the matter in hand, viz. the duty of husbands to love their wives.

In this way: 'according as Christ loved the Church.'

As their own bodies: i.e. looking upon their wives as being their own flesh and blood. These words link together two closely related metaphors, viz. the Church as the Body (Ephesians 5:23) and as the Bride (Ephesians 5:27) of Christ; and brings them to bear, thus linked together, upon the relation of husband and wife.

**Ver. 28b-30.** These verses develop an argument lying in 'as their own bodies.' Husband and wife have one interest. Therefore, affection towards the wife brings proportionate gain to the husband. In this sense, 'he that loves his own wife, loves himself.' This argument, Ephesians 5:29 further supports. Paul asserted in Ephesians 5:25 that a man's relation to his wife is like that of Christ to the Church. And he has frequently taught that the Church is the Body of Christ. If so, Christ's love to the Church is like a man's love to his own body. This latter love Paul declares to be universal, and further describes.

His own flesh: his body, in view of its material constitution, which has special needs and demands special care.

Nourishes: finds the food needful for its health and development.

Cherishes: 1 Thessalonians 2:8: keeps warm, as a hen her chickens. Every one feeds his own body and protects it from cold. And as every one acts towards his own body so 'Christ' acts towards 'the Church.' This treatment of us by Christ is illustrated by a restatement of the fact that 'we are members of His Body.'



5.30

**Ver.** 31-32. The words of Genesis 2:24 (almost word for word from the LXX.) taken up by Paul and woven into his argument about the relation of Christ to the Church as a pattern to husbands and wives. Same quotation in Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7, 8. Adam asserts that because woman is derived from man the relation of husband and wife is the closest of human relationships. By appropriating these words, Paul brings them to bear on the argument before him. And they prove clearly that (Ephesians 5:28) to love one's wife is to love oneself. For they assert that husband and wife are one flesh. This plain reference of the quotation makes it needless to seek in it an assertion about Christ. And certainly the Son of Mary did not 'leave His mother' in order to be united to the Church.

Because of this: because woman was taken out of man, as stated in Genesis 2:23. It is a part of the quotation. We therefore need not assume a special reference to Ephesians 5:30.

A man will leave: whenever in all generations a man marries.

The two shall become one flesh: the chief point in the quotation. So close is the marriage relation that it seems in some sense to suspend the distinction of personality. Now, whatever is done to one part of a living body affects the whole. Consequently, kindness to one's wife is kindness to oneself.

This quotation casts light upon the assertion in Ephesians 5:23 that 'man is head of the woman.' The head and body are one flesh, so closely and vitally united that injury or benefit done to one is done to the other. Yet the head directs and the body obeys. All this is true both of man and woman and of Christ and the Church. Of each of these relationships the human body is a metaphor. Even Christ and the Church are 'one flesh:' for both are human. But Christ directs; and the Church obeys. The human body is thus a pattern of two important relations, viz. of husband and wife and of Christ and the Church. It is therefore a link uniting these relations, and making each a pattern of the other. This double metaphor is not found elsewhere. And it greatly strengthens the obligations here enforced. The wife is bound to obey her husband, as the Church, of which she is a member, obeys Christ. The husband is bound to love his wife, as Christ

loved the Church. To fail in this is, as this quotation proves, to act as a man would who did not care for his own body. We have thus a double motive for marital love, the example of Christ and the instinct of self-preservation.

**Ver. 32.** This mystery: (same word in Romans 11:25:) the marriage relation described in the foregoing quotation. See note under 1 Corinthians 3:4. Under the marriage relation lies secret teaching known only to those taught by God.

But I speak: Paul's own use here of this quotation as distinguished from the hidden truth underlying marriage.

With reference to Christ and with reference to the Church: these represented as distinct objects of thought. While quoting Genesis, Paul is thinking not so much of man and woman as of Christ and the Church. In other words, under the specific matter in hand lie broader truths. Even marriage, so important in itself, receives greater importance from being a visible setting forth of the relation of Christ to the Church.

It is needless to discuss here whether marriage is a sacrament: for this would involve a definition of the term. Certainly, marriage cannot be put on a level with the two rites ordained by Christ for all His servants. But Paul's teaching here implies clearly its unchangeable sacredness. And this felt sacredness has ever found expression in acts of worship accompanying the marriage ceremony. Callous must they be who can enter the solemn obligations of wedlock without recognising its divine sanction and sacred duties.

**Ver. 33.** Nevertheless: or, more fully, 'I say nothing 'except' this one thing.' It breaks off the discourse to insist on the one thing needful.

Ye severally: transition from a mystery touching Christ and the Church to readers of this Epistle, taken 'one by one.'

Thus love: i.e. in the manner, and for the reasons, just expounded.

As himself: 'as their own bodies' in Ephesians 5:28. 'And the wife' must remember that 'the husband' has been set over her by Christ, and that therefore insubordination to him is disobedience to Christ. An obligation

so solemn may well evoke her 'fear.' So careful is Paul to balance the duty of the husband by that of the wife.

## REVIEW

At the close of 11 Paul bids his readers to submit one to another. He then discusses in order three very special kinds of submission. Of these, the first and noblest and most significant is that of the wife to her husband. The Apostle bids her render to him a reverence similar to that which she pays to her Master in heaven; and supports this by asserting a similarity between the marriage relation and that of the Church to Christ. This similarity he describes by comparing each of these relations to that of the head and members of a human body; but points out the limits of his comparison by reminding us that the Head of the Church is also its Savior. He concludes his injunction to the wife by urging her to take as her pattern the submission of the Church to Christ.

If Paul speaks first of the duties of the wife, he finds it needful to linger longer over those of the husband. Just as the wife must look on the Church's submission to Christ as a pattern of her own submission to her husband, so the husband is bound to take Christ's love to the Church, manifested in His death, as a pattern for his own love to his wife. Paul then leaves for a moment the duty of husbands to describe, in language borrowed from the metaphor he is here using, the purpose of Christ is self-sacrifice for the Church, viz. to present to Himself the Church as His loyal and spotless bride. The purity needed in the bride of Christ recalls the baptismal water through which these Asiatic Christians had passed, and which was designed to be the entrance into a spotless life. Going back to the subject specially in hand, Paul bids husbands to love their wives like Christ loved the Church, to love them even as they love their own bodies. These last words introduce another motive for love to the wife, a motive which is at once more fully developed. To love one's wife, is to love himself: and all are careful to feed and protect their own bodies. Since we are members of the Body of Christ, this care for our own body has a divine counterpart in Christ's kindness to the Church. The double analogy involved in this argument, viz. that the human body consisting of head and members has one counterpart in the relation of husband and wife and another spiritual counterpart in the relation of Christ to the Church, Paul supports by a quotation from Genesis which asserts that husband and

wife are one flesh as though parts of one living body. He adds that in this quotation he is referring to Christ and the Church. He thus finds in the Bible strong support for his second motive for love to the wife, viz. that in loving her the husband is loving himself. The Apostle concludes by repeating, and placing side by side, the mutual duties of husband and wife.

This section is throughout characteristic of Paul. As in his earlier Epistles the duties of today are enforced by reference to broad and abiding principles. Thus, as ever with him, little details of common life are raised into dignity. And these details are made an occasion of expounding broad principles, which thus receive important practical illustration. The O.T. quotation finds for the relation of the Church to Christ an important and most instructive counterpart in the original constitution of our race. We notice also, as before, Paul's fairness. While defending the rights of the weaker, he does not forget the obligations involved in those rights.

## SECTION 13

### *DIRECTIONS TO CHILDREN AND PARENTS*

#### CHAPTER 6:1-4

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord. For this is just. “Honor thy father and mother;” (which is the first commandment with promise; ) “that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest be long-living upon the earth.”*

*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children, but nurture them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.*

**Ver.** 1. Children, obey your parents: nearly word for word as in Colossians 3:20.

In the Lord: as in Colossians 3:20.

Just: in harmony with the eternal principles of right which found embodiment in the Law of God. Same word in same sense in Colossians 4:1; Philippians 1:7; 4:8, etc.

The phrase ‘in’ the ‘Lord’ affords no proof or presumption, especially in the absence of other reliable indications, that infant children were baptized in Paul’s day. For doubtless many who might fairly be called ‘children’ had by their own faith and confession entered the Church. It was therefore suitable that to them directions should be given. Moreover the close and peculiar relation of children to their parents places all children of Christian parents, from the earliest days of opening consciousness, in a peculiar and close relation to the Church of which their parents are members. Paul therefore writes to them. His words prove that he looked upon them as part of the flock for which he had to care. This intimate relation found in the early Church, legitimate and suitable expression in the administration of Baptism to infants. That this formal recognition of the relation of infants to the New Covenant dates from the early morning of the Church, is made certain by the literature of a later day. But we have no sure proof

that it was as early as this Epistle. Certainly this passage is easily explained without assuming it.

With his usual careful study of the O.T. Paul notices that in the Decalogue the fifth commandment differs from the rest in being supported by a definite promise. So were several later commands: e.g. Deuteronomy 24:19; 25:15. But of the many and various commands given to Moses this is the 'first commandment' which has attached to it a definite 'promise.' At the close of the second commandment there is a virtual and implied promise. But it is only general, and is not specially attached to this one command. The definite promise in the fifth commandment raises it into conspicuous prominence. To this prominence Paul points when enforcing upon children the duty of obedience.

After this digression, which explains the significance of what follows, Paul goes on to quote the exact words of the ancient promise.

That it may be well with thee, etc.: almost word for word from Exodus 20:12, except that the concluding words 'which the Lord thy God gives thee' are omitted. This promise is very frequent in Deuteronomy, referring indisputably to the gift of the land of Canaan: Deuteronomy 4:40; 5:33; 6:2, 3; 11:8-12, etc. This reference is quite inapplicable to Paul's Gentile readers at Ephesus. By omitting these words he makes the promise applicable to all persons in all lands. And this is the simplest explanation of the omission. The Greek word rendered 'earth' denotes both a particular country, viz. in Exodus 20:12 Canaan, or the whole world consisting of many countries. This latter more general meaning is given to it here by the omission of the defining words 'which the Lord gives thee.' The original promise may refer either to the long life of individuals or to the long continuance of the nation. As quoted by Paul, it can refer only to individuals. But this ancient promise cannot be appealed to as absolute now to all children who honor parents. For the New Covenant promises blessing for this life only indirectly, and under various conditions and limitations. The promise is here quoted chiefly to remind the readers of the special honor given to this command by the promise attached to it. This honor marks the abiding importance of this universal precept.

**Ver. 4.** And, ye fathers: to the duty of the weaker, Paul adds as before the obligation of the stronger. So Colossians 3:21.

Provoke: move to anger by word or act.

Nurture: same word as in Ephesians 5:29. It denotes here, as the following words prove, not material food, but the care needful for moral and spiritual growth.

Discipline: derived from the word 'boy,' and denotes all that pertains to the training of a boy: a cognate word in Acts 7:22; 22:3. The same cognate word is found in Luke 23:16, 22 in the simpler sense of punishment. This suggests that the idea of punishment was often associated with the word: so does the same or cognate word in 1 Corinthians 11:32; 2 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:20; Revelation 3:19; Hebrews 12:5-10. We may understand it here to mean a training which includes punishment when needful.

Admonition: same word in 1 Corinthians 10:11; Titus 3:10: a cognate word in Colossians 1:28; 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 4:14 where see note. Perhaps 'discipline' refers rather to the father's firm hand; 'admonition' to his faithful voice.



## SECTION 14

### *DIRECTIONS TO SERVANTS AND MASTERS*

#### CHAPTER 6:5-9

*Servants, obey them that are masters according to flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart as to Christ; not by way of eye-service as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with goodwill doing service, as for the Lord and not for men; knowing that, whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive from the Lord, whether he be a servant or a free man.*

*And, ye masters, do the same things to them, forbearing threatening, knowing that the Lord both of them and of you is in heaven; and there is no respect of persons with Him.*

**Ver. 5.** Contains a general precept for slaves. This is further expounded in Ephesians 6:6, 7; and is supported in Ephesians 6:8 by a broad principle pertaining alike to slaves and freemen.

Servants, (or ‘slaves,’ ) obey your lords according to flesh: word for word as in Colossians 3:22 except that ‘in all things’ is omitted here.

Fear and trembling: as in Philippians 2:12. It is a counterpart of ‘fearing the Lord’ in Colossians 3:22; and describes in strong language an anxious desire to do right and a consciousness of the spiritual peril of disobedience.

In singleness of your heart: almost word for word as in Colossians 3:22. There may be an apparent fear arising from duplicity of heart.

As for Christ: in conspicuous contrast to ‘the lords according to flesh.’ The slave must look upon obedience to his earthly master ‘as’ obedience rendered ‘to Christ.’

**Ver. 6-7.** Exposition, negative and positive, of what is involved in ‘as to Christ.’

By-way-of eye-service: taking as their principle of action a 'service' aiming only at the eye of a human Lord. Slightly different in form from 'with 'eye-service'' in Colossians 3:22.

As servants of Christ: positive exposition, after the negative exposition just given, of the words 'as to Christ' in Ephesians 6:5. 'As servants of Christ,' they are 'doing the will of God:' for every command and purpose of Christ is from God and for God.

From the head: as in Colossians 3:23.

With goodwill: parallel with 'from' the 'heart,' adding to it the idea of gladness. While 'serving' earthly masters, they do so gladly: for they look upon their service 'as for the Lord' Jesus Christ, 'and not for men.' They do the bidding of men, but their real aim is to please a Master in heaven.

6.7

**Ver. 8.** A great and broad truth underlying and supporting the specific direction just given and expounded. A close parallel in Colossians 3:24. From Christ, the real Master, there will be reward corresponding exactly to the work done, whether by a Christian 'slave' or a Christian 'freeman.'

**Ver. 9.** And ye masters or 'lords': like 'and ye fathers' in Ephesians 6:4. To the precepts for slaves is now added a precept for masters. So Colossians 4:1.

The same things do ye to them: 'treat the slave on the principle just expounded for his treatment of you.'

Threatening, or literally 'the threatening': a common fault of masters. For it is easier to threaten than to punish. 'Threatening' is often an empty and irritating assertion of authority.

Knowing that, etc.: as in Colossians 4:1. The action, as of the slave, so of the master, must be guided by knowledge.

Both of them and of you: emphatic. Master and slave are put side by side as servants of 'the' one 'Master in' the 'heavens.' So Colossians 4:1.

Respect-of-persons: as in Colossians 4:25.

With Him: literally 'in His presence.' Before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven respect of appearances has no place. Close parallel in Romans 2:11.

Speaking to slaves, Paul reminds them that their masters are such only in reference to the outward and bodily life. He nevertheless bids the slave to obey his Lord, with anxious care to do right, and with a pure motive, looking upon his obedience as really paid to Christ. Such service will not be designed merely to catch the eye or to please men. It will be a service of Christ, doing God's will heartily and gladly, as work done for Christ and not for men. This exhortation Paul supports by the universal principle that every good thing, by whomever done, will be rewarded by Christ.

Masters have their duties as well as slaves, duties based on the same broad principles. Especially must they avoid threatening, a common fault of the stronger party. This will be easily avoided by those who believe that both Master and servant stand before an impartial Master in heaven.

## SECTION 15

### THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE

#### CHAPTER 6:10-17

*Henceforth, be powerful in the Lord, and in the might of His strength. Put on the panoply of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Because to us the wrestling is not with blood and flesh, but with the principalities, with the authorities, with the world-rulers of this darkness, with the spiritual things of wickedness in the heavenly places. Because of this take up the panoply of God, in order that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having accomplished all things to stand. Stand then, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with a preparation of the Gospel of peace; amid all taking up the shield of faith, with which ye will be able to quench all the burning darts of the wicked one: and take the helmet of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word.*

**Ver. 10.** Henceforth or 'the rest,' i.e. all that remains to be said. Same words, in another case, in Galatians 6:17, introducing as here a final exhortation.

Be made powerful: i.e. day by day, for each day's work and fight. Same word in Philippians 4:13, a close parallel.

In the Lord: in Christ our Master, the encompassing element from which we daily draw power. Apart from Him we can do nothing: John 15:5. Paul bids his readers accept the power which dwells in Christ and is obtained by inward union with Him.

The might of His strength: same words in Ephesians 1:19, (where see note,) describing the might of God. While bidding his readers receive power in Christ, Paul remembers the infinite strength of Christ, capable of controlling and crushing all hostile power; and points to this omnipotence

as the source of the needed power. Cp. Ephesians 3:16, 'be strengthened with power.' Both the personality of Christ and His infinite might are the surrounding element of Christian strength. Cp. 1 John 4:16, 'He that dwells in love dwells in God.'

**Ver. 11.** A second exhortation, pointing to a means of strength and giving a motive for using it.

Put-on: same word and sense in Romans 13:14, in the same sense of putting on weapons.

Panoply: an English form of the Greek word here used, which denotes an entire and full suit of armor and weapons. Same word in Wisdom v. 18, 'He shall take His zeal as a panoply;' Judith xiv. 3, 'having taken up their panoplies;' 2 Macc. iii. 25, 'a golden panoply.' This 'panoply' is described in detail in Ephesians 6:14-17. It is the entire provision of God to protect His servants and to arm them for the battle of life. All this, Paul bids his readers appropriate to themselves.

That ye may, etc.: purpose of, and motive for, 'putting on the panoply of God.'

Stand: maintain your Christian position. It is the opposite of falling or fleeing. Same word and sense in Romans 5:2; 11:20; 1 Corinthians 10:12; 15:1; 2 Corinthians 1:24.

Able to stand; suggests the difficulty of holding our own in the Christian fight.

Wiles: same word and sense in Ephesians 4:14, 'wiles of error.'

The devil: an English form of a Greek word meaning slanderer, and so used in 1 Timothy 3:11; 2 Timothy 3:3; Titus 2:3. The same word is used by the LXX, e.g. 1 Chronicles 21:1; Job 1:6, 7, 9, 12, as a rendering of 'Satan,' a Hebrew word meaning 'opponent.' In other places, the LXX. merely reproduces the Hebrew word Satan, as in 1 Kings 11:14, 23, where it is simply a human opponent. The Hebrew form is found in Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 7:5; 2 Corinthians 2:11; 11:14. In the N.T. the two words are practically equivalent as a proper name of the great enemy of God and man. His weapon is deception; and with this he seeks to overthrow and

put to flight the soldiers of the cross. In order that we may maintain our ground, Paul bids us 'put on the panoply of God.'

**Ver. 12.** A tremendous fact supporting the motive just given. As usual with Paul, the fact is stated, first negatively, then positively: 'not with... but with.'

Wrestling: a technical term of the Greek athletic contests. So Homer 'Iliad' bk. xxiii. 635. It was probably suggested here by the word 'stand.' For the wrestler's work is to maintain his position and to throw down his adversary. And it is a most graphic picture of the Christian life. For, unlike military conflict, in wrestling each one contends alone against a personal antagonist, and can gain the victory only by intense personal effort and watchfulness. This suitability of the word led Paul to forsake for a moment the military metaphor involved in the word 'panoply,' to which he returns in Ephesians 6:13, and to borrow another metaphor from the Greek athletic festivals.

With blood and flesh: so 'flesh and blood' in 1 Corinthians 15:50; Galatians 1:16. It denotes mankind as limited by the constitution of the human body. The Christian struggle is not against persons so limited. This is true even when we have resolute human opponents. For these are but instruments of unseen and more tremendous foes.

But with... with... with... with: graphic description of the real enemies.

The principalities... the authorities: same words in same order in Ephesians 1:21; 3:10; Colossians 1:16; 2:10, 15, denoting in each case ranks of superhuman beings. Here the context implies various ranks of fallen angels. Possibly, as suggested under Colossians 1:16, 'the principalities' were the highest rank; and 'the authorities' an order exercising sway over men or angels or natural forces. This last is also suggested by the term 'world-rulers' which describes the realm over which they rule. Throughout the world they reign supreme. And they belong to 'this darkness,' to the present state of ignorance, the moral and intellectual night which hides from the view of the children of this world their impurity and their peril. The 'spiritual-things' or powers: the Greek neuter including persons and things, as in Colossians 1:16 and elsewhere frequently.

Of evil or 'wickedness': a characterizing quality of these spiritual enemies.

In the heavenly places: same words in Ephesians 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; in each case in a local sense, denoting superhuman abodes. And so probably here. It describes the superhuman abode of the fallen angels, already described in Ephesians 2:2 as 'the air.' This locality agrees with their nature. They are above men and below the throne of God. It forms a climax in Paul's description of his readers' enemies. They have to struggle not against men like themselves limited by the weakness of bodily life, but against the various ranks of angels, against the lords who rule over the darkness which envelops the present world, against spiritual beings whose nature is bad and whose home is in realms far above the abodes of men. The frequent use of the first two terms of this series and in the order here given suggests that they denote definite classes of angels. All else is uncertain. Possibly the term 'world-rulers' is a fuller description of 'the principalities and authorities.' And the last term is evidently a description of all the spiritual foes with which the Christian has to contend. If therefore we take the first two terms as describing two classes, the third and fourth terms are probably further descriptions of the same superhuman antagonists.

Although Paul often speaks of the Christian life as a conflict, only here does he name the opponent. In 1 John 5:4, 5, the enemy to be conquered is called 'the world.' This calls attention to the outward and visible form, and the multiplicity, of the foes arrayed against us. In 1 John 4:4, the power of this multiform antagonist is traced to one animating and personal principle. In 2 Corinthians 4:4, 'the God of this age' proves his hostility by blinding 'those who believe not.' And the passage before us speaks of various superhuman powers acting under direction of one supreme foe.

**Ver. 13.** After the reason given in Ephesians 6:12, Paul repeats the exhortation of Ephesians 6:11. He then adds, in the form of a purpose, a motive: 'that ye may be able, etc.' It is parallel to a similar purpose in Ephesians 6:11. The repetition emphasises our need for weapons and armor in order to maintain our position.

Withstand: to hold one's own against another: same word in Galatians 2:11; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9.

Evil: as in Ephesians 5:16, 'because the days are evil.' But here 'the evil day' is spoken of as future. Yet there is nothing to suggest the revelation of 'the lawless one' mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:8. Probably Paul

thinks of the day of severe trial which comes sooner or later to every soldier of Christ. So certain is this trial that to his thought it becomes definite as 'the evil day.' These words correspond to 'against the wiles of the devil' in Ephesians 6:11. But here Paul mentions the day of battle; there, the enemy with whom we fight.

Having-accomplished or 'worked-out': same word in Philippians 2:12; Romans 7:18; 15:18.

All things: i.e. needful for victory.

**Ver.** 14-17. Specification of armor and weapons included in 'the panoply of God.'

Stand then: an exhortation summing up the foregoing. It keeps before us an idea prominent in Ephesians 6:11, and still more so in Ephesians 6:13, viz. the need for immoveable firmness in face of foes who would put us to flight or trample us under foot. Notice that the word 'stand' at the end of Ephesians 6:13 notes a position still held when the battle is over. It is therefore represented as a goal kept in view. The same word here refers to a position to be maintained now. We must stand now in order that we may stand then.

The Christian armament. 'Having-girded... having-put-on... having-shod:' preliminaries needful in order to maintain our position. Cp. Isaiah 11:5, 'having girded his loins with righteousness.' To gird himself, was the soldier's first preparation for battle. Only then could he put on his weapons. The Christian's girdle is 'truth:' i.e. a subjective conception corresponding with the eternal realities. See under Romans 1:18. It is the absolute opposite of the error of heathenism. Without such hold of eternal truth, the Christian lacks all compactness of character and is like a soldier going into battle with ungirt loins.

Breastplate: covering the vital parts of the body.

Righteousness: as in Ephesians 4:24; 5:9' Same words in Isaiah 59:17 'He put on 'righteousness' as a 'breastplate.'" Without strict uprightness, the Christian is like a soldier whose breast is unprotected. His conceptions must agree with the eternal realities, and his conduct with the eternal law of right.



The Gospel of peace: cp. Isaiah 52:7 'How beautiful... the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publishes peace.

Readiness: ever prepared for the Christian fight. This readiness comes from 'the Gospel of peace,' i.e. from the announcement as good news that to us in midst of conflict there is peace. Just as the 'shod foot' is ready at once to meet the enemy, so they who have heard and grasped 'the Gospel of peace' are 'in readiness' for any conflict which may await them. That they are ready and eager to proclaim the Gospel, is only a part of the more general readiness mentioned here.

**Ver. 16.** Another participial clause somewhat separated from those foregoing and noting a fourth preliminary needful for Christian stability.

Having taken up: parallel with 'having-girded, etc.' Same word in Ephesians 6:13.

Shield: large Roman shield some four feet by two and a half, used by heavily armed troops. It was usually of wood covered with leather.

Faith: belief of the Gospel, the unique condition of salvation. It saves us from both the guilt and power of sin, as being the one condition of union with Christ.

Burning darts: arrows with affixed torches, used to set fire to ships or towns. So Octavius used against the ships of Antony 'fire-bearing 'darts:.' Dio Cassius bk. 1. 34.

The evil one: same word as in Ephesians 6:12, 13. Close parallels in 2 Thessalonians 3:3; Matthew 13:19; 1 John 2:13f; 5:18f. It is equivalent here to 'the devil' in Ephesians 6:11. The evil thoughts which he suggests are like 'burning darts:' for they tend to kindle strange fire in the hearts of men. But they cannot injure those 'guarded in the power of God through 'faith:.' 1 Peter 1:5. Since faith is thus a complete protection, it is here called a 'shield able to quench all the burning darts' cast against it. Paul thus teaches the absolute safety of those who believe.

Ye shall be able: in every future attack.

**Ver. 17.** Two more details of the Christian armor. But, instead of participles as before, these are added in the imperative mood as separate exhortations.

Helmet of salvation: same words in Isaiah 59:17. [This accounts probably for the peculiar form of the word ‘salvation,’ a form not used elsewhere by Paul but found in Luke 2:30; 3:6.]

Salvation: in its widest sense, viz. present deliverance from sin to be consummated in eternity by complete deliverance from every kind of evil. Such ‘salvation’ is a ‘helmet’ covering our heads from what would otherwise be fatal blows. Cp. 1 Thessalonians 5:8, ‘put on... as a helmet, hope of salvation.’

Sword: as in Romans 8:35; 13:4; Acts 16:27. The one weapon of attack here mentioned.

Of the Spirit: either as given by the Spirit, like ‘panoply of God;’ or used by the Spirit. These senses here almost coincide.

Word of God: same words in Hebrews 11:3. Cp. “word of” Christ’ in Romans 10:17. It can be no other than the Gospel, the mighty voice of God raising into new life those who were spiritually dead. The word preached is a ‘sword:’ for, armed with it, the servants of Christ attack and over turn the kingdom of darkness and set free its captives. It is put into their hands by ‘the Spirit’ of God. For, under His influence were spoken (Acts 1:2) even the words of Jesus. And He is with the preacher making His word to be a sharp sword in the hearts of those who hear.

Such is Paul’s description of the enemy with whom the Christian has to fight and of the armament needed for victory. Our foes are both one and many; and our real foes are unseen and superhuman. They consist of successive ranks of evil angels ruling from their lofty abode the material world around us, and acting under direction of one guileful chief. Well may the time of their most severe attack be called ‘the evil day.’ Paul bids his readers hold their own in face of these tremendous foes. And, that they may do this, he bids them appropriate the whole equipment provided for them by God. First of all, the soldier must gird himself, for attack or defense; then put on his breastplate covering the chief part of his body, and his sandals so as to be ready at a moment’s notice to march against the

enemy. For still further protection, he must take up and carry the great shield; and with his right hand put on the helmet and grasp his sword.

Paul mentions only one weapon of attack but several pieces of defensive armor, because his chief thought is to encourage his readers to maintain their position against the onslaught of tremendous foes. To this end they need knowledge of the eternal realities, strict integrity, a readiness for every emergency prompted by the glad tidings of peace, firm faith, actual experience of salvation born triumphantly aloft, and in their lips the recorded words of God to man.

## SECTION 16

### A REQUEST FOR PRAYER

#### CHAPTER 6:18-20

*With all prayer and supplication praying at every season in the Spirit and watching for this with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints; and on my behalf in order that to me may be given utterance, in opening my mouth, with boldness to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I may speak boldly, as I must needs speak.*

Now come participial clauses containing virtually another exhortation, a collateral addition to those foregoing. In Ephesians 6:14 Paul bade his readers stand firm, and that they might do this bade them put on the armament provided by God. The details are added, at first in the form of past participles, ‘having girded’, etc. But, as Paul enumerates them he passes unconsciously to direct exhortation in the imperative mood. Now follow two present participles noting, not preliminaries, but accompaniments of the original exhortation. It is best to join these participles to the dominant exhortation of 15, ‘stand then,’ rather than to the subordinate exhortation, ‘take the helmet,’ which is a mere detail. Paul bids his readers to maintain their position in face of all their foes; and while doing this to pray for all the saints (Ephesians 6:18) and (Ephesians 6:19, 20) for himself.

**Ver. 18.** With or ‘by-means-of’: using prayer as a means of obtaining blessing.

Prayer and supplication: as in Philippians 4:6. In ‘every’ way they must approach God in ‘prayer,’ and must make ‘petition’ for definite benefits.

In every season: same words in similar connection in Luke 21:36.

In the Spirit: prayers prompted by Him. So Romans 8:15, ‘in whom we cry, Abba, Father.’

And watching for, etc.: a second participial clause, adding further details.

Watching: as in Colossians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 16:13. For successful prayer, we must keep wide awake, i.e. with our faculties in full exercise. And this must be accompanied by unlimited 'perseverance:' cognate to a word in Colossians 4:2; Romans 12:12. This suggests that for a continual exercise of our faculties in prayer every kind of sustained effort is needful, and bids us make the effort.

Petition: as above. Our watchfulness must be accompanied both by sustained effort and by definite request for definite blessing.

Touching all the saints: cp. Ephesians 5:3. It is best to understand the first participial clause in this verse as referring to prayer in general; and the second as going on to speak specifically of prayer for our fellow-Christians.

**Ver. 19.** And on my behalf: a particular request for prayer, added to the foregoing more general request.

That to me may be given, etc.: purpose and contents of the desired prayer. It expounds 'on my behalf.'

Utterance, or 'word': as in 1 Corinthians 1:5.

In opening my mouth, or 'when I open my mouth': same phrase in 2 Corinthians 6:11.

Boldness: unreserved speech, as in 2 Corinthians 3:12. Paul asks his readers to pray that whenever he begins to speak God will give him something to say, in order that with unreserved speech he may 'make known the Gospel.'

The mystery of the Gospel: the secret, known only by those to whom God reveals it, which belongs to the good news announced by Christ. See under 1 Corinthians 3:4. Cp. Colossians 4:3, 'to speak the mystery of Christ.'

**Ver. 20.** On behalf of which mystery of the Gospel: i.e. in order to 'make it known.'

I am an ambassador: same word and sense in 2 Corinthians 5:20. It expresses Paul's sense of the dignity of his apostolic office.

In a chain: strange paradox; (for by all nations ambassadors were held to be inviolate; ) and a graphic picture of Paul's present position. The hand which writes or signs this letter is bound by a chain. But since this chain was born for Christ's sake and by Christ's providential arrangement, it was to Paul an honorable badge of office. Moreover, that Paul was bound, 'made it more needful that God should give him unrestrained speech. Cp. 2 Timothy 2:9.

In order that, etc.: ultimate aim of the prayer which Paul requests, supplementing and expounding the purpose given in Ephesians 6:19.

In it: in 'the mystery of the Gospel.'

I-may-speak-boldly: cognate to 'boldness' in Ephesians 6:19, keeping before and emphasising the idea of unrestrained speech.

As I must needs speak: same words in same connection in Colossians 4:3. The imperative need for unrestrained proclamation of the Gospel, together with his own solemn and official relation to it, prompt Paul to ask his readers' prayers that God may give him fit utterance.

This section reveals unmistakeably the hand and thought of Paul. The man who himself prays for every Church to which he writes may well ask his readers' prayer 'for all the saints.' And this request for prayer on his own behalf, attesting as it does his deep sense of the efficacy of prayer, is in close harmony with similar requests in Romans 15:30; 2 Corinthians 1:11; Colossians 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; and with Philippians 1:19. The word 'ambassador' is one of many proofs of his consciousness of the grandeur of his office: cp. Ephesians 3:2; Romans 15:15, 16; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 11:2; 13:10.

## SECTION 17

### ABOUT TYCHICUS. FAREWELL

#### CHAPTER 6:21-24

*But that ye may know the matters touching me, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make known to you all things, whom I have sent to you for this very thing that ye may know the things about us and that he may encourage your hearts.*

*Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptness.*

**Ver.** 21-22. A close and verbal parallel with Colossians 4:7, 8.

Also ye: as well as others who are to receive like information. It is a note of genuineness. For from Colossians 4:7 we learn that 'Tychicus' was commissioned to carry intelligence and encouragement to others besides those to whom this letter was written. So slight an indication is not like the work of a personator. And such a one would probably have mentioned Onesimus.

Encourage your hearts: as in Colossians 4:8.

**Ver.** 23-24. Peace: inward rest prompting outward harmony, as in Ephesians 1:2. At the end of an Epistle, only here and Galatians 6:16.

To the brethren: noting their close relation to each other and to Paul. This suggests the addition 'and love:' i.e. one to another, its usual sense when not otherwise defined. See under 1 Corinthians 13:1.

With faith: more fully Galatians 5:6, 'faith working by means of love.'

From God, etc.: source of this inward rest, and of this mutual love associated with faith. For the former compare Ephesians 1:2; and for the

latter 1 John 4:19, 'we love because He first loved us.' Both 'peace' and 'love with faith' are a work and gift of 'God' and of 'Christ.'

Grace with all who love, etc.: a contrast to 1 Corinthians 16:22.

In incorruptness: same words in 1 Corinthians 15:42. The absence of decay (so Romans 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:10) which will characterize our resurrection bodies must characterize our present love to Christ.



## REVIEW OF THE EPISTLE

As usual, Paul's first words, after a Christian greeting, are praise to God. But, in what seems to have been a circular letter to several Churches, his thanks are not for special blessings to his readers but for the blessings conferred on all the people of God. These he traces to their source in a purpose of God in Christ older than the world but now made known to men, viz. His purpose to unite under the rule of Christ both earth and heaven. This purpose embraces not only those who were long waiting for the appearance of Christ but also the Gentile readers of this Epistle who have already received as a seal of their acceptance the Spirit of God promised of old to Israel.

All this, and what he has heard about their faith and faithfulness, move Paul to constant thanks on his readers' behalf. His praise turns imperceptibly into prayer. He prays that God may give to them the Holy Spirit to reveal the things of God and specially to teach how great are the blessings to which He has called them, how rich is the inheritance belonging to the people of God, and how mighty the power at work in those that believe. Of this last Paul gives a measure in the power which raised Christ from the grave and to heaven, above the highest ranks of angels. He adds that God gave Christ, thus exalted, to the Church to be its Head, and the Church to be His body and His fulness.

The assertion that the power which raised Christ from the grave is at work in believers, Paul goes on to prove by saying that, in consequence of their sins which brought them under the anger of God, both his readers and himself were once dead; and that, by saving them through faith, God had raised them from the dead and made them sharers of the throne of Christ. He did this in order to reveal throughout eternity, in His kindness to them, the abundance of His favor to men. This salvation was wrought by the creative power of God, not prompted by any good in man, but designed by God to lead to good works.

Having described salvation as an inward and spiritual change from death to life, Paul goes on to describe it as a changed relation to the covenant-people of God. They who were once far off aliens have, through

the death of Christ, been brought near and built into the rising walls of the living temple of God.

In view of all this the Apostle seemed to be approaching God in prayer. But he pauses for a moment to say that to himself and others had been revealed a secret hidden during long ages, viz. God's purpose, mentioned above, to unite Jews and Gentiles into one body, in order thus to reveal to the various ranks of heaven, by this wonderful accomplishment of a divine purpose, His own manifold wisdom. In view of all this, Paul turns solemnly to God in prayer that He may give to his readers spiritual strength, by the indwelling presence of Christ, that thus they may be able to comprehend the incomprehensible love of God, and that thus they may be made full to an extent limited only by the fulness of God. And, while offering this great prayer he remembers that God is able to surpass in fulfilment all prayers and thoughts of men.

From this mount of transfiguration Paul comes down to discuss, in the light of the glory there revealed, matters of practical life. He begs his readers to walk worthy of their divine call; and specially urges them to do all they can to preserve Christian unity. This last exhortation he supports by pointing to the great spiritual unities on which rest the Christian Church. From unity he passes to the various spiritual gifts with which the triumphant Savior has enriched His Church in order that it may lay aside the vacillation of childhood and grow into Christian manhood, into a compact and healthy body in which each part helps the well-being and development of the whole. He reminds his readers of the darkness and sin around them, and of the better lesson they have learnt, viz. that in Christ the old life of sin has been laid aside and a new life put on. What is involved in this change, is then expounded in an informal but appropriate series of general precepts. Falsehood, inordinate anger, theft, evil-speaking, and such things must be laid aside: and Christian kindness must take their place. For all sin excludes from the kingdom of God and brings the sinner under the anger of God. His servants must not only avoid, but rebuke, the shameful practices of the heathen. For they are children of the light: and light ever reveals the hidden things of darkness. All this needs wisdom. Instead of the drunken songs of the godless there must be songs of praise to God. And each must loyally accept his place in the social order.

These last words are a stepping-stone to directions about the three most conspicuous social relations. Wives must view their husbands as set over them by Christ, and thus in some sense sharing His authority. And husbands must remember that this authority lays upon them an obligation to imitate Christ's love to, and self-sacrifice for, the Church. Just as the Church is united to Christ as the body to the head, so the ancient record of creation says that husband and wife are one flesh. Consequently, the husband's kindness or unkindness to his wife is kindness or unkindness to himself. In view of this mysterious relation, the husband must love his wife, and the wife reverence her husband, Similar mutual duties, resting upon their relation to Christ, rest upon children and parents, servants and masters.

All that remains is an exhortation to maintain, armed by the might of Christ, an unbroken front in face of the tremendous spiritual enemies arrayed against the Christian. In this inevitable and deadly conflict, God has provided for His servants a complete armament. The truth is their girdle, righteousness their breastplate: and the good news of salvation will fit their feet for the path before them. Faith will preserve them from the darts of the enemy, salvation will enable them to lift up their heads in triumph; and the word which God has put into their lips will be an effective weapon of attack. The Apostle begs their prayers for all Christians, and for himself that he may be able to proclaim the Gospel as the necessities of the case demand.

All personal matters are left to Tychicus, the bearer of the letter.

The width of view already noted as characterizing the Epistles to the Colossians characterizes also that to the Ephesians. But the one Epistle is by no means a duplicate of the other. The same keen eye looks now, with independent gaze, in a some what different direction. And the tone of the letters is different. Forceful argument and appeal against perilous error have given place to the serenity of victory. Again the Apostle's thought ascends the stream of time to its source in eternity; not as before to search out the origin of the material universe, but to contemplate the salvation of man when salvation was only a deliberate thought in the eternal mind of God. Even the historic distinction of Jew and Gentile, separated for a time that they may be united for ever, is viewed in the light of this eternal

purpose. The various ranks of angels are still in sight. They bow to their ascending Lord; and they will learn from saved and united humanity the many-sided wisdom of God. The conception of the Church receives a marked development. Throughout the Epistle the ideal Church is ever before us, one and manifold, in its relation to the one Spirit and Lord and God, as the permanent realization of the eternal purpose of God, and as the chosen Bride of Christ, purified by Him that she may be His for ever.

Already in other Epistles we have witnessed Paul's approach to God in prayer. But in the Epistle we now close his prayer takes a more sustained and loftier flight. With strong wing he follows, in spiritual elevation, his rising Lord, and with mighty effort endeavors to grasp the infinite love of Christ and to make his own the infinite fulness of God. And on the summit of his lofty flight, raised by the power of God working in him, he seems to join the chorus of the glorified Church in its eternal song.

# EXPOSITION

## OF THE

# EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

### SECTION 1

#### A CHRISTIAN GREETING

#### CHAPTER 1:1, 2

*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Ver. 1.** The absence of any assertion of authority here and in 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1 is explained by the evident and unanimous loyalty to the Apostle of these two Macedonian Churches. This permitted him to place his beloved disciple and himself on the same level as alike doing the work of the one Master: Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus. Cp. Romans 16:21; 1 Corinthians 16:10, and note under Romans 1:1. This reminds us that Paul and Timothy were together when the Gospel was first preached at Philippi. For the same reason the name of Silas is added in 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1. The association of Timothy with Paul in other Epistles recalls also the close spiritual relationship recorded in Philippians 2:19-22; 1 Corinthians 4:17.

Saints: see under Romans 1:7. This common designation of all Christians, read in the light of the Old Testament, implies that God had claimed for Himself all the professed servants of Christ, thus placing them, in privilege and solemn obligation, on a level with, or rather infinitely above, the 'holy' objects of the Old Covenant.

In Christ Jesus: as in 1 Corinthians 1:2. In distinction from the Old Covenant, our consecration to God is brought about through the historic facts of Christ and is consummated by spiritual union with Him.

Who are, etc.: emphatic assertion that 'at Philippi' there are 'saints in Christ Jesus.'

All the saints: so Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:2; but not Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:2. Totality is very conspicuous in Philippians 1:3, 4, 7, 8. Writing to the Philippian Christians as individual saints, Paul thinks of them 'all' without exception.

Bishops and deacons: evidently two orders of Church officers. So 1 Timothy 3:2, 8: cp. Ep. of Clement, ch. 42, in my 'Corinthians' App. 1: In Acts 20:28 Paul speaks of the elders of the Church at Ephesus as 'bishops;' thus implying, as here, a plurality of bishops in one Church. That the two titles describe one office, is implied in Titus 1:5, 7. Our word 'bishop' is an English form of the Greek word here used, which denotes an overseer. 'Elder' was a Jewish title: cp. Matthew 16:21; Numbers 11:16; Exodus 3:16, 18.

Deacons: see under Romans 12:7. Why Church officers are mentioned in this greeting and in no other from the pen of Paul, is matter of mere conjecture. Something unknown to us brought them to his mind while writing; possibly the part they had taken in the contribution of which this letter is an acknowledgment. [This is not forbidden, though not favored, by the absence of the article.] Doubtless Paul's reference would be understood by those to whom it was written.

**Ver. 2.** Word for word as in Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Philemon 3. The suitability of these well-chosen words had printed them on the mind of Paul. He desires for his readers 'grace' or 'favor,' and, resulting from it, 'peace,' i.e. inward rest arising from consciousness of safety, 'from our Father, God, and' from 'Jesus Christ,' the one 'Lord' or 'Master.'

## SECTION 2

### *PRAISE AND PRAYER FOR THE CHRISTIANS AT PHILIPPI*

#### CHAPTER 1:3-11

*I thank my God for all my remembrance of you, always in every petition of mine on behalf of you all making the petition with joy, for your fellowship in furtherance of the Gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun in you a good work will complete it until the Day of Jesus Christ; according as it is right for me to be of this mind on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, all of you being partakers with me of grace. For God is my witness, how I long for you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus.*

*And this I pray, that your love yet more and more may abound in knowledge and all discernment, so that ye may approve the excellent things, that ye may be sincere and without stumbling to the Day of Christ, being made full of the fruit of righteousness, that which is through Jesus Christ, for glory and praise of God.*

**Ver. 3.** The first person singular shows us that Paul thinks of himself alone as writer of this letter. Accordingly, in Philippians 2:19, Timothy is spoken of merely in the third person. He is associated with Paul only in the superscription. Contrast 1 and 2 Thess., where by the first person plural maintained throughout Paul joins with himself Silvanus and Timothy as sharing his sentiments, thus reminding us that they had recently shared his labors and perils at Thessalonica. On the other hand, this Epistle was evoked by special liberality towards Paul alone.

Paul's entire 'remembrance' of the Philippian Christians, i.e. all that he remembers about them, this looked upon as one pleasant memory, is a ground of thanks to God.

My God: as in Romans 1:8. The ‘good work’ wrought in his readers, Paul feels to be a personal gift to himself from ‘God,’ before whom in the solitude of his own spirit he stands: for this work was an answer to his prayers and in part a result of his own labors.

**Ver. 4.** A collateral statement showing with what good reason Paul thanks God for his entire remembrance of his readers. So good was this remembrance that every prayer for every one of them was to him always a matter of joy. This joy explains his thanks. And it becomes, even in his prison at Rome, the key-note of the Epistle. So Philippians 1:18, 25; 2:2, 17, 18, 28, 29; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10.

Always.. every... all justify and expound ‘all my remembrance of you.’ With this acknowledgment of universal excellence compare the more guarded, yet strong, language of 1 Corinthians 1:4-8.

Petition, or ‘supplication’: a definite prayer prompted by felt need: so Philippians 1:19; 4:6; Romans 10:1; Luke 1:13. It suggests urgency.

This unmixed delight aroused in the breast of Paul by his every thought about the Christians at Philippi gives to them a unique place of honor among the Churches of the New Testament. We shall, therefore, eagerly gather together as we pass along all indications of their character and conduct, and shall regret that these are so scanty.

**Ver. 5.** This verse is parallel with, and expounds, ‘for all my remembrance of you,’ stating the special feature in the Philippian Christians which evoked Paul’s joy and gratitude.

Fellowship: a disposition to share with others effort, toil, peril, enjoyment, or material good, either by receiving from them a share of their good or ill, or by giving to them a share of ours. It is a word very common and important with Paul: e.g. Romans 12:13; 15:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:16, 18, 20; 2 Corinthians 1:7; 6:14; 8:4, 23; 9:13; 13:13.

In furtherance of (or ‘for’) the Gospel: aim of this co-operation, viz. to spread the good news of salvation. For this end the Philippian Christians worked together, either one with another, or the whole body with Paul and others. For an example of such co-operation, see Philippians 4:3. And their brotherhood was not only universal but had been constant throughout their



entire Christian course: 'from the first day until now.' Constancy is the great test of personal worth. A fellow-worker always ready to co-operate is beyond price.

That this one excellence is here given as itself a sufficient reason for Paul's unmixed joy and gratitude, reveals its unique importance. And this we can understand. For, that God has committed the spread of the Gospel to the voluntary co-operation of a multitude of workers, gives special value to a virtue which leads a man to work easily with others. And, since all sin and selfishness tend to set man against man, the spirit of brotherhood implies all Christian excellence. It is therefore a sure test of character. For its only source is that 'love' (see Philippians 1:9) which is a 'fulfilment of the Law.' This spirit of brotherhood prompted the contribution of which this letter is an acknowledgment: cp. Philippians 4:14. And in this matter also the Philippian Christians showed equal constancy: Philippians 4:15. But whether Paul refers here to this special form of brotherhood, we do not know. Certainly it was not his sole reference.

**Ver. 6.** A firm persuasion underlying Paul's gratitude for his readers' co-operation for the spread of the Gospel.

Complete: bring to perfection, to the goal towards which it tends: Romans 15:28; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Begun, complete: same contrast in 2 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 3:3. The co-operation was a 'good work,' but so manifestly incomplete that Paul can speak of it only as a good work 'begun.' He traces it, however, to a personal Worker, Whose Name he need not mention. And he is sure that what 'He has begun' He 'will complete.' Thus the work already done assures Paul that greater things will follow. And the prospect of these greater blessings makes his remembrance of the Philippian Christians so pleasant. This is the real significance of all present spiritual good in ourselves or others. Its incompleteness proclaims that from the same personal Source greater things will come.

The Day of Jesus Christ: as in Philippians 1:10, 2:16; 1 Corinthians 1:8; 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14. The frequent use of these simple words in this definite sense shows how definite and important in the minds of the early Christians was the Second Coming of Christ. 'Until' the Day of Christ;

suggests a further spiritual work during life, like that already begun, to be consummated in the Great Day. This phraseology suggests that Paul did not know certainly that the Return of Christ would be delayed for centuries after the last of his readers had been laid in the grave. But the Day of Christ not the day of death, must ever be the aim of His servants' forward look. For in that Day, and not till then, will the good work which God is now doing in His people's hearts be completed and manifested. Not for the day of death, which will rend asunder what God has joined, but for the Day of their Lord's return, His servants wait. In that Day He will present to Himself the spotless Church. And towards that consummation tends our present growth in spiritual life.

**Ver. 7.** A statement in harmony with, and thus supporting, the confident hope just expressed.

To be of this mind: to cherish this hope. [The word rendered 'mind' is a link connecting this Epistle with that to the Romans, and suggests a common author: cp. Romans 8:5; 11:20; 12:3, 16; 14:6; 15:5; Philippians 2:2, 5; 3:15, 19; 4:2; 10.]

On behalf of you all; recalls the universal terms in Philippians 1:3, 4.

Right: same word as 'righteous' and 'just.' That simple justice demands this firm expectation of the final consummation of every one of his readers, implies strong proof of their sincerity and excellence. Similar thought in 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2:13: cp. Philippians 1:6.

Because etc: ground of the 'right' just mentioned. Its ultimate ground is uncovered in the last words of the verse, for which the preceding words prepare the way. It was not Paul's love for his readers that made it right to expect that the work begun in them would be completed, but his loving remembrance that the smile of God which shines on him shines also on them. The Philippian Christians have an abiding and large place in Paul's heart: and this moulds all his thought about them.

My bonds; implies that Paul was in prison while writing this letter: so Philippians 1:13, 14. This clause is to be joined probably to the foregoing. Within the narrow limits of Paul's prison walls, his readers are ever with him. And whenever, either to visitors in his prison or before heathen judges or elsewhere, he defends against attack the truth of the Gospel, or

when he endeavors to impart to believers a firmer and fuller knowledge of it, he thinks ever of his beloved converts at Philippi. Thoughts of them dispel in part the gloom of his dungeon, and strengthen his defense of the Gospel. Thus the changing circumstances and occupation of the Apostle throw into relief his constant thought of them.

All of you being, etc.: the aspect in which they are present to him.

Partakers: cognate to 'fellowship' in Philippians 1:5: they were 'joint-sharers with him.'

Grace: the undeserved favor of God, to which Paul owes whatever he has or is: so 1 Corinthians 15:10. God's smile rests, as he remembers, on every one of his readers. Therefore, while looking forward to the completion in himself of that which the grace of God has begun, Paul feels himself bound by his sense of right to expect a like completion of the work begun in them. Thus his hopes for them are traced to the only sure ground of hope, the undeserved favor of God.

**Ver. 8.** This verse supports the new thought introduced in Philippians 1:7, viz. that Paul has his readers in his heart.

God, my witness: a genuine trait of Paul, Romans 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 2:5.

Long-for: same word in Philippians 2:26; Romans 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Timothy 1:4.

You all; maintains the universality which is so marked a feature of this section.

Tender-mercies: same word in 2 Corinthians 6:12; see note. While Paul fears his readers in his heart, he feels that his love for them is an outflow of the 'tender mercies of Christ.' That divine tenderness is the element in which Paul's love breathes and lives. Thus, to Philippians 1:7; Philippians 1:8 is a climax.

Such are Paul's first thoughts about his readers. As he turns in thought to them, one feature of their character absorbs his attention viz. their harmonious co-operation for the spread of the Gospel. This co-operation is universal, and has been constant throughout their course. So sure a mark is it of Christian excellence that it makes every prayer for them a delight,

and every remembrance of them thanks to God. The secret of this joy is Paul's firm confidence that what he sees in his readers is but the beginning of a development which will not cease till consummated in the Day of Christ's Return. And this confidence is made obligatory to him by his loving recognition, amid his various hardships and labors, of the evident grace of God shining upon them as well as upon himself. And, while protesting his yearning for them, he remembers that its source and the element in which it moves are not human but divine, that his love is but an outflow of the tender love which fills the breast of Christ.

**Ver. 9.** After mentioning for a moment in Philippians 1:4 his petitions to God for his readers, Paul now adds to his thanks for the good work already begun in them and his hopes for its completion a definite prayer for its progress: 'and this I pray.' The matter of this prayer, he describes as its purpose: he prays 'in order that' their 'love, etc.'

Love: the principle which prompts us to do good to our fellows; as always when not further defined. So Romans 12:9; 13:10; 1 Corinthians 13:1ff. It is the distinctive feature of the Christian character. By asking for its increase, Paul assumes its existence. And rightly so. For it is implied (Philippians 1:5) in 'fellowship,' of which mutual love is always the animating principle.

Knowledge: more fully 'scientific knowledge,' an orderly and comprehensive acquaintance with something; as in Romans 1:28; 3:20; 10:2: a favorite word of Paul, especially in his later Epistles. Its frequency there is a mark of his mature thought, and perhaps of his deepening conviction of the need, in order to escape prevalent dangers, of a fuller knowledge of the Gospel.

Discernment: perception of qualities. Frequent in classical Greek for perception by the bodily senses. Paul desires for his readers a comprehensive acquaintance with things divine and a faculty of distinguishing right from wrong in the various details of life. The word 'all' recalls the number and variety of these details.

Abound: either itself abundant in quantity or results, as in 2 Corinthians 1:5; Romans 3:7 or possessing abundance of 'knowledge and discernment,' as in 1 Corinthians 8:8; 2 Corinthians 8:7. According to the one

interpretation, Paul prays that his readers' love may increase and their increasing love be associated with knowledge: or, that the knowledge which already enriches their love may increase, and thus enrich it still more. The difference here is slight. Perhaps the latter sense is nearer to Paul's thought. For he passes at once in Philippians 1:10 to the desired result of 'knowledge and discernment,' showing that of them he thinks chiefly.

Yet more and more: further and further in the same direction. This is a courteous acknowledgment that his readers' love is already rich in, and enriched by, knowledge.

**Ver. 10.** Further purpose, and then a final purpose, of the enrichment in knowledge.

Approve, or 'prove': put to the test with good purpose, i.e. to detect the good.

The excellent things: literally, 'the things that differ.' But the good aim already implied in the word rendered 'approve,' and the result which Paul expects (in Philippians 1:10b) to follow this proving, imply that the difference referred to is that of superiority. Same words in same sense in Romans 2:18. Same purpose in Romans 12:2. Only a divinely given comprehension of the great realities and discernment of moral details will enable us to distinguish the comparative excellence of various modes of action. And no gift is of greater practical worth.

That ye may be, etc.: i.e. 'seek Christian intelligence in order that it may mould your character.'

Sincere: unmixed with any foreign matter. So 1 Corinthians 5:8; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:17; 2 Peter 3:1; Wisdom 7:25. [The meaning is well illustrated in Plato's 'Phaedo' pp. 66a, 67a.]

Without-cause-of-stumbling: having nothing against which either themselves or others may strike their foot and fall. Same word in the latter sense in 1 Corinthians 10:32; in the former sense in Acts 24:16. Here perhaps in the former sense, causing themselves to stumble. For Paul is referring to the development of his readers own spiritual life. Everything foreign to the Christian life tends to trip up in the Christian course him who tolerates it. Paul desires for his readers spiritual intelligence in order

that they may accurately distinguish moral qualities, in order that thus there may be in them no mixture of impure elements and that they may escape the peril of falling which such foreign elements involve.

The Day of Christ: as in Philippians 1:6. The recurrence of this thought reveals its firm hold of the mind of Paul.

To the Day, etc.: ultimate goal of Paul's thoughts about his readers. He desires them to be pure and to be preserved from falling in order that they may be so found in that day. Same words and thought in Philippians 2:16; Ephesians 4:30; 2 Timothy 1:12. The slightly different words in Philippians 1:6 note a slightly different thought, viz. the time to which he desires his readers' spiritual development to continue.

**Ver. 11.** A collateral element in Paul's prayer, placing beside the foregoing negatives, 'without mixture and without stumbling,' a positive blessing. He desires them not only to stand erect in the Day of Christ but to be then 'full of fruit.'

Righteousness: right doing, conformity with the moral standard, as in Romans 6:13, 18, 20.

Fruit of righteousness: the good results growing naturally, in the moral order of the universe, out of right doing. Same words and similar thoughts in James 3:18, Proverbs 11:30. This harvest of blessing, only to be had by right doing, Paul desires his readers to have to the 'full.' [The difficult accusative **καρπον** specifies the remoter object of the desired filling. The Philippian Christians are its immediate object. 'The fruit of righteousness' is, as matter of fact, that with which they are to be 'made full.' But perhaps the accusative case represents the fruit rather as the extent of the fulness, or as the aim of Paul's prayer. He desires his readers to be made full in the sense, and to the extent, of obtaining the fruit of righteousness. Same construction in Colossians 1:9.] The fruit is 'through Jesus Christ.' For only through His agency come good works and their good results. They thus show forth the 'glory and praise of God,' i.e. His splendor evoking admiration (see under Romans 1:21) and verbal acknowledgment. And this ultimate result of the blessings which Paul asks for his readers is also the final aim of his prayer for them. He prays for them the more earnestly and confidently because he knows that the answer to his prayer

will reveal the greatness of God and evoke in earth and heaven a louder note of praise to Him. Cp. Romans 15:7.

As usual, Paul's first thought about his readers is praise to God for them. But the incompleteness of the good work for which he gives thanks moves him at once to pray that the work begun in them may make progress. So good is the work that Paul needs only to pray that it may advance in the same direction. For in their spirit of brotherhood he recognises that love which is the essence of the Christian character. Especially he prays that, as hitherto so in greater measure, their love may be rich in general Christian intelligence and in the faculty of discerning moral excellence, such excellence being a condition of spiritual purity and safety and of that right doing which will produce a harvest of blessing and thus make the Philippian Christians rich indeed. This harvest of blessing can come only through Christ, and will reveal the splendor of God and thus redound to His praise.

## SECTION 3

### PAUL'S BONDS, ADVERSARIES, AND FRIENDS

#### CHAPTER 1:12-18

*Moreover, I wish you to know, brethren, that the matters touching me have fallen out rather for progress of the Gospel; so that my bonds have become manifest in Christ in the whole Praetorian and to all the rest, and the more part of the brethren having become confident in the Lord through my bonds are more abundantly bold to speak fearlessly the word of God. Some indeed even because of envy and strife, but others also because of good will, proclaim Christ. These, out of love, knowing that for defense of the Gospel I am set. But the others out of a spirit of faction announce Christ, not purely, thinking to raise up affliction for my bonds. What then? Only that in every way, whether pretense or truth, Christ is announced. And in this I rejoice; yes, and I will rejoice.*

After praise and prayer for his readers, Paul now speaks about himself; i.e. about (Philippians 1:12-14) the results of his imprisonment, about (Philippians 1:15-17) his enemies and friends, and about (Philippians 1:18) the joy indirectly caused to him both by friends and enemies.

**Ver. 12.** To know: literally, 'to come to know,' to learn. Paul now begins to give information.

I wish you to know: similar words in 1 Corinthians 11:3; cp. Romans 1:13; 1 Corinthians 10:1; 12:1; 2 Corinthians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

The matters touching me: the entire circumstances, doings, and experiences, of Paul. Same words in same sense in Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7.

Progress: same word in Philippians 1:25; 1 Timothy 4:15; Galatians 1:14; Luke 2:52; 2 Timothy 2:16. 'The Gospel' makes 'progress' (same idea in 2 Thessalonians 3:1) geographically, when the good news is carried from place to place; numerically, when one after another believes it and



confesses Christ; spiritually, when as a 'power of God' it more and more moulds the inner and outer life of men. The word 'rather' suggests a comparison or contrast between the expected and actual results of the events or circumstances about which Paul here writes, and thus implies that these events were likely to hinder the Gospel. Notice that the hardships involved in them are, throughout the Epistle, left entirely out of sight. The only point present to Paul's thought is their effect upon the spread of the good news of salvation.

**Ver. 13.** A result of 'the things which happened to' Paul, stated as a proof and measure of the progress of the Gospel caused thereby. [ὥστε with the infinitive throws the emphasis on the foregoing statement, and indicates that the words which follow are a result affording proof and measure of this statement. Verses 13 and 14 tell to how great an extent the events and circumstances which threatened to hinder the Gospel have actually helped it forward.]

My bonds; indicates the nature of the events referred to in Philippians 1:12 as likely to hinder the Gospel, viz. Paul's imprisonment, and confirms the suggestion in Philippians 1:7 that this letter was written in prison. Paul will now tell us how his arrest, which for so long time put an end to his active and successful labors, actually helped forward the cause for which he labored.

Manifest in Christ: set visibly before the eyes of men in their relation to Christ. Similar thought in 2 Corinthians 3:3: 'ye being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ ministered by us.' The real nature of Paul's imprisonment was made public, as occasioned not by crime but by the prisoner's relation to Christ.

The Praetorium: a Latin word denoting something belonging to the Praetor, a title given to the leader of the Roman armies. It denotes sometimes the general's tent. The same word denotes in Matthew 27:27; Mark 15:16; John 18:28, 33; 19:9 the residence of a provincial governor. Similarly Acts 23:35, 'Herod's praetorium.' In a few clear cases, e.g. Tacitus, 'Histories' bk. i. 20, it denotes the imperial body-guard, the 'Praetorian' regiments, a corps of some 10,000 picked troops instituted by Augustus, and stationed, under Augustus in part, under Tiberius entirely, at Rome. This reference would give good sense here. We can conceive Paul, a prisoner

who had appealed to Caesar, committed to the charge of Praetorian soldiers, one of them always with him; and that thus the Gospel which Paul preached became known throughout the whole Praetorian guard. It has been suggested that the word refers to a great camp of the Praetorians established by Tiberius just outside Rome. But we have no proof that the word is ever so used. It is therefore better to accept here the indisputable reference noted above. See a very good note by Lightfoot.

Inasmuch as the residence of a Roman governor was also called 'Praetorium,' the use of this word here is not in itself absolute proof that this Epistle was written from Rome. But it somewhat confirms other indications (especially Philippians 4:22) to this effect.

And to all the others.: Not only within the limits of the imperial body-guard, but to every one around, the nature of Paul's imprisonment became known.

**Ver. 14.** A second result, showing further how much the events which happened to Paul have aided the progress of the Gospel.

The more part of the brethren; reveals a minority, even among Christians, whose confidence in Christ was not increased by Paul's 'bonds.' This minority must have included the opponents mentioned in Philippians 1:15. Possibly it may have included also some timid friends in whom Paul's imprisonment evoked, not faith, but fear.

In the Lord; must be joined, not to 'brethren,' to which it would add no meaning, but to 'being-confident' specifying in very emphatic manner the Personal Ground of their increasing confidence. Through Paul's imprisonment most of the Christians around reposed new trust in Christ: for they saw in Paul, as they had never seen before, the presence and power and sufficient grace of Christ. Thus was 'Christ magnified' in Paul's body: Philippians 1:20. [This use of the Greek dative to denote an instrument is not uncommon: see Romans 11:20; 15:18. To take 'my bonds' as the ground of confidence, though grammatically admissible, (see Philemon 21,) gives no intelligible sense. Paul's imprisonment was the occasion, and in this sense the instrument, of trust in Christ, but could not be its ground. Moreover, the ground of this confidence is clearly stated: it is 'in Christ.']

More-abundantly bold; recognises previous abundant boldness, which is now surpassed.

Fearlessly; adds definiteness, and thus emphasis, to ‘more-abundantly bold.’ No mixture of fear weakened the courage with which they proclaimed ‘the word of God.’

Thus in a twofold way did Paul’s imprisonment aid the spread of the Gospel it threatened so seriously to hinder. By means of his long confinement, Christ became known throughout the most influential part of the Roman army, and to all the men around the prisoner. And such was his conduct in prison that he became to most of the Christians at Rome a revelation of the universal grace of Christ, and thus led them to put in Him new confidence and, trusting in Him, to give to the winds all fear and with greater courage than before proclaim the message of God.

**Ver. 15.** The last words of Philippians 1:14 remind Paul that not all who ‘speak the word of God’ are prompted by confidence in Christ evoked by his imprisonment. Among them he distinguishes two classes inspired by different motives.

Because of envy: moved by vexation at Paul’s success: same words in Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10.

Strife: active opposition, a natural result of ‘envy.’ Same words together in 1 Timothy 6:4. ‘Even ill-will prompted by my success and a resolution to oppose’ me are motives to some men for preaching Christ.

Goodwill: either something which seems good to us, as in Luke 10:21 or a wish for the good of others, as here. These senses often coalesce, as in Romans 10:1. The meaning here is determined and expounded by the word ‘love’ in Philippians 1:16.

Proclaim: as heralds announce the coming of a king.

Proclaim Christ: as in 1 Corinthians 1:23; 15:12; 2 Corinthians 1:19; 4:5; 11:4.

The hostility to Paul, revealed in Philippians 1:15, on the part of some who preached Christ, indicates a conception of the Gospel radically different from his. This suggests that these were Judaizing teachers like

those referred to in Galatians 1:7; 6:12 and like the apparently similar teachers mentioned in 2 Corinthians 11:4, 13, 22. And the suggestion is strongly confirmed by the plain reference to such teachers in Philippians 3:2, 3.

**Ver. 16-17.** Further description of the two classes who ‘preach Christ,’ justifying the foregoing account of them; and arranged, like 2 Corinthians 2:15, 16, in inverse order.

Out of love: the inward source of their preaching. Grammatically we may render either ‘They who’ preach ‘out of love’ do so ‘knowing that, etc.,’ or ‘These’ preach ‘out of love knowing, etc.’ To a similar alternative interpretation Philippians 1:17 is open. Since the words ‘out of love’ add definitely to the sense already conveyed by the word ‘goodwill’ in Philippians 1:15, noting that this goodwill is the central Christian virtue of ‘love,’ I prefer, with A.V. and R.V., the latter interpretation [So Hebrews 7:21, 12:10. The other in Romans 2:7, 8; Galatians 4:22.] The preaching prompted by ‘goodwill’ springs out of ‘love.’ This can only be love towards Paul, in contrast to the hostility described in Philippians 1:17.

Knowing that, etc.: ground of this special manifestation of Christian love. Notice here genuine phraseology of Paul: so Romans 5:3; 6:9; 13:11; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Corinthians 1:7; 4:14; 5:6, 11.

Defense of the Gospel: same words in Philippians 1:7. For this purpose Paul has been ‘set’ by God in his present position in the Church. These men ‘know’ this. And their Christian love inspires sympathy with the Apostle in his great work, and moves them to preach the Gospel committed to his charge. Consequently, in addition to men of baser motives there are those who ‘also because of goodwill proclaim Christ.’

**Ver. 17.** Another class who ‘preach Christ.’ They must have been included in, and therefore not more numerous than, the minority (Philippians 1:14) whose confidence in Christ was not increased by Paul’s imprisonment. Whether they constituted the whole minority, or whether there were in it others of different spirit, we do not know.

Out of a spirit of faction: same words in Romans 2:8, where see note. They denote a low and mercenary spirit, ready to do base work for hire or in order to gain selfish and contemptible ends. One such motive is

mentioned in Galatians 6:12. Paul thus traces to their source ‘the envy and strife’ spoken of in Philippians 1:15. He intimates that his opponents were annoyed at his success, because it interfered with their own selfish aims, and that on this account they stirred up conflict against him.

Announce Christ: bring the news that Christ has come. It is practically equivalent to ‘preach Christ,’ but leaves out of sight the official position of the herald. These words, which are in part a repetition, are added here to expose the incongruity of ‘announcing Christ out of party spirit.’

Not purely: a comment. With this announcement of Christ was mixed a base element.

Thinking to raise up, etc.: exposition of the foregoing. It justifies Paul’s charge that the preaching referred to was an outflow of mercenary spirit.

For my bonds: i.e. for Paul in prison. So Romans 8:26 ‘helps our weakness.’ They thought that what they were doing was making or would make Paul’s imprisonment more bitter to him. How this was to be, Paul does not say. But we can easily suppose that these were Jewish Christians who, like the Judaizers in Galatia insisted on the continued and universal observance of the Jewish law as a condition of the salvation brought by Christ. They knew that the Apostle strongly denounced their teaching as subversive of the Gospel. And they ‘supposed’ that by earnestly preaching Christ and winning converts, and thus raining influence in the Church, they would annoy Paul and make him feel more keenly the confinement which limited his effective opposition to them.

Affliction: usually, external hardship. Here and in 2 Corinthians 2:4 it denotes severe inward sorrow caused by the unworthy conduct of Christians.

This implies that to Paul such conduct was hardship as real as actual persecution.

Notice the contrast between the friends who ‘know,’ their action being based on truth and reality, and the opponents who ‘suppose’ but who labor, as Philippians 1:18 will show, under delusion.

**Ver. 18.** What then? literally, ‘for why?’ same words in Romans 3:3. They support, under the form of a startled question, or seek support for,

something foregoing. Paul has just said that even his opponents, speaking with mercenary motives, nevertheless ‘announce Christ.’ This assertion he will now strengthen.

In every way: expounded in detail by the following words.

Pretense: as a cloak concealing the real motive.

In truth: the apparent corresponding with the real. Paul supports the assertion in Philippians 1:17 by saying that it ‘only’ amounts to this, that in every variety of mode, some being actually what it seems to be, and some a mask covering most unworthy aims, ‘Christ is’ nevertheless ‘announced.’ The second repetition of this last thought reveals its large place in Paul’s thoughts about the various motives of the preachers at Rome. ‘In this’ great fact Paul has present ‘joy:’ and future joy awaits him, for reasons which he proceeds to give. Thus did his opponents fail. They thought, by propagating a Gospel which he condemned, to make his fetters more painful. Their efforts caused him joy, and gave him a hope of still further joy to come.

We have seen that Philippians 1:15 implies teaching about Christ and the Gospel by Paul’s opponents quite different from his own. We naturally ask, How could Paul expect from such teaching good results? In very different language does he speak of opponents in Galatians 5:12; 2 Corinthians 11:15. An answer is not far to seek. Efforts to lead astray Paul’s converts could do nothing but harm, and were therefore denounced in strong terms. But the words ‘preach Christ’ suggest that the activity of the adversaries at Rome was directed chiefly to those outside the Church. Such activity would at least spread the name of Christ, and might open a way for purer teaching. Possibly also, in accordance with the calmer tone which breathes throughout the letters written in prison, Paul’s maturer thought may have detected a better side even in teaching which aroused his indignation while engaged in active labor in the face of many enemies. His joy reminds us that very imperfect teaching may be better than no teaching, and warns us not to despise imperfect forms of Christianity. Probably the worst form of it is better than the best non-Christian teaching.

Such are the tidings about himself which Paul sends to his readers. His imprisonment has brought the name of Christ into influential circles which otherwise it could hardly have reached; and the bondage of one preacher has opened the lips of many. It is true that some of these are moved by ill-will. They think by their activity to make the prisoner's chain more galling. But by preaching Christ they are doing good. So completely have they missed their aim that their efforts to trouble Paul have caused him abiding joy.

## SECTION 4

### PAUL'S CONFIDENT HOPE, IN VIEW OF LIFE AND DEATH

#### CHAPTER 1:19-26

*For I know that to me this will result in salvation through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my eager expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be put to shame, but that with all boldness, as always so now also, Christ will be magnified in my body whether through life or through death. For to me to live is Christ: and to die, gain. But if to live in the flesh be my lot, this to me is fruit of work. And what I shall choose for myself I do not know. Moreover, I am held fast from the two sides, having my desire for dissolution and to be with Christ: for it is very far better. But to abide in the flesh is more necessary, because of you. And, being confident of this, I know that I shall abide, and abide with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your ground of exultation may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again.*

After describing his outer surroundings of bonds, friends, and enemies, Paul closed 3 by describing their inward effect upon him, viz. joy now and further joy in the future. This joy marks the transition to 4 which describes his inner life in its relation to his outward surroundings. In Philippians 1:19, 20 Paul justifies the joy expressed in Philippians 1:18, by a confident hope: and in Philippians 1:21-26 he looks at this confidence in its relation to the alternative of life and death which is now before him.

**Ver. 19.** A reason, viz. knowledge of the result, justifying Paul's joy that, even by his enemies and as a mask concealing a wish to annoy him, 'Christ is proclaimed.' Not his only reason, but one suiting his course of thought, which now passes from the life around him to the life within.

This: as in Philippians 1:18, that 'Christ is proclaimed' even by enemies and in pretense.



Salvation: in its usual sense of final deliverance from the spiritual perils of earth into eternal safety; as in Philippians 1:28, Philippians 2:12; Romans 1:16; 10:1, 10; 11:11; 13:11. Paul's joy that Christ is preached is not dimmed by the ill-will which occasioned it: for he knows that this effort to add bitterness to his imprisonment will work out for him spiritual safety and final deliverance.

How this is to be, he does not say. But we know that, to the faithful, hardship develops spiritual strength, and thus fits for the battle of life and leads to final victory. In this way tribulation works endurance and hope: Romans 5:3. Similarly, Paul's thorn in the flesh was designed by God to preserve him from spiritual peril: 2 Corinthians 12:7. Just so, the ill-will of his enemies was a safeguard preserving him for final 'salvation.' Consequently, it could in no degree dim his joy that Christ was preached. Indeed his joy was increased by the manifest victory over all evil involved in the spiritual benefit resulting from his enemies' attempt to vex him.

The word 'salvation' cannot mean release from imprisonment. For Paul is quite doubtful, as we shall see, whether life or death awaits him: there is no visible connection between his enemies' hostility and his own escape from prison, and no indication that the word is used here in any other than its ordinary sense.

Supplication or 'petition': as in Philippians 1:4. His readers' urgent request to God was a means through which Paul expected these good results. He knows that they pray for him, and is sure that God will answer their prayers in the development of his own spiritual life in spite of, and by means of, the hostility of his enemies. Another note of genuineness: cp. Romans 15:30; 2 Corinthians 1:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:2. It reveals Paul's high estimate of the value of prayer for others.

Supply, or 'bountiful supply': see under 2 Corinthians 9:10.

Grammatically, 'the Spirit of Jesus Christ' may be either Himself the matter supplied (cp. Galatians 3:5) or the Author of the supply. The practical difference is very slight. For the Holy Spirit given is Himself the active source of all spiritual good: and He supplies our need by Himself becoming the animating principle of our life. He is therefore both Giver and Gift. But since the Holy Spirit is usually thought of as definitely once for all given to all who believe, it is better to think of Him here as actively

supplying Paul's various spiritual needs. Notice two channels through which Paul expects blessings. He knows that his readers at Philippi will pray for him; and that in answer to their prayer the Spirit of Jesus will by His own presence supply the spiritual needs occasioned by Paul's peculiar circumstances.

**Ver. 20.** A personal and appropriate condition on which depends the realisation of the assured expectation just expressed: 'according to, etc.'

Eager-expectation: see under Romans 8:19. To this, the word 'hope' adds the idea of expected benefit.

That in nothing, etc.: negative side of the expectation, as usual placed first.

Put-to-shame: deserted by God in the hour of trial and thus covered with ridicule by the failure of his hopes. Paul is sure that 'in nothing' that awaits him will this happen. Same word in same sense in Romans 5:5. This objective sense involves also here the subjective sense of fear of ridicule, as in Romans 1:16. But the trust in God which pervades this page suggests that Paul thinks, not of what he will feel, but of what will happen to him.

In all boldness: positive side of Paul's expectation.

Christ will be magnified: in the subjective view of men, to whom Christ will occupy a larger place through that which they see in Paul; cp. Luke 1:46; Acts 10:46; 5:13; also Leviticus 10:3. Notice that in this enlargement Paul is represented not as himself magnifying Christ, but only as His body the locality in which 'Christ will be magnified.'

Boldness, or 'unreserved speech': see under 2 Corinthians 3:12. Paul has an assured hope that God will give him grace to speak the whole truth without fear of consequences, and that in his unreserved speech will be revealed the greatness of Christ. An example of this in Acts 4:13. Thus the realisation of Paul's hope depends upon himself. But even for courage he trusts to God and to the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Already Christ is 'always' magnified in Paul. And he has a firm hope that what has been hitherto will be 'now also,' even amid his peculiarly trying circumstances. This modest recognition of his own moral excellence is in close harmony with 2 Corinthians 1:12.

In my body: special locality of the revelation in Paul of the greatness of Christ. The weakness and suffering and peril of Paul's fettered body will show forth the greatness of Him who is able to fill His servants, even in prison, with confidence and peace and joy. 'The body' is specially mentioned as that side of Paul which comes in immediate contact with his hard surroundings and in which is seen manifested the greatness of Christ. The importance here given to 'the body' is a note of genuineness. Cp. Romans 6:12; 8:13; 12:1.

A tremendous alternative overhanging Paul's bodily life cannot be overlooked in this eager glance into the future. In any case, 'Christ will be magnified.' But Paul knows not 'whether' it will be 'through the continued preservation of his body in 'life, or through' his 'death.'

Such is the failure of the attempt to make Paul's imprisonment more galling. His opponents think to annoy him by preaching a Gospel he does not approve. Their attempt to vex him fills the prisoner with joy. For their preaching, though containing serious error, makes known the name of Christ to some who perhaps otherwise would not hear it. And Paul knows that their hostility is one of the many things working together for his good, giving occasion for Christian patience, and thus strengthening him for the remaining battle of life. That he is unmoved by such annoyance, evokes a sure confidence of final salvation. And this confidence is supported by knowledge that the beloved ones at Philippi pray for him and that the Spirit of Christ will supply his every need. This assurance of final victory rests upon an assurance that in every trial God will give to Paul a courage which will show forth the greatness of Christ, and is not shaken by his uncertainty whether life or death awaits him.

**Ver. 21-26.** The just mentioned alternative, 'whether by life or by death,' as it presents itself to the wavering thought and feelings of Paul.

To me; introduces conspicuously the personal experience of Paul.

To live is Christ; proves that 'Christ will be magnified... by life.' Cp. Colossians 3:4, 'Christ your life;' Galatians 2:20, 'Christ lives in me.' Christ animates and permeates Paul's entire activity, so that all his words and acts are really said and done by Christ and are therefore an outflow of Christ living in him. Consequently, the personality of Christ is the center

and circumference of the entire life of Paul. If so, in his body the character and greatness of Christ will ever appear. And the various events of life, pleasant and unpleasant, will but show how great Christ is.

To die is gain.: Whatever earthly wealth the Christian loses by death, he gains in the wealth of heaven infinitely more. For all material good is but a scanty and dim outline of the eternal reality. And none except the servants of Christ can speak of death as gain. Others may bravely give up life in a noble cause. They thus endure with worthy aim, so far as they can see, the loss of all things. The Christian martyr suffers no loss, for he knows that death is immediate enrichment.

These last words were not needed to prove that Christ will be magnified in Paul's death. For the martyr's dying courage is part of the life which Christ lives in him. But they strengthen the proof already given. For the greatness of Christ is revealed in every one who calmly looks death in the face for Christ's sake, and declares it to be gain. Such victory reveals the presence of one greater than death. These words are also a contrast suggested by the alternative now before Paul.

**Ver. 22.** To live in flesh; takes up 'to live' in Philippians 1:21. The added words are needed, after the implied reference to a life beyond the grave, to show that Paul refers now, not to his real life which is exposed to no uncertainty, but only to life 'in' mortal 'flesh.'

**Work:** immediate result and embodiment of sustained effort.

**Fruit of work:** further result developed from work done, according to its own organic laws. 'If' Paul continue 'to live' on earth, his continued life will be 'work' done; and from this work he will gather good 'fruit.' Close coincidence in Romans 1:13.

[Two renderings of this verse, as in R.V. text and margin, are possible. (a) The words 'If to live in' the 'flesh' may be a complete conditional clause; and 'this' is 'to me fruit of work' a direct assertion limited by the foregoing condition. In this case we must supply from the general train of thought some such words as 'be my lot.' The following words, 'and what I shall choose,' will then come naturally as an additional thought. The word 'if' will suitably introduce one side of the alternative of life and death which now fills the thought of Paul. And this alternative suggests easily

the inserted words 'be my lot.' For Paul is now uncertain what his lot will be. Or we may take (b) 'If to live in flesh... fruit of work' as one conditional clause, and the words 'what I shall choose for myself I know not' as the main assertion. That which in (a) is expressly stated, viz. that Paul's life in flesh brings with it fruit of labor, is in (b) only casually implied, the main assertion being that Paul knows not what to choose. The question is whether 'this' is 'to me fruit of labor' is an independent and direct assertion, or is merely subordinate to the assertion following. The importance of the thought contained in these words favors the former supposition. Moreover, to (b) the word if εἰ presents a difficulty. For, although it may be used, as Ellicott follows Meyer in saying, in a syllogistic sense as in Colossians 3:1, we have no case in the N.T. of this use where the idea of uncertainty is altogether absent. And here there is no doubt whatever that for Paul to live is to work and to have 'fruit of' his 'work.' Nor have we in the N.T. a case of καὶ used as (b) would require. On the other hand, the supplied words required by (a) are easily suggested by the terrible alternative before the prisoner awaiting his trial. Paul is sure that in his body Christ will be magnified, but knows not whether this will be by preserved life or by a martyr's death. If he live, his life will be a continued incarnation of Christ. If he die, death will enrich him. These last words seem to give a preference to death. But this, Paul repudiates. To him both death and life are gain. He therefore takes up the alternative of life, and tells its real significance and worth. Instead of saying simply 'to live in flesh, this is to me fruit of work,' Paul expresses the uncertainty of his present position by prefixing the word 'if,' conveying easily the sense 'if' it be my lot 'to live in' the 'flesh, etc.' This exposition gives the chief prominence to the most important words of the sentence, 'this' is 'to me fruit of work,' which the other exposition hides in a conditional clause. In spite therefore of the preponderant judgment of both ancient and modern expositors, I venture to give a slight preference to (a). But the practical difference is not great.]

'I do not know' or 'I do not say.' The latter is the meaning everywhere else in the N.T. of the word so rendered. The former is its more common use in classical Greek. And as a reader was accustomed to the one or the other, he would probably interpret Paul's words. The difference is slight.

The latter interpretation makes Paul simply silent: the former makes him silent because he has nothing to say.

**Ver. 23.** Additional detail about Paul's state of mind in view of the great alternative.

Held fast from the two sides: whichever way he looks, from that side comes an irresistible influence. 'To live in the flesh' is for Paul a prolonged incarnation of Christ, and brings with it work producing a harvest of blessing. And 'to die is gain.' Yet, in spite of this double and contrary compulsion, Paul has a 'desire' in the matter. It is 'for dissolution:' literally, 'taking-to-pieces.' A cognate word, in the same sense of death, in 2 Timothy 4:6. Often used in classical Greek in the sense of release or departure.

And to be with Christ: inseparably connected in Paul's thought with 'dissolution.' While saying that a double compulsion from two directions holds him fast, he yet acknowledges that his desire goes in the direction of dissolution and the immediate companionship of Christ which it gives. Over this preference Paul lingers, and supports it by a direct assertion: 'for it is very far better.' That he looked upon the state entered at death as a companionship of Christ 'very much better' than his present state of fruitful work, implies that in his view the departed servants of Christ are, while waiting for the greater glory of the resurrection, already in intelligent intercourse with Him infinitely closer than the fellowship enjoyed on earth. Notice that Paul's thought about death is not, as with many, mere rest from the hardships of life, but actual intercourse with Christ. A close coincidence with 2 Corinthians 5:8, where see note and thus another mark of common authorship.

**Ver. 24.** Paul's wavering thought, drawn in different directions, turns again to the advantage of continuing on earth.

To abide in the flesh: similar phrase in Romans 6:1; 11:22, 23; Colossians 1:23. Although his wearied heart yearns for the fuller fellowship with Christ which death will bring, he recognises the more pressing need that he remain a time longer in the weakness of bodily life. Notice the contrasted comparatives: 'very far better' and 'more necessary.'

Because of you: the beloved Christians at Philippi as representing all those whom Paul's continued life will benefit.

**Ver. 25.** Two renderings possible: 'and, being confident of this, I know that,' or 'and this I confidently know that, etc.' The former refers the word 'this' to the foregoing, making the necessity of Paul's continuance in the flesh a ground of his assurance that he shall so continue: the latter merely makes a very strong assertion without giving any reason. Paul's habit of giving reasons favors the former rendering. He is quite sure that there is more need for him to remain than to depart; and this assurance convinces him that that which is more needful will be his actual lot.

Abide: absolutely, continue in his present state.

Abide with you all: relative continuance, prolonged association with the Christians at Philippi.

Progress and joy of faith: probably 'progress' in the Christian life and the 'joy' which always accompanies growth, both progress and joy being derived from 'faith,' the unique condition of Christian life.

**Ver. 26.** Further aim of Paul's continuance with his readers. It is evidently a purpose of God, who will preserve him.

Ground of exultation: as in Romans 4:2.

May-abound: that you may have more and more to glory in and boast about. This increase of matter of exultation will be 'in Christ:' for He is the element, as well as the ground, of all Christian boasting. So 1 Corinthians 1:31.

In me: Paul liberated from prison would be to the Philippians an occasion of increased exultation, Christ being its element and ground. Similarly in Philippians 1:20, 'Christ will be magnified 'in' my body,' and Philippians 1:14, 'confident in the Lord through my bonds.'

Through my presence with you again; expands in detail in me. Paul's presence once more at Philippi after his imprisonment will give to the Christians there in his person an increased confidence and exultation in Christ. Thus will his continued life increase his readers' faith in God, and consequently their joy and their spiritual growth.

The ground and worth of the confidence in Philippians 1:25 we cannot now determine. If, as we have good reason to believe, the pastoral Epistles are genuine, this confidence was justified by the event. And possibly the Holy Spirit may have revealed to Paul, by spiritual insight into the needs of the case, God's purpose to deliver him from the terrible peril of his trial before Nero and to restore him to active work. (Cp. Acts 27:22-26, a close parallel.) But the assured expectation of evil recorded in Acts 20:25 was, as we learn from 1 Timothy 1:3, not actually realized. And the matter is unimportant. The truth of the Gospel preached by Paul rests upon a broad historical basis, of which his testimony is only one factor, and not upon his personal infallibility.

Section 4 gives us invaluable insight into the inner life of one of the greatest of the early followers of Christ, at a crisis which tests most severely the character of any man, viz. amid health and strength, the alternative of life and death. The uncertainty which breathes in every line accords with the statement in Acts 25:11; 27:1, that Paul went to Rome to be tried before Nero, a judge whose verdict and sentence no one could foresee. Yet, in this uncertainty, there is in the mind of Paul perfect certainty touching all that is really dear to him. He knows that even the hostility of false brethren is leading him to eternal safety, and as a ground of this confidence knows also that the hope he cherishes cannot be put to shame and that whatever awaits him will serve only to show forth the greatness of Christ. On the other hand, the uncertainty which has left its record even in the trembling phraseology of these verses pertains only to matters about which Paul was indifferent; in view, not of possibilities equally worthless, but of alternative prospects of equal and infinite value. Each side of the alternative has irresistible allurements. Continued life is continued manifestation of Christ in Paul, and work fruitful in a harvest of blessing. His presence on earth is needful for his converts, whose confidence in Christ will be increased by his return to them. But death is immediate enrichment: for it takes him at once to the presence of Christ. Yet the wearied eye and heart of the prisoner turn from the fascinating vision. For the sake of his children in the faith he cheerfully acquiesces in what seems to him to accord both with their need and with God's purpose, and looks forward confidently to restoration to active work for them.



## SECTION 5

### SUNDRY EXHORTATIONS, SUPPORTED BY THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

#### CHAPTER 1:27-2:18

*Only act as citizens worthy of the Gospel of Christ, that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand in one spirit, with one soul together contending by your belief of the Gospel, and not affrighted in any thing by the adversaries, which is for them proof of destruction, but of your salvation, and this from God: because to you it has been graciously given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer on His behalf; having the same contest, such as ye saw in me and now hear to be in me.*

*If there be then any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender feelings and compassions, make full my joy, that ye may mind the same thing, having the same love, with united souls minding the one thing; doing nothing by way of faction nor by way of vainglory, but with lowliness of mind each counting others better than themselves; not each of you looking to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who existing in the form of God, did not count His equality with God a means of high-handed self-enrichment, but emptied Himself taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men: and, found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself becoming obedient even unto death, death on a cross. For which cause also God exalted Him beyond measure, and graciously gave to Him the name which is beyond every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee may bow of heavenly ones and earthly ones and those under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

*So then, my beloved ones, according as always ye have obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, with fear and trembling work out your own salvation. For it is God who works in you both to will and to work, for His good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may become blameless and pure, children of God without blemish, in the midst of a generation crooked and perverted, among whom ye are seen as luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life, that I may have whereof to exult in the Day of Christ that not in vain I have run, neither have labored in vain. Yes, if even I am being poured out as a libation upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and rejoice with you all. and, the same thing, rejoice ye all, and rejoice with me.*

After speaking in 3, 4 about the things concerning himself, Paul comes now to those immediately concerning his readers. He bids them stand firm in face of their enemies, Philippians 1:27-30; exhorts to unity, Philippians 2:1, 2; and to unselfishness, supporting this exhortation by the example of Christ, Philippians 1:3-11; points out that on this depends their salvation, Philippians 1:12, 13; exhorts them to a spotless life, Philippians 1:14-16; and concludes with an expression of joy on their account, Philippians 1:17, 18.

**Ver. 27-30.** Only: as in Galatians 2:10; 3:2; 5:13. All that Paul has to say is summed up in this one exhortation.

Act-your-part-as-citizens: same word in Acts 23:1, from the lips of Paul: a remarkable coincidence. Also 2 Maccabees vi. 1; xi. 25. It represents the Church as a free city, like those of ancient Greece, of which all Christians are citizens. Possibly this word here, and the cognate word in Philippians 3:20, were suggested by the municipal rights which distinguished the citizens of the Roman colony of Philippi from the provincials around: cp. Acts 16:20. Citizenship involves privileges and duties. Paul therefore bids his readers act 'worthily of the Gospel,' which is both their charter of privileges and their law.

This general exhortation the rest of 5 expounds in detail.

In order that... I may hear that, etc.: the first detail in Paul's exhortation, in the form of a purpose which he bids his readers have in view in their behavior as citizens of the Kingdom of God. He urges them to act worthily in order that he may have the joy of hearing about their worthy conduct. He thus adds to his exhortation a motive, viz. his own attentive interest in them. Cp. Philippians 2:1.

Whether... or: two ways in which, as circumstances may determine, Paul hopes to hear about his readers, viz. either by visiting and seeing them and thus hearing from their own lips, or if absent by the report of others. Even in their midst, he would 'hear' about their steadfastness. In this case, hearing would be associated with coming and seeing, in the other case, with absence. The form of the alternative suggests that Paul thinks chiefly of hearing about his readers from a distance. Revelation assumes that his life will be spared. Otherwise, he would neither visit nor hear about them.

That ye stand, etc.: the matter Paul wishes to hear about his readers; and consequently the real object of his first exhortation.

Stand: maintain your position in the Christian life. A word and thought familiar to Paul: Philippians 4:1; Ephesians 6:11-14; Romans 5:2; 11:20, etc. It suggests the presence of enemies or dangers threatening to drive them back or cause them to fall.

In one spirit: one animating principle moving the many members of the Church, this principle looked upon as the element 'in' which they maintain their position: either the One Holy Spirit, who is (1 Corinthians 12:9, 11) the one personal inward source of life and harmony to the many servants of Christ; or the inward harmony which He imparts to those in whom He dwells, as suggested by 'one soul.' Since this Person and this harmony are cause and effect, the distinction is unimportant, and was perhaps not clearly marked in the writer's mind. Notice that, as in an army, so in the Church, harmony is a condition of steadfastness. The disunited fall.

Now follow two collateral clauses, each noting a condition of the desired steadfastness, viz. mutual help in the conflict, and fearlessness.

Contend: the Greek original of our word 'athlete.' It represents the Christian life as a struggle for a prize, like the athletic contests of Greece. See note under 1 Corinthians 9:27.

Together-contending: athletes represented as comrades in one struggle, each helping the others. Similar word in Romans 15:30, where Paul begs his readers to join with him, by praying for him, in the struggle of his apostolic work. But here he does not expressly mention his own conflict; and on the other hand the words ‘one spirit, one soul,’ place conspicuously before us the desired union of the Philippian Christians one with an other. Paul remembers that his readers are engaged in one great struggle, and desires that in it all may act together, as though the many were impelled by the soul of one man, this harmony being a condition of the steadfastness of which he hopes to hear.

Soul: see under 1 Corinthians 15:53. It is that side of man’s immaterial nature which is nearest to the body and directly influenced by it, and through the body by the outer world; and is thus distinguished from the ‘spirit,’ which is that in man nearest to God and directly influenced by the Spirit of God. The soul is therefore the emotional side of man, that which is roused by his surroundings. Paul desires that his readers be moved by one impulse.

The faith (or ‘belief’) of the Gospel: belief that the good news is true. The Gospel is the object-matter believed. So 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Colossians 2:12; cp. ‘faith of Christ’ in Philippians 3:9.

**Ver.** 28-30. A second collateral clause, noting a second condition of steadfastness, with comments upon it.

Affrighted: as a horse takes fright at a sudden alarm.

In anything: any adverse circumstances, be they what they may.

Adversaries: same word in 1 Corinthians 16:9; and, of one tremendous opponent, in 2 Thessalonians 2:4. The definite term ‘the adversaries’ shows that the conflict implied in the foregoing words was in part caused by abiding personal enemies, Jews or Gentiles. Samples may be found in 1 Thessalonians 2:14; Acts 17:5; 16:19, these last being at Philippi. Paul bids his readers not to be frightened out of their compact rank by any attack of their enemies.

Which is, etc.: an encouraging comment on the fearlessness which Paul desires in his readers.

**Destruction:** see under Philippians 3:19 and note under Romans 2:24.

**Proof:** same word in Romans 3:25; 2 Corinthians 8:24. The fearlessness of the persecuted will be to their enemies a proof that eternal ruin awaits them. For it will reveal supernatural help given to the persecuted, and thus prove that God is with them, and that consequently their opponents are fighting against God. An example of this in Acts 4:13; 5:39.

To them or 'for them': this proof being an objective reality before their eyes, whether they see it or not.

**Salvation:** as in Philippians 1:19. Their own courage, being evidently divinely given, is to them a proof that God is with them and that therefore they are on the way to eternal safety. So is every manifest work of God in us an earnest of final deliverance.

And this from God: not only actually a proof, but designed by God to be such. Both the courage and the proof therein implied are 'from God.' Taken in itself, this last statement might cover 'destruction' as well as 'salvation,' stating that both elements of the proof are 'from God.' But, since the explanation which follows in Philippians 1:29 refers only to the persecuted, probably to them only refer the last words of Philippians 1:28.

**Ver. 29.** A proof that the courage of the persecuted was designed by God to be to them a proof of their ultimate salvation.

**Graciously-given:** or 'given-as-a-mark-of-favor' or 'grace:' frequent with Paul, found only with him and Luke. A cognate word, frequent with Paul, is found elsewhere only in 1 Peter 4:10: see under Romans 1:11.

**On-behalf-of Christ:** in order to advance His pleasure or interests.

To believe in him: a phrase very common with John, with Paul only Romans 10:14; Galatians 2:16. The repeated words 'on his behalf' lay great stress on the fact that the sufferings endured by the Philippian Christians were endured in order to help forward the Kingdom of Christ. God had ordained, in His favor towards them, that they should not only accept as true the promises of Christ but 'also' undergo suffering in order to advance a work dear to Him. Their sufferings were, therefore, part of a

divine purpose; and consequently the proof involved in them was part of that purpose.

Since the mention here of faith is only casual and is designed chiefly to throw into prominence the sufferings for Christ which follow faith in Him, it is unsafe to base upon these words a definite proof that faith is a gift of God. But, since we should never have believed in Christ had He not first spoken to us, and had not God exerted upon us influences leading us to accept the words of Christ, we may in this guarded sense speak of faith as a gift of God. Similarly, sufferings are gifts of God's favor: for they come upon us by His design and for our good. This seems to me all that can fairly be inferred from this verse. The scantiness in the N.T. of proofs that faith is a gift of God was perhaps occasioned by the danger lest, if it were taught more definitely, we might wait for faith as for some gift not yet bestowed, instead of at once accepting the promises of Christ.

**Ver. 30.** A statement collateral and subordinate to that of Philippians 1:29, giving to the persecuted still further encouragement.

**Conflict:** the ordinary word for the athletic contests referred to in Philippians 1:27.

The same conflict or 'the same sort of conflict as ye saw in me': close coincidence with Acts 16:19-24. The persecutions of Paul's readers arose from the same cause, and therefore belonged to the same category, as his own scourging and imprisonment at Philippi. They might therefore look for similar divine help. And this letter tells them that similar hardships and perils surround him now at Rome. When Paul was before their eyes at Philippi, they 'saw' in him a conflict like their own present troubles. And 'now' from a distance they 'hear' tidings which reveal 'in' his person a similar conflict. Yet at Philippi they saw him unmoved by his enemies. And from this letter they hear that he is unmoved now. Thus Paul brings the example of his own courage to inspire his readers.

Turning to the Christians at Philippi, Paul's one thought is that they may act in a manner worthy of the spiritual commonwealth to which they belong and of the good news they have heard. His own deadly peril reminds him that they also are exposed to hardship and peril. He therefore bids them maintain their position in face of their foes; and to this end

exhorts them to contend bravely shoulder to shoulder, armed with their belief of the good news; and to be undismayed by their enemies. Their fearlessness will be a proof of the destruction awaiting their foes and of the deliverance awaiting them, and this by God's design. For their persecutions are no mere accident, but are a part of God's great purpose of mercy, He having ordained that they shall not only believe the promises of Christ, but also suffer to advance His kingdom. Their hardships have the same source and the same gracious aid as the hardships at Philippi from which God so wonderfully delivered Paul, and as the hardships now at Rome, in which, while he writes, Christ is daily magnified.

**Ver.** 1-2. Another exhortation arising out of, and in part repeating and developing, the exhortation in Philippians 1:27-30.

If there be then: an appeal based on the conflict just mentioned.

Encouragement: speech calculated to prompt to action or endurance: same word as exhort' in Romans 12:1, where see note.

In Christ: 'if in the spiritual life, of which Christ is Himself the surrounding and lifegiving element, there is anything to move you.' Cp. 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 10:1.

Consolation: kind words to one in sadness, thus distinguished from the word rendered 'encouragement.' Such kind words Christian 'love' ever prompts. 'If 'love' prompts words of comfort to those in sorrow, remember me in prison at Rome and yield to my request.'

Fellowship of the Spirit: either a sharing with others the gift of the Holy Spirit, or brotherliness prompted by the Spirit. The latter would give to the word 'fellowship' the same sense as in Philippians 1:5, and is suggested by the Christian harmony so earnestly desired in the words following. It is therefore the more likely interpretation. A close parallel in Romans 15:30, where an appeal is supported by reference both to Christ and to the 'love of the Spirit,' i.e. the love with which the Holy Spirit fills the hearts of those in whom He dwells.

Tender-mercies: as in Philippians 1:8. To this word, the word 'compassions' adds the idea of pity towards one in distress, viz. Paul at Rome. Thus the 4th plea is related to the 2nd, which recalls the idea of

distress: the 3rd is related to the 1st, giving the divine source of the disposition Paul desires. 'If there is anything in Christ moving you to yield to my request, if my sufferings claim the consolation which love is ever ready to give, if the Holy Spirit whom ye have received as the animating principle of a new life is a spirit of brotherhood, if in your hearts sufferings can evoke tenderness and pity, ', etc. The earnestness of this fourfold appeal prepares us for a request of the highest importance.

To the word 'any' before 'tender-mercies' all uncials and many cursive MSS. agree to give a form utterly ungrammatical and unintelligible, a manifest error. The error extends only to one or two letters, and makes no appreciable difference in the meaning of the passage. That an error so evident has passed uncorrected in all the older and many of the later Greek MSS. is certainly remarkable, and proves that even the agreement of the best copies is no absolute guarantee against error. But one trifling slip does nothing whatever to shake our confidence in the general accuracy of our copies. Moreover it reveals the accuracy of the transcribers, an accuracy not less valuable because it is sometimes unthinking.

**Ver. 2.** An earnest request, for which the foregoing pleas have prepared the way.

Fill up my joy: implying that if the readers will yield to Paul's request nothing will be wanting to make him 'full' of 'joy.' Cp. 1 Thessalonians 3:8, 9. We have here again (cp. Philippians 1:4) the golden thread of joy which runs through and illumines this Epistle. Notice that, although grammatically 'fulfil my joy' is the matter of Paul's request, it is really another plea, the actual request being added, in the form of a purpose, in the words following. This first request is an appeal to fill with gladness the heart of the prisoner awaiting his trial at Rome.

That ye may, etc.: the real request, put in rather furtively as the aim the readers are to have in view. They must resolve to 'mind the same thing.' By so doing they will fill Paul with joy.

Mind: as in Romans 8:5. The same thing actuated by a like aim; as in Philippians 4:2; Romans 12:5; 2 Corinthians 13:11. This purpose is expounded and developed in two participial clauses. 'The same thing,'



which Paul desires in his readers, is 'love' one to another, 'the same love' in each breast.

The one thing: stronger than 'the same thing,' stating that the readers are not only to agree in thought and aim but to agree in one definite aim. That this aim is to be Christ and His Kingdom, Paul leaves them to infer.

With-united-souls: similar words in Philippians 1:27. It is best to connect this word closely with those following, as describing the manner in which they are to 'mind the one thing,' thus giving to this clause the chief weight. The harmony is to pervade not only the intelligence but the emotions. Cp. 'from the soul' in Ephesians 6:6; Colossians 3:23. The earnestness of these repeated pleas reveals the infinite importance of Christian unity: and this is confirmed by similar language in Romans 15:5; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:3-6, and by the Savior's prayer in John 17:21-23.

**Ver.** 3-4. Two other participial clauses, each warning against a disposition fatal to Christian unity and commending the opposite virtue.

Faction: as in Philippians 1:17.

Vainglory, or 'empty glory': an appearance without reality.

By way of faction and vainglory: two distinct paths, along neither of which would Paul have his readers go. He warns them both against a mercenary spirit and against a desire for empty show. In this clause we have no verb. Since the repeated word 'by-way-of' suggests actions along a mental line marked out, it is better to supply the word 'doing.' It was needless to insert it: for action was clearly implied.

Lowliness-of-mind: see under Colossians 3:12. It is suggested by the word 'mind' in Philippians 2:2. [The Greek article indicates the well-known virtue of humility.] This virtue must be in active exercise when Christians compare themselves with others.

Looking-at: 'not' making 'his own' interest the goal of his forethought. See under 2 Corinthians 4:18. But also; rather softens the foregoing absolute prohibition. Paul now requires, not that the interest of others be the only object of our thought, but that it have a place along with our own interest. Similar teaching in 1 Corinthians 10:24, 33; 13:5. It is therefore another note of common authorship. Whether the above warning against

selfishness was prompted by something special at Philippi, we have no means of knowing. The universality of selfishness, imperilling everywhere Christian unity, forbids us to infer from these words such special occasion.

**Ver. 5-11.** A new sentence bringing suddenly before us the supreme example of Christ. A close coincidence with Romans 15:3; 2 Corinthians 8:9. Since the example of Christ does not bear directly on Christian unity, but is the absolute opposite of every kind of selfishness, which is a universal hindrance to unity, it is best to understand the example of Christ as adduced simply to give the strongest possible support to the words immediately preceding.

Have this mind, etc.: ‘cherish ‘in yourselves’ as an object of your thought the thought and disposition ‘which was in Christ.’”

Also in Christ Jesus: the mind which was actually in Christ ‘and’ that which Paul desires in his readers being placed side by side. Notice that although the words which follow refer to the not yet Incarnate Son, (see under Philippians 2:7,) He is here called ‘Christ Jesus.’ So 2 Corinthians 8:9; 1 John 4:2. This reveals Paul’s intense conviction of the continuous and undivided personality of the Eternal Son and the God-Man. This made it easy to give to the Pre-incarnate Son the name He bore as Man among men; the more so because only through His appearance in human form is the Eternal Son known to men. It is specially easy here because Paul is really adducing the example of the Incarnate Son, tracing however the example of Christ on earth to the purpose of the not yet Incarnate Son contemplating His approaching life on earth. See below.

**Ver. 6-11.** The thought of Christ which Paul desires in his readers he expounds in Philippians 2:6-8, in its successive stages of self-emptying and self-humiliation until He hangs dead on the cross, this being the lowest point in His descent. Then follows in Philippians 2:9-11 His exaltation by the Father, until to the Name of Jesus is paid universal homage, all this being a divine recompense for His self-humiliation and an inducement to men to follow His example. We have thus a unique and infinite example of unselfishness, crowned by unique honor. Verse 6-8. The voluntary descent of Christ, in its two successive stages. Philippians 2:6, 7 describe His original condition, and His surrender of it at His Incarnation: Philippians 2:8 describes the condition then assumed, and His action to the moment of

death. We thus find the Son in three positions, in His original glory, as man on earth, and dead upon the cross.

Form: that in which essence manifests itself; the sum total of that by which an object is distinguished from other objects and thus made known. Whatever, we can see, hear, or touch is the form of a material object: whatever we can grasp with the mind is the form of a mental object. It is to the essence what the outside is to the inside, what the manifestation is to the underlying and unseen reality. It is “the utterance of the inner life” (Trench) of whatever exists. Same word in the N.T. only Mark 16:12; also Daniel 5:6, 9, 10; 7:28; 4:33; Isaiah 44:13; Job 4:16. Cognate words in Romans 2:20; 2 Timothy 3:5; also Galatians 4:19; Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 8:29; Philippians 3:10, 21. It is closely related in sense to ‘image,’ which however suggests the idea of comparison and similarity.

Existing: a more emphatic word than ‘being,’ yet common. It recalls the condition and surroundings of existence. These words refer evidently to the not yet incarnate Son. For they describe His state when He ‘emptied Himself’ by ‘becoming in the likeness of men,’ i.e. by His birth as a human child. To this, as we have seen, the words ‘Christ Jesus’ are no objection. Nor is it an objection that this is an example for men on earth. For the action even of the Father is made in Matthew 5:45-48 an example for men. Moreover the entire action of Christ on earth is an outflow in human form of His divine nature. See under Philippians 2:11. These words therefore describe the Eternal Son before, and apart from, His incarnation. He was then ‘in the form of God.’ And since, without an intelligent mind to grasp it, ‘form’ would lose its real significance, we must conceive the Son contemplated by the Father and by the bright ones of heaven. They saw in Him an expression corresponding to the essence of God. This implies that the Son was, before His Incarnation, a Person distinct from the Father. And, if so, a divine Person. Other wise His self-manifestation would be (cp. 2 Timothy 3:5) a deception, which is inconceivable. Consequently, these words imply equality with God. And this is explicitly assumed in the words following. See Dissertation iii. The phrase ‘in the form of God’ was chosen doubtless for contrast to ‘form of a servant.’ This contrast reveals the supreme unselfishness of Christ. On the Mount the Incarnate Son assumed, in the presence of the chosen Apostles, as He did after His

resurrection to the disciples going to Emmaus, a ‘form,’ or mode of self-manifestation, different from that in which they were accustomed to see Him: Mark 9:2; 16:12. And our bodies, having laid aside their present transitory ‘shape,’ will share, as their mode of self-presentation, the glorious ‘form’ in which Christ Himself will appear: Philippians 3:21.

His equality with God: literally ‘the existing in a manner equal to God.’ The Greek article points to a definite thought already before us. And this is found, and found only, in the words ‘existing in the form of God.’ For He who thus existed must have also existed ‘in a manner equal to God.’ These last words tell us the inner reality underlying ‘the form of God.’ And, as we have seen, He whose existence can be thus described must be divine. In these words Paul’s teaching about the nature of the Son finds its culmination. Throughout his Epistles the Son occupies a place infinitely above that of the loftiest creatures. He is here explicitly assumed to be ‘equal to God.’ This equality Christ ‘did not count’ a means of ‘high-handed self enrichment:’ or, more literally, ‘no high-handed self enriching did He deem the being equal to God.’

[The verb underlying the substantive I have rendered ‘high-handed self-enrichment’ means to snatch, to take hold of quickly with a strong hand. With such strong-handed taking, very frequently injustice is associated, yet not always: for the word is used of a man grasping his own sword; and in John 6:15; Acts 8:39; 2 Corinthians 12:2 the same word is used without any thought of injustice. But it always denotes taking hold of, or snatching, something not yet in our hands. This is made quite certain by an argument in Chrysostom’s Homily (vi. 2) on this passage. The precise word here used is found in non-Christian Greek only, I believe, in Plutarch’s ‘Morals’ p. 12a for a violent act of seizure, according to the usual active sense of the termination. For the booty seized, the passive form [απραγμα](#) is common in later Greek. Lightfoot quotes three passages from early Christian writers in which apparently this meaning is given to the word [απραγμος](#) which is used in the passage before us. It is so understood here by him and Ellicott and several early Greek writers. But these two modern commentators suggest no reason why Paul passes by the common phrase [απραγμα ηγεισθαι](#) and uses instead the rare word [απραγμος](#). The natural explanation is that the word chosen expresses a sense not conveyed by the word passed over. And, if so, the difference of

sense must be sought in the different termination. Moreover, Lightfoot's exposition gives to **αρπαζω** the sense of refusing to let go that which one already securely holds, a sense which it never has. The real meaning of the verb is illustrated by one of Lightfoot's own quotations, Eusebius, 'Church History' bk. viii. 12, where we have **τον θανατον αρπαγμα θεμενοι** written about men who, casting themselves from high roofs, laid violent hands on death and made it their own. Evidently death was not theirs until they threw themselves down. Lightfoot compares the words **ευρημα** and **ερμαιον**. But, like **αρπαγμα**, these words denote always an acquisition, not an ancient possession. And equality with God was to the Eternal Son no acquisition. Consequently it could not be an object to be snatched hold of. Again if, as Lightfoot interprets, the Son did not clutch His equality with God, we must suppose that he allowed it to go from His grasp, that He gave it up. Surely this is inconceivable. The Son gave up 'the form of God,' i.e. the utterance of the inner reality of the divine existence, in order to assume the form of a servant: but, even when He had emptied Himself, He was in very truth essentially equal to God. The force of this combined objection seems to me irresistible. The exposition before us makes Paul use a rare word which suggests a meaning he did not intend instead of a common word expressing exactly his intended meaning; gives to the root of the word here used a sense it never has, viz. to hold fast something already in one's hand; and implies that the Son of God did not refuse to give up His equality with God. Meyer and Hofmann, expositors unsurpassed for grammatical accuracy and exegetical tact, give to the word **αρπαγμος** its natural sense, and interpret the passage to mean that the Son did not look upon His divine powers as a means of self-enrichment. They understand this passage to describe the Son contemplating His own divine powers in view of His approaching entrance into the world. He did not look upon his equality with God as a means of laying hold for Himself, after becoming man, of the good things of earth, wealth, enjoyment, power; but, instead of this, laid aside the form of God, i.e. the assertion of His divine powers, and took His lot merely as a man among men. Christ thus presents an infinite contrast to the gods of Homer, who ever used their superhuman powers for their own enjoyment. This exposition seems to me altogether satisfactory. It accepts the natural grammatical meaning both of the root and the termination of the uncommon Greek word here used. Meyer appropriately compares a similar word used in 1 Timothy 6:5 to

describe persons who looked upon piety as a means of gain. In their thought piety and gain were coincident: to have the one was to have the other. And it agrees most fully with the context. For Christ's refusal to use His divine powers to take for Himself as man material good was the highest conceivable example of seeking not His own things, but the things of others. The Latin writers generally, Tertullian, Ambrosiaster, Ambrose, Augustine, led astray by the Latin rendering 'rapina,' a word denoting 'plunder,' explain this passage to mean that Christ did not look upon His equality with God as an act of robbery, in other words, that He deemed Himself to be justly equal to God. This exposition is quite consistent with the following word **ἰσότης**: see my 'Corinthians' p. 124. But it gives to the words 'equality with God' the meaning of 'assumption of equality with God,' a meaning in no way suggested by the context; and makes injustice to be the most conspicuous idea of **ἰσότης**, an idea not belonging to the word. Moreover, it reduces this passage to an exposition of 'in the form of God' with no direct bearing upon Christ's self-humiliation as an example of unselfishness, thus leaving unexplained its emphatic position in the sentence. This exposition is based on the Latin versions, and is almost confined to the Western Church. It thus came into the English Versions, Protestant and Roman Catholic. But it is rejected by almost all modern expositors. Of Greek commentators, Origen ('On Romans' bk. v. 2, p. 553) expounds the passage to mean 'did not reckon it a great thing for Himself that He was equal to God:' and he is followed by Theodore of Mopsuestia and by Theodoret. But the connection between this exposition and Paul's Greek words is not evident. Chrysostom expounds it to mean that Christ did not look upon His own equality with God as something which He had taken by force, and which since it was acquired by force might be lost by force and must therefore be carefully guarded. Instead of doing this, and conscious that His equality with God was securely His own, Christ 'emptied Himself,' thus laying aside for a time the manifestation of His equality with God. This exposition gives to the word **ἰσότης** the sense of **ἰσότης**, and thus fails to explain Paul's substitution of a rare and less suitable word for one common and altogether suitable. And it makes the connection between Philippians 2:6 and Philippians 2:7 so distant as to be unrecognisable. On the other hand, it holds fast the true sense of **ἰσότης**, viz. to take hold of something not yet in our grasp. A somewhat similar exposition is found in other Greek

writers. Others again quote the words of Paul as an example of the condescension of Christ, without expounding their exact meaning. Lightfoot says that his own exposition “is the common and indeed almost universal interpretation of the Greek Fathers, who would have the most lively sense of the requirements of the language,” and gives a long list of quotations. These quotations support him in rejecting the exposition of the Latin Fathers. But not one of them confirms his own exposition. So far as I know it is not supported by any ancient writer. And inasmuch as the writers he quotes evidently understood *αρπαγμος* in the sense of acquirement or something acquired, and Chrysostom speaks of this as implied in the word, they really contradict the exposition they are quoted to support. On the other hand, I do not know of any ancient writer who holds Meyer’s view. We are therefore left, in the interpretation of this difficult passage, without any help from the early Christian writers. See farther in the ‘Expositor,’ 3rd series, vol. v. p. 115.]

**Ver. 7.** Exact opposite of counting His equality with God a means of self-enrichment.

Himself: emphatic. A grasping hand frequently empties those on whom it is laid. So did the hand of the Eternal Son: but it was upon ‘Himself’ that the violent hand was laid. The two participial clauses following specify with increasing clearness the way in which the Son’s self-emptying was manifested.

The likeness of men: close coincidence with Romans 8:3, ‘in the likeness of the flesh of sin.’ It suggests that Christ was not in every respect a man. And this is fully consistent with Paul’s frequent description of Him as Man: e.g. Romans 5:15, 18; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 47; 1 Timothy 2:5. Since the human race is older than sin, we may think of the essential attributes of manhood without thought of sin, and, using the word in this correct sense, speak of Christ as truly man. On the other hand, the universality of sin justifies our including it now in our conception of mankind. In this sense, Christ was not man, but ‘in the likeness of men.’ For in outward form He was exactly similar to the race which inherited Adam’s sin. ‘In all things He was made like to His brethren:’ Hebrews 2:17. These two modes of viewing our race forbid us to infer from this verse that Christ was not actually man.

Being-made: literally 'having-become:' same word in Romans 1:3; Galatians 4:5. By clothing Himself in a humanity like that of other men, the Eternal Son entered a mode of existence new to Him. These words are Paul's counterpart to John 1:14, 'The Word became flesh.' By entering a mode of existence like that of Adam's children, the Son took the 'form of a servant,' or 'slave.' For creatures are essentially the property of the Creator, bound to use all creaturely powers to work out His will. This simple exposition forbids us to infer from these words that Christ was ever servant to an earthly master. The Son assumed the obligations of a creature. He who had been recognised by angels as bearing the 'form of God' presented Himself on earth to the eyes of men as one doing the work of another. In connection with His entrance into human life, and with His assumption of a creature's form, the Son 'emptied Himself.' These words involve the whole mystery of the Incarnation. They therefore demand in their exposition the utmost caution and reverence.

The words 'emptied Himself' assert that the Son exerted upon Himself an influence which deprived Him, while on earth, of some fulness which He previously had, and made Him in some sense 'empty.' And this suggests that this self-emptying was the negative condition of His assumption of a servant's form. It will help us to understand these words if we first note a broad distinction between certain elements which go to make up, so far as we can understand it, the nature of God. Love is the essence of God: 1 John 4:8, 16. Consequently, to lay aside His love, even for a moment, would be not to empty, but to deny and mutilate Himself. For an empty vessel still retains all its essential parts. Nor could the Son (cp. 2 Timothy 2:13) interrupt the full exercise of His infinite love. Indeed of that love His entire life on earth was a ceaseless outflow. Moreover all the moral attributes of God are involved in His unique attribute of love. To be untrue or unjust would be unloving. Consequently, the essential truth and justice of the Son could not even for a moment become inoperative. These therefore were not in any way laid aside at the Incarnation. On the other hand, the natural attributes of God stand in a different relation to Him. His power is not necessarily, like His love, always in full exercise. It is active only so far and in such manner as His love and wisdom determine. To refrain from its full exercise is therefore not inconsistent with the nature of God. A limitation even of knowledge does not necessarily contradict



infinite love. Yet both power and knowledge increase immensely the practical value of love.

With this distinction in view we turn to the recorded life of the Incarnate Son. We find Him (Luke 2:52) growing in knowledge, and yet acknowledging at the close of His life (Mr 13:32) that He did not know the day of His return. Yet strangely mingled with this human ignorance we find in Him divine omniscience: John 2:25. The Son was guided (Luke 4:1) by the Holy Spirit; and in the strength of the Spirit (Luke 4:14; Matthew 12:28) were wrought His miracles. This limited knowledge reveals the presence in the God-Man of a human Spirit capable of limitation and increase. And that the indivisible personality of the Eternal Son accepted the limitations of a pure human spirit, and was anointed for work (Acts 10:38) by the power of the Holy Spirit, implies a renunciation for a time and for man's salvation of the full exercise of His divine powers. See under 2 Corinthians 8:9. To this renunciation indisputably refer the words before us. How He who from all eternity knows all things, and by the word of His power upholds all things, could in any sense accept the limitation of human knowledge and become a medium of the operation of the power of the Holy Spirit, is beyond our thought. It is to us inscrutable, because divine. But it is the mystery of divine love. Notice that although in one sense, as here stated, the Incarnate Son was empty, in another sense even upon earth He was (John 1:14) 'full of truth and grace.' The difference is only verbal.

The words of John look upon grace and truth as contents of the Son's divine personality: the words before us assume that they are part of His nature and therefore remain with Him even when He had emptied Himself. We may therefore reverently believe that, in order to save man, the Eternal Son entered a life subject to human limitations; and that in order to do this, while retaining in full exercise the infinite love which is the essence of God and which could not be even for a moment inoperative, the Son deliberately laid aside, by an influence upon Himself which no creature can exert, the full exercise of His divine powers, thus permitting them to become for a time latent. Guided by infinite wisdom and prompted by infinite love, the Eye Omniscient was for a moment closed, and the power which made the world became latent. The possibility of this self-emptying lies deep in the mystery of the Divine Trinity. But it is the most

wonderful outshining conceivable of the infinite splendor of divine love. Every attempt to understand the Great Renunciation must hold fast the real Manhood, the unchangeable Divinity, and the undivided Personality, of the God-Man. Since the exercise of the Son's divine powers were the utterance of His inner essence, of His equality with God, that which He laid aside was the 'form of God.' But this is not expressly asserted here. On the other hand, we have no hint, and no reason to believe, that He laid down His 'equality with God.' We are merely told that He did not look upon it as a means of seizing for Himself the good things of earth.

**Ver. 8.** Further and final descent of the Son, in graphic delineation. Some ancient versions and the Rheims Roman Catholic version punctuate, 'being made in the likeness of men and found in fashion as a man: He humbled Himself.' But this extension of the last clause of Philippians 2:7 is rather tautological, and gives to the words 'He humbled Himself' an unaccountable abruptness: whereas the punctuation of the A.V. and R.V. gives to the whole sentence a more harmonious and majestic flow and to each clause due weight. Paul describes first the not yet incarnate Son, then His descent into humanity, then depicts His condition as a man among men, and His further descent, until He reaches its lowest point and hangs dead upon the cross. Fashion (in N.T. only 1 Corinthians 7:31) differs from 'form' as any occasional appearance or visible clothing differs from an expression which corresponds to actual inner reality. The 'form of God' is the appropriate self-manifestation of the Son's essence, of 'His equality with God.' The 'fashion as a man' was the outward guise of humanity, a visible clothing bearing only a distant relation to the actual nature of the Son. It is practically the same as 'in the likeness of men,' except perhaps that it recalls more conspicuously the outward aspect of Christ as an individual man. In this outward guise, by those who sought Him, the Incarnate Son was found. This last word keeps before us, as does the conspicuous repetition of the word 'form,' the self-presentation of the Son both as God and as man.

**Humbled Himself:** chose for Himself a lowly path. Such was Christ's every step from the manger to the grave.

**Becoming obedient:** mode of Christ's self-humiliation. It is related to 'He humbled Himself' as is 'taking the form of a servant' to 'He emptied

Himself.' Having laid aside the manifestation of His divine powers and become Man, the Son entered also the path of obedience, the normal moral state of man. He thus manifested in the human form of obedience His essential and absolute devotion to the Father.

As far as to death: the extent of Christ's obedience. [Cp. 2 Timothy 2:9; Hebrews 12:4.] In the path of obedience He went on till He reached the grave.

Death upon a cross: a graphic detail marking the extreme limit of the downward path which God marked out for His Son on earth, and which He obediently trod. He refused not to die a criminal's death. This was the lowest step of the lowly path entered when He emptied Himself. Such is the example by which Paul supports his exhortation that his readers seek not their own things, but also the things of others. It is found in the visible human life of the Son of God, of whom therefore Paul speaks as 'Christ Jesus.' The thoughts which manifested themselves in the Incarnate Son he bids us think in ourselves. And, since these thoughts were earlier than the incarnation, he lays open to us the mind of the pre-existent Son.

Contemplating His approaching life on earth, He did not look upon His divine powers as a means of grasping the good things which are to so many men objects of highest ambition and desire; but gave up, for the term of His life on earth, the exercise of these powers, thus leaving His divine personality in a sense empty, accepted the distinctive features of service, and became like men. Nor was this all. A further descent begins where the first ended. We go to seek the self-emptied Son, and we find Him clothed in a guise such as men wear. He treads a lowly path marked out for Him by divine command, until it leads Him to death in its most shameful form. As we gaze at Christ dead upon the cross, and remember the splendor from which He came and the earthly possibilities which were within His reach, and remember also that He left that glory and endured that shame of His own free will and in order to save the lost and to make them sharers of His glory, we see in Him an example of unselfishness the most sublime we can conceive.

**Ver. 9-11.** The matchless exaltation which followed the matchless self-humiliation of Christ. For which cause also God: the divine recompense for the foregoing.

Him: emphatic; the divine Author and divine object of this exaltation placed side by side.

Highly exalted: literally 'exalted-beyond' measure.

Graciously-given: same word in Philippians 1:29. The name given was a mark of the Father's favor to the Son.

Beyond every name: corresponding to 'exalted-beyond' measure. This name comes up to, and goes 'beyond, every' other. Same thought in Hebrews 1:4. As a definite object of thought, it is 'the name.' Not necessarily the name Jesus, which is merely that by which He was actually known among men; nor any special articulate sound; but the name which belongs to, and denotes, in heaven and earth, the personality of Him that was born at Bethlehem. For this, not an articulate sound, is the one essential point. The exaltation and name of Christ are a gift of the Father, as in Ephesians 1:20-22; Colossians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 15:15, 27.

**Ver.** 10-11. A purpose of God in exalting Christ.

In the name of Jesus: so 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 4:14; James 5:14. A 'name' is personality as known and recognised among men, and as distinguished from others. In the recognised personality of Jesus abides the Majesty before which God designs all to bow.

Every knee bow: graphic delineation of the act of worship. So Ephesians 3:14; Romans 11:4; 14:11.

Those-in-heaven: its angelic inhabitants. Same word in Ephesians 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12; 1 Corinthians 15:40, 48, 49.

Those-on-earth: living men. Same word in Philippians 3:19; 1 Corinthians 15:40; 2 Corinthians 5:1.

Those-under-the-earth: the dead, in contrast to the living. So Homer ('Iliad' bk. ix. 457) speaks of Pluto as "Zeus under the earth." It is unsafe to infer from this term that Paul thinks of universal worship earlier than the resurrection. His threefold Division includes angels and men at the moment of writing: and he divides the latter into those now living and those already dead. Without thought of time, looking only at the persons

belonging to these three all-inclusive classes, Paul says that God exalted Christ in order that every one of them should bow to Him. Nor is it safe to infer from 'every knee' that angels and departed human spirits have bodily form. For these words were naturally prompted by Paul's thoughts about living men: and with these he easily associated angels and the dead.

Acknowledge: see under Romans 14:11. Every tongue acknowledge; completes the picture of worship. The words 'every knee bow, every tongue confess' are appropriately taken from Isaiah 45:23 (quoted in Romans 14:11), where God solemnly announces His purpose of salvation for the Gentiles. And inasmuch as that ancient purpose will be fulfilled in homage paid to Christ, and only thus, the submission to God foretold by Isaiah is legitimately stated here in the form of submission to Christ.

Jesus Christ is Lord: confessed submission to the rule of Christ; so 1 Corinthians 12:3.

For the glory of God the Father: manifestation of the Father's greatness, evoking His creatures' admiration, this being here represented as the ultimate purpose for which God exalted Christ. As ever, Paul rises from the Son to the Father. Close coincidence in 1 Corinthians 15:28: cp. Ephesians 1:12, 14. We cannot conceive this worship and praise to be other than genuine. Consequently, all men are embraced in the purpose of salvation which raised Christ from the grave to the throne. But this by no means implies that all men will actually be saved. And, as we shall see under Philippians 3:19, Paul did not expect that all men will eventually be saved.

The harmony of the two passages is found in the truth that God has made the fulfilment of His own purpose of mercy contingent on man's submission and faith. Nor can we, from the word 'those-under-the-earth,' infer a probation in Hades, even for those who did not on earth hear the Gospel. For it is quite possible that the fate of these will be determined by their acceptance or rejection of such light as they had on earth. And, if so, their eternal song will be a designed result of Christ's victory over death. The whole passage is so easily explained by Paul's teaching elsewhere that we cannot fairly infer from it any further teaching about the position or prospects of the dead. Christianity differs from all other religions in presenting a perfect model of human excellence, suitable alike for all

persons in all circumstances, an absolute standard by which every one may and must be measured and judged. To this example appeal is constantly made in the N.T.: 1 Corinthians 11:1; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Romans 15:3; 1 Peter 2:21, 24; 1 John 2:6. This being so, it might be expected that of the human life of Christ we should have a very full record, that we should be told much about Him in whose steps we are bidden to tread. Such is not the case.

If from the Gospels we deduct the miracles and teaching of Christ, there remain only scanty memorials of the Savior. It is well that this is so. Had we more details, we should imitate these, forgetting perhaps the deep underlying principles of the sacred life. As it is, we are directed chiefly, as in the passage before us, to those elements in Christ apparently furthest above reach of imitation, to His incarnation and His death for our sins. The reason is evident. In these supreme events shone forth in its intensest lustre the inmost heart of the Eternal Son. Consequently, Paul bids us, not to do as Christ did, but to have the mind that was in Him. Notice specially, in the example of Christ here set before us, two elements, unsparing self-abnegation for the good of others and unreserved obedience to God. These led the Son from heaven to earth, and from earth to the grave; and from the cross and the grave, in a ruined world, to the splendors of the eternal throne and the ceaseless songs of wondering angels and of a ransomed human race. In that path it is ours to tread

**Ver.** 12-13. Philippians 2:12 is an exhortation based on the foregoing; Philippians 2:13 is a reason for it. The one main exhortation is prefaced by several preparatory clauses.

So then, etc.: a designed moral consequence of the foregoing.

Beloved-ones: Philippians 4:1 twice: a mark of the tenderness of this epistle. Cp. Romans 12:19; 1 Corinthians 10:14; 15:58; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Obedied: viz. the apostolic authority of Paul. For only thus can we account for the mention of his 'presence' and 'absence.' Such authority he claims over his children in the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 4:14, 15, 21; 5:3. He does so in confidence that his commands are the will of God. This mention of obedience recalls the example of Christ in Philippians 2:8, and the authority (1 Thessalonians 2:6) with which Paul might command. They

had ‘always obeyed:’ close agreement with Philippians 1:5, ‘from the first day until now.’ This recognition of previous obedience softens somewhat Paul’s silent assumption of authority. He only bids them continue to act ‘according’ as they had ‘always’ done. They were ‘not’ to act ‘as’ though their action were prompted by Paul’s ‘presence.’ [The word **ως** is omitted in the Vatican MS. and some good versions. But its omission is so easily accounted for that we may with some confidence retain it. It gives the readers’ subjective view, in Paul’s wish, of their own conduct.]

Now much more: the absence of the teacher’s help making their own care more needful.

With fear and trembling: with anxious care as in a matter serious and difficult: a Pauline phrase; see 1 Corinthians 2:3; 2 Corinthians 7:15; Ephesians 6:5. It suggests the real peril to which Christians are exposed, and especially the great peril of selfishness.

Salvation: as in Philippians 1:19: deliverance from the perils which surround the Christian life. That it is their ‘own salvation’ is good reason why they should ‘work’ it ‘out’ with anxious care, and with even greater care in Paul’s absence than when his watchful eye is on them.

Work-out: literally ‘be working out:’ same word in Romans 5:3; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 20 times in the Epistles of Paul, 3 times in the rest of the N.T. it is akin to the word in Philippians 2:13. It denotes effective effort, and implies that deliverance day by day is a result of persistent work: cp. Ephesians 6:13. While using all means to strengthen our spiritual life, we are bringing about our present and final deliverance. So sailors have often toiled to save their ship from the rocks and themselves from a watery grave.

**Ver.** 13. Encouragement to work out our own salvation. Paul assumes that there is One who works in us, speaks of Him as a definite object of thought, and calls Him ‘God.’ [To this last word he gives great prominence by bringing it to the beginning of the sentence.]

Works: 1 Corinthians 12:6, 11; Romans 7:5; Ephesians 1:20; 2:2, instructive parallels; 17 times with Paul, 3 times in the rest of the N.T. Like the kindred word in Philippians 2:12, it is a note of Pauline

authorship. The cognate substantive is used in Philippians 3:21. It is the in-working activity of God.

In you: within your personality, body or spirit: cp. Ephesians 2:2; Colossians 1:29; also Ephesians 1:20. Even 'to will,' the inward determination to act, is a result of God working in us.

And to work: the inward effort to accomplish the formed purpose. Both the purpose and the energy with which we work it out are here said to be an inward work of God.

His good-pleasure: that which seems good in the sight of God, as in Matthew 11:26, suggesting possibly that it is for the good of others. Same word as 'goodwill' in Philippians 1:15; where however the context makes the idea of benefit to others much more conspicuous than here.

On-behalf-of His good-pleasure: in order to accomplish a purpose pleasing to God. Cp. Ephesians 1:5, 9. This verse by no means implies that these divine influences are irresistible. And indisputably they are resisted. For God's good pleasure is (1 Timothy 2:4) that all men be saved; whereas not all men are saved. Even to an impenitent man Paul says (Romans 2:4), 'God is leading thee to repentance;' although evidently the divine influences were completely thwarted. Yet in all cases these influences are real and of infinite worth. For without them there would be no good in man. But their actual effect depends upon our surrender to them. We have here a plain statement of prevenient grace, a divine influence in man preceding and producing whatever in him is good, from the earliest desire for salvation to final victory over the last temptation. Philippians 2:12, 13 present two opposite and yet completely harmonious sides of the Christian life. The latter is the source and ground and motive of the former.

All good in man, from the first good desire, is an outworking of a divine purpose and power. Through the Gospel, and the written and unwritten Law, God is ever exerting an influence leading men to repentance and salvation. He does this in order to gratify His own desire to save and bless. The actual result depends upon man's self-surrender to these influences. Other influences would lead him in an opposite direction. Man's only choice is to which of these influences he will yield. On this depends his fate. Consequently, if he rises, he rises entirely by the power of God: if he



sinks, it is because he refuses influences which would raise him. These divine influences ever prompt, and are designed to evoke, human effort. Consequently man's earnest effort is a condition of salvation. But both this effort and its good results are the outworking of the purpose and power of God. A knowledge that our own purposes are from God, and that our efforts are armed with His power, and that our victory will gratify Him, are strong encouragement to put forth all our powers. The exhortation in Philippians 2:12 is to Christian perseverance; and thus takes up and completes that in Philippians 1:27-30. In Philippians 2:27. Christian harmony was mentioned casually as a condition of victory, and in Philippians 2:1, 2 it was made matter of direct exhortation. In Philippians 2:3, 4 we were warned against selfishness, the great enemy of Christian harmony. And in Philippians 2:5-11 this warning and its implied exhortation were supported by the unique example of Christ's self-humiliation for the good of others and His exaltation by God. This supreme example Paul brings, in Philippians 2:12, 13, to bear upon his readers. But instead of bidding them to imitate Christ, or rather to cherish a disposition like His, which would be merely a repetition of Philippians 2:5, he bids them, by obedience, work out their own salvation. He thus implies that the only way of safety is the path of self-humiliation and obedience trodden by Christ: a lesson we all need to learn. Underneath an apparently abrupt transition we find, as so often with Paul, an important lesson. A similar train of thought occurs in 1 Corinthians 9:22-27, where Paul says that his own salvation depends upon his efforts to save others. 'Since the Eternal Son, instead of using His divine powers to obtain for Himself the good things of earth for which so many strive, allowed them to remain latent, and trod the path of self-humiliation and obedience, a path which led Him to infinite glory, thus marking it out as the way of safety, walk ye along the same path, remembering the spiritual perils which surround you, and therefore walk as carefully in my absence as in my presence. Do this remembering that in our own moral efforts God is working out His own good pleasure.

**Ver.** 14-16. After exhortations to courage, unity, unselfishness like that of Christ, and the implied warning that upon obedience depends personal salvation, Paul adds an exhortation touching the manner in which he would

have these exhortations obeyed. All things; covers and goes beyond the matters already mentioned.

**Murmurings:** 1 Corinthians 10:10: talk expressing dissatisfaction, especially clandestine talk as grumbling often is. It is most easily understood here of dissatisfaction with the rough lot referred to above, such dissatisfaction being really murmuring against Him who has allotted our earthly position and surroundings. Doubtings or ‘reasonings:’ ideas closely allied, that about which we reason being naturally open to doubt while the reasoning continues. Same word in Romans 1:21; 14:1; 1 Corinthians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:8; James 2:4; Luke 9:46, 47. Dissatisfaction with our lot arises necessarily from want of faith in Him who with infinite wisdom and love has chosen for us our path and who will soon cover us with the splendor of heaven and fill us with eternal joy. Hence all ‘murmurings’ are an outward expression of inward ‘doubtings.’ And both these are utterly unworthy of children of God. Therefore, whatever duties and burdens life lays upon them, Paul bids his readers ‘do all things without murmurings and doubtings.’

**Ver. 15-16.** Aim of the foregoing exhortation: then a statement about the readers’ relation to the world: and lastly a further aim touching Paul and his work.

That ye may-become, etc.: a designed result of laying aside ‘murmurings and doubtings.’

**Blameless:** men with whose outward aspect none can find fault.

**Pure or ‘mixtureless’:** men in whose inward disposition there is no foreign element. Thus ‘blameless’ and ‘pure’ correspond respectively to ‘without murmurings’ and ‘without doubtings.’

**Children of God:** Romans 8:16, 21; 9:8: a point of connection between Paul and John, John 1:12; 11:52; 1 John 3:1, 2, 10; 5:2. A similar phrase in Romans 8:14, 19; 9:26; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Galatians 3:26; 4:6, Hebrews 2:10; 12:5; Luke 20:36; 6:35; Matthew 5:45. These words here, without any special occasion, reveal the deep root of this thought in the writer’s mind, and are thus a mark of authorship. They note a close relation to God.

Spotless: Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:19; Jude 24; Revelation 14:5: without blemish, or anything to cause reproach. Notice three negatives, 'blameless, mixtureless, spotless,' emphasising absence of all evil inward or outward. That this absence of evil is represented as a result to be attained by avoiding murmurings and doubtings, suggests that these defects are the last to cling to the Christian; that he who avoids them will escape all evil. And rightly so. For absence of doubt is perfect faith: and absence of murmuring reveals profound inward peace. These words reveal also Paul's high appreciation of the present moral character of his readers.

Generation: see under Ephesians 3:5.

Crooked: opposite to 'straight,' as in Luke 3:5.

Crooked generation: Acts 2:40.

Perverse: twisted in different directions, especially of misshapen or mutilated limbs. So Matthew 17:17; Luke 9:41: 'generation unbelieving and perverted.' Instead of being upright, they were crooked in character and conduct: instead of being a normal growth, they were deformed cripples. Among such men and in conspicuous contrast to them, Paul desired his readers to be without blemish, thus revealing their divine lineage: 'children of God, spotless in the midst, etc.' Since the stress evidently rests on the words 'spotless in the midst, etc.,' describing what sort of 'children of God' the Philippians were to be, we cannot infer from these last words that Paul looked upon them as not yet children of God. Consequently, this verse in no way contradicts Galatians 3:26; 4:6. Among whom, etc.; keeps up the contrast between Christians and those around them.

Are seen: same word in Matthew 6:5, 16, 18 also rendered 'appear' in Matthew 1:20; 2:7, 13, 19. It is akin to the Greek word for light, and denotes in its simplest form 'to give light:' e.g. John 1:5; 5:35. Similarly, the form here used is found in Matthew 24:27; Revelation 18:23. But in a wider sense it is constantly used for the visible manifestation of an object, whether by its own light or by light cast upon it. The participle is the Greek original of our word 'phenomenon.' Amid a perverse generation the spotless children of God are conspicuously seen: and, since (Ephesians 5:8) their nature is light, they shine.

Luminaries: 'light-givers:' same word in Genesis 1:14, 16; Wisdom 13:2; Sirach 43:7, for the sun and moon. In Revelation 21:11. it denotes the brilliance of a precious stone. Luminaries in the world; keeps up the contrast noted above. Like stars at night, so shine the children of God in a dark world. The foregoing words described what Paul would have his readers be: those now before us say what they actually are. Whatever be their degree of brightness, they 'are seen.' That they are said to be seen 'as luminaries in the world,' is a recognition of their lofty position, and an implied exhortation of the most persuasive kind to walk worthy of it.

Word of life: the Gospel, as a channel through which God bestows eternal life, 1 Corinthians 1:21; 15:1: so 'words of eternal life' in John 6:68; 'words of this life,' Acts 5:20. The singular number here, 'word of life,' looks upon the Gospel as one whole.

Holding forth: as if with outstretched arm: a word not uncommon for one holding to another's lips food and drink. By proclaiming the Gospel we hold out to the lips of famishing ones the bread of eternal life, and reach out a light revealing perils which otherwise would be certain destruction; and revealing also a way of safety. Thus the Gospel is the light of life. The slight change of metaphor from the heavenly bodies shining by their own brightness to men holding out a light to guide others is easily understood. The former conception represents Christians as shining with superhuman brightness and as raised immeasurably above the world: the latter represents them as actively endeavoring to save others. These two clauses explain how the 'children of God are seen as luminaries in the world.'

For a ground-of-exultation for-me: further purpose of the exhortation in Philippians 2:14, viz. joy to Paul himself at his readers' Christian conduct. Similar thought in Philippians 2:2: cp. Romans 1:13.

For the day of Christ: as in Philippians 1:6, 10. This third mention so early in the Epistle shows how definite in Paul's thought was that day, and how steadily his thoughts about the future went forth to it as their goal.

That not in vain, etc: contents of this 'ground-of-exultation.'

Run: 1 Corinthians 9:24, 26; Galatians 5:7.

Run in vain: Galatians 2:2, a close coincidence.

‘I-have-run’ suggests the runner’s intense effort: ‘I-have-labored’ suggests the weariness of effort; same word in John 4:6, same root in 2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:27; Galatians 6:17. Paul desires proof, in the light given by his readers to the dark world, that his own strenuous efforts and frequent weariness for them have not been in vain. Such proof will be to him a ground of exultation, i.e. of triumphant confidence in God; just as to his readers will be (Philippians 1:26) Paul’s own deliverance from prison. And this exultation will reach forward to that Day ever present to Paul’s thought when the inward spiritual life began on earth and manifested imperfectly here will receive its full and visible consummation in the light of eternity, and earthly toil receive its abundant recompense.

Php2.16

**Ver.** 17-18. Sudden break in Paul’s line of thought, followed by a comment upon the words foregoing. He has just spoken of his strenuous efforts for his readers: he will now speak of his possible death on their behalf.

Poured-out-as-a-libation: technical term for wine poured out upon or beside sacrifices or holy objects: same word in Numbers 28:7; 4:7; Genesis 35:14.

If I am even being poured out: an extreme possibility. Even if Paul’s hopes of release be fallacious, if his present imprisonment be a beginning of the end, if the legal process now going on be God’s way of removing him from earth, he nevertheless rejoices. Same word and tense in 2 Timothy 4:6, a very close parallel, referring to Paul’s last imprisonment previous to his execution.

Service: public and especially sacred ministration. Same word in Philippians 2:30; 2 Corinthians 9:12: cognate word in Romans 13:6, where see note; and in Philippians 2:25.

Your faith: object of this ministration. By leading his readers to faith in Christ, Paul was performing a public and sacred work. And, since this service was rendered to God, their faith was a ‘sacrifice’ presented by Paul. Similar thought in Romans 15:16, where in similar language the believing Gentiles are represented as an offering to God. Another note of

common authorship. 'The Gentiles' and their 'faith' may be conceived as the 'offering' and 'sacrifice' laid upon the altar. Similar sacrificial language in Philippians 4:18. Whether the words 'upon the sacrifice' were suggested by the heathen practice (so apparently in 'Iliad' bk. xi. 775) of pouring wine 'upon' the slain victim, or are merely used in the frequent and looser sense of something done in connection with or in addition to the sacrifice as in Acts 4:17; 2 Corinthians 9:6, we cannot now determine. Either thought would explain Paul's language. The practical meaning is clear. Paul has long been laboring in discharge of a public and sacred duty laid upon him by God, to lead the Gentiles to faith in Christ. He now contemplates the possibility of the sacrifice thus presented to God being consummated by the pouring out of his own life.

I rejoice: not necessarily that Paul's life is being sacrificed, but that he has been permitted, even at so great a cost, to lead his readers to faith.

I rejoice with you all: 'I share your joy, rejoice that ye are joyful,' i.e. with a joy resulting from faith in Christ. This is the most common use of the compound word so rendered, and gives a good sense. It is therefore needless to render it 'congratulate,' as if it meant a verbal expression of sympathy with another's joy. Paul rejoices to see the result of his own self-sacrifice; and his joy is increased by the joy of those for whom he has labored and suffered. You all; recalls the universality so conspicuous in Philippians 1:3, 4.

The same thing, rejoice: cherish 'the same' joy that I have. Even if Paul's imprisonment be the way to death, he still rejoices at his own success and at his readers' joy. He now bids them to 'rejoice' in Christ, and to rejoice that he is joyful. Thus this important section, like 3 and 4, closes on the key-note of joy sounded in Philippians 1:4. Similar exhortations in Philippians 3:1; 4:1.

**REVIEW**

Paul's hope of release from imprisonment is based in part on the needs of his readers. To them, after speaking about himself, he now turns. All he has to say to them is comprised in one exhortation, viz. to act in the City of God in a way worthy of the Gospel of Christ. This worthy action Paul then expounds in detail. His own conflict reminds him that they also have enemies. Against these he bids them stand firmly. To this end he urges harmony and fearlessness, saying that this last will be to them a proof of their own salvation present and future, and that sufferings are a part of God's good purpose, both for himself and for them. Paul then returns with greater earnestness to the need for unity.

The prisoner at Rome pleads for the gratification to himself which his readers' harmony will bring, and begs them to cherish the one great purpose. He warns them against selfishness and vanity, commending humility and care for the good of others. In this he quotes the supreme example of Christ, who contemplating His approaching life on earth did not look upon His divine prerogatives as a means of obtaining for Himself material good, but on entering the world laid aside the full exercise of His divine powers in order to assume human limitations and thus save men, and who on earth trod the humble path of obedience till it led Him to the grave.

The force of this example Paul increases by pointing to the honor conferred by God on the Risen Christ and to the universal homage designed for Him. Armed with this example, Paul reminds his readers that upon their earnest effort to imitate Christ depends their final salvation, and encourages them to such effort by saying that their conflict is no trial of human strength, but that in them God is working out His own good purpose. These exhortations he concludes by urging them to lay aside murmuring and doubt, to aim at a spotless character, and, by holding forth to others the word of life, to become lights in a dark world. He closes the section by looking forward to the Day of Christ and the joy. He hopes then to have in the result of His present labors. So great is the joy thus in prospect that Paul's present joy of anticipation is not dimmed even by the possibility that his present imprisonment may end in death. Nor does this

possibility prevent him from rejoicing in his readers' joy in Christ. He bids them share his joy.



## SECTION 6

### ABOUT TIMOTHY

#### CHAPTER 2:19-24

*But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, in order that I also may be of good cheer; knowing your affairs. For I have no one of equal soul who in a genuine way will be anxious about your affairs. For they all seek their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ. But the proof of him ye know, that, as a son serves a father, with me he has done service in furtherance of the Gospel. Him then I hope to send, whenever I see the issue of my affairs, forthwith. But I trust in the Lord that I myself also will shortly come.*

After general exhortations to the Christians at Philippi, Paul comes now to speak about two of his fellow-workers, each closely related to them; about Timothy in 6, and in 7 about Epaphroditus.

**Ver. 19.** But I hope: Paul's actual and cheerful expectation, in contrast to the possibility (Philippians 2:17) that his death is near. For the words, 'that I also may know,' suggest a hope that he will live till Timothy's return. Probably also the fuller hope expressed in Philippians 2:24 was already present to Paul's thought and moulding his words. And apparently the mission of Timothy was dependent (see Philippians 2:23) on Paul's liberation.

Hope in the Lord Jesus: who is able to rescue him from impending death, and whose purpose, as Paul thinks, is so to do.

Also: in addition to the benefit to the Philippians from Timothy's visit. This purpose reveals Paul's deep interest in his readers. News about them will be encouragement to him. Close coincidence in 1 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:3

**Ver. 20-22.** Reason for Paul's 'wish to send' Timothy, and him specially.

Of-equal-soul: see under the word 'soul' in Philippians 1:27. Paul has 'no one' in whom care for the Philippians kindles the same emotions as in Timothy. If he had wished to say that Timothy's care was equal to his own, he would need to have indicated this by writing 'no one else.' The comparison is between others and Timothy, not between Timothy and Paul.

In-a-genuine-way: as a real, born son naturally cares for his father's interests: a cognate word in Philippians 4:3; 2 Corinthians 8:8; 1 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4.

Be-anxious-about: forethought so intense as to become painful. Same word in Philippians 4:6; 1 Corinthians 7:32, 33, 34; 12:25; Matthew 6:25, 27, 28, 31, 34; 10:19; Luke 10:41. The contradiction with Philippians 4:6 is only apparent. There is a care for the future which implies doubt, and is therefore utterly unworthy of the Christian: and there is a forethought which may be, and often is, painful, and yet a genuine outflow of intelligent Christian love. A cognate word, and a close coincidence, are found in 2 Corinthians 11:28. The sad statement in Philippians 2:20, Philippians 2:21 justifies by a universal description of the men around Paul whom he might conceivably send to Philippi.

Their own things: same words in same sense as in Philippians 2:4: a marked contrast to 'your affairs.'

The things of Jesus Christ: the interests of His kingdom, which include the highest well-being of the Philippian Christians. The reason here given implies that self-seeking unfits a man to be a reliable witness of the spiritual life of others. And correctly so. For all selfishness dims spiritual vision, and thus veils to us spiritual things good or bad. Therefore selfish men cannot bring to Paul a trustworthy report. To this description of the men surrounding Paul, there is no exception: 'they all seek, etc.' A remarkable parallel to 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:1-3; 5:2; 6:5. As at Corinth, so at Rome, the men referred to were doubtless real though very imperfect Christians. The different language of Colossians 4:10-14 suggests that the men there mentioned were not with Paul when he wrote this Epistle: and this would account for the absence of any greetings to the Philippians from Christians at Rome: an important coincidence. Of men such as those here described, Paul would not wish to speak.

**Ver. 22.** Description of Timothy, in contrast to the men just referred to.

The proof of him: the attestation of his real worth: close parallel in 2 Corinthians 2:9.

Ye know: a coincidence with Acts 16:3; 17:14 where we learn that Timothy was with Paul at the founding of the Church at Philippi; and with Acts 20:4 which says that Timothy accompanied Paul on a journey through Macedonia, in which province Philippi was.

A child: close coincidence with 1 Corinthians 4:17, where Paul when sending Timothy to Corinth speaks of him as his 'beloved and trustworthy child.'

Father: coincidence with 1 Corinthians 4:15, where Paul claims to be the 'father' of the Corinthian Christians.

With me he has done service, or 'has served': a slight change of metaphor. While saying that Timothy has served Paul 'as a son' serves his 'father,' Paul remembers that, from another point of view, Timothy and himself are alike children and servants of another Master. He therefore now speaks of Timothy as joining with himself in serving One whom it is needless to name.

In furtherance of the Gospel: for its spread and triumph: same words in same sense in Philippians 1:5; more fully in Philippians 2:12, 'for the progress of the Gospel.' This was the aim of the service in which, as the Philippians knew, Timothy joined with Paul.

**Ver. 23-24.** Resumption, from Philippians 2:19, of Paul's purpose to send Timothy, after a digression about his fitness, unique among others unfit, for this mission; followed (Philippians 2:24) by a hope of himself coming.

Him then, etc.: more fully, 'this man then on the one hand I hope to send... on the other hand I trust in the Lord that myself, etc.: ' a double hope cherished by Paul.

Hope to send: resuming Philippians 2:19.

My affairs: same phrase as 'your affairs' in Philippians 2:19; and practically identical with 'the matters touching me' in Philippians 1:12. It must refer to some great crisis which would determine Paul's conduct. And

this is most easily explained as the issue of the trial before Nero, for which Paul was waiting during his imprisonment at Rome. These words are thus a coincidence with Acts 28:30.

Forthwith: as soon as Paul's case is decided, he will send Timothy. That he was unwilling to send away his beloved son in the Gospel before the decision, we can well understand.

Trust in the Lord: as in Philippians 1:14. Paul's hope of coming to Philippi has its root in the Master whom he serves. A fuller exposition of this hope and of its ground is given in Philippians 1:25, 26.

## REVIEW

After expressing his joy about his readers, a joy which even the possibility of death does not dim, Paul now turns, in hope of prolonged life, to practical matters. He has something to say about two of his helpers. Timothy he hopes soon to send in order that he may bring back news about the Church at Philippi. On such an errand Timothy is the only one he can send: for Paul's other associates are incapacitated, by their selfishness, for correct spiritual vision and a correct estimate of the spiritual state of others.

But Timothy, as a genuine son, shares even Paul's anxieties for the Churches; and has proved this, as the Philippians know, by service rendered to Paul, and to God in fellowship with Paul. The sending of Timothy is however for the present hindered by Paul's uncertainty about the issue of his trial. When this is dispelled, he will at once send Timothy. But he cherishes a purpose resting on his Master's power and purpose that he will himself shortly come. In this section we again meet Timothy, whom Paul has associated with himself as joint author of the Epistle, and whom we have already met in 1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10; 2 Corinthians 1:1, 19. And the features of the man are the same. As before he is Paul's child in the faith; and is in sympathy with him so complete that he is both the eye and the lips of the Apostle, his trusted delegate to a distant Church. Again he is joint author of an apostolic letter. Yet the notice of him here is no repetition. For Timothy's fitness to bring Paul spiritual intelligence affords valuable insight into his character and into all Christian character. The casual description of Paul's associates is no small proof of the historic truthfulness of his Epistles.

## SECTION 7

### ABOUT EPAPHRODITUS

#### CHAPTER 2:25-30

*A necessary thing, however, I counted it, to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, but your apostle and minister of my need: inasmuch as he was longing for you all, and distressed because ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick, near to death. Yet God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, lest I should come to have sorrow upon sorrow. The more eagerly therefore I have sent him, that seeing him ye may again rejoice, and I be less sorrowful. Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold in honor such men.*

*Because by reason of the work of Christ he drew near even to death, having hazarded his life in order to supply the lack of your service for me.*

From the hoped-for mission of Timothy in the near future, Paul now passes to that of Epaphroditus, who was evidently the bearer of this letter.

**Ver.** 25. Necessary, however: although Paul hopes himself soon to come. The ground of this necessity is stated in Philippians 2:26.

#### EPAPHRODITUS:

only here and Philippians 4:18, yet evidently a tried and valued associate of Paul. We have here five details about him; three giving his relation to Paul, a fourth his relation to the readers, and the fifth a relation both to the readers and to Paul.

Brother: so 2 Corinthians 2:13, 'Titus my brother.'

Fellow-worker: as in Romans 16:3, 9; Philippians 4:3.

Fellow-soldier: for Paul's work is also conflict. It suggests peril in which Epaphroditus bravely stood by Paul. But this does not necessarily imply an earlier association with Paul: for they might have been associated at Rome. If so, this title is a courteous recognition of his courage in discharging his commission. Similarly, the word 'fellow-worker' may have been prompted by work done recently at Rome. Paul remembers that Epaphroditus is united to himself as a child of the same divine Father, as a companion in the same great work and in conflict against the same enemies.

My, your: in Greek, consecutive words, placing in conspicuous contrast the relation of Epaphroditus to the Philippians and his relation to Paul.

Apostle: as in 2 Corinthians 8:23; see under Romans 1:1: one sent on special business. What Paul's 'need' was, we learn from Philippians 4:14-18, viz. his poverty in prison at Rome and the resulting hardship, a need removed by the contribution brought by Epaphroditus.

Minster: a cognate word in Philippians 2:17, 30; the same word in Romans 13:6; 15:16. Both Paul in fostering the faith of the Philippian Christians and Epaphroditus in bringing to Paul their contribution were performing a sacred and public service, as sacred as the high-priest's ministrations at the altar. Same thought in Philippians 4:18. Epaphroditus was thus a minister of the Philippian Christians: for he was carrying out their instructions and conveying to Paul their gift. He was also a minister of Paul's 'need:' for, by discharging the mission entrusted to him by the Church, he removed that need. See under Philippians 4:18

**Ver. 26.** Ground of the necessity to send Epaphroditus. Longing-for you all; keeps before us, as do the same words in Philippians 1:8, the universal excellence of the Christians at Philippi.

Distressed: literally 'homeless;' a vivid description of a mind in trouble. Epaphroditus earnestly wished to return to the brethren at Philippi in order that their anxiety might be dispelled by seeing him in good health, How they heard of his sickness, and how he knew that they had heard, we do not know. But communication between Rome and the Roman colony of Philippi along the splendid Egnatian road, would be, if not regular, yet frequent. Notice a genuine trait of excellence. Many are glad for others to know of their sickness or trouble, especially if caused by service done for

them. But this good man was sorry that, through their hearing of it, his own trouble had caused trouble to others.

**Ver. 27.** Paul's comment on the sickness and recovery of Epaphroditus. Indeed he was sick; adds conspicuously to the report heard by the Philippians an attestation that the report was true.

Near to death: literally, 'as neighbor side by side of death.'

God had mercy on him: suggests man's helplessness in sickness and God's complete control of sickness and recovery.

Sorrow upon sorrow: a note of sadness, evoked by memory of the illness of Epaphroditus and of the sorrow and apprehension thus caused to Paul, amid the prevailing joy of this Epistle. Cp. 2 Corinthians 6:10. It implies other sorrow besides that occasioned by the illness of Epaphroditus.

Mercy also upon me; reveals Paul's felt helplessness under the new sorrow then looming before him. In this helplessness he recognises the restoration of his friend as God's compassion towards himself. Thus one act was, in different ways, kindness to two men equally helpless. Paul's gratitude also teaches that they who share the sorrows of others have in others' joy a special joy of their own.

**Ver. 28.** Restatement of the bearing of Epaphroditus' sickness upon his mission by Paul to Philippi.

More-eagerly therefore: parallel to 'I counted it necessary' in Philippians 2:25. The comparative suggests that the illness and recovery of Epaphroditus did but increase Paul's eagerness to send him. That in Philippians 2:29 Paul bids his readers welcome Epaphroditus, suggests that he was the bearer of this epistle. Same use of the word 'I-have-sent' in Colossians 4:8; Ephesians 6:22; Acts 23:30. The above reasons for sending him to Philippi suggest that his going there was not matter of course, as one goes back home after discharging a mission, that he may have had other reasons for his journey to Rome, and that possibly he was not a resident at Philippi. But we learn from Philippians 2:30 how eagerly he entered into the Philippians' purpose to help Paul. Again rejoice: their usual joy being overshadowed by hearing of Epaphroditus' illness, a shadow only to be removed by knowing that he is well.



Less-sorrowful: another note of sadness: cp. Philippians 2:27. Even the removal of Paul's sorrow about Epaphroditus would leave him only less sad. This indicates other and abiding sources of sorrow.

**Ver. 29-30. Recommendation of Epaphroditus.**

Receive in the Lord: same words in Romans 16:2. Their reception of him must be an outflow of their union with the One Master of him and them.

Every joy: as in Romans 15:13; James 1:2. No sort of joy was to be lacking in their reception of Epaphroditus.

Such men: this not being a solitary case but one of a class of which all deserve like honor.

The work of Christ: cp. 1 Corinthians 15:58. What the work was, we learn from the latter part of the verse. Epaphroditus' discharge of his mission was both a sacrifice (Philippians 4:18) to God and work done for Christ.

Even to death: same words as in Philippians 2:8. Epaphroditus trod in the steps of Christ, even to the edge of the grave.

Hazarded his life: literally 'gambled with his life,' (Ellicott,) making very prominent the apparent recklessness of his conduct and the great risk he ran. 'The lack of your service for me.' The public and sacred service (Philippians 2:25) rendered to Paul fell short in one point, viz. the personal presence of the Philippian Christians who would gladly have themselves ministered to his comfort. This one deficiency Epaphroditus endeavored, even at the risk of life, to supply. Same thought and words in 1 Corinthians 16:17. He thus did 'the work of Christ.' [Notice two genitives dependent on the word 'lack.' The service was deficient: hence 'lack of service.' It lacked the personal presence of the Christians at Philippi: the 'lack of you.'] The word 'death' links together Philippians 2:27 and 30 as referring to the same deadly peril. We infer therefore that the sickness which brought Epaphroditus near to death was occasioned by his mission to Rome. He deliberately exposed his life in order to discharge this mission, and thus actually fell into serious illness. This may have been through exposure on the journey or through contagion at Rome. All details are unknown. We have here a beautiful episode in the story of Paul. The Philippian Christians heard of his imprisonment at Rome, and wished to

send him help. But for a time they had no means of doing so. At last Epaphroditus, a Christian whom they well loved, happens to be going to Rome. A contribution is made, and is sent by Epaphroditus. Either on the journey or at Rome, in consequence of exposure needful to bring the money to Paul, and cheerfully endured, the messenger became dangerously ill. And Paul felt deeply that courageous care for him had brought a brother to the gates of death. Epaphroditus recovered. He joined Paul, apparently, not only in peril but in Christian work. But tidings of his illness reached Philippi. This, Epaphroditus knew; and knew that the tidings would fill his brethren with sorrow. He was therefore eager to return, to allay their fears by showing himself well in their midst. This eagerness to return Paul appreciated, and resolved to use his return as an opportunity of sending to his beloved friends at Philippi the letter before us. The joyful reception of Epaphroditus at Philippi, with this precious letter from the imprisoned Apostle, is veiled from our view in the unwritten past.

## SECTION 8

WARNINGS AGAINST BAD MEN; AND PAUL'S CONTRARY EXAMPLE

### CHAPTER 3:1-16

*As to the rest, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irksome, and for you is safe. Keep eyes on the dogs: keep eyes on the bad workers: keep eyes on the concision. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and exult in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in flesh; although I might have confidence even in flesh.*

*If any other thinks to have confidence in flesh, I yet more: circumcised the eighth day, of the race of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew from Hebrews; touching the Law a Pharisee; touching zeal, persecuting the Church, touching righteousness, viz. that in the Law, become blameless. But things which were gain to me, these for the sake of Christ I have counted loss. Yes indeed, and I count all to be loss for the sake of the superiority of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have suffered loss of all things: and I count them refuse that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, that which comes from law, but that which comes through faith of Christ, the righteousness from God on the condition of faith, in order to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the partnership of His sufferings, being day by day conformed to His death, if in any way I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained or am already made perfect: but I press on if I may also lay hold of that for which I have also been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.*

*Brethren, not yet do I reckon myself to have laid hold: one thing, however, I reckon, forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to the things before I press on towards the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. So many then as*

*are perfect, let us be of this mind. And if in anything ye are otherwise minded, also this will God reveal to you. Only whereto we have attained, let us walk by the same.*

Ver. 1a. An exhortation covering all that Paul has left unsaid: 'as to the rest.' Same words in Philippians 4:8; Hebrews 10:13.

Rejoice in: as in Philippians 1:18; 4:10; Colossians 1:24. The 'Master,' Christ, is the surrounding, pervading, life-giving element 'in' which Paul bids his readers 'rejoice.' This joy is an outflow of that with which

Christ Himself is full: and it becomes ours by inward spiritual contact with Him as servants doing His work. in proportion to our loyalty to Him is our 'joy in the Lord.' Verse 1b. Abrupt introduction of a new topic. For the short foregoing exhortation to 'rejoice in the Lord' could not conceivably be 'irksome' to Paul, i.e. something to which he would go with reluctance, nor specially safe for his readers. We must therefore suppose that from some cause unknown to us, possibly interruption, a new topic was unexpectedly introduced into the Epistle when apparently approaching its close. And the three times repeated warning which at once follows in Philippians 3:2 and which might easily be distasteful to the writer suggests irresistibly that it refers the word 'safe.' If so, to this warning refer also the words 'to write the same things.' This implies that on this subject Paul has already written to the Philippian Christians. But in this Epistle there is as yet no warning against any one. Even the reference to Paul's opponents at Rome is not put in the form of a warning to the Christians at Philippi. He has said nothing of which these words can be called a repetition. Indeed this would be true even if they referred to the foregoing exhortation: for he has not before urged his readers even to 'rejoice in the Lord.' The only approach to this is Philippians 2:18. Nor is it likely that the repetition refers to earlier oral teaching. For this would make the word 'write' emphatic: whereas the Greek emphasis is on 'the same things.'

The absence of other explanation suggests that the repetition refers to some warning in an earlier letter to the Philippians now lost. Against this suggestion there is no objection. For it is hardly possible that all the letters which Paul wrote are preserved to us. There is clear mention in 1

Corinthians 5:9 (see note) of a lost letter to the Corinthians. Polycarp, in his 'Epistle to the Philippians,' says that Paul 'when absent wrote letters to you.' But this is not a conclusive proof: for the plural form 'letters' is often used for a single written communication, e.g. 1 Maccabees x. 3, 7; xii. 5, 19; and this may have been Polycarp's meaning. That Paul refers here to an earlier and lost letter, is the easiest explanation of his words. In such letter he may have warned the Christians at Philippi against Jewish enemies. And certainly his own experience in many places justified the warning: see Acts 13:45; 14:2, 5, 19; 17:5, 13. To this danger he refers in 1 Thessalonians 2:15; Romans 15:31. And he remembers it while writing this Epistle. To mention it again, is not, he tells us, a duty from which he recoils: and to do so may guard his readers from real danger

Ver. 2. Keep-eyes-on: pay attention to. Same word in Colossians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 1:26; 10:18, etc. It denotes the simple act of looking, ocular or mental

Dogs: a term of contempt, frequent with Gentiles and Jews. To the latter, dogs, feeding as they do in Eastern cities on all sorts of refuse, were an incarnation of degraded ceremonial impurity. So Matthew 15:26; Revelation 22:15; cp. Matthew 7:6: also Isaiah 56:10, 11. This common term expressing Jewish contempt for Gentiles, Paul here applies to Jews, (see below,) indicating that the men referred to were outside and beneath the Covenant of God.

Workmen: same word in 2 Corinthians 11:13; 'guileful 'workmen,'" 2 Timothy 2:15; Matthew 9:37, 38; 10:10; 20:1, 2; Luke 13:27, etc.

They were active and laborious: but their aims and methods were 'bad.'

The concision: a contemptuous modification of the word rendered 'circumcision.' Its cognate verb describes in 1 Kings 18:28 the self-mutilations of the prophets of Baal: similarly Leviticus 21:5. It thus places the circumcision of these Jews beside the mutilations of the heathen. A close parallel in Galatians 5:12. The article before each substantive indicates a definite class of men. The essential harmony, amid total difference, of the terms used suggests that they present only different aspects of the same men. And this is confirmed by the order of the words, which passes from the general to the specific. This warning receives great

emphasis from the repetition of the verb, 'beware.' Three times, under three different aspects, Paul warns his readers of the same danger. The compactness of these words suggests that possibly they are an exact repetition of words already written by Paul. Certainly they embody a warning already given.

The word 'concision' proves that Philippians 3:2 refers to Jews. Upon these Paul flings back the term of contempt so freely cast by them at Gentiles as men outside the Covenant of God and as compared with themselves no better than unclean animals. He admits their laborious effort, but calls it bad. And the bodily rite in which they trust, he places on a level with heathen mutilation. That they were not members of the Church at Philippi, we infer with certainty from the universal commendation in Philippians 1:3-5. Yet the earnestness of the warning assures us that the danger was real and near. Paul's parody of the word 'circumcision' suggests that he refers roughly and generally to the Jewish race as a whole, or rather to the mass of it which rejected Christ. But his warning would include any Jews like those at Corinth (see my 'Corinthians' p. 477) who under guise of a false profession had crept into the Church (cp. Galatians 2:4) in order to overturn it. Indeed the strong words in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 against men of this class is an important coincidence with this verse. But, inasmuch as in Philippians 3:5, 6 we have no reference to professed Christians like that in 2 Corinthians 11:23, probably Paul refers here chiefly to non-Christian Jews. The anti-Christian Jews, Paul justly calls 'the concision:' for every outward form of religion destitute of inward devotion is practically the same as heathen ritual. While boasting of the ancient and divine rite, they were really trampling under foot the purpose for which it was given. The rite so desecrated could not be called 'circumcision,' but required a meaner name.

**Ver. 3.** A contrast, justifying the term 'concision.'

We: emphatic. To Paul and his readers belongs 'the' title 'circumcision.' Consequently, the only term left for the men here referred to is that just given them.

The circumcision: the circumcised persons, as in Ephesians 2:11; Romans 3:30; 4:9, 15:8; Galatians 2:9.

Who worship, etc.; describes the real circumcision. Worship: same word in Romans 1:9, 25; 2 Timothy 1:3, etc. It is used only of service rendered to God; frequently of the service of the temple, as in Hebrews 13:10. Consequently it is needless to mention here the object of worship.

Notice that 'circumcision' involves worship: for Israel was set apart to be a worshipping people.

By the Spirit of God: who prompts and guides this worship. [Cp. Romans 8:13, 14.]

And exult in Christ Jesus: cp. Romans 5:11. See under Romans 2:17. Like all the circumcised, Paul and his readers are accustomed to boast: but the encompassing element of their boasting is the living personality of Christ.

And have no confidence, etc.: third point in the description of the true circumcision. 'Confidence' is implied in 'exult:' for all exultation rests on some foundation, and therefore involves trust in some object personal or impersonal. These men based their hopes on something in their own bodies. For to them circumcision, not being accompanied by a spiritual change, was a mere outward rite. Paul describes the Christian life as a service of God, prompted and guided by the Spirit of God; as a joyous confidence resting in Christ as its element; and negatively as not resting on anything belonging merely to outward bodily life. Since many of Paul's readers were Gentiles, and yet all are evidently included in this description, the circumcision here referred to must be spiritual only; as in Romans 2:29; Colossians 2:11. The ancient rite was a mark of the covenant with God. But all who have the characteristics here given are included in the New Covenant, and are therefore, but in greater degree, in the position formerly occupied by the circumcision. And, if so, nothing but the contemptuous term used by Paul remains to those who trust for the favor of God to the outward rite.

**Ver. 4-6.** A boast which Paul has, but refuses to use. By showing us a confidence he might cherish, Paul adds force to 'no confidence in the flesh.' As himself the chief object of Jewish hostility to Christianity, Paul passes easily from the general statement in Philippians 3:3, 'we are, etc.,' to the details in Philippians 3:4-6 which refer to himself only. The emphatic

word 'I' recalls Paul's unique position as compared both with enemies and friends.

Although, etc.: literally 'although myself having confidence even in flesh:' contrasted statement subordinate to the foregoing. Paul has a confidence: for his condition is one in which he might trust. And the confidence in which he might indulge reaches down 'even' to the 'flesh.'

If any one, etc.: an independent statement of the foregoing.

Thinks or 'thinks-well'; denotes approval of a course of action or thought, as in Matthew 3:9; Luke 1:3: 'if to any one it seems good to trust in the flesh.'

I more: 'I have more to trust in than he.' Similar language in 2 Corinthians 11:21. Paul thinks fit to play for a moment the part of his opponents that he may show how much better he can play it than they. Then follow in detail the grounds on which he might rest a confidence in the flesh.

**Ver.** 5-6. Circumcised the eighth day: and therefore not a proselyte. Notice the accurate observance of the letter of the Law.

From the race of Israel: and therefore not a son of a proselyte, or an Edomite.

Tribe of Benjamin: nearer specification of his relation to the sacred race. Paul knows his own tribe. Moreover Benjamin not only gave to Israel its first king, whose name Paul bore, but was faithful to the House of David when the ten tribes revolted. Hebrew: 2 Corinthians 11:22. In Acts 6:1 it denotes a Hebrew-speaking Jew in contrast to the Hellenists who spoke Greek, thus marking a distinction within the Jewish nation. And elsewhere in the N.T. it has reference to language. Probably so here. Although born at Tarsus, Paul clung to the ancient language and customs of his nation. He did so by parental training: for his parents also were 'Hebrews.' A close coincidence with Acts 23:6, where Paul calls himself a son of Pharisees. For, more than other Jews, Pharisees clung to everything which distinguished Israel from the rest of mankind. After noting, in ascending scale, four points of honor in his pedigree, as Jews boasted, Paul now gives three points bearing upon his personal character and conduct. The similar



phrases 'touching law, touching zeal, touching righteousness,' mark the transition.

Pharisee: important coincidence with Acts 23:6; 26:5.

Touching law: looked at from the point of view of the general principle embodied in the law given at Sinai, and in the Books of Moses. This principle, viz. that the favor of God is to be obtained by obedience to authoritative prescriptions of conduct, found in the Pharisees its strictest exponents and adherents. And Paul was 'a Pharisee.' If, again, we take zeal as our standard of measurement, we find proof of his earnest advocacy of Judaism in that he was 'persecuting the Church.' Important coincidence with Galatians 1:13, 14: cp. 1 Timothy 1:13.

Righteousness: the condition of a man who enjoys the judge's approval: see under Romans 1:17. In order to distinguish his meaning here from 'Righteousness through Faith,' Paul adds the specifying words, 'that in law.' He is speaking of such righteousness as may be found in obedience to prescriptions of conduct. From this point of view, Paul had 'become blameless,' i.e. he had reached a position in which no fault could be found with him. He had done all that could be done to obtain the favor of God by obedience to law. Of the seven points of boasting, the first four pertain evidently to bodily descent and thus abundantly justify Paul's declaration that he has a confidence even in the flesh. These points are supplemented by three others not bearing so directly on the same. But the continued series suggests a continued train of thought. And doubtless Paul felt that the obedience to law by which he sought formerly the favor of God was only outward and bodily, and that even the zeal which prompted his persecution of the Church had its ultimate source in motives pertaining to the present bodily life. Notice that each point in the series was one which Paul's opponents would admit to be a valid ground of boasting. An interesting coincidence with Philippians 3:4-6 is found in 2 Corinthians 11:21-27. But there Paul is speaking to Jews who were also (2 Corinthians 11:23) professed 'ministers of Christ.' Here, without any reference to Christianity, he speaks simply of Jews. This suggests that the men against whom Paul here warns his readers were, at least for the more part, not Christians even in name.

**Ver. 7.** Paul's solemn renunciation of his own Jewish boasting, in emphatic contrast to the foregoing, and followed in Philippians 3:8 by a still wider renunciation. It is an exposition of 'no confidence in flesh' in Philippians 3:3, after the contrast in Philippians 3:4 and its exposition. in detail in Philippians 3:5, 6.

Things-which: literally 'what sort of things,' noting a whole class, to which belong the above details.

Gains to me: each item being, from Paul's then point of view, an enrichment to him.

I-have-counted: a calculation made and completed in the past, and the abiding estimate now remaining.

For the sake of Christ, or 'because of Christ': expounded in Philippians 3:8.

Loss: either the 'gains' themselves written off as lost; or the things formerly looked upon as making him richer now looked upon as making him poorer, i.e. as doing him harm. The former exposition is all that the words demand, and all that is implied in the word 'suffered-loss' in Philippians 3:8. We therefore cannot give to the word 'loss' the second and fuller sense. The whole class of various things which Paul once looked upon as 'gains,' he has now written of as one 'loss.'

**Ver. 8.** Yes, indeed: an abrupt breaking off, making the reassertion more forceful.

I count: the reckoning represented in Philippians 3:7 as already made, now represented as going on day by day.

All-things: wider than 'what sort of things' in Philippians 3:7.

My Lord: in harmony with 'my God' in Philippians 1:3 and Romans 1:8. Paul has come to know 'Christ Jesus' as his own 'Master;' and has found this 'knowledge' to surpass all other good. Indeed it has revealed to him the worthlessness of all merely earthly gains. And, influenced by this superior knowledge, he now reckons to be 'loss all things' he once prized.

For whose sake, etc.: an emphatic and categorical statement of the loss involved in Paul's reckoning. The things mentioned above were once

wealth to him: they are now worthless. Consequently, where before he was rich, he is now poor. Moreover, the things thus lost were those he most prized. Therefore, in losing them he ‘suffered the loss of all things.’ This loss was occasioned by the person and work of Christ, ‘for whose sake’ it was cheerfully endured. Notice the emphatic repetitions: ‘I have counted, I count, I count; loss, loss, suffered-loss; for Christ’s sake, for the sake of the superiority of the knowledge of Christ, for whose sake.’ [More definite than **παντα** is **τα παντα**, including all forms of material good.] In proportion as we know Christ- does earthly wealth cease to be an enrichment to us. We look upon it only as an instrument of serving Christ. Therefore, like Paul we may say that because of Christ we have lost all things. Of this complete, inward, subjective loss, all objective loss for Christ’s sake is a partial and easy realisation in outward form, easy in proportion to our knowledge of Christ.

And I count them refuse: added as an explanatory parallel to ‘I have suffered,’ keeping before us Paul’s subjective estimate of the change which has taken place in him.

Refuse: anything thrown away, either excrement rejected by the body, or the leavings of a feast incapable of giving further nourishment or pleasure. Such does Paul reckon the Jewish prerogatives in which once he boasted. And this reckoning has been to him practically the ‘loss of all things.’

**Ver. 9-11.** Purpose of the reckoning described in Philippians 3:7, 8, i.e. the greater gain for which Paul cheerfully submitted to the ‘loss of all things.’ It is therefore practically an exposition of ‘for the sake of Christ,’ and ‘for the sake of the superiority of the knowledge of Christ.’

Gain Christ: ‘make Him my own and thus obtain infinite enrichment.’

For all that Christ has and is belongs to His servants: and having Him they have all they need. The word ‘gain’ is a marked contrast to the things which to Paul were once gain but which he now counts to be loss.

Be found in Him: second item in Paul’s purpose. He desires so to gain Christ that He will be to him the home and bulwark of his soul and the pervading element of his spiritual life. The word ‘found’ suggests a recognition by others of Paul’s inward union with Christ. In the searching

scrutiny which will make known whatever is now hidden, Paul will 'be found' safe in Christ.

Righteousness: as in Romans 1:17; see note.

A righteousness of my own: very close coincidence with Romans 10:3. As Paul never forgot, an unchanging law of the Kingdom of God makes spiritual blessing conditional on agreement with a divinely erected standard. Consequently, to be in Christ, implies 'righteousness.' The only question is the kind of righteousness and the source from which it is derived. The righteousness through which Paul hopes to gain Christ is not 'a righteousness of' his 'own,' i.e. an agreement with a divine standard resulting from his own effort and which therefore he can claim as 'my own.' Such would be the righteousness which the Jews were ever, though vainly, seeking to derive from the Law by careful observance of its prescriptions.

From law: as in Galatians 3:21; a close parallel. [The absence of the Greek article suggests the abstract principle 'Do this and live,' a principle which received historical and literary embodiment in the Law of Moses.] Cp. Philippians 3:6; Galatians 3:11, 18, 23; 4:4, 5, 21; 5:4, 18, 23; 6:13. It is practically the same as 'from works of law' in Galatians 2:16 three times.

Through faith of Christ: belief of the words of Christ, as in Romans 3:22; Galatians 2:16.

From God: source of this righteousness. By proclaiming that He receives into His favor all who believe the Gospel, God gives righteousness to all who believe. And this 'righteousness' received 'from God' is in absolute contrast to all righteousness of their own, i.e. derived from their own obedience, for which the Jews were ever striving. Same contrast in Romans 10:3.

On-the-condition-of faith: literally 'on faith:' same words in Acts 3:16. They represent faith as the condition on which, whereas just above it is the channel 'through' which, 'righteousness' comes forth 'from God.' The unexpected occurrence here of the word 'righteousness' in this peculiar sense, the emphatic repetition of the word faith, and the coincidence in phraseology and thought with Romans 3:22; Galatians 2:16; 3:21, are very clear indications of Pauline authorship.

**Ver. 10.** The slight change of phrase, ‘in order to know Him,’ indicates that this is not a third item of Paul’s aim in addition to those in Philippians 3:9, but is rather a further purpose to be attained by gaining Christ and being found in Him.

To know Him: as though Paul’s present knowledge were so defective as to be unworthy of the name. This fuller knowledge of Christ is yearned for also in Ephesians 1:17; 3:19; 4:13. It is obtained only by (Philippians 3:9) gaining Him for our own and by abiding in Him. These words expound ‘for the sake of the excellence of the knowledge of Christ’ in Philippians 3:8; as ‘that I may gain Christ’ in Philippians 3:8 expounds ‘for the sake of Christ’ in Philippians 3:7. And the power, etc.; expounds what is involved in ‘to know Christ.’

The power of His resurrection: the power of God which raised Christ from the dead, For His resurrection is emphatically a manifestation of divine power: and in this manifested power lay its practical worth: cp. 2 Corinthians 13:4; Romans 1:4. From Philippians 3:11 we learn that the ultimate goal of Paul’s desire is to ‘attain to the resurrection from the dead.’ To experience that resurrection is to ‘know the power’ which raised Christ. For the one resurrection is a result of the other. Had not Christ risen, there had been no faith in Him, no Gospel, no Christianity, and therefore no resurrection to eternal life. Moreover, our present spiritual life is a victory over sin gained for us and in us by the power of God which raised Christ. It will be consummated in a bodily resurrection like His. That power in its full manifestation, Paul desires to know. A very close and important parallel is found in Ephesians 1:19, 20. The intimate connection between the resurrection of Christ, the believer’s present victory over sin and moral elevation, and His final victory over the grave, a connection ever present to Paul’s thought, at once suggests the above exposition, and makes needless any other.

Fellowship of His sufferings: partnership with Christ in His sufferings: cp. 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:16. They who for Christ’s sake, and in order to save men, endure hardship, are sharing His sufferings for the world’s salvation. For their sufferings, like His, are caused by man’s sin, are endured in loyalty to God and love to mankind, and are working out God’s purpose of mercy. Close coincidence in Colossians 1:24; 2 Corinthians 1:5. This

companionship of suffering, Paul desires to know. And wisely. For we know Christ only so far as we share His loyalty to God and love to men. And if we share these, the circumstances of life will often lead us to endure hardship in order to save those whom Christ has taught us to love. Of such partnership with Christ, the annals of the Church are full. Happy they on whom rests most heavily this yoke of Christ. 'The resurrection' is placed before the 'sufferings' of Christ because Paul's thought went out first to the glory which should follow. He then remembered that to this goal there is only one path and in view of the goal desires to tread that path.

Being-conformed, etc.: way in which this knowledge of the fellowship of Christ's sufferings is to be obtained, a path Paul is already treading. Every step towards a martyr's grave was making him more like Christ who died on the cross. This clause gives definiteness to the foregoing one, and shows that Paul has in view both the death of Christ and the deadly peril which overshadows him while he writes.

**Ver. 11.** The ultimate goal of Paul's desire.

The resurrection or 'resurrection-out-of': a strong term, used in the N.T. only here.

From the dead: more definite than 'resurrection of the dead,' and found only in Luke 20:35; Acts 4:2; 1 Peter 1:3. It suggests removal from among the dead, and is used only of Christ and His servants. Although the lost (John 5:29) will rise, resurrection will not separate them from the dead. Paul desired to 'attain to' the uprising forth from the midst of the dead, the 'resurrection of life.' This will be the Christian's final triumph over his last foe: 1 Corinthians 15:26. And it implies victory over all enemies who now bar his path. For whatever tends to overturn his faith tends to rob him of his glorious consummation. A close parallel in Luke 20:35. This phrase peculiar to the blessed dead, by no means asserts or implies that they will rise before the unsaved. And Christ asserts that the two resurrections; 'of life' and 'of judgment,' will take place in the same 'hour.'

If in any way: as in Romans 1:10; 11:14; Acts 27:12; noting a purpose which Paul desires to achieve 'in any way,' and therefore at any cost. It suggests difficulty, and earnest desire prepared to encounter any difficulty. REVIEW OF 7-11. Paul has declared that, in contrast to the Jews, he has

no confidence in the flesh; and has shown the significance of this assertion by specifying several matters pertaining to bodily life in which conceivably he might have confidence. He now tells us that he has renounced, and continues to renounce, all these matters of boasting; and describes the greater gain which has allured him to this renunciation. Things once prized as gains, he has written off as loss; and this because of Christ and because of the greater gain of knowing Him. This renunciation has been to him the loss of all things; so valuable to him once were the gains he has renounced. They are to him now only the refuse which we haste to cast away. Paul desires to make Christ his own, thus gaining real enrichment; and to have Him for his home and refuge. To this end he needs the approval of the great Judge, which he can obtain not by anything in himself but only by the divinely-given righteousness promised to those who believe. He desires to win Christ and to be found in Him, in order thus to know Him, and especially to know by experience the mighty power which raised Christ from the dead. The only way to this experience of the power which wrought in Christ is by partnership in the sufferings which reached their culmination in the cross. And these Paul is eager to share. His ultimate aim is to attain the glory of those who in the Great Day will rise from and cast off the dust of death and thus enter into immortal life. In these verses Paul contemplates the great change which had turned the entire current of his life. It was no new and loftier view of morality or even a more enthusiastic love for his fellows; but a new aim in life, and this aim a new relation to Christ and a deeper knowledge of Him, the ultimate aim being a share in the resurrection of the just.

**Ver. 12-14.** The chief feature of the spiritual life described in Philippians 3:7-11 is the aim, manifold and yet one, therein so emphatically and repeatedly set forth. In Philippians 3:12-14 this aim is placed in still clearer light, thus receiving even greater prominence as an all-controlling element of Paul's inner life. Verse 12.

Not that: as in 2 Corinthians 1:24. It guards from misinterpretation the foregoing assertion, by saying that this lofty aim does not imply actual attainment.

Obtained: literally 'received' or 'taken.' The object received is not mentioned, attention being for the moment limited to the act of reception.

But the word 'press-on' suggests that Paul has already in view the prize mentioned in Philippians 3:14. This prize can be no other than the full blessedness of the Kingdom of Christ. And, for this, Paul must wait till the 'resurrection from the dead.' Notice the accurate use of the Greek tenses. The aorist, 'I-have-obtained,' denotes the mere act of reception: the perfect, 'am-made-perfect' denotes its abiding result. The denial 'not already attained' covers Paul's past life to the moment of writing. He has not yet received the prize he has in view. Lightfoot's exposition, 'not as though by my conversion I did at once attain,' puts into the Greek aorist a meaning quite foreign to it and belonging only to the English preterite: see 'The Expositor,' 1st series, vol. xi. p. 375.]

Already... already: emphatic denial of present attainment. A close parallel in 1 Corinthians 4:8.

Made-perfect: same word from the lips of Paul in Acts 20:24; Hebrews 2:10; 9:9; 11:40; 12:23, etc. A cognate adjective, rendered 'perfect,' in Philippians 3:15, and 1 Corinthians 2:6 where see note. These words denote a development which has reached its goal. Consequently, the exact sense in each case will vary according to the goal the writer has for the moment in view. They suggest here that the prize Paul seeks is to be obtained by personal maturity. Since it is given in the Great Day (cp. 2 Timothy 4:8) Paul probably means here that it is not yet so secure to him as to be no longer an object of earnest effort.

I-press-on: literally 'pursue,' i.e. follow quickly with a view to take hold of. Same word in Romans 9:30, 31; 12:13, 14.

Lay-hold: stronger form of the word rendered 'obtain.' The words may be compared as 'take' and 'take-hold.'

Of that for which: or with equal grammatical correctness 'inasmuch as.' The former rendering would assert that Christ has taken hold of Paul with a definite aim, and that Paul presses forward in order to achieve that aim, i.e. to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of him. The second exposition would leave unmentioned, as in Philippians 3:12a, the object Paul desires to grasp, stating only that Christ has laid hold of him and giving this as a reason for his own earnest effort. Between these renderings (R.V. text and R.V. margin) we cannot decide. And the practical difference



is slight. Paul knows that Christ has laid His hand on him. This must be with a definite purpose, a purpose to be attained by Paul's own effort. To accomplish this purpose is the object of his strenuous endeavor.

**Ver.** 13-14. An affectionate repetition and development of Philippians 3:12.

Reckon: a favorite word of Paul: close parallel in 2 Corinthians 11:5.

I... myself: each word emphatic, a vivid description of self-estimation. Cp. John 5:30, 31.

Not-yet: connected grammatically with 'reckon.' But in Paul's thought 'reckon to have laid hold' forms one idea. He has not yet reached the point at which he can soberly calculate that he has achieved the aim of life.

One thing, however, I do: the last two words being supplied from the sentence following which describes what Paul is doing.

Forgetting, etc.: as a racer thinks not of the ground already passed, but only of that still before him.

The things behind: the earlier stages of his Christian course. For the Jewish delusions in Philippians 3:5, 6 were no part of his marked-out path.

Stretching forward to, etc.: like a racer with hands reaching out eagerly towards the goal: a graphic delineation.

The things behind... the things before: a conspicuous contrast which cannot be reproduced in English. I-press-on; takes up the same word in Philippians 3:12.

The goal: the end of the course already in view and directing and quickening the racer's rapid steps.

The prize: in N.T. only here and in 1 Corinthians 9:24: same word in Ep. of Clement ch. v.; see my 'Corinthians' p. 521. The context shows that Paul refers to the garland given to successful athletes at the Greek festivals. See my 'Corinthians' p. 157. While forgetting the ground already trodden and pressing eagerly towards the goal, the racer was really pressing on towards the garland he hoped to win.

The... calling of God: as in Romans 11:29; see under Romans 8:28. It is the Gospel looked upon as a voice of God summoning men to Himself.

High calling: belonging to a realm infinitely above everything on earth: cp. Hebrews 3:1. The Gospel has its source in heaven, and calls men up to the place whence it comes. Of this divine and heavenly summons, given to all who hear the Gospel, the voice on the way to Damascus was a particular case. It bids us contend for a prize. Hence 'the prize of the high calling.' Paul remembers that God has called him to contend for a glorious prize, and that to enable him to win it Christ has laid His hand upon him. He therefore presses forward with the goal in view, to grasp the prize. In Christ Jesus; asserts either that the 'high calling' was given 'in' connection with 'Christ,' or that Paul's eager effort for the prize had Christ for its encompassing and pervading and animating element. The latter exposition, giving as it does to these concluding words a much richer significance, is probably correct. A similar ambiguity in 2 Corinthians 12:10. Paul's chief thought in Philippians 3:7-11 about his spiritual life was a purpose to win and to know Christ, that thus he may obtain a place in the resurrection of the just. In Philippians 3:12-14, this purpose is made more definite by a repeated and emphatic assertion that Paul has not yet attained the object he so earnestly desires; and is then developed into actual and intense effort. This effort is clothed in Paul's favorite metaphor of the Athletic Festivals of Greece. He is a racer pressing forward along the course, forgetting the ground already trodden and eagerly straining every nerve to reach the goal and thus obtain the prize. This metaphor presents an invaluable picture, and an essential condition, of healthy Christian life; viz. incessant and strenuous effort and sustained progress. The goal is the resurrection of the just. We can reach it only by pursuing now the path marked out for us by God. Consequently, every moral victory is a step towards the prize which will be given in that Day.

**Ver. 15-16.** Practical application of the foregoing. That Paul here implicitly claims perfection, after disclaiming it in Philippians 3:12, proves that the word was not to him a technical term for one definite stage of the Christian life. The context shows that the perfection denied in Philippians 3:12 was such as would make needless further effort and progress. That assumed here is doubtless the Christian maturity mentioned in 1 Corinthians 2:6; 14:20; Hebrews 5:14, and there contrasted with spiritual

infancy. It implies a firm grasp of the Gospel and a full surrender of our heart and life to its transforming power. Possibly Paul has here in view some who claimed to be 'perfect' or 'full-grown.' Instead of denying their claim, he shows the obligation it involves. They who call themselves men in Christ are bound to contend as athletes for the great prize. Similar thought and expression in 1 Corinthians 8:1.

Of this mind: viz. pressing on towards the prize. Since Paul, whom all would admit to be a mature Christian, disclaimed absolute perfection and was striving with all his might for something he had not yet attained, he bids his readers, so many as suppose themselves to be mature Christians, to make the same self-estimate and the same resolute effort.

In anything otherwise minded: some detail not in harmony with the 'mind' of Paul. That it is only a mere detail, is implied in the absence of censure and in the hope immediately expressed. 'If in any matter you do not share my self-estimate and earnest effort, 'even this' error God will dissipate by heavenly light.'

Reveal: as in 1 Corinthians 2:10; Galatians 1:16; see under Romans 1:17. It denotes always the Hand of God lifting a veil and thus imparting to men by light from heaven actual knowledge, ordinary or extraordinary. Paul bids his readers imitate his own self-estimate and earnest effort, and expresses an assured hope that if they do so, and if in any detail they fall below the example just set before them, even this error will be removed by God.

**Ver. 16.** Concluding exhortation, in the form of a limitation to the foregoing. 'Let us count as nothing our present attainments and press forward: 'only' in so doing let us pursue the direction in which 'we have attained' our present position.' A similar thought underlies the argument in Galatians 3:3, where Paul exposes the folly of turning aside from the path in which his readers have obtained spiritual life. That argument and this exhortation assume, not that the readers are infallible, but that they have made indisputable progress. Of this, their own moral sense was to them an infallible witness. They know that they have come out of darkness into light. Paul expresses his own determination, and encourages his readers, to go forward; and warns that their progress be in the direction which their past experience has proved to be right. So will all real progress mental and

spiritual be along the lines of whatever progress we have already made. But we must be sure that our progress is real. Of this, neither Paul nor his readers had any doubt.

Walk: same word in Romans 4:12; Galatians 5:25; 6:16; Acts 21:24; describing, as here, a spiritual path. Such are Paul's safe words to his readers. Around them are enemies, unworthy of the name of men, yet busy, and boasting in the Covenant of God.

Their professed loyalty to that Covenant is unreal. Its true sons are Paul and his readers, Jews and Gentiles. For the worship of the true Israelites is prompted by the Spirit of God: and their boast is in Christ and not in anything pertaining to mere bodily life. Yet in whatever the Jews boast, Paul might boast still more. For, whatever they claim, he has. But to him all such trust, and indeed all reliance upon earthly good, have vanished at the magic name of Christ. Paul's one aim now is to win Christ as his spiritual home and refuge, that thus he may know Him; and by knowing Him obtain a place in the resurrection of the just. Yet this lofty aim does not imply attainment. Paul has not reached the goal on which his eye is fixed. But day by day he is pressing forward. And his strenuous effort after spiritual progress he holds before his readers as a pattern for all who claim to be men in Christ. If in any detail, of thought or action, they cannot as yet embrace this all-controlling purpose, Paul confidently hopes that new light from heaven will enable them to do so. But whatever else they do, their effort and progress must be along the path which already has led them from sin to God.

## SECTION 9

### **WORLDLY-MINDED CHURCH-MEMBERS, WITH WHOM IS CONTRASTED THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE**

#### **CHAPTER 3:17-4:1**

*Be joint-imitators of me, brethren, and mark those who thus walk, according as ye have us for an example. For many walk of whom I often said to you, and now say even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is the belly, and their glory is in their shame, who mind the earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will refashion the body of our humiliation conformed to the body of His glare, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject to Himself all things. So then, my brethren, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, in this way stand in the Lord, beloved ones.*

Exhortation to imitate Paul, Philippians 3:17: opposite conduct of some church-members, Philippians 3:18, 19: with which is contrasted the Christian's hope, Philippians 3:20, 21: concluding exhortation to steadfastness, Philippians 3:1. Ver. 17.

Joint-imitators of me, become ye: join with others in imitating Paul. The chief word here differs only one syllable from that in 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1, where Paul speaks of himself as an example. [So always when a genitive follows the word 'imitators:' cp. 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2:14.] This is simpler than the exposition 'join with me in imitating Christ:' for there is no reference in the context to the example of Christ; whereas in Philippians 3:17b Paul speaks expressly of himself and others as patterns to the Philippians.

Mark: to look with a purpose, especially with a view to avoid, imitate, or obtain. Compare and contrast the same word in Romans 16:17. Same word as 'look-at' in Philippians 2:4, and 2 Corinthians 4:18. The word 'walk' takes up the similar, though not the same word in Philippians 3:16.

Who walk thus: viz. imitating Paul.

According as ye have etc.: a fact with which the above exhortations are in agreement. [This exposition gives to καθως its full force as introducing a harmony. Had it introduced merely an exposition of ουτως, ως would probably have been used, as in Ephesians 5:28, 33.]

Us: in contrast to ‘me,’ including Paul and those who ‘walk’ as he does. Such persons are an enrichment to the Philippian Christians: ‘ye have a pattern.’ Same word and sense in 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:9, where as here many men are one pattern; and in 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7: same word in slightly different sense in Romans 5:14; 6:17; 1 Corinthians 10:6. While exhorting his readers in Philippians 3:15, 16 Paul placed himself among their number: ‘let us be of this mind... we have attained.’ Conscious that he is himself doing what he exhorts, he now bids them to imitate him; and in so saying remembers that others are setting the same example. Upon these disciples who follow the steps of their teacher, Paul advises his readers to fix their attention, making use of the pattern they possess. He thus teaches the value of study of Christian character. Notice that the example of Paul did not supersede the need and value of the example of others who imitate him. For a less example under our immediate observation is sometimes more effective than a greater one at a distance. And various good men present varieties of excellence suitable for imitation in various positions of life

**Ver. 18.** Reason for the foregoing exhortation; viz. that ‘many’ pursue an opposite path. These were apparently church-members. For the hostility and sensuality and worldliness of pagans was so familiar to Paul that it would hardly move him to tears. The neutral word ‘walk’ (see under 1 Corinthians 3:3) simply places beside the walk of those who imitate Paul the outward life of these unworthy men. The path in which they walk is left to be inferred from what follows.

Many and often: notes of importance.

I have often said: probably when present at Philippi, where Paul must have been twice and possibly oftener, during his third missionary journey. It may also have included written warnings. The singular number, ‘I said,’ suggests special warnings from Paul himself. Even weeping; reveals the

terrible position of the men referred to and the damage they were doing. The enemies of the cross; implies that the death 'of Christ' holds a unique place as a chief means of the advancement of His Kingdom. And this can be explained only by Paul's teaching in Romans 3:24-26 that our salvation comes, by the grace of God, through the death of Christ making the justification of believers consistent with the justice of God. To resist the cross of Christ, is to resist the tremendous earnestness of God meeting a tremendous need of man, and the infinite love, there manifested. We wait to know more about the men guilty of sin so great.

**Ver. 19.** Further description of 'the enemies of the cross.'

Whose end: as in 2 Corinthians 11:15, where see note.

Destruction: utter ruin: see note under Romans 2:24, and especially 'The Expositor,' 4th series, vol. i. p. 24. That ruin is here said to be 'the end' of these men, implies clearly that Paul believed in the possibility of final ruin. For if all men will at last be saved, destruction cannot be their 'end.' In that case the end of all men would be eternal life. The plain words before us prove that such universal salvation was altogether alien to the thought of Paul. For the universal purpose of salvation, see under Philippians 2:11.

Whose... whose: stately repetition.

The belly: not 'their belly.' The seat of appetite for food is looked upon in the abstract as one definite idea; and is thus in some sense personified; so 1 Corinthians 6:13. This gives great force to the terrible charge 'whose God is the belly.' A similar, though slightly different thought in Romans 16:18. The appetite for food and the desire for pleasant food, with all the self-indulgence of which this appetite is a representative, are the supreme power which these men obey. The lower element of their nature controls the whole of it. The absence of the word 'whose' before 'glory in their shame' joins these words to the foregoing as together forming a second item in the description.

Glory: that which evokes admiration: see under Romans 1:21. That which evokes from their fellows admiration of them, and to which they look for admiration, is found 'in' that which is 'their' disgrace and ought to cover them with 'shame.' To them, their degradation is their ornament.

The earthly things: good or ill, these looked upon as a complex yet definite idea: hence the plural, and the definite article.

Who mind: as in Philippians 3:15; 2:2, 5; Romans 8:5, etc.: a word frequent in this Epistle. The things of earth, i.e. material good and ill, are the objects of their mental activity. Exact contrast in Colossians 3:1; 'mind the things above.' About these enemies of the cross, Paul's first thought is the ruin which awaits them. He then mentions the most conspicuous feature of their character, viz. that desires common to animals are the supreme object of their worship, the lower thus ruling the higher. Closely connected with this terrible inversion, we find that that which gains for them admiration with their fellows is really their disgrace. All this Paul traces to its ultimate source, viz. concentration of their thought on things pertaining to the material world. This preference of the lower for the higher is inevitably degrading. Hence comes the supremacy of bodily appetites, and the distorted vision which mistakes a disgrace for an ornament. The result is ruin. Since Christ died in order to raise us above the dominion of the perishing world in which our bodies live, they who surrender their mental powers to contemplation of earthly things and their nature to the control of its lowest elements, by so doing declare war against 'the cross of Christ.' This fearful description of men who must have been church-members is in sad agreement with 2 Corinthians 12:21. It is thus a note of genuineness. But we have no hint that these were members of the Church at Philippi. And this is contradicted by Philippians 1:4 and the general tone of the Epistle. Nor do we know whether or not they were at Rome, where Paul was writing.

**Ver. 20.** This verse supports the condemnation implied in the last words of Philippians 3:19 by pointing to the city 'in heaven' whose rights of citizenship are despised by those who fix their thoughts on 'earthly things.'

City or 'commonwealth': the city looked upon as the home of municipal life and rights. Same word in 2 Macc. xii. 7: 'root up the whole city of the men of Joppa, so that the 'municipality' of Joppa shall cease to be.' Practically the sense would be the same if we gave to the word the meaning 'citizenship' or 'rights-of-citizens, which it sometimes has. For where the city is there are the citizen rights.



Our city: viz. of Paul and those who imitate him; as in Philippians 3:17, 'us a pattern.' Cp. Clement of Alex. 'Miscellanies' bk. iv. 26: "For the Stoics say that heaven is properly a city, but the things on earth no longer cities; said to be such, but not so actually... the Elysian plains are the 'municipalities' of just men." 'Is,' or better 'exists, in heaven,' in complete contrast to 'the earthly things' of Philippians 3:19. Our commonwealth is 'in heaven:' same thought in 2 Corinthians 5:1; Galatians 4:26, where see notes. It is in heaven because there Christ is, in whom dwells the power which in the new earth and heaven will create the glorified home of His servants now on earth. Whence: 'out of' heaven, from within the veil which now hides from our view the unseen world. We wait for: a strong word used in the same connection in Romans 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Corinthians 1:7; Galatians 5:5; Hebrews 9:28: cp. 1 Thessalonians 1:10.

Also we wait, etc.: in addition to already having a city in heaven.

Savior: Ephesians 5:23. Also 2 Timothy 1:10; Titus 1:4; 2:13; 3:6; Acts 13:23 in a sermon by Paul, referring to Christ; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4, referring to God. Our home in which we have municipal rights exists in heaven: and we are eagerly waiting for One from heaven who will rescue us from the perils and hardships around.

**Ver. 21.** The deliverance which the expected Savior will work, and the standard with which it will correspond.

Fashion-anew: give to it an altered shape and guise. Same word in 1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. This use of a word denoting only a change of shape suggests the continuity of the present and future bodies. Cp. Romans 8:12, 'raise your mortal bodies.' And this continuity must be, in a way inconceivable to us, real. But it does not imply, any more than does the continuity of our bodies on earth, identity of material atoms. Niagara remains the same while every drop of water is ever changing. It is rather a continued relation to the human spirit of its material clothing. A description of the change is given in 1 Corinthians 15:35-53.

Our body, not bodies: as in Romans 6:12; see note under Romans 1:21. 'The body of,' i.e. standing in relation to, 'our humiliation.' On earth the servants of Christ are exposed to weakness, sickness, reproach, hardship, and peril. This their lowly estate, so inconsistent with their real rank, is

determined by the constitution of their material clothing, which is therefore 'the body of' their 'humiliation.' But when Christ comes out of the unseen world He will 'refashion' it. The body of Christ is the visible, material, human manifestation of

His divine splendor: 'the body of His glory.'

Conformed: sharing the form of: akin to the word 'form' in Philippians 2:6. It is stronger than the word rendered 'fashion-anew,' denoting such change of the mode of self-presentation as implies a share of the inward constitution of the body of Christ. When Christ appears, the changed bodies of His servants will become so like His body, which belongs to His essential splendor, as to share its mode of presenting itself to those who beheld it.

According to the working, etc.: a measure with which will correspond the coming change. This phrase is a marked feature of this group of Epistles: Colossians 1:29; Ephesians 1:19; 3:7; 4:16; cp. Colossians 2:12; Philippians 2:13.

Working: literally 'inworking' or 'activity,' an inward putting forth of power. It is the Greek original of our word 'energy.' Literally rendered, Paul's words are 'according to the energy,' or 'the inworking, of His being able,' i.e. of His ability, 'to subject to Himself, etc.'

All things: all the various objects in the universe, persons and things, these looked upon as a definite object of thought. To subject to Himself all things: 1 Corinthians 15:27, 28. It suggests that not yet do all things bow to Christ. But Christ has the abiding power to bend to His will all the component parts of the universe. The conformation of our bodies to His body will correspond with the activity of this abiding power. And this power confirms greatly our faith that He will remove from our bodies those mortal elements hostile to us and insubordinate to Him. These words also suggest that the victory to be gained in our bodies is part of a greater victory which will embrace and rescue 'all things.' Thus, as ever, Paul rises from the particular to the general, from the partial to the universal. Christ's ability to subject all things to Himself does not contradict the sad indication in Philippians 3:19 that some will be finally lost. For the putting forth of His power is determined by His infinite wisdom, which passes

our thought. Notice here a clear proof of the divinity of Christ. The resurrection will be His work, a work in harmony with His infinite power.

## SECTION 10

### ABOUT EUODIA AND SYNTYCHE

#### CHAPTER 4:2, 3

*Euodia I exhort, and Syntyche I exhort, to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, I request thee also, true yoke fellow, assist them; women who in the Gospel joined with me in my struggle, with Clement also and the rest of my fellow-workers whose names are in the Book of Life.*

A new matter abruptly introduced.

Enodia, Syntyche: names of women, both found on inscriptions. Grammatically they might also perhaps be names of men. But no such men's names are found elsewhere: and women are expressly referred to in Philippians 4:3, where the reference must be to these two persons. This mention by name suggests that they held a prominent place in the Church, and that the conduct which evoked this appeal was serious and notorious. Whether, like Phoebe (Romans 16:1) they were deaconesses, we do not know. They recall to us Lydia and the women who used to meet for prayer at Philippi when Paul first went there: Acts 16:13, 14. The exact repetition of the appeal suggests that it was needed by both women, and equally.

The same mind: as in Philippians 2:2. It implies that they were conspicuously of different mind, i.e. that they had openly quarrelled.

In the Lord: the encompassing element of the hoped-for reconciliation. It is to be no mere human agreement, but a concord flowing from contact with the one Master.

**Ver. 3.** Yoke-fellow: e.g. oxen under one yoke; often used in Greek for a wife and for persons in any way joined together.

True, or 'genuine': as in 1 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; cognate word in Philippians 2:20: one who is actually what his name describes. Either the

man referred to here was indicated orally by Paul to Epaphroditus, or there was some one at Philippi who would be at once recognised as intended by this term. In other words, this phrase needs a key which has not come down to us. The 'yoke-fellow' may be Epaphroditus himself whom in Philippians 2:25 Paul calls his fellow-worker and fellow-soldier and who occupied a unique position as messenger from Philippi and bearer of this letter. If so, these words pay honor to him as one worthy to be called a sharer of the Apostle's toil. But this reference, not being itself evident, would need to be explained to Epaphroditus. It has also been suggested as early as the time of Chrysostom that 'yoke-fellow' is a proper name, and that Paul added the word 'true' to assert that the man was worthy of his name. [Notice its emphatic position before the substantive qualified.] This suggestion is supported by the proper names around, Euodia, Syntyche, Clement. If such a name existed in the Philippian Church, the reference would be caught at once: and the epithet 'true' would be understood. The name, which we may write 'Synzygus,' is not found elsewhere. But many Greek proper names occur only once: and we cannot suppose that all are preserved. A suggestion of Ellicott, that Paul refers to the chief of the bishops at Philippi, is most unlikely. For we have no hint, except possibly at Jerusalem, of any one raised so completely above his fellow-presbyters as to be accosted by Paul with this title. The only explanations, therefore, are the two noted above, the one implying a private indication of Paul's meaning, the other implying the existence at Philippi of a man bearing a name not found elsewhere. Neither of these explanations is unlikely. But, between them, our data do not enable us to decide.

Assist them: 'join with them in grappling with the difficulty caused by their quarrel:' same word in Luke 5:7. The pronoun 'them' is feminine, referring evidently to the two ladies mentioned above. Paul wishes this true partner in his own toil to render help towards their reconciliation.

Women who, etc.: a description of the past services of these ladies, in support of this request for help. [αἰτινές introduces a class of persons to which these women belong, this involving a reason for helping them.]

Joined-with me in my struggle: literally, 'joined with me in an athletic contest:' same word in Philippians 1:27. Paul's gratitude remembers the

severity of the struggle in which they came to his aid. This gave them a claim to help from his friends.

In the Gospel: 1 Thessalonians 3:2; Romans 1:9: cp. 'fellowship for the Gospel' in Philippians 1:5. They joined with Paul in his efforts to spread the Gospel, efforts severe like those of athletes. The hardship involved in evangelical effort at Philippi, we learn from 1 Thessalonians 2:2. And not only with Paul but 'also with' another whom he mentions by name, 'Clement,' did these ladies co-operate. Nay more. So eagerly did they join in every good work that they associated themselves with Paul's other 'fellow-workers:' cp. Philippians 2:25. This proves that their co-operation was not, as is often the case, prompted by personal friendship. They were ready to assist all sorts of Christian workers. Yet these excellent ladies had quarrelled. Possibly, as so often in all ages, their eagerness in Christian work led them in different and opposite directions, and thus caused collision. And now, along with the record of their excellence, this blemish stands against them on the imperishable page of Holy Scripture.

That Clement is mentioned by name, implies that in some special way these ladies were associated with him. Probably his name recalled some incident giving them a further claim to help. That Paul speaks here of help 'in the Gospel,' suggests that Clement was a preacher of the Gospel. All else is unknown.

Origen in his 'Comm. on John' vol. vi. 36 identifies this 'Clement' with the author of the extant 'Epistle of Clement:' see my 'Corinthians' App. i. But the commonness of the name and the total absence of connecting links forbids the inference.

The Book of Life: as in Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; cp. Luke 10:20. In Exodus 32:32, 33 we have a 'book' of God, a register of His servants: similarly Psalm 69:28 'Book of Life' or 'living ones... written with the righteous.' Possibly the N.T. use of the word may have been immediately derived from Daniel 12:1, where we have a register of those who will rise to eternal life. While mentioning only one of his fellow-workers, Paul remembers that other names unmentioned by him are securely recorded among the heirs of salvation.

These verses give an interesting glimpse into early church life. We have the struggle involved in preaching the Gospel, Paul's various helpers in this work, and the two ladies who rendered assistance to him and to his brave comrades. Then steps in human imperfection. The ladies quarrel: and their quarrel comes to the ears of the prisoner at Rome. It is so serious as to demand mention in his letter to the Church. But the mention is only a recognition of their excellence, an exhortation to unity, and a request for help in the work of reconciliation.

## SECTION 11

### SUNDRY EXHORTATIONS

#### CHAPTER 4:4-9

*Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I will say, rejoice. Let your equity be known to all men. The Lord is near. In nothing be anxious; but in everything, by prayer and by supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all thought, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.*

*As to the rest, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things honorable, whatever things righteous, whatever things pure, whatever things lovely, whatever things of good report, if there be any excellence and if any praise, take account of these things; what things also ye have learnt and accepted, and heard and seen in me, these things do. And the God of peace will be with you.*

A series of exhortations, without grammatical links: cp. Romans 12:9-18.

**Ver. 4.** Rejoice in the Lord: as in Philippians 3:1. It takes up, after the interposed matters of 8-10, the thread then suddenly dropped.

Always: the new feature in this verse. Constancy is a distinguishing mark, and a measure, of Christian joy. 'To rejoice in' the 'Lord always,' is to rejoice when all earthly joy is withdrawn; and when the light of earth shines most brightly, even then to find our highest joy in the Master's smile. A noble example in Habakkuk 3:17, 18. All other joy is subject to change. But they whose joy is an outflow of union with a Master in heaven walk in the light of a sun which never sets. And their joy is a safeguard against the perils both of earthly joy and earthly sorrow.

Again I will say: emphatic repetition, revealing the importance, in Paul's view, of Christian joy. Of such joy, he is himself, as every page of this Epistle testifies, an illustrious example.



**Ver. 5.** Equity: a disposition which does not press to the full the claims of absolute justice; but, tempering these claims by a generous reasonableness, is satisfied sometimes with less than is due. It is discussed at length in bk. v. 10 of the 'Nic. Ethics' of Aristotle, who explains it as being akin to justice but better than justice. It is eminently a Christian virtue: and the disposition which presses our claims to the full extent allowed by justice is eminently non-Christian. Paul bids us so to act that 'all men' may see and know our generous reasonableness. Therefore we must treat all men with equity.

The Lord is near: at His second coming. For the 'Day of Christ' was ever in Paul's thought: Philippians 1:6, 10; 2:16. And he has just referred to His expected return. Probably had Paul known that long ages would elapse before the return of Christ, he would not have used these words. But it is unsafe to infer from them that he confidently expected to survive His coming. The greatness and the certainty of that event, for which we today like Paul centuries ago wait eagerly as the consummation of all our hopes, occupied his entire field of view; and obscured completely the secondary question of time. If Christ be coming, to bring in by His presence the eternal day, then to our thought in all ages 'the Lord' is 'near.'

The nearness of the coming of Christ is a strong dissuasive from the grasping spirit which made needful the foregoing exhortation. They who look for His appearing will not demand, from dying men around them, the last farthing they owe. Cp. 1 Corinthians 7:29; James 5:7.

**Ver. 6.** Anxious: not the forethought which enables us to guard against coming troubles, but the useless and painful care which merely brings the sorrows of tomorrow to spoil the pleasures of today. See under Philippians 2:20.

In nothing: absolute prohibition of all anxiety of every kind. Same prohibition from the lips of Christ in Matthew 6:25-34. See under 1 Corinthians 7:32. This anxiety arises from the common delusion that our happiness and well-being depend upon the possession of material good. It injures our body; and, by filling the mind with earthly care, blocks out the elevating influence of heavenly things; and exposes us to the terrible temptation of seeking in forbidden paths relief from present distress. This

peremptory command, so difficult to obey, assures us that all anxiety is needless.

But in everything: exact positive counterpart of the foregoing negative exhortation. It is virtually Paul's remedy for anxiety.

Prayer and supplication: same words together in Ephesians 6:18; 1 Timothy 2:1; 5:5; Psalm 6:10; Daniel 9:21, 23. The word 'prayer' is used only in reference to God, and denotes every kind of verbal approach to God.

Supplication, or 'petition': earnest request for some special good, whether from God or from man. See Philippians 1:4 Paul bids us go in every difficulty to God in prayer and beg from Him the help we need.

With thanksgiving: same connection in Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; 1 Timothy 2:1. Thanks should be an element in our every approach to God, and be associated with every petition. Thus will memory of benefits and answers to prayer already received aid our prayers by stimulating a confident hope of good things to come.

Requests: things asked for. Same word, and the cognate verb twice, in 1 John 5:15.

Made-known to God: i.e. we must put our wants into words, as though He needed to have them made known to Him. Thus God puts Himself by our side as our friend that we may have the relief of pouring into His ears our tale of sorrow. By so doing, we grasp the consolatory truth that God knows our need.

Notice Paul's remedy for anxiety. In every difficulty we must tell our case to God. We must put it in the form of request for help. This request must be mingled with thanks for the innumerable mercies already received. In the light of these mercies, of God's promise to answer prayer, and of His loving sympathy, anxiety cannot live.

**Ver. 7.** And the peace of God will guard, etc.: blessed result which will follow the use of this remedy. It is not a prayer but a prophecy.

Peace: inward rest arising from absence of disturbing causes within or around us, a happy consciousness of absolute safety. So Romans 1:7; where see note.

Peace of God: not 'with God' as in Romans 5:1. Rather compare John 14:27, 'My peace I give to you.' The words 'of God' distinguish this 'peace' from all other by pointing to its divine source and nature. Cp. 'righteousness of God' in contrast to 'their own righteousness' in Romans 10:3. It is the profound calm of omnipotence which fills the breast of God and which nothing can disturb, which He gives to, and by His presence and power works in, His servants. It shuts out all anxiety, which is always a result of felt helplessness. As the Giver of this peace, He is called in Philippians 4:9 'the God of peace.'

All thought: literally 'all mind:' same word in Romans 1:28; 7:23, 25. It is the mental faculty which looks through outward appearances to the underlying realities. This peace, because divine, goes further than man's 'mind' can follow or comprehend. It 'passes' the 'thought' not only of those around but of those to whom it is given, who wonder at their own peace in the midst of sorrow or peril and acknowledge it to be a gift and work of God. Same thought and a cognate word in Ephesians 3:20, 'beyond all things which we ask or think.' It is true that whatever comes from God surpasses human thought. But the peace of God is here expressly said to do so because it is found, not only in heaven where we expect it, but amid the anxieties and unrest of earth. And the unexpected contrast between storms around and peace within evokes surprise.

Shall guard: shall keep with military power; either from injury, as here and 1 Peter 1:5, or from escape as in Galatians 3:23; 2 Corinthians 11:32. Since anxiety exposes us to spiritual peril, the peace of God, by excluding anxiety, guards from peril. Breathed into us by infinite power, it is itself almighty: and, filling our hearts, it will guard us on every side from all evil. Just so the Roman garrisons in frontier towns guarded them from attacks of enemies, and enabled the inhabitants to carry on in peace their daily work.

Our hearts: those inmost chambers whence come thoughts and actions. See under Romans 1:21.

Thoughts: the products of mental activity. Same word in 2 Corinthians 11:3, 'The peace of God will guard the hearts' of His people so that sin shall not invade them, 'and' their 'thoughts' so that doubt and fear shall not trouble them.

In Christ Jesus: His divine personality being a bulwark sheltering them from evil. This implies that the peace of God is definitely a Christian grace.

Thus Paul guarantees the effect of the remedy he proposes. He bids us take to God in prayer, with gratitude for past mercies whatever now causes anxiety. And he assures us that if we do so we shall have, instead of anxiety, a peace which is God's work and gift; and that this peace will be itself a protection guarding our hearts from the entrance of evil and guarding our thoughts from taking a wrong direction. This divine safety is ours in Christ Himself the home and refuge and bulwark of our spiritual life.

**Ver.** 8-9. Concluding exhortations to meditation in Philippians 4:8, to action in Philippians 4:9a: followed in Philippians 4:9b by a promise.

As to the rest: same words and sense in Philippians 3:1, introducing words which cover all that Paul has left unsaid.

So many things as; suggests number and variety in each of the following classes. Notice the stately six-fold repetition.

True: words, acts, and disposition corresponding with reality, especially with the eternal realities, with which our thought and conduct must ever be in harmony, as opposed both to falsehood and to error. It includes, but is much wider than, truthfulness. Cp. Ephesians 4:21; 5:9; 1 John 1:6.

Honorable: deserving and gaining respect. It suggests the dignity which pertains to conduct worthy of Christ. Only, in N.T., here and 1 Timothy 2:2; 3:4, 8, 11; Titus 2:2, 7.

Righteous: agreeing with the authoritative standard of human conduct; as in Philippians 1:7; Ephesians 6:1.

Pure: unstained by evil of any kind, as in 2 Corinthians 6:6; 7:11; 1 Peter 3:2; 1 John 3:3.

Lovely: only here in N.T. Sirach iv. 7; xx. 13. It denotes the attractive sweetness of Christian excellence.

Of-good-report: cognate word in 2 Corinthians 6:8: whatever sounds well when spoken of.

If any, etc.: an hypothesis which every one admits to be true, and which if true supports this exhortation. If there be such qualities, as undoubtedly there are, their existence makes them worthy of attention.

Excellence, or 'virtue': common in classic Greek for excellence of any kind, moral, mental, bodily, or merely material; this looked upon as giving worth to its subject. In N.T., only 1 Peter 2:7; 2 Peter 1:3, 5. Possibly the reason of its rarity is that the N.T. writers look upon human excellence, not as inhering in man and giving him worth, but as wrought in him by the indwelling Spirit of God.

Praise: outward verbal recognition of 'excellence,' which is inward and essential. It corresponds with 'of-good-report.' 'Excellence' covers the five preceding details. 'If there be any intrinsic human excellence, and if it have among men any recognition of its worth.'

Take-account-of: reckon them up, so as to estimate and appreciate their worth: same favorite word in Philippians 3:13. Paul bids his readers calculate the worth of various kinds of moral excellence. And, feeling how many and various are its elements, he goes into detail and bids them contemplate actions, words, and dispositions which correspond with reality; and which therefore claim and gain respect; those which agree with the eternal standard of right; and are unstained by pollution; those which possess the charm of moral beauty; and which when mentioned secure for themselves name and fame among men.

Philippians 4:8 is Paul's commendation of the science of Ethics. Only by careful meditation can we distinguish and appreciate moral worth. This is the real value of Christian biography. It sets before us in a variety of forms the various elements of Christian excellence. And this value is not destroyed, although the worth of a particular memoir is lessened, by occasional overstatement. Even if the portrait be overdrawn, it sets before us a model worthy of imitation.

**Ver. 9.** To the exhortation to ponder the foregoing virtues, Paul now adds an exhortation to practice them; and supports this last by his readers' previous acceptance of his moral teaching and by his own example. Not only are these virtues worthy of 'being taken account of' but the Philippian Christians have also already learnt them and have accepted them as good.

Learnt: intellectual apprehension.

Accepted: moral approval, as in 1 Corinthians 15:1, etc. Probably these virtues were learnt from the lips of Paul. But it was not needful to say this. From whomsoever learnt, they had been understood and approved.

Heard: not to be joined to the foregoing, to which it would add nothing, but to the words following. 'Not only 'have ye learnt and accepted' these virtues but 'ye have also heard and seen' them exemplified 'in me,' viz. in Paul's verbal intercourse with them and in the life he had lived before their eyes. Happy they who can speak thus to their pupils. Such can with authority say 'do these things.' Thus by the lessons already learnt and approved, Paul urges his readers to practice the virtues he has just bidden them to ponder.

To the above exhortation, as in Philippians 4:7, Paul adds a promise: 'and God shall, etc.' Where God is, there is peace, viz. 'the peace of God.' He is therefore 'the God of peace.' So Romans 15:33; 1 Corinthians 14:33.

With you: as in Romans 15:33. The Giver of peace 'will' ever 'be with' those who keep His commands.

Paul cannot conclude his letter without again and more emphatically bidding his readers to rejoice. And in their joy he bids them, in view of the near approach of the Great Judge, to treat all men not merely with strict justice but with reasonable fairness, He bids them dismiss all anxiety; and, in order so to do, to take to God all causes of anxiety, mingling their prayers with thanks for past mercies, All that now remains is covered by two exhortations and a promise. Paul bids his readers ponder the various forms of moral excellence, But in so saying he remembers that they have already learnt and approved the virtues he bids them ponder. And he reminds them that they have seen these excellences exemplified in himself.

He exhorts them to practice what they have learnt and seen; and assures them that in so doing the Author of peace will Himself be their companion.

## SECTION 12

### *PHILIPPIAN LIBERALITY FAREWELL*

#### CHAPTER 4:10-23

*I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at length ye have revived your thought on my behalf; for which also ye were taking thought, but ye were without opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want. For I leave learnt in whatever circumstances I am to be content. I both know how to be abased and I know how to abound. In everything and in all things I have been initiated into the mystery both to be filled with food and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. For all things I have strength in Him who gives me power. Nevertheless ye did well that ye had fellowship with me in my affliction. Moreover, yourselves also know, Philippians, that in the beginning of the Gospel when I went out from Macedonia no church had fellowship with me for the matter of giving and receiving except ye only. Because even in Thessalonica both once and twice ye sent for my need. Not that I seek for the gift, but I seek for the fruit which is increasing for your account. But I have got all things, and I abound; I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things from you, an odor of a sweet perfume, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours, according to His wealth, in glory, in Christ Jesus. To God, our Father, be the glory for the ages of the ages. Amen.*

*Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. There greet you the brethren with me. There greet you all the saints, especially they of Caesar's household.*

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.*



This section contains the specific occasion of the Epistle, viz. the gift brought to Paul at Rome from Philippi by Epaphroditus, added almost as a postscript to the far more important matters mentioned above.

**Ver. 10.** I rejoice, literally 'rejoiced': when the gift arrived from Philippi. Paul himself does what in Philippians 4:4 he bid his readers do, This keeps up the tone of joy which runs through the Epistle: so Philippians 1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17, 18, 28, 29; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10.

In the Lord: as in Philippians 3:1. The joy occasioned by the gift from Philippi was no mere human emotion, but was distinctly Christian, i.e. prompted by union with the Master.

Greatly: calling marked attention to a cause of special joy; cp. Matthew 2:10.

Now at length; suggests delay. But not reproach: for the delay is at once and satisfactorily explained.

Revived, or 'burst forth-again': as a branch puts forth new shoots. So did the Philippians produce, by this gift to Paul, a new development of spiritual life.

Thought or 'thinking': same word as in Philippians 1:7; 2:2: mental activity for the good of Paul. This was the specific matter of the new development: 'touching your thought on my behalf.'

For which: viz. the well-being of Paul, represented as the mental basis or aim of their thought. Not only had their Christian life burst forth now into a new practical development of care for Paul, but even before this their minds were at work in the same direction: 'ye were also taking thought.'

Ye-were-without-opportunity: apparently, without means to send a contribution. The opportunity was afterwards found in the journey of Epaphroditus, whether it was undertaken expressly to carry the gift or for some other purpose. In the former case, the circumstances which made the journey possible were the opportunity; in the latter, the journey itself. Possibly poverty may have been the hindrance; and better circumstances the subsequent opportunity. But an approaching journey of Epaphroditus to Rome for other reasons is the easiest explanation.

Thus Paul mentions the delay, and apologises for it. The new shoot reveals continuous life, latent before, but now assuming visible form. The gift was somewhat late. But its lateness was caused not by want of loving care but by lack of means to carry thought into action. At last the means had been found: and the consequent outburst of pent-up love had filled Paul with joy.

This delay implies that, when the relief from Philippi arrived, Paul had been a long time in want, For the news had reached Philippi, and after some delay a gift had been sent to Rome. It is difficult to suppose that this time of want includes the two years (Acts 24:27) at Caesarea. And, if not, Paul must have been many months at Rome when he wrote this Epistle. This is therefore an indication of its date. See Introd. v.

**Ver. 11.** Not that: introducing, as in Philippians 3:12, a safeguard against misinterpretation.

By way of want: as though his words were prompted by deep need. The expression of joy in Philippians 4:10 might seem to be the voice of a starving man whose distress had been unexpectedly relieved. That this is the explanation of his glowing words, Paul denies.

For I have, etc.: proof of this denial.

Content: or literally 'self-sufficient.' The cognate substantive occurs in 2 Corinthians 9:8; 1 Timothy 6:6: a simpler word, in 2 Corinthians 12:9, where we have the same thought in another form. The syllable 'self-' states not the source, but the inwardness, of this sufficiency, in contrast to external possessions. Its divine source is stated in Philippians 4:13. Aristotle, 'Nicom. Ethics' bk. i. 7, defines the 'self-sufficiency' to be that which 'even by itself alone makes life worthy of choice and needing nothing.' This definition we may accept. That is 'self-sufficient' which has in itself whatever is needful for its highest well-being, and is therefore independent of everything external to itself. Christian contentment is not a narrowing down of our desires to our poor possessions, but a consciousness of infinite wealth in Christ, in whose hands are all things already working for His servants moment by moment their highest good. He who has this consciousness is independent of his environment. His sufficiency is in himself.

In whatever circumstances I am: including the dungeon in which Paul wrote these words, and in which before the arrival of Epaphroditus he had been in actual want. Paul's contentment was not natural but acquired.

I-have-learnt; suggests gradual acquirement by the toilsome effort of the learner. But the task has been accomplished.

I: very emphatic. In this school each must learn personally and for himself.

**Ver.** 12-13. Exposition in detail of Paul's self-sufficiency. Having 'learnt,' he says 'I know.' The lesson learnt, he then unfolds.

To-be-abased: same word in 2 Corinthians 11:7, where it is the exact opposite of being exalted; so Luke 14:11. It includes every kind of going down, whether into poverty, or dishonor, or prison, or sickness, or the grave. This downward path Paul knows how to tread so as not to slip, so to descend that every step down be spiritual elevation. This knowledge many have not. Consequently adversity produces in them gloom and repining and fear and resentment and rebellion, thus doing them serious spiritual harm. E.g. many have lost their confidence in God and their spiritual life through commercial disaster. But the real cause of this ruin is not adversity which is powerless to injure those who understand its source and purpose, but want of knowledge. He who has found in Christ the full supply of all his need can take these perilous steps with safety.

I-know-also; adds to the foregoing, with stately repetition, its necessary complement.

To-abound: to have more than we need. It is a counterpart, not to 'abase,' which would require as counterpart 'exalted,' but to the special kind of abasement which Paul had been enduring, viz. poverty. Many who passed unscathed through adversity are ruined by prosperity. For they are satisfied with material good. This ruin is caused by their not knowing how to rise in wealth, fame, power, and yet remain 'lowly in heart.' But Paul had learnt even this difficult lesson. Consequently, he was beyond reach of injury from either the ups or downs of life. He was independent of the uncertainties of the world around; and therefore 'self-sufficient.'

**Ver.** 12b is a fuller exposition of Philippians 4:12a; as is Philippians 4:12a of Philippians 4:11b.

In everything and in all things: things around looked at individually and collectively. 'In whatever position I am, and in whatever combination of circumstances.'

Initiated-into-the-mystery: cognate to the Greek original of our word 'mystery.' See note under 1 Corinthians 3:4. The use of this word here sheds light upon the cognate word already found in 1 Corinthians 2:7; 4:1; Romans 16:25, by suggesting that Paul refers, not to a mere secret, but definitely to teaching known only, like the Eleusinian mysteries, to the initiated. It thus embodies a development of Paul's earlier teaching. Paul is telling us how he came to 'know how to be abased, etc.' He had been led into the secret chamber of God and had there learnt that which is known only by those whose eyes and ears God opens. Notice the gradation: 'I have learnt, I know, I have been initiated into the mystery.'

Both... and, both... and; suggests the completeness and the unity of the secret Paul has learnt.

To-be filled-with-food: i.e. satisfied. Same word in Matthew 15:33, 37, etc. It suggests that in prison Paul had been in want of food.

Hungry: exact opposite of the foregoing. This contrast is a specific case under the more general contrast in Philippians 4:12a. It is followed by a restatement of the more general contrast.

To-about: to have more than we need.

To fall-short or 'to-be-in-want': to have less than we need. Same word in same sense in 2 Corinthians 11:9 etc,

**Ver. 13.** Triumphant summing up of the practical result of what Paul has learnt. He knows: therefore he is strong.

All-things: very emphatic: it includes abasement, hunger, abundance.

Strength: spiritual muscle and force, In the Christian struggle Paul was like a man in robust bodily health and strength. 'For all things' within the horizon of duty and desire, he has unlimited strength.

In Him who gives me power: Christ, in whom Paul lives and acts, and whose power (2 Corinthians 12:9) rests upon him, He is to Paul not merely the bulwark protecting him on every side by its own strength, but

an all-pervading and life-giving personal element breathing into him His own omnipotence. From this inward union with Christ is derived the strength which fits Paul for all things he has to do. The strong man helps the weak by bearing his burden for him. Christ helps us by breathing into us a strength which makes our burdens light.

The word 'Christ,' (A.V.) appears in the margin of the Sinai and Clermont MSS. and in nearly all the later Greek copies. This suggests the origin of a large class of various readings, viz, that they were explanatory glosses, afterwards incorporated into the text.

This great assertion must not be diluted. Whatever lies within the horizon of duty and necessity and desire, Paul can do. To him as to God there is no question of can or cannot. In Christ Paul is morally omnipotent, But, just as God's inability to lie (Hebrews 6:18) does not in the least degree limit His infinite power, (for lying is contrary to the divine nature and therefore outside the horizon of divine action,) so Paul is strong only for that which Christ would have Him do. All else is outside Christ, the sphere of his strength. But within the limits of the personality of Christ lay Paul's whole action, thought, and life. Consequently, this limit was no limit to him. And he felt himself endowed with infinite strength. To him therefore the burdens of life were light; and its toil was easy.

These words embody an important secret into which Paul had been initiated, and which enabled him to sink or to rise without spiritual injury. He knows how to be abased because he knows that underneath him are the Everlasting Arms: he can therefore go down into the depth without fear and without damage. He can rise without danger: for he knows that God who raises him will guard His servant from the perils of exaltation. He is therefore safe. Neither height nor depth can separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Notice the four steps in this great climax. Paul has learnt: therefore he knows: he has learnt the secret: consequently he can do all things.

**Ver. 14.** Nevertheless, etc.: a corrective on another side to the corrective introduced in Philippians 4:11. Although it would be an error to suppose that Paul's joy was prompted by his deep need, he by no means valued

lightly the gift which supplied that need. He says that his readers 'did nobly.'

My affliction: Paul's hardship at Rome, which was relieved by the contribution from Philippi. This involved monetary loss, and therefore some degree of hardship, to the Christians there. They cheerfully submitted to this hardship, and thus 'became partners' (see under Philippians 1:4; 3:10) 'with' Paul 'in' his 'affliction.' In so doing they 'did well.'

**Ver.** 15-16. Additional facts, known to the readers and casting light upon the fact just mentioned.

Also yourselves know: as well as Paul. He thus supports the foregoing statement, not by new information, but by an appeal to knowledge shared by himself and his readers.

Philippians; gives definiteness to this appeal by naming the persons appealed to.

In the beginning of the Gospel: thrust prominently forward, contrasting conspicuously with the gift just acknowledged the liberality of days long past.

These words are explained at once by those following. They take us back to the time when Paul first preached in Europe; and remind the Philippians that their present action was only continuance in a path entered at the beginning of their Christian course. We find the same words in the Ep. of Clement, ch. 47 (see my 'Corinthians' p. 528) referring to the time when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians.

When I went out from Macedonia; grammatically may refer to an event contemporary with, or following, Paul's departure from Macedonia. [See Winer's 'Grammar' 40, 5a.]

From Acts 17:15 we learn that some Macedonian Christians, apparently from Beroea, went with Paul out of Macedonia to Athens. The words before us imply that then or soon afterwards the Philippian Christians sent money to Paul. Whether this was the gift mentioned in 2 Corinthians 11:9, we do not know. If, hearing that Paul had gone to Corinth, they sent to him there a deputation with a gift, this would explain both Philippians

4:15 and 2 Corinthians 11:9. For it would be a gift in the beginning of the Gospel after Paul had left Macedonia. Or, less probably, the gift from Philippi may have reached Paul as he was leaving Beroea for Athens. In any case, the contribution here mentioned is an important coincidence with 2 Corinthians 11:9: for this passage proves that Paul did not refuse gifts from friends at a distance.

Had-fellowship: simpler form of the word in Philippians 4:14. They became partners with Paul.

For an account of giving and receiving: purpose of this partnership; similarly Philippians 1:5, 'fellowship for the Gospel.' They entered into partnership with Paul in order to have with him dealings about 'giving and receiving,' i.e. about transferring money from one to the other. Paul leaves his readers to remember that the 'giving' was on their part, and the 'receiving' on his; merely saying that both sides of the transaction were present to their mind and purpose. This explains abundantly the words here used, without involving the idea of spiritual recompense as in Romans 15:27.

Except ye alone: an example splendid in its solitariness. Not only did their spiritual life at once take this form: but the example thus set was at first not even imitated by others.

**Ver. 16.** Because even, etc.: a definite fact confirming the foregoing negative statement.

Even in Thessalonica: in addition to, and earlier than, what they did when Paul 'went forth from Macedonia.' A close coincidence with Acts 17:1, which tells us that 'Thessalonica' was the first city at which Paul lingered after leaving Philippi. During the few weeks (Acts 17:2) spent there, the Philippian Christians sent 'twice' to supply his 'need:' a wonderful proof of the influence upon them of his preaching. Truly their liberality dated from 'the beginning of the Gospel.'

Once and twice; lingers over the repetition of this kindness. This second contribution in so short a time is very significant. Others would have thought that one gift was all that could be expected from them. But even a second present did not exhaust the liberality of the Philippian Christians. For, apparently, they sent to him another shortly afterwards to Corinth.

My need: as in Philippians 2:25, Paul's poverty (cp. 2 Corinthians 11:8) owing probably to his inability to maintain himself (2 Thessalonians 3:8) while preaching at Corinth.

**Ver. 17.** Not that; introduces a corrective to Philippians 4:15, 16, as do the same words in Philippians 4:11 a similar corrective to Philippians 4:10. Each corrective supplements the other. Paul's joy about the gift from Philippi (Philippians 4:10) was not prompted by his deep need. And his appreciation of it (Philippians 4:15, 16) was prompted, not by eagerness for money, but by eagerness for his readers' spiritual profit.

The gift: whatever from time to time, as circumstances determine, their liberality might prompt; this looked upon as a definite object of thought.

I seek for the gift: an abiding state of mind which Paul disavows.

But I seek for: stately repetition.

Fruit: as in Romans 1:13: the reward of the Philippians' liberality; this looked upon as its organic outworking according to the laws of the Christian life, Day by day, as one act of liberality follows another, this reward is 'increasing.'

For your account; recalls the same words in Philippians 4:15, 'for account of giving and receiving.' While the Philippian Christians entered into partnership with Paul in order to have dealings with him in a matter of giving and receiving, a harvest of reward was growing which was reckoned to their credit. These last words, and Paul's constant reference of reward and punishment to the Great Day, indicate that to this he refers here: so Philippians 1:6, 10.

**Ver. 18.** An added statement containing another reason why Paul does not desire a gift; viz. that his wants are completely supplied.

I have all: or better, 'I have to the full all things.'

And abound: not only supply but overflow.

I-am-filled full: of all material good. Notice the climax: 'I have all, I abound, I am filled full.'



Having received, etc.: means by which his needs have been fully supplied. This clear assertion that Epaphroditus had brought to Paul a gift from Philippi explains Philippians 2:25, 30.

An odor, etc.: a comment on the gift from Philippi, revealing its real significance.

Odor of perfume: Ephesians 5:2; Genesis 8:21; Exodus 29:18; Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17, etc.: a frequent O.T. phrase picturing the acceptableness of sacrifice to God.

Sacrifice: as in Romans 12:1.

Acceptable, well-pleasing: a climax. Same words in Acts 10:35; Romans 12:1, 2; 14:18; 2 Corinthians 5:9. Since all these phrases are frequently followed by the word 'to-God,' it probably refers to all of them. 'To God' a fragrant 'perfume' goes up and a 'sacrifice' is offered which is 'acceptable' and 'well-pleasing' to Him. Apparently the gift from Philippi was only kindness to a prisoner in poverty at Rome. But whatever is done to the servant is done for the Master: and whatever is done for Christ brings abundant recompense. This gift is therefore a seed producing already a harvest of blessing for its generous donors; and a sacrifice laid on the altar of God. The sacrifice is fragrant in the mind of God: it is a gift He will receive and be pleased with.

**Ver. 19.** Philippians 4:18 has brought the gift from Philippi into the presence of God. This reminds Paul of the recompense which will follow it.

My God: as in Philippians 1:3. The recompense will follow because the prisoner at Rome stands in a personal relation to God.

Supply, or 'fill': same words as 'filled-full' in Philippians 4:18, which it recalls.

Will-supply: a definite promise, as in Philippians 4:7, 9.

Every need: of body and spirit; every necessity and every yearning of their whole nature.

Need of yours: corresponding to 'my need' in Philippians 4:16.

His riches: a favorite conception of Paul; Romans 2:4; 9:23; 11:33; Ephesians 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:8, 16. It is here a picture of God's ability to supply our need, as a rich man can remove the present want of the poor man: cp. Ephesians 3:20.

According to His riches: measure of the promised supply. This will not only come out of the wealth of God but will correspond with its infinite abundance. Consequently, 'every need' will be supplied.

In glory: locality or surrounding element of this supply. Same words in similar sense in 2 Corinthians 3:7, 8, (9,) 11. It is the splendor which will surround the final reward and triumph as in Colossians 3:4; 1:27; Romans 5:2; 2:7, 10. Amid the brightness of the great day, every need and every yearning will be gratified.

In Christ: in virtue of our inward union with Him. The abundant supply will be 'in glory,' as its visible clothing evoking admiration; and 'in Christ,' as its encompassing, all-pervading source and element. Cp. same words at end of Philippians 4:7.

This great promise makes even the half-conscious yearnings of our nature to be themselves a prophecy of future blessing. For their complete satisfaction in the glory of heaven is pledged by the wealth of God.

**Ver. 20.** Outburst of praise evoked by the promise in Philippians 4:19; and marking the close of the topic introduced in Philippians 4:10.

To God, our Father: literally 'God and our Father;' i.e. God who is 'also' our Father. See note under Galatians 1:5. As ever, Paul's song of praise is directed to the 'Father.' In these words he acquiesces in the eternal recognition of the grandeur of God manifested in His mercy to men. This recognition he seals by a final 'Amen.'

**VERSES 10-20** preserve for us one of the most beautiful incidents in the story of Paul or of the early Church. From them we learn that his imprisonment at Rome was aggravated by poverty, that he was not only in prison but in want. All this reached the ears and moved the hearts of the Christians at Philippi. But either from straitened circumstances or more probably from lack of a messenger they were for a time unable to render the help they were eager to give. At length an opportunity occurred.

Epaphroditus offered to take their contribution to Rome. On the way he fell dangerously ill. Indeed he risked his life in order to discharge his mission of mercy. But the gift from Philippi arrived safely at Rome, and supplied at once and fully the prisoner's need. Paul was filled with joy. But his was not the joy of a starving man suddenly relieved. His happiness was not dependent on the kindness of far-off friends. For he had learnt the secret of the Christian's poverty and suffering. To him the presence and smile of God were an all-sufficient supply of every need and a source of infinite strength. The prisoner's joy is distinctively Christian. He knows that this gift is seed from which already an abundant harvest is growing up for the donor's enrichment. Being prompted by loyalty to Christ, it is a sacrifice laid upon the altar of God, an acceptable sacrifice filling His courts with pleasant perfume. And it will be repaid, as will everything done for God, by a full supply of every need in the splendor of heaven.

Paul remembers that this was not the first gift from Philippi. Very soon after he founded the Church there the brethren sent him money while preaching the Gospel in the city of Thessalonica; and that not once but twice. And apparently shortly afterwards they again sent him money to Corinth. Consequently, their action now is but continuance in a path entered at the commencement of their Christian course. It is only another outflow of that spirit of brotherhood which, as Paul said in Philippians 1:5, they had manifested from the beginning. In monetary help they set the first example; an example which others were somewhat slow to follow. Nay more. We learn from 2 Corinthians 8:1 that in the great collection for the poor Christians at Jerusalem the Churches of Macedonia were very conspicuous. Our thoughts go at once to the acknowledged liberality of the Church at Philippi, the earliest of the Macedonian Churches founded by Paul. And we cannot doubt that they who set the first example in Macedonia of Christian giving were equally prominent in the contribution for Jerusalem. Indeed the liberality of Macedonia must have been in great part an imitation of the example set by the Church at Philippi. If so, then as so often since, men who were eager to contribute money for the need of a beloved teacher were also ready to do so for unknown, but suffering, Christians in a far-off land. Thus 2 Corinthians 8:1 is an important coincidence with Philippians 4:16.

It is worthy of note that the Church marked by this constancy of liberality, not only presented nothing needing from Paul even a word of rebuke, but affords the noblest of the many pictures of early Christian Churches reflected in his Epistles. In the apostolic age the Church at Philippi stands supreme in its spotless beauty. And to the generosity of that Church we owe this letter, written to acknowledge it, and all the untold blessings it has conveyed to thousands of the servants of Christ. Little thought the faithful ones at Philippi that the gift they so readily sent to relieve the Apostle's distress would enrich the Church of Christ in all ages with a priceless treasure. Never was there a more wonderful proof that they who do good do better than they think.

**Ver. 21-22.** Salutation. To the Church collectively is committed a greeting for every member of it: 'greet ye every saint.' We may expound either 'every saint in Christ Jesus,' noting their relation to Christ as in Philippians 1:1; or 'greet in Christ Jesus every saint,' noting a definitely Christian greeting. Since the word 'saint' is already sufficiently definite, this latter exposition which would give spiritual emphasis to the greeting is somewhat the more likely. So 1 Corinthians 16:19, and probably Romans 16:22.

Why, writing to a Church so much beloved, in which there must have been so many persons well known to him, Paul does not add greetings to individuals, we do not know. Possibly, where all (Philippians 1:4; but compare Romans 1:8 and contrast Romans 16:3-15) were so good, Paul was unwilling to give special prominence to any; or preferred to give them less prominence by sending personal greeting orally by Epaphroditus.

The brethren with me: those more closely associated with Paul in prison, and thus distinguished from 'all the saints,' i.e. the church members at Rome. Same words in similar, though perhaps slightly different, sense in Galatians 1:2. These companions are called 'brethren,' although (Philippians 2:20) they do not fully share the Apostle's spirit.

Caesar's household, or 'house': either the emperor's palace, or its inmates of all kinds from his relatives and state officials down to the humblest slaves. Between these meanings the difference is very slight. So Diogenes Laertius ('Lives of Philosophers' bk. v. 5. 3) says that Demetrius was 'of Conon's 'house.' Paul's words assert that even in the home of Nero,

perhaps the most corrupt spot on earth, were Christians. The servants of the palace were very numerous and various; and even the lowest of them would naturally, among others of the same class, be proud of his position. Possibly this special salutation was occasioned by the closer contact of the members of the imperial household with the prisoner of the Praetorian Guard.

**Ver. 23.** Paul's farewell, almost word for word as in Galatians 6:18.

**REVIEW OF THE EPISTLE.** The prisoner at Rome, over whose head hangs the sword of a capricious tyrant and whose imprisonment had been aggravated by poverty, writes to the Christians at Philippi to acknowledge a gift which has completely supplied his need.

To beloved brethren, Paul has no need to assert his official position, and simply places himself beside Timothy as a servant of Christ. But the officers of the Church have, for reasons unknown to us but probably creditable to them, the unique honor of definite mention in the opening salutation. After the salutation, Paul's first thought is thanks to God for the universal excellence of the Christians at Philippi, which makes prayer for them a delight and encourages a just and loving confidence of their final salvation. These thanks are followed by prayer for their growth in knowledge and in usefulness.

The anxiety of the Philippian Christians calls for news about the imprisoned Apostle, about his circumstances and his feelings. His apparent misfortunes have, by inspiring confidence in the Christians at Rome helped forward the preaching of the Gospel. This gives Paul abiding joy. And this joy is not destroyed by the fact that some preach Christ out of ill-will to the Apostle. Their hostility pains him the less because he knows that it is working for him spiritual good, and is therefore helping his eternal salvation. This reference to Paul's inner thought becomes a reflection on the page on which he writes of his utter uncertainty of life and death, and of the profound and equal calm with which he views each side of this tremendous alternative.

From himself Paul now turns again to his readers. One thing only he begs from them, that they play their part as citizens of the Kingdom of God in a way worthy of Christ. This will require from them persevering courage

and united effort in face of their enemies. On unity the Apostle lays special emphasis; and warns against the subtle forms of selfishness so fatal to it. As a supreme example of unselfishness, he points to the incarnation and death, and subsequent exaltation, of the Son of God. He also warns his readers that upon their conduct depends their salvation, and begs them so to act as to be lights in a dark world and an eternal joy to himself. To him, every sacrifice for them is an abiding joy.

Paul then commends Timothy, his proved and faithful son in the Gospel, whom he hopes soon to send; and Epaphroditus who at the risk of his life had discharged the mission entrusted to him and had thus rendered to the Apostle eminent service. He bids the Philippian Christians receive back with due honor their faithful messenger.

With this commendation Paul was closing his letter. But, for his readers' safety, he adds a warning, viz. against Jewish opponents and Jewish self-confidence. In such confidence Paul might himself indulge: but his knowledge of Christ has made it impossible. He has no present attainments in which to rest; but is eagerly pressing forward to a goal still beyond him. He bids all who claim to be men in Christ to imitate his example. A sadder warning follows. Some church-members, by their worldly and sensual spirit, prove themselves to be enemies of Christ. This unworthy Spirit Paul rebukes by pointing to the expected Savior and the complete change which His coming will bring.

Next follows a word of kindly expostulation with two excellent ladies whose quarrel was the more serious because of their Christian activity. Then come charming words of spiritual exhortation and of wise counsel.

Lastly, Paul speaks at some length about the gift which prompted this letter. The gift filled him with joy; not because of the poverty it relieved-for Paul has learnt a secret which makes him superior to the burdens of life-but because of the harvest of blessing which already it is producing for his readers, and because it is an acceptable sacrifice to God, who will supply in the glory of heaven the givers' every need. A few words of general greeting close the Epistle.

In the pages of the Epistle to the Philippians we see reflected the most attractive picture in the New Testament of Christian life and a Christian

Church. Scarcely a word of reproof disturbs the joyous outflow of Paul's warm affection. And this affection finds equal response in the abiding and loving care of the Philippian Christians for Paul. Among the Apostolic Churches they hold indisputably the place of honor. And to thousands of men and women tossed about by the uncertainties and anxieties of life, this letter, written in a dungeon at Rome under the shadow of the gallows yet everywhere vocal with exuberant joy, has been the light of life. As our gladdened eyes turn from that far-shining light to rest for a moment on the broad and silent pastures where once was the busy Roman colony of Philippi, we see fulfilled in ancient prophecy:

***THE GRASS WITHERETH, THE FLOWER FADETH; BUT THE  
WORD OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOR EVER***

# EXPOSITION

## OF THE

# EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

## SECTION 1

### APOSTOLIC GREETING

#### CHAPTER 1:1, 2

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colossae. Grace to you and peace from God, our Father.*

**Ver. 1** is the same as 2 Corinthians 1:1. Whether ‘Timothy,’ who is not mentioned in the twin letter to Ephesus, is mentioned here because of some special relation to Colossae, we do not know. But the scantiness of our information leaves this quite possible. He may or may not have been Paul’s penman. The same word denotes ‘faithful’ or ‘trustworthy’ in 2 Corinthians 1:18, etc., and ‘believing’ in Colossians 6:15; senses quite distinct but closely allied. Between them here, it is most difficult to decide. Since faith is implied in the word ‘brethren,’ and again in the phrase ‘in Christ,’ and since this Epistle is a warning against serious error, we may perhaps find in this word a recognition that the ‘brethren at Colossae’ are ‘trustworthy.’ It is not certain whether ‘in Christ’ refers to the word ‘saints’ as well as to ‘faithful brethren.’ Perhaps only to this latter phrase. For it needs further definition as noting a distinctively Christian brotherhood, more than does the word ‘saints’ which outside the Aaronic priesthood belongs only to Christians.

**Ver. 2.** The benediction is only ‘from God our Father.’ For this no special reason can be given. Paul thinks only, when wishing his readers ‘grace’ and



‘peace,’ of the divine ‘Father from’ whom such blessing comes; not, as usual, of the Son also, the joint source with the Father of all good.

Writing to the Colossian Christians whom he has never seen, Paul remembers that by the will of God he has the position and responsibility of an Apostle. He joins with himself, as approving the letter he is writing, his brother Timothy; and addresses his readers as men claimed by God to be specially His own and as brethren in Christ worthy of confidence. He desires for them the smile of God and the peace which only that smile can give.

# DIVISION I

## PRAISE AND PRAYER

### CHAPTER 1:3-14

## SECTION 2

### *PAUL THANKS GOD FOR HIS READERS' FAITH*

#### CHAPTER 1:3-8

*We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ always about you, when praying, having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which ye have towards all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in the heavens, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel, which is present among you, according as also in all the world it is, bearing fruit and increasing, according as also among you, from the day when ye heard and understood the grace of God in truth; according as ye learnt from Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.*

**Ver. 3.** As to the Philippians, so here Paul begins with praise for God's work in his readers and with prayer for its further development.

We-give-thanks: so 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; where however the plural is explained by the close relation of Silvanus and Timothy to the Thessalonian Christians. Here, possibly, the plural is used, in contrast to Philippians 1:3, because Paul's more distant connection with the Church at Colossae permits him to fall back on somewhat official phraseology.

God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: same words as in Romans 15:6; 2 Corinthians 1:3, except that here Paul omits the copula 'and' which there formally joins together the titles 'God' and 'Father of, etc.' He to whom Paul gives thanks is 'God,' the divine Person whom Christ used to address, and to speak of, as His 'Father.'

Give thanks... always about you: better than 'always when praying about you:' for it is more likely that Paul would say that his thanks were ceaseless, than that his prayers were ceaseless, for his readers.

When praying: i.e. in his regular devotions. He is always thanking God about the Christians at Colossae: and the specific time and manner of this perpetual thanksgiving is his approach to God in prayer.

**Ver. 4.** Special occasion and matter of these thanks. When Paul heard of his readers' 'faith' and 'love' he began, and continues, to thank God on their behalf.

Faith in Christ: Ephesians 1:15; 1 Timothy 3:13; 2 Timothy 1:13; 3:15; not elsewhere in the N.T. It must not be separated from Paul's frequent phrase 'in Christ;' and notes that the personal object of our faith is also its encompassing element. Faith saves because Christ is the element in which it dwells and rests.

Love which ye have: for love is an enrichment to those who possess it. 'Faith' takes inward hold of 'Christ: love' reaches out 'towards all the saints.' The universal scope of Christian love is a mark of its genuineness.

**Ver. 5a.** Real significance of this faith and love; and therefore the ultimate reason of Paul's thanks: 'because of the hope, etc.' All Christian hope is a germ developing into the glory of heaven: it is the dawn of the eternal day. And this is its real worth. In his readers' faith and love Paul saw a foretaste of eternal blessedness: and this prompted his thanks on their behalf. Similarly, in Philippians 1:6 he looks forward to the completion of the work already begun. The simplicity of this exposition renders needless all attempts, necessarily forced, to represent this 'hope' as in any way the cause or reason of the faith. and love. Colossians 1:3 is Paul's thanksgiving: Colossians 1:4, its immediate occasion: and Colossians 1:5, its ultimate 'cause' or ground. See a good paper by Findlay in 'The Expositor,' 1st series, vol. x., p. 74.

The infinite objective reality underlying the Christian ‘hope’ gives even to the subjective hope itself an objective reality; and prompts us to think and speak of it as such. Now this objective reality is ‘in heaven,’ far away from us and above reach of the uncertainties of earth. It is therefore a ‘hope laid up in heaven.’ For, where our treasure is there is our heart and our hope. Thus a hope cherished in the breast of men on earth is guarded from disappointment by the security of heaven. Similar thought in Philippians 3:21. Notice here in close relation faith, love, hope: so in the same order, 1 Thessalonians 1:3 a close parallel: also 1 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:5, 6.

**Ver. 5b-6.** Objective source of this hope, viz. the Gospel preached at Colossae and throughout the world.

Heard-before; makes conspicuous the fact that the subjective hope in the heart was preceded by an objective proclamation.

The truth of the Gospel: Galatians 2:5: the reality underlying the good news brought by Christ. See under Romans 1:18.

The word of the truth, etc.: the announcement of this reality. The announcement preceded and caused the Christian hope at Colossae.

Which Gospel is present among you: or, more fully, ‘which has reached you and is now present with you.’ This suggests the good fortune of the Colossians in that the Gospel had reached them; and the reality of the Gospel which like an overshadowing presence is now among them.

According as also in all the world it is: a larger fact in harmony with that just stated. Paul carries out his readers’ thought from the valley of the Lycus where they had heard the Gospel to ‘the’ wide ‘world’ throughout which ‘also’ the same Gospel ‘is,’ or ‘exists,’ i.e. is heard and believed and gains victories.

All the world: an hyperbole similar to that in Romans 1:8. Within Paul’s mental horizon, which was very large, the Gospel was everywhere preached.

Bearing-fruit and increasing: further information about the universal Gospel.

Fruit: results produced by the organic outworking of its own vitality, viz. the many and various benefits of the Christian life. Same word in Romans 7:4, 5; Mark 4:20, 28; cp. Philippians 1:11, 22; 4:17.

Increasing: as the goodness is carried from place to place and its converts multiply, the Gospel itself becomes a larger thing. So Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20. Thus it 'bears fruit' in the blessings it conveys, and 'increases' in the increase of its adherents.

According as also among you: another fact added to, and in harmony with, the foregoing. That the Gospel is preached at Colossae, is part of a larger fact, viz. that it is preached throughout the world. Paul now adds that its good effects through out the world are reproduced also at Colossae. He reduplicates the comparison because the second member of it, viz. the general statement, goes beyond the foregoing particular statement, and therefore needs to be supplemented by the second comparison. These last words are a courteous recognition of the genuineness and extent of the work at Colossae. The Gospel produced there the good effects it produced elsewhere. This Paul strengthens by saying that the fruitbearing and increase began at once and continue to the present: 'from the day when, etc.' In the Gospel the Colossians 'heard the grace of God,' i.e. the favor to our race which prompted the gift of Christ. 'And' the word needed to be, and was, 'understood,' i.e. apprehended by careful thought.

In truth: so John 4:23, 24. Correspondence with reality was the surrounding element of their hearing and mental comprehension. While hearing the Gospel and grasping its contents they were dealing not with delusion but with reality.

**Ver.** 7-8. Ye learnt from Epaphras: an historical detail in harmony with, and expounding, the general statement in Colossians 1:5. Like Paul, (Philippians 4:11,) the Colossian Christians had acquired gradually and with effort their understanding of the grace of God: 'ye learnt.' Their teacher's name is given: 'Epaphras.'

Fellow-servant: with Paul in the service of Christ: same word in Colossians 4:7; Revelation 19:10; Matthew 18:28. The plural number assumed in Colossians 1:3 is retained: 'our... us... our.' Paul recognises

Epaphras as, along with himself, Timothy, and others, doing the work of the one Master.

Who is, etc.: a commendation of Epaphras.

Minister: see under Romans 12:7. The added words 'of Christ' (cp. 2 Corinthians 11:23) make us certain that the word 'minister' is used, not in an official sense as in Philippians 1:1, but in the more general sense of one who does free and honorable work for another. In this work he was 'faithful' or 'trustworthy:' Ephesians 6:21; 1 Corinthians 4:2.

On our behalf: emphatic. The difficulty of this reading confirms its genuineness as attested by the best copies. Paul probably means that his interest in the Colossian Christians was so great that the service rendered to Christ by Epaphras in caring for them was rendered also to himself, and that this interest was shared by his companions. Possibly Epaphras may have been urged by Paul to care for the Christians at Colossae: but this is not necessarily implied in his words.

Who also declared, etc.: another fact. It implies that Epaphras had come to Rome and there told Paul the story of the Colossian Church. Consequently, from Epaphras the Colossians heard the good news of the grace of God and Paul heard the good news of the work of God at Colossae.

Your love; implies faith, which therefore is not here mentioned.

In the Holy Spirit: the animating principle of all Christian life. Cp. Romans 14:17, 'joy in the Holy Spirit.'

We are here introduced to another of the noble band of Christian workers who surrounded the great Apostle; of whom we have already met Timothy, Titus, and Epaphroditus. Since 'EPAPHRAS' was apparently (Colossians 4:12) a Colossian and yet founded the Church at Colossae, we may suppose that on a journey perhaps to Ephesus, the capital of the province, he heard the Gospel preached by Paul; that he carried back to his own city the good news he had himself embraced and thus became founder of the Church there. Evidently, he had come to Rome; and was remaining there when Tychicus started with this letter. Even in Rome his deep interest in the spiritual welfare and progress of the Christians at Colossae

moved him to ceaseless and very earnest prayer on their behalf. The intelligence of his prayer (see Colossians 4:12) proves him to have been a man of highest worth. Well might Paul call him a 'beloved fellow-servant' and a 'faithful minister of Christ.' In Philemon 23, for reasons unknown to us he is called a 'fellow-prisoner' of Paul.

Paul's letter to the Colossians begins with an expression of his constant thanks to God on their behalf, prompted by tidings he has heard about their faith and love. This evokes his thanks because it is a sure indication of better things to come. It therefore inspires a hope not dependent for its realisation upon the uncertainties of earth but resting on the security of heaven. These hopes the Colossians owe to the Gospel which has reached their city. Paul reminds them that the same Gospel is preached throughout the world; and that everywhere it is bearing fruit and extending its influence. He is glad to recognise that the same good results have followed the preaching of it at Colossae from its first proclamation to the present day. This Gospel they had heard from the lips of Epaphras, a fellow-worker of Paul and a minister of Christ: and also from Epaphras Paul had heard the good news about the Church at Colossae.

The distinctive feature of this thanksgiving is Paul's mention of the universal proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world, and of its universal fruit-bearing and growth. He thus raises his readers' thoughts above their own Church and city to the great world and the Church Universal: a transition of thought always beneficial in the highest degree. Possibly this reference to the proclamation and success of the Gospel throughout the world was suggested by the strange doctrines which it is the chief business of this letter to correct and which were a local perversion of the one Gospel. This local perversion Paul wishes to discuss in the light of the universal Gospel everywhere preached and everywhere successful.

## SECTION 3

### PAUL'S PRAYER FOR HIS READERS' FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

#### CHAPTER 1:9-14

*For this cause also we, from the day we heard it, cease not praying on your behalf and asking that ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, in every good work bearing fruit and increasing by the understanding of God, with all power being made powerful according to the might of His glory for all endurance and long-suffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father who has made you meet for your share of the lot of the saints in the light, who has rescued us from the rule of the darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

**Ver. 9.** Result on the writer's side of the fact stated in Colossians 1:8: 'because of this also we, etc.' These words place Paul and Timothy, as a third party, in contrast to Epaphras and especially to the Colossian Christians.

From the day we heard: same phrase in Colossians 1:6. As soon as the Colossians heard the word of grace, it began to bear continual fruit in them: as soon as Paul heard of their Christian love, he began and continued to pray unceasingly for their further development.

Do not cease praying on your behalf: cp. Ephesians 1:16, 'I do not cease giving thanks on your behalf.'

Praying: general term for approach to God, as in Colossians 1:3, where the specific form of prayer is thanksgiving. Here the specific form is immediately added: 'and asking that ye may be filled.' Same words together, 'praying and asking,' in Mark 11:24.

Asking: more fully 'asking as a favor to myself.'



That ye may be filled: immediate matter and purpose of Paul's request: further purpose in Colossians 1:10a, with collateral details in Colossians 1:10b, 11, 12.

Filled: so that every part of their being be permeated, and thus controlled and elevated, by an intelligent comprehension of the will of God.

Knowledge: full and complete knowledge, as in Philippians 1:9.

His will: embracing God's purpose of mercy towards us and the path in which He would have us walk. [The accusative case after 'filled,' as in Philippians 1:11, where see note. I specifies the kind and extent of the fulness which Paul has in view.]

Wisdom and understanding: found together in 1 Corinthians 1:19, from the LXX. where the words are often associated and their cognate adjectives in Matthew 11:25.

Wisdom: acquaintance with first principles, these being looked upon by the Jews as a guide in action: see note under 1 Corinthians 2:5.

Understanding: the faculty of putting together, and reading the significance of, facts and phenomena around.

Spiritual: wrought by the Holy Spirit: for to Him most frequently does the word 'spirit' refer. But the distinction is not important. For the spirit in man is that highest element of his nature on which the Holy Spirit directly operates. Same word in 1 Corinthians 2:13, where see note; 1 Corinthians 3:1; 15:44. It distinguishes the wisdom and understanding wrought in us by the Holy Spirit from that mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:19, 20; 2:5, 6, 13; 3:19; 2 Corinthians 1:12; James 3:15.

All wisdom and understanding: embracing every element given to man of acquaintance with the great realities behind and beneath and above the visible world around, and a faculty of interpreting phenomena of every kind. All this is looked upon here as the surrounding element 'in' which was to be realized the fulness of knowledge which Paul desired for his readers. He prays that amid such wisdom and understanding they may be made full with a fulness embracing intelligent acquaintance with the will of God. A similar prayer, including the word here rendered 'knowledge,' is found in each of the letters written by Paul during his first imprisonment

at Rome, Philippians 1:9; Ephesians 1:17; Philemon 6. It may almost be called the key-note of this group of epistles.

**Ver.** 10a. Further purpose to be attained by this fulness of knowledge: viz. to take such steps in life as are 'worthy of the Lord,' i.e. of the great Master.

Walk worthily of: so Ephesians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; cp. Philippians 1:27; Romans 16:2. The grandeur of the Master claims corresponding conduct in His servants. How wide is this claim, we shall learn from Colossians 1:10b, 11, 12, which expound in detail Colossians 1:10a.

For all pleasing: i.e. in order to please Him in 'all' things, making His pleasure our constant aim. So 1 Corinthians 7:32. This aim is the only one worthy of the Master whom we serve. And it will mark out for us a worthy path. Thus Paul desires for his readers knowledge not merely for its own sake but that it may produce in them a worthy Christian life. So Philippians 1:9-11 an important parallel.

**Ver.** 10b. The first of three participial clauses describing further the worthy walk which Paul desires for his readers.

Bearing-fruit and increasing; recalls the same words in Colossians 1:6. To those who receive it the Gospel communicates its own vitality, and fruitfulness, and growth. As it bears fruit in them so they bear fruit 'in every good work,' i.e. in beneficence of every kind. These last two words occur together in 1 Timothy 5:10; 2 Timothy 2:21; 3:17; Titus 1:16; 3:1; 1 Timothy 2:10; Romans 2:7; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:17. The visible outgrowth of the Christian's inner life is found 'in' good deeds. As before, 'fruitbearing' and spiritual 'growth' go together. Just as the Gospel by producing good results itself comes to occupy a larger place on the world's great stage, so all good we do to others increases our own spiritual stature.

Knowledge of God: as in Colossians 1:9, which it recalls. Just as there Paul desired for his readers full and complete knowledge of God in order that they may walk worthy of Christ their Master, so now, while speaking of the growth he desires to accompany this worthy walk, he mentions the full knowledge of God as the means by which this growth is to be wrought. This quick repetition of the same thought, viz. knowledge as a means of

something beyond itself, gives to this thought great emphasis. This emphasis, and the close connection between fruitbearing and growth suggested by the repetition of these words together, with the indisputable fact that fruitbearing as much as growth is a result of knowledge of God, suggests that the instrumental clause 'by the full knowledge' of God embraces both 'fruitbearing' and 'growth.' (Cp. John 15:7.) If so, the balance of the sentence suggests that the early clause 'in every good work' has in some measure the same compass. In other words, Paul desires his readers to be filled with knowledge of the will of God, producing in them a walk worthy of their Master, and along with this a fruitbearing and growth showing itself in every good work and produced by knowledge of God. Just as in Colossians 1:6 we have a comparison of the work at Colossae with that throughout the world, and this turned back upon itself by a further comparison of the work throughout the world with that at Colossae, so here after tracing Christian knowledge to its practical result in Christian conduct Paul traces back Christian beneficence and growth to the instrumentality of specific Christian knowledge.

**Ver. 11.** Second detail which Paul desires may accompany his readers' worthy walk, viz. spiritual 'power' producing 'endurance.'

**Power:** ability to overcome obstacles and to do work.

Being made powerful: day by day receiving power, like the same tense of a cognate word in Ephesians 6:10, a very close parallel, and Philippians 4:13.

With all power: every kind of ability, this looked upon as an objective ornament for the Christian work and fight. Similarly, Ephesians 3:16.

His glory: the manifested grandeur of God, evoking His creatures admiration. See under Romans 1:21. With this divine grandeur is associated infinite 'might,' i.e. the power of a ruler. And this 'might' is the measure of the 'power' with which Paul desires his readers to be made strong: 'according to the might, etc.' For whatever there is in God He communicates, according to their need and their faith, to His servants.

All endurance: maintenance of our position under all burdens which would press us down and in face of all foes who would drive us back; as in Romans 2:7, etc.

Longsuffering: a holding back of emotion, whether anger as in Romans 2:4; Ephesians 4:2, or fear as is implied here by the connection with 'endurance.' Paul desires that in spite of 'all' obstacles his readers hold on their way and preserve a serene Christian spirit.

With joy: a desired accompaniment of this endurance and longsuffering. So completely are the Colossian Christians to maintain their position and their serenity in spite of hardships that these are not even to dim their 'joy.' This last word adds immense force to those foregoing as a note of absolute victory. The note is clearly sounded in 1 Thessalonians 1:6. But this complete victory is possible only by the inbreathing of power in divine measure.

Grammatically, the words 'with joy' might be joined to Colossians 1:12. And this would preserve in some measure the symmetry of the three participial clauses, giving to each participle a foregoing prepositional specification: 'in every good work, in all power, with joy.' The practical difference is very slight. For in any case the 'endurance and longsuffering' are associated 'with joy.' But these last words would add very little to 'giving thanks:' (for all thanksgiving is joyful:) whereas joined to 'endurance' they are a note of triumph. [This is somewhat confirmed by the word **μετα** which joins together dissimilar or at least distinct objects; and therefore more naturally connects 'joy' with 'endurance' than with 'thanksgiving.']

**Ver. 12.** Third participial detail collateral with, and expounding, the 'worthy walk' of Colossians 1:10a. This must be accompanied not only by fruitbearing and growth, and by divinely-given strength producing joyful endurance, but also by 'thanksgiving.' This last is very conspicuous with Paul: Colossians 2:7; 3:17; 4:2; Ephesians 5:4, 20; Philippians 4:6. It is cognate to, and was perhaps suggested by the word rendered joy in Colossians 1:11. The 'endurance and longsuffering' are to be accompanied by 'joy:' and this is to assume the form of expressed gratitude to God. Whether He is here spoken of as 'Father' of the Firstborn Son or of us His human brethren, the close relation between Christ and us leaves us unable to determine; and makes the distinction unimportant.

The word 'lot' or 'allotment,' and the word 'saints' which never throws off its O.T. reference and which has here its usual N.T. sense of

church-members, these looked upon as claimed by God to be specially His own, recall the Division of Canaan among the sacred people. Similarly Acts 26:18, 'a lot among the sanctified:' a close coincidence, from the lips of Paul. Cp. Numbers 33:54, where the 'lot' is the instrument of allotment: and Numbers 32:19; Joshua 17:6, where it is an allotted portion of the land. And Deuteronomy 10:9, 'For this cause the Levites have no share and 'lot' among their brethren: the Lord Himself is his 'lot.'"The lot of the saints' seems to include the whole portion of spiritual blessing allotted to the human family of God

The share of the lot: that part of this general allotment of blessing which falls to each 'of the saints.' The word 'share' reminds us that in this allotment many joined, and that the Colossians were now sharers with the ancient people of God.

Made-meet: same word in 2 Corinthians 3:6, 'meet or sufficient to be ministers of the New Covenant.' It implies that for this participation some fitness is needed and that this fitness God has given to the Colossian Christians. This can be no other than the righteousness of faith: for righteousness is ever the condition of spiritual blessing, and it can be obtained only by faith. This divinely-given fitness is abundant and constant reason for 'thanksgiving.' The O.T. coloring of these words recalls Ephesians 2:12, 13. It somewhat favors the reading 'you' found in the two best Greek copies, as against 'us' which is read by most other authorities. For the word 'you' would contrast the Colossians who were Gentiles with Paul and others who were Jews. Cp. Ephesians 2:1 and 3:12 and 14. This internal confirmation of our two best witnesses perhaps slightly outweighs abundant documentary evidence on the other side.

In the light: locality or environment, probably, of 'the lot of the saints.' Similarly in Colossians 1:13 'the darkness' has a semi-local sense. 'Light' is a characteristic of everything pertaining to the inheritance of the saints. Their eternal home will be a world of light, as God is light and dwells in light: Revelation 21:24; 1 John 1:5; 1 Timothy 6:16. And the glory of that splendor will illumine their path on earth: 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 5:8. Since the lot of the saints is both a future enjoyment (a 'laid-up hope') and a present possession, the words 'in the light' must have the same double reference. The sons of God are already heirs (a word cognate with

‘lot’) and therefore ‘in the light:’ and the light in which they walk is an earnest of their share of the allotment of blessing which belongs to the consecrated people of God.

[‘In the light’ can hardly be the instrument by which (cp. 2 Corinthians 4:4 ‘the light of the Gospel’) God ‘made’ them ‘meet’ for the inheritance. For its distance from the verb would require this to be very definitely indicated. But the Greek preposition here only notes the light as a surrounding element. Moreover, the contrast with ‘out of darkness’ in Colossians 1:13 suggests very strongly that the light is an environment of that for which God has made His people meet.]

**Ver.** 13. Further statement of what God has done, expounding Colossians 1:12 and giving further reason for thanks to God.

The darkness: the objective realm of evil, looked upon as causing ignorance and gloom and as possessing power and thus exercising ‘authority’ or rule over its victims: so Luke 22:53 and Ephesians 6:12, ‘this darkness.’ It is practically ‘the authority of the air’ in Ephesians 2:2 the rule of moral and spiritual night. These words imply that under this rule all men once lay bound. ‘Out of’ this ‘rule of darkness’ God had ‘rescued’ the Colossian Christians: i.e. by His kindness and power He had brought them out into the light.

Translated: removed from one place to another: same word in Luke 16:4; Acts 13:22; 1 Corinthians 13:2.

The Son of His love: who belongs to the love of God as its eternal personal object. The phrase fixes our attention on the relation of the Son to this unique attribute of the Father.

The kingdom of, etc.: the realm over ‘which Christ will reign for ever: Ephesians 5:5; John 18:36. This kingdom will have its full realisation in the final glory. But already its citizens are being enrolled. And enrolment brings at once a foretaste of the blessings of the rule of Christ. Notice the complete change which God has wrought. Once these Colossians were in bondage under the rule of darkness, a rule shutting out the many blessings of the light. From that realm of darkness God has rescued them and brought them into another realm over which reigns the eternal Son, the divine Object of divine love. By this rescue and this transfer God made

these Gentiles meet to share the lot of His holy people. For such benefit, well might Paul wish his readers to give thanks to God.

**Ver. 14.** Our relation, in this kingdom, to the King. This verse is a transition from the foregoing thanksgiving to the great matter of this Epistle, viz. the dignity and work of Christ.

In whom... redemption: as in Romans 3:24. This last word suggests or asserts that our rescue was costly. In the parallel passage, Ephesians 1:7, the cost is stated: 'through His blood.' Since surrender to the rule of sin is the due penalty of sin, rescue from the power of sin implies 'forgiveness of sins:' same words in Ephesians 1:7; Acts 13:38; 26:18; Luke 1:77; 3:3; Mark 1:4; Matthew 26:28; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43. It is practically the same as justification: for the justified are guilty. And we are (Romans 3:24) 'justified through the redemption which is in Christ.'

In whom we have, etc.: objectively through His death and subjectively by inward union with Christ, a union which makes us sharers of all He has and is.

Notice the assurance of personal salvation implied in 'we have... forgiveness of sins.' For our 'sins' and 'the forgiveness of' them are essentially personal matters. This assurance, Paul assumes that his readers share.

The introduction to the Epistle is now complete. Paul has thanked God for the Christian life at Colossae as he has heard of it from the founder of the Church there, Epaphras. To praise he has added prayer for his readers, full development in knowledge of the will of God, this leading to a life worthy of the Master whom they serve, viz. to fruitbearing and to growth, to joyful endurance and gratitude to God. This prayer has been on the lips of Paul from the time he first heard about the work at Colossae. Abundant reason for gratitude, he finds in the fact that God has made these Gentiles sharers in the inheritance promised to the sons of Abraham, an inheritance in the realm of eternal light; or, to state the same benefit in other words, He has rescued them from the realm of darkness and made them citizens of the kingdom of the beloved Son of God. To this royal Son they already stand in closest relation. For in Him is their liberation: because in Him they have forgiveness of sins.

This gratitude for mercies already received brings us into the presence of the Son of God. To expound His essential grandeur and His work, as a corrective to prevalent error, is the chief aim of this Epistle.



## DIVISION II

### THE TRUTH CONCERNING CHRIST

#### CHAPTER 1:15-2:3

#### SECTION 4

#### *CHRIST'S RELATION TO GOD, AND TO THE UNIVERSE*

#### CHAPTER 1:15-17

*Who is the image of the Invisible God, firstborn before every creature. Because in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities: all things have been created through Him and for Him, And Himself is before all things: and in Him all things stand together.*

With stately words Paul now begins his exposition of the nature and work of the Son of God; and pursues this august topic, in its various relations, to Colossians 2:3, where it finds a suitable conclusion, The purpose of this exposition, as stated in Colossians 2:4, is to guard the Colossian Christians against persuasive errors. Naturally these errors must have molded the exposition designed to combat them. We shall therefore seek for indications of their nature in the features peculiar, among the Epistles of Paul, to the important teaching now before us. Fortunately for us and for the Church in all ages, Paul meets these errors, not by direct attack which would have been intelligible only to those acquainted with the errors attacked, but by positive truth instructive to all men in all ages. This method gives to the epistle before us abiding and universal value. It is, moreover, an example to us. Error can be effectively met only by statement and proof of corresponding and opposite truth.

Paul states first the Son's relation to God, Colossians 1:15a; then His relation to the created universe, Colossians 1:15b, 16, 17; then His relation to the Church, Colossians 1:18-20; and especially to the Colossian Christians, Colossians 1:21-23; lastly Paul's relation to these last in Christ.

**Ver. 15a.** Who is: solemn assertion touching the abiding nature, relations, and state, of the God-Man.

Image: a similitude derived from an original, and presenting it more or less accurately and fully to those who behold the similitude, So Matthew 22:20, a stamp on a coin; Revelation 13:14, a statue.

Who is image of God: word for word as in 2 Corinthians 4:4, where see note, Cp. 1 Corinthians 11:7; Colossians 3:10; Genesis 50:26. Here, however, we have the added word 'invisible' God, shedding light upon the significance of the phrase 'image of God' as a manifestation of an unseen person. These words assert that the glorified Son sets forth, to those who behold Him, the nature and grandeur of the Eternal Father. The 'image' includes the glorified manhood in which the Eternal Son presents in created and visible form the mental and moral nature of God. Men knew the Father because they had seen the Incarnate Son: John 14:9. The possibility and fitness of this mode of presenting the divine nature flow from man's original creation (Genesis 1:26) according to the 'image' and likeness of God. And the emphatic word 'is,' which asserts an abiding reality, and the following assertion about the creation of the universe, suggest that the words 'image of God' describe also all eternal relation of the Son to the Father. The same is suggested in Hebrews 1:3, 'outshining of His glory and expression of His substance:' a close and important parallel. Probably, whatever the Son became by His incarnation was but a manifestation in human form of His essential nature and His eternal relation to the Father; these being an eternal archetype of His human nature. They are also the archetype of man as originally created, and in some sense (1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9) of man as he now is; and of the future glorified humanity of the servants of Christ. If so, the revelation of God to man in time has its root in eternity and in God, i.e. in the existence within the Godhead of a person other than the Father, derived from Him, and sharing His divine nature.

‘God’ is ‘invisible,’ as being beyond reach of human sight: 1 Timothy 6:16. And the context of the word ‘invisible’ in 1 Timothy 1:17 suggests very strongly that He is essentially invisible to all His creatures. (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12, ‘God, no one has ever seen, may or may not deny that others besides men have seen God.) If the words ‘image of God’ describe an eternal relation of the Son to the Father, the word ‘invisible’ must refer, as apparently does 1 Timothy 1:17, to the eternal essence of God. Just as only through the Son came the creatures into being, even the earliest and the highest of them, so probably only through the Son is the Father known even to the highest of His creatures. Thus the word ‘image’ is correlative to ‘visible.’ The essentially invisible Father has in the Son an eternal organ of self-manifestation, an eternal counterpart and supplement to His own invisible nature. His manifestation began when time began, by the earliest act of creation. And each later act of the Son, before His Incarnation, His Incarnation itself, the acts of the incarnate Son, and of the glorified Son, is a further manifestation of the Father. If so, touching the entire nature and relations of the God-Man, Paul’s words are in their fullest extent true: He ‘is’ the ‘Image of God.’

The word ‘image’ suggests the existence of others outside the Godhead. For there can be no manifestation without persons capable of apprehending it. In this sense the Son became the image of God when the earliest intelligent being contemplated Him. But what then became actual fact existed in Him potentially in eternity. This first indication of the existence of creatures prepares a way for further reference to them in Colossians 1:15b, and for the explicit mention of them in Colossians 1:16.

**Ver. 15b.** Further description of the Son’s relation to the Father, and to the entire created universe, which here finds definite mention; and a further step in Paul’s transition from the invisible Creator, through the Son, to His creatures.

Firstborn: same word in Colossians 1:18; Romans 8:29; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 1:5; Luke 2:7; referring to Christ; also Hebrews 11:28; 12:23; Exodus 13:2, 15; Numbers 18:15, etc. It denotes ‘earliest-born,’ in contrast to others ‘later-born,’ or not ‘born’ but created. The earliest creatures are spoken of by Clement of Alex. and others as ‘first-created.’ The syllable ‘-born’ describes evidently, without further limitation, the Son’s relation

to the Father; in close harmony with the word similar in meaning, though different in form, rendered ‘only-begotten’ in John 1:14, 18; 3:16; 1 John 4:9. The syllable ‘first’ needs further specification; and finds it in the following words ‘every creature.’

Creature or ‘creation’: same word in Romans 8:19, where see note; Romans 1:25; 8:39. [The practical difference between the renderings ‘all creation’ (Lightfoot and R.V.) and ‘every creature’ (Meyer and Ellicott) is very slight. The former looks upon the created universe as one whole; the latter as consisting of various created objects. The latter rendering is preferable. For in Colossians 1:16 Paul distributes created objects into categories, thus suggesting that he thinks of them singly. And this is the more usual significance of the phrase here used: e.g. 1 Peter 2:13; Colossians 1:28; Philippians 1:4; 2:10, 11; 4:19, 21; Ephesians 1:21; 2:21; 3:15; 4:14, etc. A genitive after *πρωτος*, specifying the later objects with which the ‘first’ is compared, is found also in John 1:15, 30; 15:18. This use of the genitive after a superlative to denote comparison forbids us to infer that the ‘firstborn’ is Himself a ‘creature.’ So Thucydides (bk. i. 1) speaks of the Peloponnesian War as the ‘most worthy of mention of those which had happened before it.’] Paul says simply that in relation to every created object the Son is ‘firstborn.’ Moreover, that in Colossians 1:16 even the blessed ones of heaven are included in ‘every creature,’ whereas the Son is first’-born,’ suggests that His mode of derivation from the Father is essentially different from theirs. Otherwise the transition cannot be explained. (This transition is a close harmony with John 1:14, 18.) And this suggestion is confirmed by the statement in Colossians 1:16, 17 that through the Son were all things created and that He is before All things.

Colossians 1:16a. A great fact, justifying the foregoing title of the Son. He is rightly called ‘firstborn before every creature’ ‘because in Him were created all things.’

Created: akin, in Greek as in English, to ‘creature’ in Colossians 1:15, which it recalls and expounds. The Hebrew word rendered ‘create’ (e.g. Genesis 1:1, 21; 2:3, 4; 5:1, 2) is predicated only of God; except that in Joshua 17:15, 18; Ezekiel 23:47 another grammatical form of the same word has its apparently original sense of ‘cut,’ and in Ezekiel 21:24 (A.V. Ezekiel 21:19) the same form denotes human workmanship. This

restriction of its use to the work of God suggests that to 'create' is to make as only God can make; not necessarily to make out of nothing, (cp. Wisdom xi. 18, 'created the world out of a shapeless mass, ') but at least to bring into existence new forms. In Genesis 1:1, 21, 27; 5:1, 2; 6:7 this Hebrew word is poorly represented in the LXX. by a Greek word meaning only 'to make.' But in Deuteronomy 4:32; Psalm 51:12; 89:13, 48; Isaiah 22:11; 45:8, etc. we find the word used here. In classic Greek the same word denotes frequently the origin of a town or colony or institution the idea of original ways being present. In the N.T. the verb is found only in Colossians 1:16; 3:10; Ephesians 2:10, 15; 3:9; 4:24; Romans 1:25; 1 Corinthians 11:9; 1 Timothy 4:3; Revelation 4:11; 10:6; in each case describing the work of God. So in the LXX. and the Apocrypha. This constant use of the word, the exposition immediately following, and the cognate word 'creature' in Colossians 1:15 to which this word evidently refers, fix beyond doubt its meaning here. Paul asserts of the Son that 'in Him all things' originally sprang into being.

All things: the entire universe rational and irrational, animated and inanimate, consisting of various parts but looked upon here as one definite whole. Certain of its component parts are at once enumerated. The words 'in Him,' so frequent with Paul and especially in this group of epistles to describe the relation of the incarnate Son to His servants on earth and to their salvation, assert here that the Eternal Son bears to the creation of the universe the same relation. (Colossians 1:17 asserts this touching the abiding state of the universe.) The personality of the Eternal Son is the encompassing, pervading, life-giving element in which sprang into being and assumed its various natural forms whatever exists. In His bosom the world began to be. In Him was from eternity its possibility: and in Him the possible became actual. A close coincidence in Revelation 3:14, 'the beginning of the creation of God.'

In the heavens and upon the earth: further specification in detail of the 'all things created in Him,' dividing created objects according to their locality and thus revealing the wide compass of Paul's assertion. A more accurate specification in Revelation 10:6: 'the heaven and the things in it, ', etc. Here 'the heavens, etc.' are looked upon not as themselves created objects but as mere notes of locality. Perhaps this mode of speech was prompted by Paul's thought being directed, as we learn from the words following,

not so much to the material universe as to its inhabitants. He does not find it needful to mention here and in Ephesians 1:10 the 'things under the earth,' Philippians 2:10. For the dead were once alive and are therefore covered by the foregoing assertion.

The things visible and the things invisible: another very conspicuous Division of 'all things;' suggested by, but not exactly coincident with, the foregoing division. 'The visible' includes all persons and things within reach of the human eye: 'the invisible' includes, most simply understood, all objects beyond its reach

Whether thrones or lordship's, etc.: further details included in 'all things.' It is not an exhaustive Division as was the last, 'visible and invisible,' but a mere enumeration of possible examples belonging apparently or chiefly to 'the invisible things.' The list recalls Ephesians 1:21, 'principality and authority and power and lordship;' 1 Peter 3:22, 'angels and authorities and powers.' The words 'principality' and 'authority' are found, in singular or plural, and in the same order in Colossians 2:10, 15; Ephesians 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; 1 Corinthians 15:24; Titus 3:1; Luke 12:11; 20:20; the last three places referring expressly to earthly rulers. These cannot be excluded from the universal assertion of this verse. And in Romans 13:1 Paul teaches that even political power has its ultimate origin in God. But the other quotations refer evidently to superhuman persons in the unseen world. And this evident reference of the other passages quoted above, together with the word 'invisible' immediately foregoing, leaves no doubt that to these chiefly Paul refers here. And, if so, these various titles designate various successive ranks of angels. That there are bad angels bearing these titles, and therefore presumably of different rank, Ephesians 6:12 asserts. And, if there are superhuman enemies, there must be also successive ranks of superhuman servants of God. In this verse, however, the existence of angelic powers is not absolutely assumed. Paul merely says that if there be such, be they what they may, they were created in the Son of God.

The distinction between these various titles, and their order in rank, cannot be determined with any approach to certainty. From the titles themselves very little can be inferred. The word 'thrones' suggests a position of conspicuous and secure dignity, like that of the twenty-four elders

(Revelation 4:4) sitting on thrones around the throne of God. This is better than the suggestion that they combine to form by their own persons the throne of God, as themselves the bearers of the divine Majesty.

Lordships: last word in the list of Ephesians 1:21; found also in 2 Peter 2:10; Jude 8. It is akin to the word 'Lord,' and to the word 'rule' in Romans 6:9, 14; 7:1; 14:9; and suggests an authority to which others bow as servants. The word rendered 'principality' denotes sometimes 'beginning' as in John 1:1; Philippians 4:15; and sometimes the position of a ruler or officer. A cognate word is rendered 'ruler' in 1 Corinthians 2:6, 8; Ephesians 2:2; Romans 13:3, and frequently in the Gospels and the Book of Acts. This last word designates in Daniel 10:13, 20, 21; 12:1 certain angel-princes, or angels of superior rank, standing severally in special relation to the kingdoms of Persia, Greece, Israel. The word used in Colossians 1:16 is the first syllable of 'archangel.' And Michael, 'one of the chief princes' in Daniel 10:13, is in Jude 9 (cp. 1 Thessalonians 4:16) called an archangel. The word 'authority' (cp. 'authority of darkness' in Colossians 1:13, 'authority of the air' in Ephesians 2:2; Mark 6:7; John 17:2) suggests angelic powers exercising sway over certain portions of the material or immaterial universe. The frequent connection of 'principality' and 'authority' in this order (1 Corinthians 15:24; Ephesians 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Colossians 2:10, 15; Titus 3:1; Luke 12:11, 20:20) suggests that this was their order of rank. But it is impossible to define the relation of this pair to the 'thrones' and 'lordships.' All these titles are twice mentioned together by Origen in his work 'On First Principles' (bk. i. 5. 3, 6. 2) as of angelic powers. But he refers evidently to the passage before us, and contributes nothing to its elucidation. Nor is reliable evidence beyond the above scanty inferences from the words themselves to be derived from Jewish literature. All we know is that Paul believed that there are successive ranks of angelic powers, and declares here that all these, whatever they may be, were created in the Son.

**Ver. 16b.** An emphatic repetition, and development, and summing up after exposition in detail, of the opening words of Colossians 1:16.

All things: word for word as in Colossians 1:16a.

Through Him: by His instrumentality or agency; see under Romans 1:5. It describes constantly Christ's relation to man's salvation: Romans 5:1, 2, 11; 2 Corinthians 5:18. The same relation, Paul here asserts, the Eternal Son bears to the creation of the universe. Similarly, both to redemption and creation He bears the relation described by the phrase 'in Christ.' Colossians 1:16a. That these two phrases alike describe His relation both to the Church and to the universe, makes very conspicuous the identity of His relation to these two distinct and different objects. A close coincidence in 1 Corinthians 8:6: 'through whom are all things, and we through Him.' A still closer coincidence in Hebrews 1:2; John 1:3. [δία with the genitive is used even where the agent is also the first cause: so Galatians 1:1; Romans 11:36, where God is said to be the Agent of the resurrection of Christ, and of all things. But the use of the same preposition constantly to describe the Son's relation to the work of creation and also to man's redemption, of both which the Father is expressly and frequently (e.g. Colossians 1:20) said to be the First Cause, suggests very strongly that the preposition was deliberately chosen because the Son is only the Agent, and the Father is the First Cause, of the created universe. This different relation of the Father and the Son is asserted, or clearly implied, in 1 Corinthians 8:6. Thus the preposition before us describes the Son's relation to the entire activity of God.]

And for Him: to please and exalt the Son, and to work out His purposes. The Agent of creation is also its aim. Close coincidence in Hebrews 2:10. That Christ is only its mediate aim, we infer with certainty from the entire New Testament. The Father's eternal purpose is the ultimate source, and His approbation is the ultimate aim, of whatever good exists and takes place. And, just as the Son is the divine channel through which the Father's purpose passes into actuality, so only through the Son and through His exaltation does creation attain its goal in God. So 1 Corinthians 8:6; 15:28; Ephesians 1:14. in this real sense 'all things' are 'for Him.'

The word 'created' marks the close of Paul's discussion of the creation of all things by the Son. [The Greek perfect, 'have-been-created,' calls attention to the abiding result of the act of creation, thus differing from the aorist in Colossians 1:16a which simply notes an event. 'By His agency



and to work out His pleasure all things were created in the past and exist now in the abiding present.’]

**Ver. 17.** A statement reasserting and supplementing the truth embodied in ‘first-begotten’ in Colossians 1:15 just as Colossians 1:16 expounds and supplements ‘every creature.’ The Son is the Firstborn because He is earlier than all.

He is: or ‘Himself exists.’ It calls attention to an unchanging existence earlier than every other existing object. Similar words in John 8:58; Exodus 3:14.

Before: in time rather than in rank. For this is the sense of the word ‘Firstborn:’ and the clear reference of Colossians 1:16 to Colossians 1:15 prepares us for another reference here to the same verse.

Consist: literally stand together as united of one whole. It is cognate to the Greek original of parts our word ‘system.’

In Him: as in Colossians 1:16 ‘in Him were created.’ Just as in the bosom of the Eternal Son all things sprang into being, so in Him as their encompassing element all things find their bond of union and their orderly arrangement into one whole. Similar thought in Hebrews 1:3: ‘bearing all things by the word of His power.’ The word here rendered ‘consist’ is frequent in Plato and Aristotle to denote the orderly arrangement of the various parts of the material universe.

That the universe was created through the agency of the Son of God, is stated by Paul expressly and indisputably only here. The plain and emphatic assertions of Colossians 1:16, 17, are therefore an invaluable addition to his other teaching. A close coincidence is found in the broad statement in 1 Corinthians 8:6. But the absence there of reference to the universe forbids us to build upon this passage a sure inference. The full statement in Colossians 1:16, 17, given without proof evidently because proof was needless, implies, however, that this teaching had an assured place in Paul’s thought. We have similar teaching in Hebrews 1:2, a document allied to, though in many points different from, the Epistles of Paul; and very conspicuously in John 1:3. All this proves that the early followers of Christ believed that their Master was Creator of the world.

This belief is an important and almost inevitable corollary from the whole teaching of Paul. The Son is ever said to be the channel through which flows forth from the Father into actuality His purpose of salvation. This salvation will rescue man from a corruption which has infected his entire surroundings. Frequently the forces of nature seem to be hostile to us. In reality they work together for our good. And the coming glorification of the sons of God will one day rescue from the corruption which now enslaves it (Romans 8:21) the entire created universe. This present and coming victory is pledged to us in the great truth that He who became Man to save man is also the Creator of man and of whatever exists.

It is worthy of note that all the great religions give an account of the beginning of the world. And naturally so: for man's highest spiritual interests are involved in the question of his origin. Hence Genesis 1:1f is a necessary prologue to the story of the Old Covenant. And its real worth is derived from the historic fact that He who made heaven and earth became the God of Abraham. That their God was the Creator of the world, was a great bulwark of Israel's faith. Similarly, the teaching of Colossians 1:16, 17 derives its whole value from that of Colossians 1:18-20; as does John 1:3 from the subsequent story of the incarnate Son. For knowledge of the God who made us would be useless had He not come near to save us. It is now the firm ground of our faith. He who made us and the universe, and He only, is able to save us from forces around which seem ready to overwhelm us.

From Colossians 2:4 we learn that the earlier part of this Epistle was written to guard its readers against seductive error prevalent at Colossae. This suggests at once that the verses before us, which are the most distinguishing feature of the Epistle, refer to the same error. We notice also in Colossians 2:18 a warning against 'worship of angels,' a practice implying undue estimate of their place and importance. This suggests a reason why the successive ranks of angels are selected in Colossians 1:16 as examples of 'the invisible things' created through the Son; viz. that they had been placed in undue rivalry to the unique honor belonging to Him. All this confirms our inference that Paul has here in view the errors at Colossae. What these errors were, we shall, at the close of our exposition, endeavor to gather from the notices scattered throughout the Epistle.

That for the more part Paul meets these errors not directly but by stating contrary truth, makes it difficult for us to determine exactly what they were, But it increases immensely the value of the Epistle by making it an assertion of great principles which bear with equal force upon the ever-varying errors of each successive age. Had Paul merely overturned the errors he had in view, his letter would have had practical value only for those among whom these errors were prevalent. But the great principles here asserted can be understood and appreciated by all men in all ages.

In Proverbs 8:22-31 the wisdom of God is associated with the work of creation. And certainly the wisdom of God is divine and eternal. But although in Prov. 8, it is personified, we have there no language which implies that it is an actual Person distinct from the Father. But here the Son, in whom all things were created and through whom (Colossians 1:20) God reconciles men to Himself, is indisputably a Person and one distinct from the Father. For Colossians 1:16 is much more than an assertion that all things were made by God. And He by whose agency all things were made is identified by Paul with Him who was afterwards known as Jesus Christ. This teaching implies that with the Father from eternity and personally distinct from Him is another Person. The eternity of the Son implies His divinity. And this is confirmed by the word 'created' which is restricted in O.T. and N.T. to God and is here predicated of the Son. Thus the passage before us is an important contribution to our proof that Christ is divine. See further in Diss. 3.

## SECTION 5

### *CHRIST'S RELATION TO THE CHURCH AND TO THE WORK OF SALVATION*

#### CHAPTER 1:18-20

And Himself is the Head of the Body, i.e. of the Church; who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead ones, in order that He may become in all things Himself first. Because in Him, He was well-pleased that all the fulness should dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself having made peace through the blood of His cross, through Him, whether the things upon the earth or the things in the heavens.

**Ver. 18.** And Himself is: exact and stately repetition of the opening words of Colossians 1:17. He through whom all things were created and in whom all find their bond of union 'is also the Head of the Body,' i.e. 'of the Church.' That this last short explanation is sufficient, shows how familiar to Paul was the thought that the Church is the Body of Christ. This important metaphor we have already found in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Romans 12:4, 5. The new point here is that of this body Christ is 'the Head:' so Colossians 2:19; Ephesians 1:22; 4:15. Accordingly, in the earlier epistles this metaphor sets forth chiefly the relation of Christians one to another: here it sets forth, in harmony with the scope of the epistle which is to expound the dignity of Christ, their relation to Him. The Son of God is not only a Spirit animating, and directing from within, each member and uniting them into one body, but also Himself the Head of the Body, i.e. a part of it, yet occupying a unique and supreme position and from that position directing the whole Body. And this relation is vital. Some other members may be removed and the body live still: separation from the head involves instant death. Perhaps we may say that as divine Christ is the animating and invisible spirit of the Body: as human and yet superhuman and possessing a visible and glorified body He is its Head.

Notice here and in Colossians 1:24 the word 'Church' in a sense more august than we have hitherto met, viz. as denoting definitely and unmistakably the entire family of God: so Ephesians 1:22; 3:10, 21;

5:23-32. Inasmuch as Christ designs His people on earth to be joined in outward and visible fellowship, the word 'Church' here denotes probably, not the simple totality of those who are inwardly joined to Christ, but the company of His professed followers with the implied exception of those whose profession is an empty pretense and therefore valueless. For the common local use of the word links with it indissolubly the ideas of outward confession and visible unity. And, in spite of the many ecclesiastical divisions of Christians, there is between all the professed and real servants of Christ a bond of union, recognised in some small degree even by the world around. The true significance of membership in a sectional Church is that by entering it we become members of the universal company of the professed followers of Christ.

Who is, etc.: solemn assertions, expounding further Christ's relation to His body.

The Beginning: earliest in time, as in Genesis 49:3; Deuteronomy 21:17 where the same word is linked with 'firstborn.' Very frequently the earliest is the cause of all that follow. So is Christ. Similarly, Revelation 3:14, 'the beginning of the creation of God:' for Christ is the Agent and in a real sense the Archetype of the whole creation. Here the reference of the word 'beginning' is not stated: but it is suggested by the new topic introduced by this verse, viz. Christ's relation to the Church, and is placed beyond doubt by the words following. He is the beginning of the New Creation because He is 'Firstborn from the dead.' For resurrection is the gate through which we shall enter the fully-developed kingdom of God: and His resurrection made ours possible. By Himself rising He opened a path along which we shall enter the glory in which He already is. And by rising 'from' among 'the dead' through (2 Corinthians 13:4) the power of the Father, the God-Man entered a new mode of life and in some sense a new world; and may therefore be said to have been 'born from the dead.' Since He was the first to pass through death, He 'is' the 'firstborn from the dead.' The word 'firstborn,' recalling Colossians 1:15, emphasises the similar relation of Christ to the Universe and to the Church. But in Colossians 1:15 it was followed by mention of the later-created, 'every creature:' here it is followed by mention of those from whose midst the Resurrection-Birth brought Christ, 'from the dead.'

That He may (or 'might') become: purpose of Christ's rising first. 'In all things Himself first' or 'holding-the first-place.' Already the Son is first in time and rank, as being earlier than every creature and as being agent, and bond of union, of the entire universe. That this priority may be universal, i.e. that it might extend to the Church, Christ rose from the dead before any of His servants: and He did so by the deliberate purpose of God.

Become; notes the historical development of Christ, in contrast to that which 'He is,' i.e. to His abiding state, as described in Colossians 1:15, 17, 18. The emphatic words 'in all things' keep before us the sameness of Christ's relation to the Church and to the Universe.

**Ver.** 19-20. A statement which explains the foregoing purpose by tracing it to its 'cause' in the thought of God, and specifies two purposes of God touching His Son, one relating to His Incarnation and the other to the ultimate aim of His death in the restoration of harmony between God and the universe.

In Him: Christ, who is thrust prominently forward to the beginning of the sentence.

He was-well-pleased: same word as in Galatians 1:15; 1 Corinthians 1:21. This good pleasure cannot be that of the Son: for in Colossians 1:20 the Son is distinguished, as the Agent or Instrument, from Him whose good pleasure it is to reconcile through Christ all things to Himself: cp. 2 Corinthians 5:18. It must therefore be either the Father as in A.V. and R.V.; or the 'fulness' personified, as suggested by Ellicott. This suggestion, however, which implies a rather startling personification, has no support in the context or in the Epistles of Paul: whereas the constant presence of God in the entire thought of Paul as the ultimate source of all good makes the other exposition quite easy. [The change of subject between the verbs 'well-pleased' and 'dwell' is in complete harmony with the spirit of the Greek language even in the use of the word 'well-pleased'.] Paul had no need to say whose good-pleasure it was that the fulness should dwell in Christ.

Fulness: a word all-important in these epistles: found in Colossians 2:9; Ephesians 1:10, 23; 3:19; 4:13; Romans 11:12, 25; 1 Corinthians 10:26; Galatians 4:4. It denotes a result of the action described by the verb 'fill'

or ‘fulfil;’ and takes all shades of meaning belonging to this verb. Since both the vessel filled and the matter filled into it are direct objects of the verb ‘fill,’ the word ‘fulness’ may denote (1) a filled vessel, (2) that with which it is made full, as evidently in 1 Corinthians 10:26, or (3) the increment by which a partly filled vessel is made quite full, as in Matthew 9:16. Or, since the verb denotes the accomplishment of a purpose or promise or command, the word ‘fulness’ may denote (4) that in which such accomplishment is attained, as in Romans 13:10, ‘love is a ‘fulness’ (or ‘fulfilment’) of the Law.’ The absence here of any defining genitive (contrast Colossians 2:9 “all the fulness’ of the Godhead) implies that the word ‘fulness’ itself conveys a definite thought present to the mind of Paul. And this can only be, in sense (2), the fulness of God, the totality of that with which God is Himself full, of the dispositions and powers which make up, in our thought, the personality of God. These, being infinite, leave no lack or defect in God. They are also a necessary development of our conception of God, thus approaching sense (4); or rather showing its close connection with the simpler meanings of the word. ‘The fulness’ of God is the totality of attributes with which He is essentially full and which go to make up our conception of God. And this is the meaning of the less definite phrase here. The Father was ‘pleased that all’ this divine ‘fulness should dwell’ (or more accurately ‘make-its-home’) ‘in Him’ who has been just described as the ‘firstborn from the dead.’

The past tense ‘He-was-well-pleased’ suggests [as does the aorist [κατοικησαι](#)] that Paul refers, not to that which the Son is unchangeably from eternity-although we may reverently say (cp. John 5:26) that even in this sense these words are true-but to what He became in time; and, if so, to the incarnation in which the Eternal Son became the God-Man. In that divine-human Person, the entire circle of the attributes of God took up its abode. This is in complete harmony with the complementary truth in Philippians 2:7, ‘He emptied Himself.’ For even on earth the Word (John 1:14) was ‘full of grace and truth;’ and (John 1:16) ‘from His ‘fulness’ we all have received.’ All that belongs to the essence of God was present in Jesus. But the Son deliberately and definitely laid aside for a time in order to become a sharer of our weakness the actual exercise of the outer and lower circle of His divine attributes. It was the essential and unchangeable possession of these attributes which made possible, and gave worth to,

this temporary surrender of the exercise and enjoyment of them. But nothing was surrendered even for a moment which was needful to the further purpose stated in Colossians 1:20.

All the fulness; recalls 'in all things.' 'Because' the Father had resolved that in Christ should 'dwell all the fulness' of the divine attributes, He resolved further that even in the order of resurrection He should have the first place.

**Ver. 20.** Second element in the Father's good pleasure. He was pleased (1) that in Christ should all the fulness dwell, 'and' (2) 'through Him to reconcile, etc.'

Reconcile: slightly stronger form, found in N.T. only in Colossians 1:22; Ephesians 2:16, of the word in Romans 5:10, 11; 1 Corinthians 7:11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; meaning possibly to restore a lost friendship. See under Romans 5:1.

Through Him: i.e. Christ, who is ever the Agent, as the Father is the Author, of this reconciliation; so Romans 5:1, 11; 2 Corinthians 5:18.

All things: same words and same compass as in Colossians 1:16. God's purpose is to bring into harmony with Himself all things rational and irrational.

To Himself: literally 'into Himself;' a stronger term than that in Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 2:16, and suggesting close fellowship with God resulting from reconciliation.

Having-made-peace, etc.: method of the reconciliation.

Peace: primarily 'peace with God,' Romans 5:1: but this brings with it 'the peace of God,' Philippians 4:7. It is the blessed and abiding result of the act of reconciliation.

Through the blood of His cross: graphic exposition of 'through Him.' God resolved to 'make peace' between Himself and man by means of 'the blood' shed on 'the cross' of Christ. Similarly, though less vividly, Ephesians 2:16; Philippians 3:18; Galatians 6:14; 1 Corinthians 1:17, 18. 'The cross' of Christ is used in this theological sense, in the N.T., only by Paul. It is therefore a mark of genuineness. About the genuineness of the



words ‘through Him,’ documentary evidence is equally divided. But their apparent needlessness might occasion their omission; whereas, if not genuine, it is not easy to explain their insertion. This gives a slight balance of probability in their favor. They are an emphatic resumption of the same words at the beginning of the verse.

Whether the things upon the earth, etc.: exposition of the words ‘all things,’ showing that they include not only all objects on earth but those in heaven; and thus indicating that the peace resulting from the death of Christ is designed to leave no discord ‘upon the earth or in the heavens.’ ‘The earth’ is put first because it chiefly and manifestly needs reconciliation. In Colossians 1:16 ‘the heavens’ were put first, because the angelic powers were created before the inhabitants of the earth.

These words do not prove absolutely that there is disharmony in heaven. For they admit a negative interpretation, viz. that the death of Christ is designed to leave no discord in the entire universe. But they suggest it. And we may conceive that, the entire universe being essentially one and each part contributing to the good of the whole, the blight caused by sin in one part might be an element of discord to the whole. Paul declares that, whatever discord has thus been caused, the death of Christ was designed to remove it.

Although this purpose embraces everything and every one in heaven and earth, it is unsafe to infer from it that all men now living on earth will eventually be saved. For, although God’s purpose cannot fail as a whole but must receive worthy accomplishment, He has thought fit to make its fulfilment in individuals dependent on themselves, thus leaving it abundantly possible that they who now trample under foot the blood of Christ may be finally cast out both from earth and heaven and thus excluded from this universal harmony. Certainly this purpose is not sufficient to disprove the plain contrary assertion in Philippians 3:19. See under Philippians 2:10, 11.

Section 5 reveals the importance of section 4. To the material world around and the angelic world above us, it links the work of redemption as wrought by the same exalted Person and as an accomplishment of one great purpose as wide as creation. Paul thus raises his readers at Colossae out of the narrow valley of the Lycus where they had lately found personal salvation

to a platform from which they can survey the entire universe of God to its utmost bound and the successive ages of the past to the moment when the earliest creature began to be.

This width of view is a conspicuous and invaluable feature of these Epistles as compared with the earlier ones. Paul has reminded his readers (Colossians 1:6, so Colossians 1:23) that the Gospel preached to them was preached also throughout the world. He has led out their thoughts (Colossians 1:16) to the entire visible universe and to the invisible universe beyond it, to the beginning of the world and of whatever began to be, and (Colossians 1:17) to the abiding constitution of the manifold realm of creation. In Romans 5:12-19 Paul traced up sin and death to the first father of the race, and taught that the purpose of salvation was coextensive with the race. He here declares that the same purpose embraces not only earth but heaven. He thus makes the cross of Christ the center of the universe, and links with it the creation of the earliest and loftiest archangel.

## SECTION 6

### *THE COLOSSIAN CHRISTIANS IN THEIR RELATION TO CHRIST*

#### CHAPTER 1:21-23

*And you, formerly alienated as ye were and enemies by your mind in your wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh, through death, to present you holy and spotless and unimpeachable before Him: if at least ye continue in the faith foundationed and firm and not moving away from the hope of the Gospel which ye heard, the Gospel preached in all creation under heaven, of which I Paul became a minister.*

**Ver.** 21-22. And you: the Christians at Colossae now conspicuously brought within the scope and operation of the all-embracing purpose of reconciliation.

Alienated as ye were: calling conspicuous attention to a fact. It describes their state when this purpose found, and laid hold on them: cp. Ephesians 2:1, 5, 11.

Alienated-ones, literally ‘made-to-be-strangers’: a word frequently used to describe men deprived of the rights of citizens: same word in Ephesians 2:12; 4:18; frequent in the LXX., e.g. Ezekiel 14:5, 7; Psalm 69:9; and in classic Greek.

Enemies: either hostile to God, or men who have to reckon with God as hostile to them. Which of these meanings Paul intends here, we can determine only by his general conception of the Gospel. We saw under Romans 5:1 that the justice of God, which as we learnt from Romans 3:26 forbade Him to justify believers except through the death of Christ, makes Him in this sense hostile to those who refuse salvation from sin. Thus an obstacle to peace between God and sinners is found in the justice of God. Now Paul declares in Romans 3:24-26, expressly and plainly, that God gave Christ to die in order to remove this obstacle to peace. This last doctrine is, in Romans 5:10, embodied in the words ‘being enemies, we

were reconciled to God through the death of His Son,' words almost the same as those now before us. Similarly, in Ephesians 2:12, 16 men "formerly... alienated' from the commonwealth of Israel,' Christ came to 'reconcile... to God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.' On the other hand, only once (Romans 8:7) does Paul speak of sin under the aspect of hostility to God. (James 4:4 admits, and perhaps suggests the sense that they who choose the friendship of the world are thereby placed among those who will have to reckon with God as their enemy.) And Paul never speaks of the cross of Christ as the instrument by which God moves the sinner to lay down his hostility. We are therefore compelled to interpret the words 'reconciled... through death' in Colossians 1:22 as meaning that by the death of Christ God removed the obstacle to peace between God and man which lay in His own justice, and thus brought us out of a position in which we had to reckon with God as an enemy into one in which we look upon Him as a friend. This interpretation of the word 'reconciled' in Colossians 1:22 fixes in the main the meaning of 'enemies' in Colossians 1:21. We shall find that it will harmonize with the context; and may therefore accept it with confidence. Possibly, however, Paul chose the word 'enemies' the more readily because, as matter of fact, sinners are actually hostile to God. Had not Christ died, this double hostility would have been irreconcilable.

Your mind: either the faculty of mental discrimination or the operation of that faculty; senses closely allied. [The Greek dative merely states that this enmity has something to do with the readers' minds, leaving the exact relation to be inferred from the context. The simplest expositions are (1) that the mind was the seat of the enmity, as in Ephesians 4:18 where the same word and case mean 'darkened in their mind;' or (2) that the mind was the instrument by means of which the enmity was brought about, as the Greek dative is used in Galatians 2:13; Ephesians 2:1, 5; dead by means of your trespasses. This latter sense is required by our exposition of 'enemies.' For their entire personality was exposed to the hostility of God. Consequently, further specification of the locality of the enmity was needless. On the other hand, we are eager to know by what means they became enemies of God. Exposition 2 tells us that it was by the perverted activity of their intelligence which mistook evil for good; and which thus, instead of leading them to God, led them into the ranks of His foes.

In your wicked works: immoral locality of this enmity. Same thought in Ephesians 2:2. Led astray by their own wicked thought they wandered among wicked actions, and thus became exposed to the just anger of God.

Whether Paul intended to say that the alienation as well as the enmity were caused 'by' his readers' perverted 'mind' and had its locality 'in' their 'wicked works,' we cannot determine with certainty. But, as matter of fact, the alienation and the enmity had the same instrumental cause and the same ideal locality. And the absence here (contrast Ephesians 2:12; 4:18) of any further specification of the word 'alienated' suggests that Paul intended to say this.

Before stating how the divine purpose just mentioned has been accomplished in his readers, Paul describes in Colossians 1:21 their former spiritual state. Not only were they aliens destitute of the rights of sons or even of citizens but they were found in the ranks of the enemies of God. And this separation and hostility were brought about by their mistaken mode of thought revealing itself in evil actions.

**Ver. 22.** The change wrought by God, and its further purpose.

But now: see under Ephesians 2:13. It throws the present reconciliation somewhat into contrast with the former alienation and enmity.

He has reconciled: has brought out of a position in which they had to reckon with God as an enemy into one in which they can look upon Him as a friend. Same word in Colossians 1:20. As before, the Reconciler is the Father.

The body of His flesh: the organized structure of flesh and blood, and therefore weak and mortal, in which Christ lived on earth. Same phrase in Colossians 2:11, describing the bodies of the baptized. Contrast Philippians 3:21: 'the body of His glory.' This body, when nailed to the cross, is here thought of as the sacred locality 'in' which the Father reconciled us to Himself. Cp. 2 Corinthians 5:19: 'God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself;' 1 Peter 2:24, 'Himself bore our sins in His body.'

Through death: the precise means of the reconciliation which took place 'in the body of His flesh.'

In order to present, etc.: ultimate purpose of the reconciliation. Cp. Ephesians 5:27.

Present: as in Ephesians 5:27; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 11:2; Colossians 1:28.

Holy: subjectively holy, i.e. all our powers actually devoted to the service of Christ. This is the aim of the objective holiness which God's claim stamps on all objects claimed by Him. It is therefore the sense intended wherever holiness is represented as a purpose of God.

Spotless: as in Philippians 2:15. It is the negative side of holiness. Whatever is unreservedly devoted to God, is spotless; and that only.

Unimpeachable: as in 1 Corinthians 1:8.

Before Him: either God, as the same words mean in Ephesians 1:4; or as in 2 Corinthians 5:10 'before the judgment-seat of Christ.' Since Paul is speaking here chiefly about Christ, to Him probably these words refer. The Father has reconciled us to Himself in order that in the great day He may set us before the searching gaze of Christ our Judge in all the sacredness symbolised in outline in the sacred objects of the Old Covenant, without any blemish being detected by the eye of the Judge, or any charge being brought against us by any accuser. Close parallel in Ephesians 5:27; except that there the saved are represented as given by the Son to Himself to be His own, whereas here they are placed by the Father before the Son as if for His inspection.

**Ver. 23.** A condition on which depends the accomplishment of the foregoing purpose of God, the condition being so described as to invite fulfilment.

Continue in faith, or 'in' your 'faith': persevere in believing the Gospel. Similar phrase in Romans 11:22, 23; 6:1. [The particle *εἰτε* lays great stress upon the condition as absolutely essential to, and certainly followed by, the accomplishment of the divine purpose contingent on it. The present indicative, which might be rendered 'if-ye-are-continuing,' suggests inquiry whether we are still retaining our faith or 'are-being-moved-away from' it. Contrast Galatians 1:6. But Paul's words give no hint whether his readers were or were not so continuing. They simply state that upon this continuance all depends.]

Foundationed: i.e. 'placed-upon-a foundation:' see under Ephesians 3:17.

Firm: result of being 'on a foundation:' same word in 1 Corinthians 7:37; 15:58.

And-not-moved-away: negative counterpart to 'foundationed and firm.'  
[The present passive describes the process of removal as now going on.]

Since the good things promised in the Gospel are contingent on continuance in faith, to surrender faith is to 'be moved away from the hope' evoked by, and thus belonging to, 'the Gospel.' For both 'hope' and the blessings hoped for vanish when faith fails.

Which ye heard; recalls the first preaching of the Gospel at Colossae. Similar thought in Colossians 1:5.

In all creation: literally, 'in every creature:' same words as 'every creature' in Colossians 1:15. Surrounded by, and within hearing of, all rational creatures the good news has been proclaimed.

Under the heaven: a strong hyperbole. Every where under the arching firmament the good news has been announced. This is in harmony with the many proofs that this epistle was written near to the end of Paul's life. It testifies how widespread was the preaching of the Gospel. And we can well believe that, just as without any apostolic messenger the good news of salvation had reached Rome, so it had reached all the chief cities of the empire.

The emphatic repetition of a thought already expressed in Colossians 1:6, viz. the universality of the Gospel, suggests that this thought bears upon the special circumstances of the Colossian Christians. And this we can easily understand. They were in danger (Colossians 2:4) of 'being moved away from' their 'faith' and 'hope' by erroneous teaching. Now such teaching is always local. Only the truth is universal. Paul therefore lifts his readers above their immediate surroundings and reminds them that the Gospel which has given them a new hope has been also proclaimed with the same result all over the world.

Of which Gospel I Paul: the writer's relation to this universal Gospel.

I Paul: as in 2 Corinthians 10:1; Galatians 5:2; Ephesians 3:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; Philemon 19. It brings the personality of the heroic Apostle to bear on the matter in hand. To forsake the Gospel, is to forsake him.

Of which Gospel... a minister: not as now a technical term for a Christian pastor, but in its ordinary sense of one who renders free and honorable service. Paul is a minister of God, of the New Covenant, of the Church, and of the Gospel: for he does the work of God, makes known the terms of the Covenant, seeks to promote the interests of the Church, and spreads the good news of salvation. So 2 Corinthians 6:4; 3:6; Colossians 1:25; Ephesians 3:7. See note under Romans 12:8. The same word is found in its technical sense of 'deacon' in Philippians 1:1.

In Colossians 1:5 Paul thanked God for the blessings awaiting his readers in heaven and already an object of their hope, a hope prompted by the Gospel they had heard. And now, when raising the question whether they are continuing in their early faith and are resting firmly on its sure foundation, he reminds them that upon such continuance depends the accomplishment of God's purpose for their eternal salvation, and that therefore to allow themselves to be carried away from that foundation is to allow themselves to be separated from the bright hope which illumines their path, from the Gospel preached throughout the world, and from the founder of the Churches of Asia Minor and of Greece.

Thus has 6 brought the eternal purpose of God to bear upon the readers of this Epistle; and has linked them, through the Gospel they had heard, with Paul, its writer. This reference to Paul forms a stepping-stone to 7.



## SECTION 7

### PAUL'S RELATION TO THE CHURCH, AND TO THE COLOSSIAN CHRISTIANS

#### CHAPTER 1:24-2:3

*Now I rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf, and I fill up the shortcomings of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh on behalf of His body, which is the Church; of which I became a minister according to the stewardship of God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which lay hidden from the ages and from the generations-but now it has been manifested to His saints, to whom God thought fit to make known what is the wealth of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory; whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ; for which thing I also labor, contending according to His working which works in me with power.*

*For I wish you to know how great a struggle I have on behalf of you and of those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, they being knit together in love and for all wealth of the full assurance of the understanding, for knowledge of the mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden.*

After describing Christ's relation to the Father, to the created universe, to the Church, and to the readers of this Epistle, Paul mentioned, in the closing words of 6, himself and his relation to the Gospel. These closing words are the key-note of 7. Paul tells us in Colossians 1:24-29 his office and work in the universal Church; and in Colossians 2:1-3 his special interest in the Churches of Colossae and Laodicea.

**Ver. 24.** Now: ‘now that I have become a minister of the Gospel.

My sufferings on your behalf, or ‘for your benefit’: the hardships to which Paul exposed himself by preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. They were a foreseen result of his preaching: and, had he not exposed himself to them, Asia Minor and Colossae would probably still have been in darkness. Similar thought in Ephesians 3:1, 13; and, from a slightly different point of view, in 2 Corinthians 1:6. ‘Amid’ these ‘sufferings,’ and with a joy evidently prompted by them, Paul says ‘I rejoice.’ A similar joy in Philippians 2:17. A somewhat different but kindred joy in Romans 5:3. Its great Example: Hebrews 12:2. Doubtless Paul’s joy was prompted by the foreseen results of the work which exposed him to these sufferings.

And I fill up, etc.: an added statement which reveals the import and dignity of these sufferings.

Afflictions of Christ: a phrase not found elsewhere; whereas we often read of ‘the afflictions’ of His servants. By using it Paul associates His sufferings with theirs.

The short-comings of, etc.; implies that ‘the afflictions of Christ’ were not in themselves sufficient to attain their end. What they fell short, Paul’s sufferings ‘fill up.’

In my flesh: the locality of these supplementary sufferings, viz. Paul’s body, this being described as ‘flesh,’ i.e. consisting of material liable to suffering and death.

On behalf of His body: fuller counterpart to ‘on your behalf.’ Paul explains ‘His body’ by reasserting the great metaphor in Colossians 1:18: ‘which is the Church.’ Notice the contrast between Paul’s fragile ‘flesh,’ which by its constitution is weak and liable to decay, and Christ’s ‘Body,’ which will survive the destruction of all flesh and share the eternal life and royalty of Christ.

In what sense are these strange words true? In this sense. When Christ breathed His last upon the cross, all the sufferings needful for the complete establishment of the Kingdom of God had not yet been endured. For the full realisation of the purposes of God it was needful, not only that Christ should die for the sins of the world, but that the Gospel should be

preached to all nations. This involved, owing to the wickedness of men, hardship to the preachers. This hardship Paul willingly endured in order to save men. Consequently, just as the life on earth of the servants of Christ is in some sense an extension of His incarnation, (for in them He lives, Galatians 2:20,) so the sufferings of Paul were in a similar sense a continuation and completion of the sufferings of Christ. This is in close harmony with, and further emphasises, Paul's constant teaching that Christ's servants share all that Christ has and is and does: 1 Corinthians 1:9; Philippians 3:10; Romans 8:17. But it by no means suggests that Paul's sufferings were in any sense propitiatory or that Christ's sufferings were not so. For the one point in common here mentioned and made conspicuous by repetition is suffering 'on behalf of' another. Propitiation for sin is here entirely out of view.

Notice the infinite dignity here given to sufferings endured for the spread of the Gospel. These, Christ condescends to join with His own mysterious agony on the cross as endured for the benefit of the Church which He recognises as His own body. 'In' such sacred 'sufferings' well might Paul 'rejoice.' Notice again, as in Colossians 1:18 in conjunction with the same metaphor, 'the Church' Universal.

**Ver. 25.** Paul's relation to the Church. This explains his sufferings on its behalf. He 'became (Colossians 1:23) a minister of the Gospel' as one appointed to do the free and honorable service of proclaiming it: he 'became a minister of' the Church as one appointed to labor for its advancement. Same phrase in Romans 16:1; used, not as here in a general sense, but in the technical sense of 'deaconess.'

Stewardship of God: position of one entrusted by God with wealth for distribution to others: so Titus 1:7; 1 Corinthians 4:1; 9:17; cp. 1 Timothy 3:15. A close parallel in Ephesians 3:2: see also under Ephesians 1:10.

For you: persons for whose benefit this stewardship had been entrusted to Paul. It is, therefore, parallel to 'on your behalf' in Colossians 1:24. And it is true of the Christians at Colossae in the same sense as is Romans 1:6 of those at Rome. The stewardship given to Paul embraced both Rome and Colossae. That Paul calls himself a 'minister' of the Church, is in harmony with ('according to') the fact that a 'stewardship' of the spiritual wealth 'of God' has been 'given' to him for his readers.

To fulfil the word of God: to achieve the full aim of the Gospel, by proclaiming everywhere to Jew and Gentile salvation through faith in Christ, and by leading men to accept it. So Romans 15:19: 'fulfil the Gospel.' This fulfilment is here said to be the aim of the stewardship entrusted to Paul. Prophecy and law (Matthew 1:22, Romans 13:8) are fulfilled by their realisation in the foretold event and in actual obedience.

**Ver. 26.** Further exposition of 'the word of God.'

The mystery hidden: favorite thought of Paul; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:4, 5. It is God's eternal purpose to save men through Christ without reference to nationality on the one condition of faith, in the manner described in the Gospel. This purpose is a 'mystery,' i.e. a secret known only by those to whom God reveals it by His Spirit. See my 'Corinthians' p. 60. It was formed (1 Corinthians 2:7) 'before the ages. But, inasmuch as it was revealed only (Romans 1:17) in the Gospel, it lay 'hid from the ages,' i.e. from the beginning of the successive periods of human history until the Gospel was proclaimed by Christ; 'and from the generations,' i.e. from the successive sets of men living at one time. This last word, in Philippians 2:15; Ephesians 3:5; Luke 11:50, 51. The contrast of 'but now manifested' suggests that 'from' is chiefly a note of time, as in Matthew 13:35. It is the more suitable here because the hidden secret was, during those early ages, away 'from' the knowledge of men.

But now it has been manifested: a break in the grammatical structure of the sentence, noting very conspicuously a break in the agelong silence.

Manifested: set conspicuously before the eyes of men. Same word and same connection in Romans 16:26: see under Romans 1:19.

To His saints: to Christians generally, according to constant N.T. use: so Colossians 1:2, 12; 3:12; Philippians 4:21, 22. In one sense the secret has been set before the eyes of all to whom the Gospel is preached. But inasmuch as none can see it except those whom God saves from spiritual blindness and thus claims to be His own, Paul says that it was 'manifested to His saints.' Since the manifested secret is (Colossians 1:17) that Christ is in the Colossian Christians who were Gentiles, possibly these saints were primarily the Jews who first believed in Christ and thus became His people. To them was revealed the new and great truth that believing

Gentiles were to share with them the blessings of the New Covenant. A recognition of this truth is recorded in Acts 11:18.

**Ver. 27.** Further statement expounding ‘the mystery manifested to His saints.’

God thought-fit, or ‘it was the will of God:’ cp. Ephesians 1:5, 9, 11. The insertion of this word detains us for a moment to look at the secret now manifested when it was only a determined purpose in the mind of God.

Make-known; includes the subjective appropriation of ‘the mystery manifested to,’ i.e. set conspicuously before, ‘the saints.’

What is: of what kind, and how much.

The riches, etc.: the abundance, making its possessors rich, of the splendor which belongs to this great secret: same phrase in Ephesians 1:18; 3:16. Cp. Colossians 2:2; Ephesians 1:7; 2:7; 3:8; Romans 11:33. The spiritual wealth in Christ is a favorite conception of Paul. The frequency of the word ‘glory’ to describe the splendor of the final consummation suggests that this is its meaning here. And this is confirmed by the same word at the end of the verse. Cp. Colossians 3:4; 2 Corinthians 3:7-11; Romans 5:2. God was minded to make known how abundant is the splendor with which in the great day those initiated on earth into the Gospel secret will be enriched.

Among the Gentiles, or ‘in the Gentiles’: same Greek preposition again in the same verse, ‘in’ or ‘among you:’ and, with similar compass, in Galatians 3:5. It includes both senses. As matter of fact, the abundance of glory is both ‘among the Gentiles’ as a spiritual possession of the whole community, and ‘within’ them as a spiritual possession enjoyed in the inner life of each one. But this full latitude of meaning cannot be expressed by any one English word. The Gentiles taken as a whole and taken individually are the personal locality of the abundance of glory with which ‘this mystery’ will enrich those who know it. Similar words and connection in Ephesians 1:18. The great secret was Paul’s Gospel, viz. that by faith and in proportion to their faith God receives into His favor, moulds into the inward image of Christ, and will some day cover with splendor, all who believe the good news announced by Christ. This implies that even Gentiles will be thus received and glorified. And to a Jew, e.g. to

Paul, this inclusion of the Gentiles in the coming glory was the most conspicuous feature of the Gospel revelation. To him this was the secret hidden during ages, but now manifested.

Which is; may refer grammatically either to 'the wealth of the glory of the mystery,' throwing emphasis on the abundance of the splendor, or specifically to 'this mystery.' This latter reference is suggested by the conspicuous repetition of the word mystery in Colossians 1:26, 27.

Moreover, 'Christ in you' is not the abundance of the mystery, but the mystery itself. 'In' or 'within you' is better than 'among you.' For we are ever taught that Christ dwells in the hearts of His people: so Ephesians 3:17; Romans 8:10. The word 'you' includes the Gentile Christians to whom Paul writes.

Hope of glory: expectation of the splendor of heaven, as in Romans 5:1; cp. Titus 1:2. The felt presence of Christ in our hearts (cp. 1 John 3:24) assures us that we are in the way of life leading to endless 'glory.' Thus 'Christ in us' and 'the hope of glory' go together; and therefore may be spoken of as equivalent. So 1 Timothy 1:1, 'Christ Jesus our hope;' cp. Colossians 3:3. This presence of Christ in us, Himself a pledge of our eternal splendor, is a 'mystery,' i.e. a secret which cannot be conveyed by human words, known only by actual experience and therefore known only by those whom God takes by the hand, leads into His own secret chamber, and teaches as only God can teach. And it will enrich the initiated with the abundant splendor of heaven. All this was for long ages a hidden purpose of God. But He had been pleased to make it known in Paul's day. 'It had been manifested to His saints.'

**Ver. 28.** In Colossians 1:25 Paul rose from himself and his stewardship to the Gospel of God, the great mystery kept secret during long ages but now revealed. This led him to its great matter, viz. Christ. He now returns to the chief thought of 7, himself and his work.

We: very emphatic, suggesting perhaps others who acted otherwise. Paul and his companions 'announce' Christ. Same word in Philippians 1:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 2:1; 9:14; 11:26.

Admonish: 1 Corinthians 4:14; 10:11; Romans 15:14. It includes all kinds of friendly discipline and training, as of a father, brother, or companion; especially reproof with a view to improvement.

Teaching; is mere impartation of knowledge: cp. Colossians 3:16; Matthew 28:20.

Wisdom: see under 1 Corinthians 2:5.

In all wisdom: Colossians 1:9; 3:16; Ephesians 1:8. A wisdom in which no element was lacking was the instrument of Paul's teaching. It was from God: 1 Corinthians 12:8; Ephesians 1:8; James 1:5; 3:17. So 2 Corinthians 1:12, 'not in fleshly wisdom;' and 1 Corinthians 1:17, 'not in wisdom of word.' Against these Paul sets in 1 Corinthians 2:6 a higher wisdom. Armed with it, he teaches every man who comes within his reach. The basis of this varied training is Christ: 'whom we announce.'

That we may, etc.: practical aim of Paul's teaching. It should be the one aim of all religious teachers.

Present: as in Colossians 1:22. It is Paul's appropriation of God's purpose there stated. Cp. 2 Corinthians 11:2. God reconciled to Himself the Colossian Christians that in the great day He might set them faultless before Christ the Judge: for the same end Paul corrects and teaches all within his reach.

Mature or 'full-grown': in contrast to 'babes in Christ.' Cp. 1 Corinthians 3:1; Ephesians 4:13, 14. See under 1 Corinthians 2:6.

In Christ: the encompassing element of this full growth. The emphatic repetition, 'every man... every man... every man,' makes conspicuous the universality of Paul's aim. Every one he meets is to him a possibility of another fully-developed trophy presented in the final triumph. Consequently, 'every man' is an object for the discipline and teaching needful to make this possibility actual.

**Ver. 29.** After stating in Colossians 1:28 his aim in announcing Christ, Paul now records the earnestness with which he pursues it, and the divine source of this earnestness.

For which thing: ‘that we may present’, etc. Not only does Paul announce Christ, but ‘also’ does this with an earnestness which involves weariness: ‘I also labor.’ Same word and thought in Philippians 2:16; Galatians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 15:10.

Contend, i.e. in the athletic festivals: same word in 1 Corinthians 9:25, where see note, and in Colossians 4:12. It amplifies and explains ‘I-labor.’ So intense are Paul’s efforts to save men that he compares them to the intense bodily struggles of a Greek athlete contending for a prize against an equally earnest antagonist. Such ‘struggle’ was ‘labor’ of the severest kind. Same words together in 1 Timothy 4:10. The word contend suggests opponents. And not only is the Christian life itself (Ephesians 6:12) a conflict with spiritual foes, but Paul had in his evangelical efforts actual human opponents: e.g. Colossians 2:4; 2 Corinthians 10:10. But of such there is no hint here or in Colossians 2:1. Our thoughts are concentrated on the earnestness of Paul’s efforts to save men. And this earnestness sufficiently accounts for the word here used. So Colossians 4:12, where there is no thought of opponents.

According to the working: same words in Philippians 3:21; see note. Underlying Paul’s activity, stimulating and directing it, was a corresponding divine activity.

His working: probably Christ’s, who has just been mentioned. But the distinction is unimportant. The inward activity is from the Father through the Son.

The working which works: emphatic repetition; so Ephesians 1:19.

In me: so Philippians 2:13; Ephesians 3:20; 2:2.

In power: or less accurately ‘with power,’ i.e. clothed with ability to produce results. And this inward working of Christ evokes, as its appropriate outworking, intense effort of Paul himself like the struggle of an athlete: ‘according to His working, etc.’ Thus Paul’s proclamation of Christ becomes ‘labor.’

Notice here as in 2 Corinthians 10:7-11 the ease with which Paul passes from ‘we’ to ‘I,’ and conversely. He remembers his companions and says



‘whom we announce:’ he remembers his own personal and in some sense solitary effort, and says ‘I labor, works in me.’

**Ver. 1.** For I wish, etc.; supports the foregoing assertion by a proof case, viz. Paul’s inward struggle for his readers’ good.

Struggle, or ‘conflict’: the substantive from which is derived the verb rendered ‘contend’ in the last verse. It is the Greek original of our word ‘agony;’ and is the technical term for the Greek athletic contests. The verb and substantive are together also in 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7. From the aim stated in Colossians 2:2 we learn that this struggle was practically the same as that of Epaphras mentioned in Colossians 4:12, ‘agonizing on your behalf in his prayers that ye may stand mature and fully assured.’

On your behalf: i.e. for your benefit: cp. Colossians 1:24, ‘sufferings on your behalf.’

Laodicea: see Intro. iv. 3. Grammatically, the words ‘have not seen my flesh’ might or might not include Colossae as well as Laodicea. But these words seem to give a reason for Paul’s anxiety. And the reason must be valid for both Churches. Moreover, they were so near that if Paul had visited one he would almost certainly have visited the other. We therefore infer with confidence that Paul had never been in the valley of the Lycus. But he knew that there were Christians there. And so anxious was he for their good, while unable directly to help them, that his thoughts about them became a spiritual conflict. Naturally he says ‘I wish you to know’ this: same words in 1 Corinthians 11:3; similar words in Colossians 10:1; 12:1, etc.

In flesh; gives greater definiteness to the bodily presence involved in ‘seen my face.’ Cp. Ephesians 2:11, ‘the Gentiles in flesh.’

**Ver. 2.** Aim of Paul’s struggles on his readers’ behalf. It determines the nature of the struggle.

Encouraged: same word as ‘exhort’ in Romans 12:1, and very common with Paul: cp. Romans 1:12. It denotes speech designed to rouse men to courage, endurance, or action.

Hearts be encouraged: same words in Colossians 4:8; Ephesians 6:22; 2 Thessalonians 2:17. Paul wishes the encouragement to reach the inmost center of their emotions and the inmost source of their actions.

Their: not 'your.' It suggests that this inward struggle is not specially for the Christians at Colossae but for all whom Paul has not seen.

Knit-together: same word in Colossians 2:19; Ephesians 4:16. It denotes the harmonious fitting together of various parts into one whole, each part supplementing the others and helping the whole.

In love: mutual Christian love, as in 1 Corinthians 13:1f, where see note. It is the encompassing element and bond of this union: cp. Colossians 3:14. 'Ye-being' (or better 'having-been') knit together: this loving union one with another being the means by which their 'hearts' are to receive 'encouragement.' To the encompassing element of this union, viz. 'in love,' Paul adds its aim: 'and for all wealth, etc.' Cp. Colossians 1:27. This aim is collateral with that already expressed, 'that their hearts, etc.' It is another purpose which Paul has in view in his earnest struggle for his readers. The unity which is to bring them encouragement is designed also to lead 'to the full assurance of the understanding,' and indeed 'to a knowledge of the mystery of God.'

Full assurance: same word in 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Hebrews 6:11; , 10:22. The cognate verb in Colossians 4:12; Romans 4:21; 14:5; Luke 1:1. It is a certainty which fills us.

Understanding: as in Colossians 1:9. 'The full assurance' results from the faculty of interpreting the various objects presented to the mind. Such assurance Paul desires his readers to have in an abundance which will make them rich; and as a condition of it desires for them the unity of mutual love. More fully stated, the aim of this unity is 'for knowledge of the mystery of God.' These last words keep before us, and by keeping so long before us greatly emphasise, the thought embodied in the word 'mystery' in Colossians 1:26, 27.

On the various readings here, see Intro. iii. 2. The last words of Colossians 2:2 may be rendered either 'the God of Christ' or 'of God, even of Christ,' or 'the mystery of God, even Christ.' This last exposition is at once suggested by Colossians 1:27 where 'Christ in you' is Himself 'the

mystery.’ And it is confirmed by the context; and by the aim of the whole Epistle, which is to set forth the mysterious grandeur of the Son of God. To know Christ, i.e. to comprehend the purpose of His incarnation with an acquaintance derived from personal contact with Him, is to know the mystery of God, i.e. the purpose kept secret during long ages and now revealed, viz. that without respect of nationality God will receive into His favor and cover with eternal glory those who believe the Gospel. The above exposition is confirmed by the word ‘hidden’ in Colossians 2:3, which recalls the same word in Colossians 1:26.

Knowledge, or ‘full-knowledge’: same word in Colossians 1:9, 10: cp. Ephesians 1:17, ‘in knowledge of Him.’

**Ver. 3.** Statement about Christ, proving that He is ‘the mystery of God.’

In whom: i.e. in Christ, immediately preceding. To refer it to the more distant word ‘mystery’ would be an impossible leap over the word ‘Christ’ and over the important implied assertion that He is ‘the mystery of God.’ And it would make the word ‘hidden’ almost meaningless: for all mysteries are hidden. Whereas as expounded above the word ‘hidden’ justifies the assumed equivalence of ‘Christ’ and ‘the mystery of God.’

Wisdom: such acquaintance with the great realities as enables a man to choose the best steps in life. See my ‘Corinthians’ p. 47.

Knowledge: acquaintance with things seen or unseen, great or small. The nearness of the nobler word ‘wisdom,’ which occupies part of the ground usually covered by the word ‘knowledge,’ limits somewhat this last word to matters which have come under our immediate observation. The two words are together in Romans 11:33; Ecclesiastes 1:16-18; 2:21, 26; 9:10; in all which places except the last ‘wisdom’ comes first. The word rendered ‘treasure’ denotes in Matthew 2:11; 12:35 the place where valuables are kept for safety; in Matthew 6:19-21, the valuables themselves. Here it has the latter sense: for Christ is Himself the personal locality of the laid-up wealth.

All the treasures: all the many forms of spiritual wealth with which wisdom and knowledge enrich their possessors, and which are all to be found in Christ. It is parallel with, and expounds, ‘all wealth of the full assurance of the understanding.’ Compare Plato, ‘Philebus’ p. 15e, ‘having

found some treasure of wisdom;' Xenophon, 'Memoirs' bk. iv. 2, 9, 'not treasures of silver and gold rather than of wisdom.' In Christ this wealth of wisdom lies out of sight: 'hidden.' The idea of concealment, frequently associated with the word treasure, does not necessarily belong to it. For laid-up wealth is not always out of sight. But the 'mystery of God' is essentially 'hidden:' close parallel in 1 Corinthians 2:7, 'God's wisdom, in a mystery, the hidden' wisdom. Fully to know Christ, is to know the hidden truths of priceless worth which none know except they whom God leads into His secret chamber and whose eyes He opens to see this inner light. They who know this are indeed rich. But this knowledge is possible only to those whom Christian love knits together in a union which fills their hearts with encouragement; and only to those who are themselves in Christ and thus know and possess, in measure, whatever is in Him: 'in whom are all the treasures... hidden.'

Such is Paul's earnest and agonizing desire for His readers. His tender sympathy longs to cheer their hearts. But for real encouragement there must be loving union among themselves. Such union will open the channels of the inner life, and will enrich them with an assured comprehension of the great realities known only to those who know Christ. In other words, for those whom he has never seen Paul desires the same blessings as for those to whom he has personally preached Christ.

SECTION 7 describes Paul's relation to the Gospel which has saved his readers. The preaching of the Gospel brings upon him hardship. But this hardship gives him joy: for he remembers its sacred relation to the sufferings of Christ, and its sacred purpose, viz. to benefit the body of Christ. It is inseparably involved in the work, committed to him by God, of making known the great secret, precious and glorious beyond description and hidden during long ages, that Christ dwells in men on earth, a pledge of future glory. This secret Paul proclaims to all within his reach, endeavoring thus to save every one. Hence his strenuous effort for the good not only of those whom he personally teaches but of those Christians who have never seen his face. For all men everywhere, he desires a full knowledge of the profound mystery of God which lies hidden in Christ

DIVISION 2, embracing Colossians 1:15-2:3, is Paul's fullest delineation of the Person and Work of the Son of God. He notes first Christ's relation to the Father, as an Image of the Invisible One; and as born, whereas all others were created. He then notes His similar relation to the created universe, to the universal Church, and to the Church at Colossae; viz. as the Agent through whom all things came into being. Consequently, He is earlier than the brightest in heaven, and holds together in His grasp the entire universe. Similarly, He was the first to pass triumphantly through death. As wide as the universe is the purpose of redemption: for its aim is to reconcile to God all things in heaven and earth. And the Gospel which has brought salvation to Colossae has done so in all the world. Thus throughout DIV. 2 we hear again the note of universality already sounded (Colossians 1:6) in DIV. 1. All this reminds Paul of the grandeur of the truth which in his own day God had made known to men, a truth hidden during long ages. God had given to men, not truth only, but the living presence in their hearts of Him who made the world, Himself a pledge in them of future blessedness. Remembrance of this moves Paul to strenuous effort to make Christ known everywhere. He has warned his readers that their share in the blessings hidden yet revealed in Christ depends upon their continuance in the word they have already received. How needful was this warning we shall learn from DIV. 3.

Notice here (Colossians 1:18, 24) the important metaphor of the body of Christ, and the Gospel described (Colossians 1:26, 27; 2:2) as a mystery; aspects of truth already conspicuous in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 and in 1 Corinthians 2:7; Romans 16:25, and peculiar to Paul.

## DIVISION III

### WARNING AGAINST ERRORS

#### CHAPTER 2:4-3:4

#### SECTION 8

#### *DO NOT FORSAKE THE TEACHING ALREADY RECEIVED*

#### CHAPTER 2:4-7

*This I say in order that no one may delude you with persuasive speech. For, indeed in the flesh I am absent, yet in the spirit I am with you, rejoicing and beholding your order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. As then ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in Him, rooted and being built up in Him and being established by your faith, according as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (Or abounding in it with thanksgiving.)*

**Ver. 4.** Hitherto, although in Colossians 1:9 we have the occasion of Paul's praise and prayer for his readers, viz. the good news about them brought by Epaphras, and although Colossians 1:23 has suggested a danger of their 'being moved away' from the safe anchorage of their hope, we have had no mention yet of any specific aim of this Epistle. Now for the first time we have a clearly stated and definite aim, viz. to guard the Colossian Christians from erroneous teaching.

I say this: not merely Colossians 2:3; for as we have seen this was added to explain and justify the words preceding. Moreover, Colossians 2:5 bears directly on Colossians 2:1: and the words 'mystery of God' in Colossians 2:2 take up similar words in Colossians 1:26. Thus the words 'I say this' recall the entire teaching of DIV. 2, of which indeed Colossians 2:3 is but a compact summing up. In other words, Paul's invaluable exposition of the

nature and work of the Son of God was given, not merely to instruct and edify, but as a safeguard against persuasive error. A good example for us. The only real safeguard against the manifold religious errors is an intelligent and comprehensive knowledge of the central doctrines of the Gospel. Such expositions of truth have abiding worth even when the errors they were designed to combat have passed utterly away. Paul's method of defense makes all the difference between the living epistle before us and the obsolete 'Refutation' of Irenaeus.

Delude you: 'reason you away from the line.' It is a modification of Paul's favorite word 'reckon' in Romans 2:3, 26, etc.; and denotes perverse reckoning.

With persuasive-speech: cp. Romans 16:18, 'by means of smooth-speech and fine-speech deceive the hearts of the innocent;' 1 Corinthians 2:4 'persuasive words of wisdom.' This persuasiveness does not in itself imply error. The error lies in the word 'delude.' What specific delusion Paul has in view, we must learn from the specific warnings following.

**Ver. 5.** For if, etc.; explains the interest in the readers which prompted the foregoing warning, and thus tacitly and very kindly supports it.

Flesh... spirit: favorite contrast of Paul. It is practically the same as 'body' and 'spirit' in 1 Corinthians 5:3. While the weak and mortal 'flesh' of Paul lingered in prison at Rome, the eye of his 'spirit' was fixed on the Christians at Colossae.

Rejoicing and beholding: as though the narrative of Epaphras at once gave Paul joy; and led him to contemplate with abiding interest his readers' military regularity and solidity.

Order: same word and sense in 1 Corinthians 14:40; cognate word in Colossians 15:23: a not uncommon military term.

Firmness: or better, 'firm-front.' It denotes something made firm.

Of your faith in Christ: 'the solid front which your faith enables you to present.' Cp. Acts 16:5: 'made firm by faith.' The Christians at Colossae held their position as good soldiers: and their faith in Christ enabled them to present to every enemy an immovable line of battle. The military tone of this verse suggests that looseness in faith exposes Christians to

disastrous overthrow. The phrase rendered 'faith in Christ' is not found elsewhere in the N.T.: but we have 'faith towards God' in 1 Thessalonians 1:8; Philemon 5; and a similar phrase 'believe in God' or 'in Christ' in Romans 10:14; Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 1:8, 21, and frequently in the Fourth Gospel.

The truthfulness of Paul compels us to accept these words as complete proof that the Christians at Colossae had not yet been actually led away by the delusion against which he now warns them. If so, this verse is not only a courteous, but a necessary, recognition, in view of the warnings which follow, of their loyal adherence to the truth.

**Ver. 6.** An exhortation, based on Colossians 2:5, and followed in Colossians 2:7 by collateral details of manner.

Received: same word in John 1:11, 'His own people received Him not.' Frequently used by Paul in reference to the Gospel he received from Christ: 1 Corinthians 11:23; 15:1, 3; Galatians 1:9, 12. They who welcome the good news of salvation thereby receive Christ Himself to be their Lord and their life. 'As then,' or 'inasmuch then as,' ye received, etc.: practical application of Colossians 2:5. That they have 'received Christ' and have thus obtained spiritual solidity, is good reason why they should 'walk in Him:' cp. Colossians 4:5, 'walk in wisdom;' Ephesians 5:2, 'in love.' 'Let the personality of Christ be the encompassing and guiding and controlling element of every step in life.' Cp. Galatians 5:25: 'If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.' A good beginning is reason for continuing in the same path.

**Ver. 7.** Collateral details about the walk in life which Paul desires for his readers.

Rooted, same word and form in Ephesians 3:18. It suggests stability and nourishment and life derived from inward contact with Christ: 'in Him.'

Built-up: same composite word in Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 3:10, 12, 14; Jude 20. It calls attention to the foundation on which the building rises. This second metaphor adds the idea of stability derived from the mutual cohesion of various component parts. [Notice a conspicuous change of tenses. The Greek perfect 'rooted' denotes an abiding result of a past event: the present 'being-built-up' describes a process now going on. Our



‘walk in Him’ is a present result of our having first taken root in Christ; and continues only so long as we retain our hold of Him. And, while we walk in Him, our spiritual life, which derives stability from union with our fellow-Christians, makes progress day by day like the rising walls of a building.] Each metaphor supplements the other. The former suggests organic life, and nourishment: the latter suggests strength derived from union of various parts. The words ‘in Him’ forsake the metaphor of a ‘building,’ in order to recall the foregoing exhortation, ‘walk in Him,’ and to keep before us the inwardness of that union with Christ from which the members of His Church derive cohesion and stability. A condition and accompaniment of our walk in Christ is that we retain our inward grasp of Him and that by compact union with our fellows the Christian life makes daily progress in us.

Being-made firm by faith: another collateral detail supporting the foregoing metaphor by singling out, and stating in plain language its chief element, viz. immoveable firmness, and by pointing to the channel through which spiritual firmness comes, viz. ‘faith.’

[The dative of instrument, as in Colossians 1:10 is more likely here than that of limitation. For we need to know the channel through which comes the firmness implied in ‘built-up’ rather than the particular element of our spiritual life in which that firmness is to be found: for evidently the whole man is made firm in Christ.] They who rest on the promises of God are themselves immoveable. These last words recall ‘the firmness of your faith’ in Colossians 2:5.

According as ye were taught: the directive rule of their ‘faith:’ cp. Colossians 1:7, ‘according as ye learnt from Epaphras.’ The teaching which already has brought them out of darkness into light is to be the guide of their present faith. Similar argument in Galatians 3:3. ‘Thanksgiving’ is to be associated with ‘faith;’ as in Philippians 4:6 with prayer. And so abundant are the reasons for gratitude that Paul prescribes for his readers an overflow of thanks: ‘abounding with thanksgiving:’ cp. Philippians 4:6.

Paul reminds the Christians at Colossae that they have already accepted Christ as their Lord, and bids them now walk in Him they have received. In other words, he urges that their outward life correspond with the beginning of their Christian profession. There must be continued inward

grasp of Christ, firm cohesion with their fellows and progress, and the solidity which faith gives; all this on the lines laid down by those who have led them to Christ, and mingled with thanks to God.

As yet we have learnt nothing about the specific danger which prompted Paul's warning, except that it is one against which the foregoing exposition of the dignity of Christ will shield his readers, and one which threatens to lead them away from the path which at their conversion they entered. We wait for more definite information about the specific and plausible error Paul has in view.

## SECTION 9

### WARNING AGAINST ERROR IN THE GUISE OF PHILOSOPHY AND JUDAISM

#### CHAPTER 2:8-15

*Take heed lest there will be any one making plunder of you through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the rudiments of the world, and not according to Christ. Because in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And in Him ye are made full; who is the Head of all principalities and authority; in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him in Baptism: wherein (or in whom) also ye were raised with Him through belief of the working of God who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead by your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made you alive with Him, having forgiven us all the trespasses, having blotted out the handwriting against us with the dogmas, which was contrary to us: and He has taken it out of the midst, having nailed it to the cross; having stripped of from Himself the principalities and the authorities, He made a show of them openly, having led them in triumph in it.*

**Ver. 8.** Specific danger against which Paul warns his readers.

Take heed or 'see-to-it': same word as 'behold' in Colossians 2:5. It denotes simply an act of sight: 'have your eyes open lest', etc.

Making-plunder of: or literally 'lead-away-plunder.' Paul fears lest his readers be themselves led away by an enemy as spoil. For error enslaves both body and soul. This exposition is suggested by the use in one or two places of this rare Greek word, and of similar words. It is a compound of the word used in 2 Corinthians 11:8; where Churches are said to have been 'plundered' by Paul who received their contribution to do work for others.

Through philosophy, etc.: means by which Paul feared that his readers might be led captive.

Philosophy: literally 'love-of-wisdom:' a common Greek word. Diogenes Laertius tells us ('Lives of Philosophers' Introd. 12) that Pythagoras was the first to call himself a philosopher or lover of wisdom, on the ground that 'no one is wise except God.' In this sense, the word is one of the noblest in human language, denoting man's effort to understand that which is best worth knowing. In a somewhat similar sense, it is used by Philo to describe the religious teaching of the Jews: e.g. vol. i. 613, 'they who philosophize according to Moses.' And Josephus speaks ('Antiq.' bk. xviii. l. 1, 2) of the schools of thought embodied in the Jewish sects, Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, as philosophies. This last use helps us to understand how a word with an origin so good came to have, as here, a sense evidently bad. Under the guise of professed love of wisdom, men attached themselves to schools putting forth their own explanations of the phenomena of life, explanations for the more part artificial and baseless. Of such baseless philosophies we have abundant and various examples in the many Gnostic systems prevalent in the second century, strange mixtures of the Gospel with earlier Jewish and Gentile teaching. See note on THE GNOSTICS at the end of this Exposition. These were called 'philosophy:' and we shall see that to something of this sort probably Paul refers here.

Deceit: the teachers of this philosophy being either deceivers or themselves deceived.

Empty: a hollow form of error.

That both words are under one article, suggests that 'philosophy' and 'error' are two sides of one instrument of seduction. It claimed to be a search for wisdom: actually it was a hollow deception. A close parallel in 1 Timothy 6:20, 'the profane empty-voices and oppositions of knowledge falsely so named.' For the precise nature of this teaching we must seek in the warnings which follow and in the foregoing exposition of truth which Paul tells us was written as a safeguard against this persuasive error.

According to... according to... not according to: description, positive and negative, of the path along which the captives were led.

Tradition of men: same words in Mark 7:8; cp. Mark 7:3, 5, 9, 13: a close and instructive parallel. Cp. Galatians 1:14; and contrast 1 Corinthians 11:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6. They who are led away by this philosophy go along a path marked out by no higher authority than that 'of men,' from whom it has been handed down. All teaching is apt to become mere 'tradition.' For it is easier to learn to repeat results than to understand the processes by which they have been attained and the proofs on which they rest; easier to accept as decisive a master's 'ipse dixit' than to follow his reasoning. False teaching is specially liable to become tradition. For it has no basis of truth. A conspicuous example of tradition is found in the Talmud which consists almost entirely of assertions of celebrated Jewish teachers; the greater part having no ground whatever except the teacher's authority. See Barclay's selections in English from the 'Talmud.' Similarly the Gnostics handed down secret doctrines professedly received from one or other of the Apostles.

The rudiments of the world: same words and sense in Galatians 4:3, where see note: the rudimentary teaching derived from the material world. In some sense both Greek philosophy and O.T. ritual were on their better side rudimentary forms of teaching preparatory to the Gospel. And with all false teaching are associated such rudimentary elements of truth. Otherwise the falsehood would not live. In Galatians 4:3 we learn that this rudimentary teaching brings men 'under bondage.' Similarly, they who seek to lead captive the Colossian Christians would lead them along a path marked out by the traditions of men and by the rudimentary teaching of the material world. Of these two delineations of this wrong path, possibly 'the traditions of men' recall rather Jewish teaching; and 'the rudiments of the world' that of Gentiles.

And not according to Christ: not taking for their guide the nature and purposes of Christ. Cp. Romans 15:5. And this agrees with Paul's exposition in DIV. 2 of the nature and work of Christ, as a safeguard against prevalent error; and especially with the last words of this exposition, 'Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.'

**Ver. 9.** A great truth proving, as Colossians 2:8 assumes, that every path 'not according to Christ leads astray. That which in Colossians 1:19 was a divine purpose is here stated to be an abiding reality: 'in Him dwells.'

All the fulness: as in Colossians 1:19, but now defined by the words 'of the Godhead,' or 'Deity.' It denotes all that distinguishes God from the highest of His creatures; all the attributes and powers of which God is full, and in which our conception of God finds its realisation. These have an abiding home in the God-Man, and are 'His fulness:' cp. John 1:14. The overflow of this fulness fills us. And because the Eternal Son wears a human body, 'in Him' this 'fulness dwells bodily:' i.e. in bodily form and manner. We may perhaps reverently say that in the Eternal Son dwelt from eternity the fulness of the Deity. At the Incarnation, the same fulness, dwelling unchangeably in Him, assumed bodily form. And in the glorified humanity of Christ this bodily form continues, as henceforth the abiding dwelling-place of all the perfections of God. The Son assumed bodily form in order that this fulness might fill us, supplying all our need and enabling us to attain the true aim of our being. Now, inasmuch as in Christ dwells this fulness, His nature ought to be the norm of our action. For His fulness is our hope. Consequently, every path which is 'not according to Christ' leads away from the goal of our life.

**Ver. 10.** And we are, etc.: one step farther, viz. from Christ to His people.

Ye are in Him: as your refuge and bulwark and home. Consequently, since He is full, 'in Him ye are made-full or made-complete: same word as in Colossians 1:9, 25. It denotes a filling up of an outline of any kind. The outline here is sketched by the needs and aim of our being. They who are in Christ, and so far as they are in Him, find in Him their need supplied and their goal attained. In them remain no unfilled chasms. They have therefore no need to seek anything away from Christ.

All principality and authority: same words in same order in Colossians 1:16, and apparently in the same sense, viz. different ranks of angelic powers. Their mention here, after the earlier mention there, suggests very strongly that they had something to do with the error prevalent at Colossae. And this is confirmed by the same words again in Colossians 2:15 and by the mention of angels in Colossians 2:18.

See further in the note under Colossians 3:4. Paul here says that, whatever angelic powers have rule or authority over men, of all such Christ 'is the Head.' This implies that He is not only their Ruler but stands to them in the relation of the head to the various members of a living body, viz. the living and controlling source of their power and action. Consequently, any trust in angels which leads away from Christ springs from ignorance of their relation to Him.

Notice that the angels, who are here said to be vitally united to Christ as their Head were also created by Him. In other words, their continued life depends upon their abiding union with Him from whom they first received it: and they use their powers under the direction of Him from whom these powers were derived. Doubtless it was to prepare the way for this important harmony, and thus to overturn an error which practically set the angels against Christ, that Paul taught in Colossians 1:16 that 'through Him' even the angels 'were created;' a statement nowhere found from his pen except in this Epistle written to dispel this special error.

Notice also that Christ bears to the Church (Colossians 1:18) and to the angels the same relation of Head: another important harmony. Both men and angels spring from Him: and of both angels and redeemed mankind He is the Head.

**Ver. 11-12a.** Another important truth added to those foregoing.

Not-made-with-hands: i.e. superhuman. It emphasises the absence of human agency. Contrast Ephesians 2:11. The same two words, here contrasted, are placed conspicuously side by side in Mark 14:58. This superhuman circumcision has Christ for its encompassing element, being wrought in virtue of inward union with Him: 'in whom ye were also circumcised.'

The laying-aside: as we take off and put away clothes. The cognate verb in Colossians 3:9, where the readers are said to have themselves laid aside 'the old man:' a similar verb in 2 Corinthians 5:4. Also the opposite verb in Colossians 3:10: 'put on the new man;' and again in Colossians 3:12.

The body of the flesh: the human body looked upon in its material constitution, in view of the truth ever present to the mind of Paul (e.g. Romans 6:12) that through the needs and desires arising from the

constitution of our body sin rules all those whom Christ has not saved. For in fallen man the flesh, although in itself good, has come under the domination of sin and has become a weapon with which sin enslaves its victims. Hence apart from Christ, man's flesh is (Romans 8:3) 'flesh of sin' and his body (Colossians 6:6) a 'body of sin.' Circumcision is only the outward removal, by human hands, of a small part of that body which to so many is an instrument by which sin holds them captive. But the servants of Christ have stripped off from themselves and laid aside their entire body of flesh, inasmuch as they have been completely rescued from its deadly dominion. Henceforth they stand in a new relation to their own bodies: these are no longer the throne of sin but the temple of God.

In the laying aside of the body of the flesh: the environment in which took place the circumcision 'not made with hands.' While the one was done the other was done. Or, practically, the two clauses describe under two aspects the same inward experience. The two figures are linked together by the next clause: 'in the circumcision of Christ,' the better circumcision which has Christ for its source and distinguishing mark.

Having-been-buried with Him in your Baptism: another description of this inward and spiritual circumcision, specifying also its time and outward instrumentality. A close parallel with Romans 6:4: a parallel the more remarkable because in the N.T. this mode of thought is found only with Paul, and is extremely rare even with later Christian writers. Already, in Romans 6:3-11; Galatians 2:20; 6:14, we have been taught that, like Christ and in Christ, we are to be dead to sin, i.e. completely separated from it as the dead are separated from the world in which they once lived, by means of that death upon the cross by which Christ Himself was separated from the penalty and curse and power of sin under which for our sakes He once groaned; and that consequently Baptism, the visible gate through which the convert from heathenism entered the company of the professed followers of Christ, is designed to be the funeral service of the old life announcing publicly that life has ceased and separating the dead man completely from the land in which he lived. In this sense the Colossian Christians were 'buried' in the grave of Christ; and this burial took place 'in' their 'Baptism.'



Although this burial is evidently metaphorical, we have no hint that 'Baptism' refers to anything except the outward rite. Indeed the metaphor needs the outward rite as its basis and explanation. And in Romans 6:3, so similar in thought and expression, 'baptized for Christ' refers indisputably to the rite, of which Paul goes on to explain the inward significance.

The sudden and conspicuous introduction of a new topic, 'circumcised... circumcision... circumcision,' in this warning against error suggests irresistibly that, as in Galatia (Galatians 5:2, 3) so in Colossae, the false teachers insisted on circumcision as a condition of salvation. This reveals a Jewish element in the error here combated. (In Galatians 2:16 this suggestion is placed beyond doubt.) Paul declares that circumcision by the hands of men is needless for the servants of Christ because they have already undergone a more complete circumcision, that in the Baptism by which they were outwardly and formally joined to Christ their whole body, not a mere fragment of it, looked upon as a body of sin, its real earlier condition, was buried in the grave of Christ. Consequently, they have actually experienced that circumcision of the heart of which Moses and the Prophets (Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 44:9) so frequently spoke as the real condition of spiritual blessing.

**Ver.** 12b. Wherein also: or 'in whom also.' Grammatically, each rendering is equally admissible: and the context affords no sure ground of decision. On the one hand, 'Baptism' is the nearest antecedent: and 'raised with' Him evidently supplements 'buried with Him,' recalling forcibly the ancient mode of the rite (see under Romans 6:4) and the baptismal water under which the convert sank and from which he rose. Paul may wish to say that in their Baptism his readers were not only buried, but also raised, with Christ. On the other hand, Christ in His relation to His people is the chief thought of the whole sentence: 'in Him dwells' and 'in Him ye are,' Colossians 2:9, 10; 'who is the Head,' Colossians 2:10; and 'in whom also ye were circumcised,' Colossians 2:11, where the first three words are the same as in Colossians 2:12b. Paul may wish to say, still thinking of the dignity of Christ, that in Him we have been not only circumcised with a superhuman circumcision but 'also raised together with' Christ 'through faith.' It cannot be objected that our resurrection is not with Him but in Him. It is both 'in' Him, resulting from inward union with Him, and 'with' Him, introducing us to a life enjoyed by fellowship with Him. So

expressly Ephesians 2:6: raised together with Him... in Christ Jesus.' This latter exposition is slightly favored by the added words 'through faith.' For to say that in Baptism they were raised through faith is somewhat clumsy: whereas the words 'buried with Him in Baptism' would be evenly balanced by the addition, 'in Him ye were also raised through faith.' But confident decision is impossible; and unimportant. For each exposition embodies a truth. The command of Christ made Baptism, to those not yet baptized, whether Jews or heathens, a condition of His favor; and therefore the only ordinary way to the new life which flows from His death, burial, and resurrection. In this correct sense, in their Baptism the Colossian Christians had risen with Christ. On the other hand, their resurrection was in Christ as well as with Christ. For it both resulted from inward contact with Him and placed them by His side.

Through faith: the constant condition of salvation in all its aspects; Philippians 3:9; Ephesians 2:8; 3:12, 17; Romans 3:22, etc.

Working: see under Philippians 3:21. It was the active power of God raising Christ from the dead. A close and important parallel in Ephesians 1:19.

Faith or 'belief of the working, etc.': belief that the activity 'of God raised Him from the dead.' According to a common Greek construction, the genitive specifies the object of faith, and in this case the object-matter. So Philippians 1:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:13. Similarly, in Philippians 3:9; Ephesians 3:12; Romans 3:22, 26, it specifies the personal object of faith. These words assert that saving faith (like that of Abraham, Romans 4:21) rests upon the recognised power of God.

The phrase 'raised together with' Christ is found also in Colossians 3:1; Ephesians 2:6. In this last place the readers are said to be also 'seated with Christ in the heavenly places.' Similarly, believers are crucified, dead, and buried, with Christ: Colossians 2:20; Romans 6:6, 11, 4. This remarkable teaching is both very familiar to Paul and peculiar to him. It demands our best attention.

Under Romans 6:6 we have learnt that we are dead and crucified with Christ in the sense that we have shared with Him the results of His own death, that through His death upon the cross we have escaped completely,

as He escaped, from the penalty and burden and dominion of sin. The day will come when we shall share to the full the results of His resurrection and ascension: for, ourselves risen from the dead, we shall sit with Him upon His throne in endless life. In that day we shall say, I am risen with Christ and through Christ and in Christ. For we shall share His throne, this being a result of His resurrection and ascension, and of our inward union with Him, a union begun on earth. For, had He not risen, we should not have believed in Him, and should not rise with Him. Now, when a future event is absolutely certain, we sometimes speak of it as present or past. For the future seems inadequate to express such certainty. Just so, as Paul looked forward with perfect confidence to the day when he will sit with Christ in glory, and remembered that no hostile power could prevent that glory, he felt that it was already his. And when, looking back to the cross and to the empty grave of Christ, he remembered that all the glory awaiting him was a result of His death and resurrection, and felt in his own heart and life the presence and power of the Risen One bearing him forward to the great consummation, the intervals between Christ's resurrection and his own conversion and between his present life on earth and the realisation of his hopes in the great day seemed to vanish from his view; and he felt himself to be already risen and enthroned with Christ. This anticipatory language is the more easy because a certainty touching the future is to a large extent an actual present influence upon us. Our confident hope becomes a mental platform on which we stand and from which we view all things. The heir to vast estates looks upon them as already his own; and takes them into all his plans for life. In this sense Paul was already risen with Christ. In his Baptism he had been laid in His grave: for it was a formal declaration that in Christ his old life of bondage had ceased. And through a faith grasping the infinite power which raised Christ from the grave Paul was himself made a sharer of the immortal life to which His resurrection and ascension had introduced the humanity of Christ, already a sharer virtually of that victory over death which will soon, as it seemed to him, be his in outward bodily reality.

Notice that faith is the link between Christ's resurrection and our own. Our assurance that the power of God is able to raise the dead enables us to believe that God actually raised Christ. A result of this faith will be that the same power will raise us. And a foretaste of that final resurrection we

have in the new life which the power of God has already breathed into us, and which reveals itself day by day in victory over sin and communion with the spiritual world. In Ephesians 1:19, 20, this relation between the resurrection of Christ and our present spiritual life is further expounded.

**Ver. 13.** Another statement, in a somewhat different, yet related, form, of the great change described as 'risen with' Christ.

And you: in addition to Christ whom 'God raised from the dead.' It emphasises by repetition this second resurrection. Same words in Colossians 1:21, where they add, to God's purpose to reconcile all things to Himself in Christ, the actual reconciliation of the readers of this Epistle: similarly Ephesians 2:1. In Colossians 1:21 Gentile Christians were contrasted with Jewish Christians. But the word 'ye-were-raised' in Colossians 2:12, which certainly includes Gentiles, forbids such contrast here. At the same time these introductory words raise into great prominence the Colossian Christians to whom Paul now writes: and the words 'uncircumcision of your flesh' remind us that they were Gentiles.

By trespasses: the instrument with which these 'dead ones' were slain. Same words and sense in Ephesians 2:1.

In what sense these men were formerly 'dead,' must be determined by Paul's general system of thought. Since they were manifestly living, their death could not be that of the body. Since it was caused by trespasses, and was connected with 'uncircumcision,' it could not be inherited depravity resulting from Adam's 'one trespass:' Romans 5:18. Moreover, the 'dead ones' have been 'made alive' in close connection with the resurrection of Christ, and their 'trespasses' have been 'forgiven.' Now we remember that (Romans 6:23) the wages of sin is death. This death can only be utter ruin of body and soul. It will be consummated (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Matthew 10:28) in the day of judgment. But inasmuch as sinners are already beyond reach of salvation except by the power of Him who raises the dead, and are separated from the Source of Life, a separation producing moral corruption, Paul correctly and frequently speaks of them as already 'dead.' See under Romans 7:9; Ephesians 2:1; 1 Timothy 5:6: also John 5:24, 25, a most important coincidence enabling us to trace the teaching of Paul to the lips of Christ; 1 John 3:14; Revelation 20:14. Just as a dead and a sleeping child differ chiefly in that, whereas the latter will wake up to life, activity,

growth, and manhood, nothing awaits the former except corruption and worms, a difference which all human power fails utterly to bridge, so and in infinitely greater degree differ those whom God 'has,' and those whom He has not, 'made alive together with Christ:' cp. John 5:25. Such was the awful former position of the Colossian Christians. They had committed trespasses: and these trespasses were bars shutting them up in the doom and gloom of eternal corruption.

Uncircumcision: joint cause with 'trespasses' of this death. Or rather it places their death by reason of trespasses in its relation to their outward separation from the ancient people of God. Similar thought in Ephesians 2:11, 12. The uncircumcised bodies of the Colossians once bore witness to their separation from the God of Abraham and from the chosen nation of the Old Covenant. By commanding circumcision God had claimed for His own the human body. The heathen live in ignorance or rejection of this claim and are thus outside the Covenant. The words 'uncircumcision of your flesh' came the more easily to Paul's pen because, in the heathen, with absence of the seal of the Covenant was associated moral bondage to the rule of the bodily life.

Such was the terrible position of those to whom Paul now writes. They had again and again fallen into sin, and were as their bodies bore witness outside the Covenant of God. Consequently, they were separated from the only life worthy of the name, and were under the dominion of eternal corruption, a dominion from which no earthly power could save them.

Has-made-alive: has removed all that is involved in the word 'death.' By reuniting them to Himself, the source of life, God breathed into them new vital power, a power opening to them a prospect of endless development and activity, a spiritual development already begun.

You together with Him: a very emphatic mode of asserting that God has so joined us to Christ that the act by which He gave life to the sacred corpse in the grave gave immortal life also to us. This is really equivalent to the statement in Colossians 2:12, 'ye were raised together with Him.' But this statement now before us looks at the inward spiritual life received by believers, when they believe, in consequence of the life then breathed into the Savior's lifeless body. Colossians 2:12 looked at their removal from the realm of spiritual death and restoration to the land of the living resulting

from Christ's uprising from the sleep of death. Both expressions are again together in Ephesians 2:5, 6. The words before us are the more suitable here because the new life thus received is derived each moment from vital inward contact with the Risen Lord.

All the trespasses: suggesting many sins, and an all-embracing pardon.

Having-forgiven, etc.: a condition involved in this new life. Since surrender to death is the just and inevitable punishment of sin, restoration to life implies forgiveness; and necessarily follows it. Just so, to a man doomed to die, pardon is life.

Forgiven: literally 'bestowed favor-upon': same word in Romans 8:32; Philippians 1:29; 2:9; and in the same sense in Colossians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 2:7, 10; 12:13. By the change from 'you' to 'us,' Paul puts himself among those whose 'trespasses' are 'forgiven.'

**Ver. 14.** This forgiveness is now traced to 'the cross' of Christ, the means by which was removed the obstacle to forgiveness which lay in the written law. It is added in the form of a second participial clause, which passes, according to the frequent habit of Paul in matters of great importance, into direct assertion.

Blotted-out, literally 'washed-out': a common word for complete removal of writing. The defective nature of ancient ink made it easy. Same word and sense in Revelation 3:5; Acts 3:19; Psalm 69:29; Deuteronomy 9:14; and, in a similar sense, in Revelation 7:17; 21:4.

The handwriting: a later Greek word, usually in the sense of a written obligation; so Tobit v. 3; ix. 5. In this sense it passed without change into Latin.

Dogma: an exact reproduction in English of the Greek word here used. It denotes something which 'seems good,' e.g. an opinion which commends itself as true or a course of action which commends itself as wise. It is frequently used for the expressed judgments of the Greek philosophers, for a joint resolution touching some united action, and for the decrees of an authority which claims to determine the conduct of others. So in Luke 2:1, 'there went out a 'decree' from Caesar Augustus;' Acts 17:7. The decisions of the conference at Jerusalem (Acts 15:23-29) are in Acts 16:4

called 'dogmas.' Similarly Ignatius 'To the Magnesians' (ch. 13) speaks of 'the 'decrees' of the Lord and of the Apostles.' In this verse 'the dogmas' must be the various commands, ritual or moral, of the Law of Moses, looked upon simply as the decrees of an authority claiming to direct and control man's conduct. For 'the handwriting against us' can be no other than the Law of Moses which Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians 3:6 as 'the letter which kills.' And this condemnatory document is the chief feature of the Old Covenant. The connection between 'the handwriting' and 'the dogmas' is not determined by the grammatical construction; but is left to be inferred. Perhaps it is easiest to understand it as 'the handwriting' written with 'the dogmas,' as in Galatians 6:11 we have an 'epistle written with (large) letters.' But, however we render these words, their meaning is clear. The Law was made up of dogmas, i.e. of commands claiming simply obedience. And these decrees gave to the Law its power 'against us:' for we had broken them; and they cried out for punishment.

Which was contrary to us: a very conspicuous repetition, given as an express assertion, of the words 'against us.' This remarkable emphasis indicates Paul's chief thought in this verse, a thought ever present to his mind, viz. the condemnation pronounced by the Law, and the barrier thus erected between man and God. Similarly, in Romans 7:3 the law of marriage condemns a married woman to bondage while her (bad) husband lives. Such a law seemed to be against her best interests.

Usually, the word rendered 'handwriting' denotes something written by the person whom the writing binds. It is not so here. Man is bound by a law written not by himself but by God. But this does not in the least degree make Paul's language inappropriate. The essential point is obligation resting upon a written document. By whom written is immaterial. Indeed it is the national law not made by us which gives its binding force to the bond we have ourselves signed. Another point is that the document consists of decrees claiming obedience.

The word 'dogmas' proves that the 'handwriting' was the Law of Sinai, which consisted entirely of written decrees. For the law written on the heart, (Romans 2:15,) although marking out certain actions as forbidden, would hardly be thus described. The change in Colossians 2:13 from 'you' to 'us' made it easy for Paul to write of the Law of Moses as hostile: for

doubtless, as a Pharisee, he had often quailed under its condemnation. And in this condemnation even the heathen were included. For we read in Romans 3:19 that the Law was given to Israel to make the whole world silent and guilty before God. The Law of Sinai proves that all men are under the anger of God. For it awakens the law written within, and through that inner law pronounces sentence even upon those who have never heard of the God of Israel.

The mention of forgiveness recalls to Paul's thoughts the tremendous sentence written in unmistakable characters in the commands of the ancient Law. He remembers that in former times this written law had seemed to be his worst enemy. And even now forgiveness can come only by 'blotting out' its terrible 'decrees.'

And He has taken it away out of the midst: a restatement, in the form of direct assertion, of what is already implied in 'blotted-out.' The writing completely erased is here described as an obstacle removed. [The Greek perfect suggests the abiding result of the removal of the great barrier blocking the way to forgiveness.]

Having nailed it to the cross: means by which the obstacle was removed. The person holding the bond has driven a nail through it and fastened it to the cross of Christ, thus making it invalid. This is a very graphic way of saying that the obstacle to forgiveness which lay in the Law, i.e. in the justice of God of which the Law is an embodiment, was removed by means of the death of Christ. Practically, the nails which fastened to the cross the hands and feet of Jesus, and thus slew Him, pierced and rendered invalid the Law which pronounced our just condemnation.

**Ver. 15.** Perhaps the most obscure verse in the New Testament. Its obscurity arises from our ignorance of the precise nature of the error here combated.

[The verb **εκδυω** denotes 'to take off clothes.' The very rare verb **απεκδυμαι** adds the idea of laying aside the stripped off clothing. An accusative following these verbs may denote either the person unclothed or the clothing taken off: for both person and clothes are direct objects of the act of unclothing. The middle voice denotes most simply removal of one's own clothing. In this sense it occurs in Colossians 3:9; and the



corresponding abstract substantive in Colossians 2:11. But the middle voice of all sorts of Greek verbs denotes not infrequently merely an action for the benefit of the actor. This would allow us to take 'the principalities, etc.' as the persons unclothed. And this is done by the Vulgate, which renders 'expolians princip., etc.' But we cannot think that Paul would use in this more remote sense, without any indication of his meaning, a word so commonly used in, and therefore naturally suggesting, the simple meaning of laying aside one's own clothes.

'The principalities and the authorities' may be either the clothing laid aside, or may belong only to the next verb 'made-a-show-of' as its direct object, the clothing laid aside not being specified. This seems to have been the favorite exposition of the Latin Fathers, who suppose that the clothing laid aside was the human flesh of Christ. Their rendering would be, 'having stripped Himself' of His own body by death, 'He made a show of the principalities, ', etc. This exposition has found its way into the MSS. FG, which read 'having laid aside the flesh, He made a show', etc. Probably the word 'flesh' was an explanatory note which was afterwards copied into the text: a frequent source of error in the text of the N.T. To this exposition it is an objection that, by putting the object before the verb it gives to the angelic powers a prominence not easily explained. On the other hand, the Greek Fathers generally accept the other interpretation, viz. that 'the principalities, etc.' were themselves the garment laid aside and the object of the public 'show.' This interpretation agrees so well with the grammatical structure of the verse that we may, with most modern commentators, accept it.]

Two questions remain. 'The principalities and the authorities' are undoubtedly successive ranks of angels. Are they good or bad? And did God or Christ strip them off from Himself?

In Colossians 2:10 and Colossians 1:16, where the same words are found in the same order, they certainly denote good angels, as does the word 'angel' when not otherwise defined. But, that here the angelic powers are said to have been stripped off and laid aside, suggested to the Greek Fathers that Paul refers to hostile, and therefore bad, angels. This is the plain reference of the same words in Ephesians 6:12; where, however, the meaning is made quite clear by the foregoing mention of 'the devil' and of

strenuous conflict, and by the absence of any mention of good angels. But to the Colossians Paul says nothing about hostile angels: in Colossians 2:10 he uses the words before us of good angels: and in Colossians 2:18 we have, based upon this verse, a dissuasion from ‘worshipping of angels,’ such worship being inconceivable except as rendered to holy beings. Again, ‘the principalities, etc.’ are here looked upon as a robe which must have been previously worn or it could not have been laid aside. In what sense could evil spirits be thus conceived? Only by supposing that in their attack on the Incarnate Son they clung to Him like a deadly robe, and that in repelling their attack He stripped them off from Himself. But I do not know that enemies attacking are ever so described: and of such desperate struggle with evil powers we have as yet in this place no hint. Another serious objection is that this exposition involves a change of subject of which we have no indication. Certainly in Colossians 2:13 it is the Father who has made us alive together with Christ and forgiven us all trespasses. In Colossians 2:14 there is no hint of change of subject. For it is in perfect harmony with Paul’s thought to say that the Father blotted out the handwriting against us and nailed it to the cross. Indeed God is said in Romans 3:25, 26 to have given Christ to die in order to reconcile the justification of believers with His own justice. If Colossians 2:15 refers to Christ repelling an attack of evil spirits, we have a most important change of actor in the scene before us which could hardly have been made in perfect silence. An exposition surrounded by such difficulties can be accepted only after all others have failed.

Is there any sense in which until the death of Christ and no longer the angels of heaven were, or might be spoken of as, a robe of God? There is. In Galatians 3:19 we read that the Law was ‘ordained by the agency of angels:’ see my note. The whole argument in Hebrews 1:1ff; 2:1ff, especially 2:2 ‘the word spoken by the agency of angels,’ implies that they were the medium through which the revelations of the Old Covenant were given. If so, we may speak of these bright messengers as the robe in which God revealed Himself to men during long ages. Only under the veil of angelic forms and through angel lips did they see His face and hear His voice. Even at the Incarnation (Luke 2:9) God approached man in the same mysterious garb. But in Christ the veil was laid aside. Through the lips of the Incarnate Son God spoke to man face to face and revealed His unveiled

glory. He thus stripped off and laid aside the garb He had previously worn. This action of God is a strong reason why the Colossian Christians should not (Colossians2:18) 'worship angels.' To do so, is to cling to a superseded mode of Divine revelation. The prevalence of this error suggested this mention of angelic powers. In Christ the Law as a means of salvation has passed away, having been nailed (Colossians2:14) to His cross: therefore none may now (Colossians2:16) pronounce sentence against others on legal grounds. And in Christ God has (Colossians2:15) laid aside the visible mediation of angels: consequently, no one (Colossians2:18) may any longer worship them.

Openly: i.e. without reserve, telling the whole truth. Same word in 2 Corinthians 3:12. By laying aside the mediation of angels, God revealed the whole truth about them and their relation to Himself and to men. They are seen to be our helpers not our lords.

Having-led-them, etc.: an exposition of the foregoing, describing the manner of this unreserved and public show of the discarded angelic robe.

Led-in-triumph: same word as in 2 Corinthians 2:14, where see note. If 'the principalities, etc.' were enemies, this word would naturally suggest a train of captives led along as in a Roman triumph and revealing by their number the greatness of the victory. And it must be admitted that this natural connection of thought favors the exposition of the Greek Fathers noticed and rejected above. But the serious objections to it, stated above, outweigh this support. Moreover apparently the word denoted originally the peaceful Greek processions in honor of Dionysius: and this made more easy its use by Paul when thinking only of a public procession and not of the military victory implied in a Roman triumph.

How did God, in Christ or in His cross, lead the angels, good or bad, in triumphal procession and thus make them a public 'show?' Perhaps in two ways. The changed position of angels in the New Covenant as compared with the Old was itself a conspicuous manifestation by God of their subordination to the Son. It made plain to all men that they were no longer His medium of revelation to man. Again, their occasional appearance around the person of Christ is another public mark of their changed position. They are now manifestly subordinate to the Son as His servants: e.g. Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43; Matthew 28:5; 24:31; 26:53. In the N.T.

angelic mediation as a means of revelation to man is almost laid aside; and angels appear only to pay homage to the Son or to help His servants; in other words, as swelling the train of Christ the Conqueror. The incompleteness of this explanation is perhaps due to our ignorance of the exact nature of the error this Epistle was designed to overturn.

The last words of Colossians 2:15 may be rendered with equal right 'in Him' or 'in it.' The former rendering is better. For it was in the entire personality of Christ rather than in His 'cross' and death that God revealed the subordinate position of angels. And this suits the scope of 9, of which Christ and His relation to us are the chief feature. In Him was manifested to men the victory of God involved in the establishment of the New Covenant.

The exposition implied in the Vulgate is maintained by Meyer: that of the Greek Fathers by Ellicott and Lightfoot. The exposition I have adopted differs little from that of Alford, and from that advocated by Findlay in a very able paper in 'The Expositor,' 1st series, vol. x. p. 403 and in 'the Pulpit Commentary.' Mr. Findlay has done good service by calling attention to the original connection of the Greek word rendered 'triumph' with the Dionysiac processions.

In SECTION 9 the warning already given in 8 becomes much more definite. The error warned against is called philosophy, i.e. an attempt to reach the realities underlying the phenomena around and is further described as empty deception. Its source is mere human tradition: and what good it possesses belongs only to the rudimentary teaching common to the whole human race. In contrast to it, Paul points to Christ as the norm of Christian belief and practice. In Him dwells all completeness; a completeness shared by all who dwell in Him. To Him bow the hierarchy of heaven. And even the blessings of the Old Covenant belong to His servants by their union with Him in Baptism. So closely are they joined to Him that they have lain in His grave, and already share His resurrection life. This life implies, as its condition, forgiveness of sins. And this forgiveness is traced to the death of Christ, by which was removed the barrier to forgiveness based upon the ancient Law or rather upon the eternal justice of God of which that law was a literary embodiment. In the Old Covenant God revealed Himself to men in the garb of angelic agency.

But in these better days that garb has been laid aside: and those bright spirits, who in former times appeared as the highest powers on earth, bearers of the might of God, appear now merely as swelling the train of One Greater than themselves.

Notice in this warning, as marked features of the error combated, philosophy and tradition, angelic powers and circumcision. This suggests that the error contained both theosophic and Jewish elements. And this suggestion will be confirmed in 10.

We notice also that, to guard against this error, Paul relies wholly on a setting forth of the Christian's relation to Christ. This explains the full exposition in DIV. 2, before the error is mentioned, of the Person and Work of Christ.

## SECTION 10

### WARNING AGAINST VARIOUS DOGMAS, JEWISH OR GENTILE, CONTRARY TO CHRIST

#### CHAPTER 2:16-3:4

*Let not any one then judge you in eating or in drinking, or in a matter of a feast or of a new moon or of a sabbath, which things are a shadow of those to come, but the body is Christ's. Let no one rob you of your prize, desiring to do it in lowliness of mind and worshipping of angels, investigating things which he has seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh, and not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, through the joints and hands receiving support and being knit together, increases with the increase of God.*

*If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye placed under dogmas? 'Handle not, nor taste, nor touch,' (all which things are to perish in the using up of them,) according to the commandments and teachings of men: things which have indeed a repute of wisdom in will worship and lowliness of mind and unsparing treatment of the body, not in any value against indulgence of the flesh.*

*If then ye have been raised together with Christ seek the things above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God: mind the things above, not those upon the earth. For ye are dead, and your life lies hidden with Christ in God. When Christ shall be manifested, your life, then also ye with Him will be manifested in glory.*

This section falls into three clearly marked divisions, each comprising four verses. Colossians 2:16-19 specifies the errors referred to in the more general warning of 9 distinguishing their Jewish (Colossians 2:16, 17) and theosophic (Colossians 2:18, 19) elements: Colossians 2:20-23 brings to

bear against them one factor of the positive teaching in 9, viz. our death with Christ: and Colossians 3:14 brings to bear upon them another factor, viz. our resurrection with Christ.

**Ver. 16.** Practical application of the foregoing, especially of Colossians 2:14. 'Since God has nailed to the cross of Christ, and thus made invalid, the written obligation of the Old Covenant with its decrees, do not submit to any one's award of praise or blame on the ground of its prohibitions or prescriptions: for these have passed away.'

Eating... drinking: same words in Romans 14:17, and similar thought; cp. Romans 14:13, 'let us no longer judge one another.' They might refer, as they do associated together in Romans 14:21, to meat and wine offered in sacrifice to idols. But, that this is not Paul's main reference here, is proved by Colossians 2:16b, which mentions distinctively Levitical ordinances, by the mention in Colossians 2:11 of circumcision, which involves obedience to the whole Law of Moses, and the mention in Colossians 2:14 of a written obligation. The word 'eating' refers therefore chiefly to the Levitical prohibition of unclean animals as food. The word 'drinking' suggests that the would-be judges extended to themselves the Mosaic prohibition of wine to Nazarites (Numbers 6:3) and (Leviticus 10:9) to priests while officiating at the altar. In other words, they not only maintained the abiding obligation of the Law but also claimed to belong to the narrower circle of Nazarites, and possibly wished to force into it the entire Church of Christ. Paul's protest against this judgment is in close accord with Romans 14:13, 14. And it is a complete abrogation of the Law of Moses, of which a conspicuous feature was distinction of meats.

Feast... new-moon... sabbath: same words in same order in Ezekiel 45:17; Hosea 2:11; in the inverse order in 1 Chronicles 23:31; 2 Chronicles 2:4; 31:3.

Feast: a yearly festival, as in Acts 18:21; Matthew 26:5; 27:15; Leviticus 23:4, etc.

New-moon: same word in Numbers 28:11-15: it refers to the special sacrifices at the beginning of each month.

Sabbath: the weekly day of rest. This is the ordinary meaning of the word; and is determined here by the ascending scale of frequency, annual,

monthly, weekly. These three terms include all the sacred seasons of the Jewish year.

**Ver. 17.** A shadow: an intangible outline caused by, and revealing the approach of, a solid reality. Important coincidence of language and thought in Hebrews 8:5; 10:1. Indeed this verse contains the germ of very much in that Epistle.

The things to come; or 'about to be:' either the New Covenant or the eternal glory. There is no grammatical objection to the former: for the future must be measured, as in Romans 5:14, from the point of view of the 'shadow' or type. And the Jewish restrictions and sacred seasons suggest at once by contrast our present service of Christ. On the other hand, since the 'shadow' was still existing, though fading, when Paul wrote, the words 'things to come' seem to point forward to the far future. So Hebrews 8:5: 'shadow of the heavenly things.' Indeed the distinction is unimportant. For Christian life on earth receives its real worth from the glory awaiting the children of God. Just so the daydawn is of worth chiefly as herald of the day. The prescriptions of the Old Covenant were outlines both of the Gospel and the spiritual life which it at once imparts and of the eternal temple and service and sabbath. Even the old restrictions of food have their counterpart in a loyalty to Christ which controls our food and all the little details of life: e.g. 1 Corinthians 8:13.

The body, i.e. the solid and tangible reality, ('of the things to come, ') is Christ's, i.e. belongs to Him, so that he who has Christ has the reality whose approach was dimly foreshadowed by the Old Covenant. Cp. Josephus, 'Jewish Wars' bk. ii. 2. 5, 'asking a 'shadow' of royalty when he had seized the substance (or 'body') of it.' In Hebrews 10:1, the contrast is between a mere outline cast by a shadow and a complete picture or 'image.' Possibly here the choice of the word 'body' was prompted by the use Paul had made of it in Colossians 2:17.

**Ver. 17** supports Colossians 2:16. Since Christ is ours, with all He has and is, we have the reality dimly outlined in the ancient ordinances. Consequently, the ancient ritual, once of value as an outline of things to come, is now worthless. Thus, as throughout this Epistle, Christ is Himself a sufficient safeguard against all error.



The warning in Colossians 2:16 proves how far Paul was from placing the Lord's Day in the same category as the Jewish Sabbath. And this warning is not altogether needless now. For it is possible to degrade into a mere prescribed rite this precious and abiding gift of Christ to His Church. That this warning does not in any way contradict the divine authority and abiding validity and infinite value of the Lord's Day, I have in my note under Galatians 4:11 endeavored to show.

**Ver. 18.** Another warning. Whether it refers to another class of false teachers or to another element in the teaching combated in Colossians 2:16, 17, Paul's words do not indicate.

Rob-of-the-prize: by giving as an umpire an unfavorable judgment. This one word is a compound of that rendered 'prize' in 1 Corinthians 9:24; Philippians 3:14. And the prize is in each case the same, viz. eternal life, the reward of victory in the good fight of faith: 1 Timothy 6:12. In Colossians 2:16 some one is supposed to be pronouncing sentence on the ground of eating and drinking. Here some one is supposed to be setting up himself as umpire in the Christian race and judging the prize in a spirit hostile to Paul's readers. [Notice the present imperative in Colossians 2:16 and 18. It suggests that what the false teachers are already saying practically amounts to a hostile judgment.] Paul warns his readers not to submit to the judgment of the one or the other. And his words imply that such submission will rob them of the hope which is to them the light of life.

Lowliness-of-mind: same word in Philippians 2:3. Whether it was real or only professed, Paul does not say. In either case his warning remains the same.

Worship: the outward form of religious adoration: same word in Acts 26:5; James 1:26, 27. This outward adoration, these men paid to 'the angels.'

Wishing to do so in (or 'with') lowliness of mind, etc.: description of the profession and outward action of the would-be umpire. (For the lowliness of mind must in some way have made itself known.) We may conceive him pretending to be unworthy immediately to approach God or the Son of God, and therefore in his humility directing his worship towards the created spirits who from heaven minister to the needs of men on earth.

Paul says that what such men actually ‘wish’ is to deprive his readers of the prize for which they are running the Christian race.

[The object-matter of this ‘wish’ must be inferred from the long word foregoing. Evidently the would-be umpire wished to give a hostile decision. So 2 Peter 3:5, ‘this lies hidden from them, they wishing it to be hidden.’ The Greek phrase here, **θελων εν**, is found in the LXX. as a rendering of a Hebrew phrase denoting ‘to take delight in.’ But in this sense it never took root in the Greek language; and therefore is not likely to be so used here. Moreover, a man’s own delight in these things would do no harm to Paul’s readers unless he tried to force his own religious tastes upon them. But, however we understand the grammatical structure, practically the sense is the same. Paul feared that by this professed humility and this worshipping of angels his readers might be beguiled, and thus robbed of their prize.]

Investigating, etc.: another detail collateral with ‘in lowliness, etc.’ Probably it refers specially to ‘worshipping of angels,’ and traces this worship to its professed origin and foundation, viz. visions of angels. The word rendered ‘investigate’ denotes originally ‘to step into’ something, especially with a view to take possession of it. It is also used of mental entrance into a subject with a view to examine and thus take mental possession of it. So 2 Maccabees 2:30, ‘to ‘investigate’ and to make discourse about all things and to be much occupied with the details, is fitting for the author of the story.’

Things which he has seen: professed visions of the unseen world. Like so many teachers of strange doctrines in all ages, these men professed to ‘have seen’ something unseen by others. These supposed visions then became matters of investigation, i.e. of comparison and inference; and thus became the foundation of a system of teaching and of religious rites.

Vainly: either without reason or without result: senses closely allied. Same word in Romans 13:4; 1 Corinthians 15:2; Galatians 3:4; 4:11, Grammatically it may be joined to the words foregoing or to those following. For the order of the original is, ‘things which he has seen, investigating vainly puffed up by, etc.’ The word ‘in-vain’ is best understood as Paul’s verdict about the uselessness of this investigation of these fancied visions. For it is needless to say that self-inflation is ‘vain.’ ‘He talks about ‘things which he has seen’ and makes his own visions a

matter of laborious inquiry: a useless inquiry.' Paul declares that this useless inquiry is the only foundation of his worship of angels and of his pretended humility.

Puffed-up: same word in 1 Corinthians 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4; and not elsewhere in N.T. Notice that here only the false teachers are said to be 'puffed up,' and of these Paul speaks in the third person: but at Corinth the same charge is brought against the whole Church.

The mind of his flesh: not exactly the same as, but similar to, 'the mind of the flesh' in Romans 8:6.

His flesh: that portion of flesh and blood, with all its belongings physical and psychological, which is owned by one person. It is the bodily side of his nature.

Mind: the inward eye which looks through phenomena to the reality underlying them: same word in Philippians 4:7; Romans 1:28; 7:23, 25, etc. Here the bodily nature is said to have a mind. And rightly. For the bodily appetites ever tend to dominate the intelligence, and to make it their slave. And since each mind thus dominated has a development of its own, both 'mind' and 'flesh' are here individualized: 'the mind of his flesh.' Now the animating principle of the flesh is selfishness: for our bodies care for nothing except their own protection and maintenance and indulgence. Consequently, the mind of our flesh always begets an inflated self-estimate, which is a form of selfishness. This accounts for the supposed visions: for the selfish man is ever ready to believe anything which flatters his own vanity; and few things do this more than belief that he has personal and unusual intercourse with the unseen world. This man pretends to investigate his wonderful revelations; and on the ground of them pays outward adoration to angels. And, blinded by his own vanity, he attributes his desire to worship angels to a humility which dares not approach God Himself. Paul warns his readers that these empty products of self-esteem will, if accepted, rob the Christian of the prize he has in view; and that this is their real aim.

Such is perhaps the easiest explanation of this very obscure verse. Doubtless the obscurity is caused by our ignorance of details well known to the readers. Paul says plainly that worship of angels was part of the

teaching of these false guides. And we can easily believe that they claimed to have seen visions of angels, and made these visions a matter of serious though empty examination. If so, the word 'in-vain' would reveal in a moment the unreality of these boasted researches. And Paul's explanation of them as a product of a self-estimate inflated by a sensual mind was probably verified by personal knowledge of the men who put forward these lordly claims.

The sense of this verse is completely changed by the corrected reading 'which he has seen.' See Introd. iii. Lightfoot, moved by the difficulty of the passage, suggests that error may have crept into all our copies, and proposes a reading of which no trace whatever is found in any ancient MS., version, or quotation. A better suggestion in the same direction is made by Westcott and Hort; and may be rendered 'treading empty air.' But that the true reading should have utterly vanished from the almost innumerable witnesses to the original text of the Epistle, is in the last degree unlikely. Even the erroneous insertion of the negative shows that the suggested reading was unthought of in the early Church. Its complete obliteration is much more difficult to accept than is the exposition given above. See a very good paper by Findlay in 'The Expositor' 1st series, vol. xi. p. 385.

The express mention of angels here sheds light upon the mention of them in Colossians 2:15 where they are said to be led by God in triumphal procession, in Colossians 2:10 where Christ is said to be their Head, and in Colossians 1:16, where He is said to be their Creator.

Worship of angels was a conspicuous feature of the Gnostic sects so prevalent in so many strange varieties throughout the second century and traceable in their early origin almost or quite to the days of the apostles. So Irenaeus ('On Heresies' bk. i. 31. 2) speaks of the Cainites as appealing to angels, "O angel, I use thy work O authority," (same word as in Colossians 2:10, 15,) "I perform thy operation." And Theodoret in his note on this passage says that a synod at Laodicea (in A.D. 364) forbade prayer to angels. This prohibition reveals how deeply the practice here condemned had taken root in the immediate neighborhood of Colossae. And this worship of angels implies as its basis supposed visions of the unseen world. See further in the note at the close of the Epistle.

**Ver. 19.** Further description of the false teachers, tracing their error, negatively, to their failure to grasp, or to retain hold of, Him from whom as the Head flows to the various members of the body nourishment and stability and growth.

The Head: as in Colossians 2:10 and Colossians 1:18: the one highest member, itself a part of the body yet directing all the other members, which live only so long as they are united to each other and to the Head. The would-be seducer does 'not hold fast the Head,' i.e. he has no firm union with Christ, the one great reality, and therefore investigates unreal visions and betakes himself to angel worship.

From whom, etc.: reason for holding fast the Head, a reason which explains the aberrations of those who fail to do so.

The joints: Ephesians 4:16: the various points of contact of the various parts of the body.

Ligaments: the bands which hold together the bones which form the joint. In this technical sense of 'ligaments' the word is used by the Greek medical writers. 'The joints and ligaments' comprise the whole mechanism by which the various parts of the body become one whole.

Receiving supply: see under 2 Corinthians 9:10. The supply in this case must be nourishment. We need not assume that Paul means that nourishment flows through the joints and ligatures. Probably his one thought was that without the bodily union of which these were the means the various members of the body would receive no nourishment.

And knit-together: same word as in Colossians 2:2.

The increase of God: i.e. wrought by God, 1 Corinthians 3:7: cp. 'peace of God' in Philippians 4:7. Paul here asserts that the entire body of Christ, consisting of various members, all receiving from Him nourishment and compactness, so long as they are closely fitted and joined each to the others, grows with a growth which God works and gives. Hence the need for holding fast the Head: for, separate from Him, there is neither nourishment nor compactness nor growth. Through want of this union with Christ, the false teacher is given up to his own vagaries. Close coincidence of words and thought in Ephesians 4:16.

**Verses** 16-19 contain the specific warning of the Epistle. We note in it two distinct elements. Paul warns first against those who would maintain as still binding, and even extend, the prescriptions of the ancient law: and then against those who, relying upon fancied intercourse with the unseen, would set up a worship of their own invention. To this second error Paul gives great attention, unveiling its source in blind conceit fostered by sensuality. But against each error his real safeguard is a knowledge of Christ in His relation to His Church. They who know Christ have the reality dimly foreshadowed in the Old Covenant, and therefore will not wish to re-establish it. And He is the Head of the Church, His body, consisting of various members each receiving from Christ, in virtue of its close union with Him and with the other members, nourishment and compactness and growth. They who know this will not be led astray by empty fancies even about the bright ones of heaven.

**Ver.** 20-23. These verses bring to bear against the errors mentioned or alluded to in Colossians 2:16-19 the teaching in 9 that through the death of Christ His servants have been placed beyond the domain of the ordinances of the written Law.

If ye died: not doubt, but logical sequence. For death is plainly asserted in Colossians 3:3. It brings to bear against all restrictions of food the teaching of Colossians 2:11, 12: for baptism and resurrection imply death, and death is essentially a separation from the life previously lived.

Died with Christ: same words in Romans 6:8; and practically the same in 2 Timothy 2:11; Galatians 2:20.

The rudiments of the world: as in Colossians 2:8, which it recalls and in some measure explains. These rudiments of religious education belong to the bondage of spiritual childhood: Galatians 4:3. Under them Christ was Himself in bondage when for our sakes He took (Philippians 2:7) the form of a slave and was made (Hebrews 2:17) in all things like us, and became (Galatians 4:5) under law and (Galatians 3:13) under the burden and curse of our sins. From this subjection Christ was set free by His own death. That death we have shared: for through His death our old life of bondage has come to an end. In this sense we are (Colossians 3:3) 'dead with Christ,' and thus removed 'from the elements of the world.' Same thought, but not so fully expressed, in Galatians 6:14: 'crucified to the world.' Paul

asks 'why,' if all this be so, his readers are 'submitting-to-dogmas' as though they were still 'living' their old life 'in the world.'

Allow-yourselves-to-be-dogmatized: the passive form of a verb derived from the word 'dogma.' The active form is found in Esther 3:9; 2 Macc. 10:8, and means, to issue an authoritative command. The passive form here used does not, however, imply that the Christians at Colossae were actually submitting to this spiritual tyranny; and therefore does not necessarily imply blame. But it implies that efforts were being made to place them under the bondage of dogmas. Paul's question reveals how inconsistent with their relation to Christ and His death is such bondage. To try to maintain it, is to try to keep in prison one whom death has set free. By showing this, Paul practically exhorts his readers not to bare the neck to the yoke which others would impose. Notice the contrast 'died... from the... world' and 'living in the world:' cp. Romans 6:2. This verse is a practical application of Colossians 2:14. For the decrees which the false teachers would reimpose have been nailed to the cross of Christ and thus made invalid.

**Ver. 21.** Various prohibitory dogmas which the false teachers sought to impose. This correct meaning of these words was observed so early as Tertullian: 'Against Marcion' bk. v. 19. But it was overlooked by some of the Latin Fathers. What the prohibited things were, Paul did not find it needful to say. His readers knew well. The word 'taste' evidently refers to the eating and drinking of Colossians 2:16. And to the same refer most probably the words 'handle' and 'touch.' This inference is strongly confirmed by Colossians 2:22: for food and drink are, and most things are not, destroyed in their use. Of the three words, the first seems to be somewhat stronger than the third, which seems to denote always a mere touch, whereas the first is sometimes used in the sense of 'take hold of.' Hence the R.V. reverses the order of the A.V. The words are in an ascending scale of stringency. Of this, that, and the other, these teachers say, 'Do not take it, do not even taste it, do not so much as touch it.'

**Ver. 22a.** All which things: those forbidden by the dogmatizers.

Are for destruction by the using: they exist in order to be used up and thus destroyed. This proves that the forbidden things were articles of food. For all such are by their nature perishing; and attain the aim of their existence

by being consumed. Cp. 1 Timothy 4:3, 'to abstain from articles of food, which God created to be partaken of.' Also 1 Corinthians 6:13, 'food for the belly, and the belly for the food:' i.e. each is designed for the other, and both will pass away. And 2 Peter 2:12, 'born to be caught and destroyed.' The argument here is that, since these articles of food were created in order to be eaten, to forbid them is to bring back the state of childhood (cp. Galatians 4:3) in which for a time certain things were not allowed to be put to their natural use.

**Ver. 22b.** These words have evidently no connection with those immediately foregoing. Consequently, Colossians 2:22a must be a parenthetical comment on the prohibitions of Colossians 2:21; and Colossians 2:22b must be joined to 'dogmatized' in Colossians 2:20, as a further description of the ordinances which the false teachers sought to impose.

Commandments: verbal prohibitions, resting on doctrinal grounds or 'teachings.' All were of human origin. This clause recalls a similar rebuke of empty forms of religion in Isaiah 29:13, which in the LXX. reads, 'teaching 'commands' of men and 'teachings.'" It was quoted by Christ in Matthew 15:9 as a warning to some who 'transgress the commandments of God because of' their 'traditions.' This similar use of O.T. words suggests whether Paul had heard of the discourse of Christ there recorded.

We saw under Colossians 2:16 that the mention of 'drink' proves that the false teachers not only maintained but exaggerated the Mosaic prohibitions. Such exaggerations were evidently 'commandments and teachings of men.' And the divine commands of the Law of Moses became mere human precepts when they were asserted to be still binding after they had been revoked by Christ. The perpetual obligation of the Law was therefore a demand resting only on human authority. Consequently, all the prohibitions suggested in Colossians 2:16 come under this description, and under the warning in Colossians 2:8.

**Ver. 23.** Paul's final and solemn judgment about the mere human and traditional teaching which forms the basis of the dogmas which some would impose on the Christians at Colossae. They are 'things' (or better 'a class of things') 'having indeed a repute of wisdom.' In other words, these



‘commands and doctrines’ belong to a larger category to which as a whole the following words apply.

Repute (literally ‘word’) of wisdom: a verbal utterance of wisdom, i.e. either called wise or claiming to be wise; senses closely allied. This recalls ‘philosophy,’ i.e. ‘love of wisdom’ in Colossians 2:8, by which Paul feared that his readers might be despoiled.

Self-imposed worship: evidently the ‘worship of angels’ in Colossians 2:18, this looked upon as a fiction of man’s invention. It keeps before us, as in Colossians 2:8, 22, the human origin of that which Paul here condemns.

Lowliness-of-mind: again recalling Colossians 2:18 where, as here, a professed inward state of mind is joined with outward forms of religion.

Unsparring treatment of one’s body: harsh refusal to it of that which rightly or wrongly it desires. It seems to be a description of the prohibitions in Colossians 2:21. And these three things, self-imposed worship, apparent humility, ascetic self-denial, are represented as an encompassing element, perhaps as an aureole of glory, of the false teaching Paul here combats: ‘in self-imposed-worship, etc.’ This composite surrounding gained for it the ‘repute’ of wisdom. [Paul’s language suggests that it was an empty repute: *μεν* solitary.]

This apparent glory was no mark of real worth: ‘not in any honor.’ The precise meaning of these words is very obscure. Perhaps Paul wishes to say that this unsparring treatment, this refusal of all pleasant things, was no ‘honor’ to the body, i.e. no recognition of its true dignity. For all asceticism is contempt of the body. From the ‘body,’ the organized unity belonging to each one, Paul now turns to ‘the flesh,’ the material constitution which human bodies have in common, which creates common needs, likes, and dislikes, and thus exerts a common influence on the spirit within.

Indulgence (or ‘satiety’) of the flesh: a supply to the full of these needs and desires, good or bad. The word rendered ‘against’ is in itself neutral; and may refer, as the context determines, to something gratifying, or checking gratification of, the flesh. Perhaps the latter here. And, if so, we may join these words closely to the word ‘honor.’ Thus understood, the

verse means that these human prescriptions, though possessing a repute of wisdom, as being apparently fitted to show men a way to the attainment of their highest good, are not associated with any real honor to the body in the way of guarding it from the self-indulgence which so often covers it with shame.

**Verses 20-23** prove that our relation to Christ renders, or ought to render, impossible submission to the empty dogmatism of Colossians 2:16-19. And from it we may glean something about the nature of this dogmatism. We have what seem to be some of the very words of these spiritual autocrats words forbidding by mere human authority the eating of food destined by the Creator to be eaten. We are reminded that their worship of angels was a fiction of their own fancy; and that their hard treatment of their own bodies was not accompanied by any real honor to the body as the temple of God, and was not of any use to enable men to resist the temptations to self-indulgence prompted by the constitution of the body. Yet, as so often in the history of the world, this homage to citizens of the unseen world, this refusal of the luxuries and comforts of life, and the apparent humility of which these seem to be an outward expression, gained for these teachers credit for rare wisdom, i.e. for acquaintance with things unknown to the multitude. All this surrounded with an illusive auriole of glory the spiritual tyranny with which these apparently wise ones sought to dictate, by their own arbitrary will, restrictions to those foolish enough to submit to them. But to those who are Christ's, such submission is impossible. For by His death they have themselves died, and have thus escaped from all spiritual bondage.

**Ver. 1-4.** The new life into which, by their union with Christ in His resurrection and ascension, Christians have already entered, a life utterly inconsistent with bondage to human dogmas. Thus, after bringing to bear upon the errors of Colossians 2:16-19, in Colossians 2:20-23, the believer's union with Christ in His death, Paul now brings to bear on the same the believer's union with Christ in His resurrection and ascension.

If then ye have been raised together with Christ: more glorious counterpart of Colossians 2:20, which it recalls. It takes up a statement in Colossians 2:12 and makes it a basis of exhortation. Through the resurrection of Christ we have been made citizens of the world to which He has gone and sharers

of its wealth and glory. That this resurrection with Christ includes not only new spiritual life but also a place with Christ in glory, is made clear by the exhortation which follows.

The things above: the blessings of heaven. These are the reward of faithful service on earth, and are within reach of present human effort and are its noblest aim. Indeed every effort to please Christ and to advance His kingdom may be looked upon as an effort to gain the things at His right hand: for these are an inevitable and known result of such effort. Cp. Romans 2:7, 'seek glory and honor and incorruption.'

Where Christ is: cp. Revelation 22:12, 'My reward is with Me.' Christ and the reward are together. Paul's assertion is then further developed. Among the things above 'Christ is;' more accurately defined, He is 'at the right hand of God:' and He is there, not worshipping or standing, but 'sitting' in majesty. Same teaching in Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Hebrews 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22; Matthew 26:64, etc. These passages reveal a thought familiar in the early Church.

**Ver. 2.** Mind the things above: literally 'the things above, make these the objects of your thought.' The repetition of 'the things above' keeps conspicuously before us the new and lofty element just introduced.

Not the things on the earth: cp. Philippians 3:19, 'who mind the earthly things.' This antithesis to 'the things above' recalls the low aims of the false teachers. For their whole thought was, in spite of their religiousness, after the passing things of earth.

**Ver. 3.** Reason for the foregoing exhortation, viz. that the life which — Paul's readers once lived on earth has ceased: consequently they can no longer 'mind the things on the earth.'

Ye-are-dead or 'ye-have-died': in the death implied in the burial of Colossians 2:12 and hypothetically stated in Colossians 2:20. Christians are not merely 'dead to the world,' i.e. separated by the death of Christ from its control, but dead absolutely; i.e. their former life which was entirely earthly has come absolutely to an end. So complete is the change that Paul can describe it only by saying that they are 'dead.' And the dead care nothing for things pertaining only to the world they have left. So, if

Christians are true to their profession, will they no longer care for things merely belonging to earth.

And your life: like Christ they still live, though dead: so Revelation 1:18; 'living and was dead;' 2 Corinthians 5:15, 'all died... they who live.' For they share already the immortal life of the Risen One. And this is their only life. For all they have and are and do is an outflow of it. On earth they are living a life which in its essence belongs to heaven and which will develop into eternal life.

Lies-hidden: beyond human sight and beyond reach of accident and death.

With Christ; for they are dead, buried, and risen with Him. Whatever Christ has and is, they share.

In God: the surrounding and life-giving element of the new life, and its impenetrable bulwark. As Christ is (John 17:21) in the Father, so are Christians 'with Christ in God.' And, in the arms of omnipotence, their life, though apparently exposed to deadly peril, is absolutely and for ever safe.

This Christian life, hidden as to its root and essence beyond reach of human intelligence and human attack, is also incomprehensible in its manifestations. For these are an outflow of its hidden essence. Thus are men on earth living a life hidden from the children of earth, a life absolutely safe, a participation of Christ's life in heaven. For by union with Christ in His death on the cross their old life has ceased; and by union with the Risen One they have entered a life altogether new.

**Ver. 4.** This life cannot be for ever hidden. Like all hidden things, it must be manifested: Mark 4:22.

When Christ, etc.: or 'whenever Christ be manifested:' suggesting uncertainty about the time of an event which itself is absolutely certain.

Manifested: set publicly before the eyes of all men in the great day. So will all men themselves be manifested: 2 Corinthians 5:10. The same word is used of Christ's self-presentation to men in His earthly life: John 21:1, 14. To describe His appearance in judgment, the word 'revelation' is also used: 1 Corinthians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7, 13. For in that day

manifestation and revelation (see under Romans 1:19) will coincide i.e. Christ will be set before the eyes of all; and all will actually see Him.

Christ is our life: for we shall live (John 14:19) because He lives and because (Galatians 2:20; John 17:23) He lives in us and we in Him. Consequently, where Christ is, there is our hidden life: and when Christ is manifested to the eyes of all men, then shall we also be manifested, sharing the splendor of His manifestation.

With Him: a frequent phrase, making conspicuous the truth that we shall be all that Christ has and is.

In glory: surrounded with a splendor which will excite the admiration of all: so 2 Corinthians 3:7-9, 11; Philippians 4:19; 1 Timothy 3:16. At present the real dignity of the sons of God is hidden from the eyes of men and indeed from their own eyes, as Christ is hidden from mortal sight. In that day Christ in His essential grandeur will appear and with Him will appear also the grandeur with which He will adorn His servants. Cp. Philippians 3:21, 'conformed to the body of His glory,' and Romans 8:19, 21, 'revelation of the sons of God... glory of the children of God.'

The believer's death and his pursuit only of things in heaven will in nowise unfit him for life on earth, or lessen his interest in things around. For the things of earth reach forward in their influence into the world to come. For instance, the movements of political life and the course of war have again and again helped or hindered the progress of the Gospel. Consequently, the Christian man whose eyes are open to the many spiritual issues at stake will watch these movements with deepest interest. Even the details and drudgery of common life receive thus importance and dignity. On the other hand, the new light in which he views all things will save him from the degrading tyranny which the uncertainties of earth exercise over those whom Christ has not made free.

Notice that in the phrases 'dead' and "risen' with Christ' we have an ideal Christian life which is ours objectively in Christ; and which it is our privilege to make subjectively our own by faith. Hence Paul sometimes speaks as though his readers were already actually dead with Christ: at other times he urges them to appropriate the inward experience thus described. Contrast Colossians 3:5 with 3:3 and Galatians 5:24. This

apparent contradiction is easily understood, and is spiritually helpful. To speak of believers as already dead with Christ, helps our faith: to urge them to put to death their members on the earth, warns us that the ideal needs to be made actual. DIVISION 3:reveals the specific occasion of the Epistle, viz. errors, or possibly one composite error, which some unknown persons were actively pressing on the Christians at Colossae. Before mentioning this great danger, Paul armed his readers in DIV. 2 with a complete protection against it, viz. a full exposition of the nature and work of Christ. He begins DIV. 3 by saying in 8 that he has written this exposition in order to guard them from seductive and perverse reasoning; and then goes on to recognise the solid front which faith enables them to present to all opponents, and to beg them, as already they have laid hold of Christ, to make Him the surrounding element, the nutritious soil, and the firm foundation, of their life and movement

In 9 Paul's warning becomes more definite. The false teaching professes to be philosophy; but is really empty deception. It is such as we might expect from its outward source, viz. mere human tradition, and from its inward principle, viz. the rudiments of religion common to all mankind. And it does not take for its directive principle the one true norm, viz. the Person and Work of Christ. This norm, Paul further expounds, keeping in view the errors at Colossae and thus to some extent indicating their nature. From 10 we shall learn that the seducers worship angels. And in 9 Paul says that Christ, in whom the whole nature of God finds perfect embodiment in human form and in whom His people find their full development, is Himself Lord of the successive ranks of angels. From 10 we shall also learn that the false teachers sought to enforce the restrictions and ordinances of the Jewish Law. And Paul teaches in 9 that in Christ His people have received the fulness of which circumcision was but an outline, and that, just as it is needless to circumcise a corpse, so they who have been spiritually laid in the grave of Christ need no circumcision. Moreover, if dead with Christ, they are also by faith sharers of His resurrection. By forgiving their sins, God raised them from the dead. He did this by nailing to the cross of Christ and thus making invalid the Law which condemned them. Thus, what the ministrations of angels could not do, God did without their aid. So conspicuously subordinate is their position in this culmination of the work of salvation, as contrasted with their more

prominent place in the Old Covenant, that God may be said, by placing them in this subordinate position, to have used them simply to swell the triumphant train of the real Conqueror. Thus without exact mention of the errors he is combating, Paul has virtually overturned them by expounding more fully the relation of Christ to the work of salvation.

In 10, the errors indicated in general language in 9 are stated without reserve. The false teachers not only maintain the abiding validity of the Law, which God had made invalid by nailing it to the cross of Christ, but add to its stringency. And other teachers, or more probably the same, amid professions of humility as unworthy directly to approach God, pretending to receive instruction from visions of the inhabitants of the unseen world, bow in worship to angels. From this it is evident that the errors which Paul combats comprise two elements, Jewish and theosophic. The former he rebuts by asserting that the Law is only an unsubstantial outline, of which the solid reality belongs to Christ. The latter element he condemns as worthless by pointing to its real source, viz. an inflated self-estimate, offspring of a mind dominated by the needs and pleasures of the bodily life, a delusion possible only to those who have no hold of Christ and who do not know that from Him is derived, by the mutual contact and close cohesion of the members of His Body, spiritual nourishment, firmness, and growth. The entire mass of restriction and ritual, resting as it does simply upon mere human assertion and pertaining only at best to the rudiments of religion common to the whole world, is for us completely set aside by the cross of Christ, which has for ever separated us from the things in which once we lived. It is far below the feet of those who are already sharers of the immortal life of the Risen Savior and already citizens of the world in which He reigns. Our one aim now is to seek, even while we tread the soil of earth, the infinite and abiding wealth of heaven. Our thoughts and hearts go forward to that day when the inner life, hidden now not only from the world, but in great part even from us who live it, will by the appearance of Christ be manifested in the splendor of the eternal glory.

Notice how in DIV. 3 Paul has led us down into, and completely out of, the mist and gloom of error. Before we entered the dark valley, he had already fixed our gaze upon the Son of God, Creator of the world, crucified that He might reconcile us to God, and risen from the dead. In 8 he warned

us that danger was near. In 9 the outlines of the enemy became discernible. In 10 he came fully into view: and we seemed in Paul's argument to enter into deadly conflict with him. In that conflict, death came to our rescue, even the death of Christ upon the cross. We lay dead with Him. Then burst upon us like the light of Easter morn the bright vision of Colossians 3:1ff: We saw Christ not only risen from the grave, but seated at the right hand of God. In the brightness of that vision we forgot that our bodies are still doomed to corruption and worms. These had vanished from our view. And we felt ourselves to be already where Christ is; and that henceforth the only matters worthy of our thought and effort are the realities which abide with Christ in God.

Notice how throughout DIV. 3 Paul points to Christ. With Him we go down into the grave. In death we are with Him. And His presence guides us up to the light of day. As throughout this Epistle, so especially in this Division, the Son of God is All and in all.



## DIVISION IV

### PRACTICAL APPLICATION

#### CHAPTER 3:5-4:6

#### SECTION 11

#### GENERAL MORAL TEACHING: NEGATIVE

#### CHAPTER 3:5-11

*Put to death then the bodily members which are upon the earth fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and the covetousness, which is idolatry; because of which things comes the anger of God upon the sons of disobedience. Among whom ye also walked once, when ye lived in these things. But now, also ye, put away all things, anger, fury, badness, railing, shameful talking, out of your mouth: lie not one to another; having put off the old man with his actions, and having put on the new man which is being renewed for knowledge according to the image of Him that created him. Where there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, free, but Christ is all things and in all.*

In the light of the glory of the Risen Lord, which shone upon us in Colossians 3:1-4, the errors prevalent at Colossae have utterly vanished. In the rest of the Epistle, no trace of them remains. But Paul remembers that his readers are still men on earth, exposed to the temptations incident to human life. Therefore, as he comes down from this Mount of Transfiguration, he uses the brightness of the vision as a moral influence deterring from sin, and prompting every kind of excellence. In other words, the vision of Christ in Colossians 3:1-4 is a transition from the specific

errors treated in DIV. 3 to the principles of general morality taught in DIV. 4 In 11 we have negative moral teaching, i.e. a warning against various forms of sin; in 12, positive moral teaching, i.e. incentives to various kinds of excellence; in 13, precepts for various classes of persons; and in 14 sundry general exhortations.

**Ver. 5.** Practical application of the foregoing: ‘put-to-death then.’ Cp. Romans 8:13, ‘putting to death the actions of the body.’ [In contrast to Romans 8:13, the Greek aorist here bids that the putting to death be at once completed so that henceforth the bodily members be not dying but dead. Similarly 2 Corinthians 7:7, ‘let us cleanse ourselves,’ so that henceforth we be clean.]

The members which are upon the earth: hands, feet, lips, eyes, etc., according to Paul’s constant use of the word and his frequent reference to the immoral influence of the body. This implies that the word ‘death’ is metaphorical. And it recalls the very strong metaphor of Matthew 5:29, 30, especially ‘one of thy ‘members’ perish.’ The body exerts on the unsaved, through its various parts and their various functions, an active and immoral influence. Its members may therefore be represented as a living and hostile power. Not that matter or the body is essentially bad: for they are good creatures of God. But man’s body has fallen under the dominion of sin, and has thus become a fetter with which sin binds the spirit within. This hostile power, Paul bids us kill, so that the bodily senses shall no longer, clamoring for indulgence, shape our actions or even our desires. He means that we surrender ourselves to the saving influence which comes to us through the cross of Christ and appropriate by faith the deliverance from the rule of the bodily life which Christ has gained for us by His death. Thus are the members of our body, which once enslaved us, nailed to His cross and thus rendered powerless for evil. And, since this deliverance comes by our own self-surrender and faith, we may be said, as here, ourselves to ‘put to death the members’ of our bodies. Thus (2 Corinthians 7:1) we cleanse ourselves from all pollution of flesh and spirit.

Upon the earth: recalls the same words in Colossians 3:2, thus bringing them to bear on this exhortation. Our bodies and all that pertains to them belong to the earth. Therefore, to allow them to rule us, whom God has

raised to heaven, is to bow to the dominion of a world which God has placed far beneath our feet.

Fornication, uncleanness: as in Galatians 5:19.

Passion: an inward emotion aroused by some external object; in this case by an impure object prompting in chastity. Same word in Romans 1:26.

Desire: good or bad; see under Galatians 5:17. It therefore needs to be further specified as 'evil desire.' It is a wider term than 'passion,' and describes a mind going out after some external object. These four terms descend from the specific to the general: intercourse with harlots, any form of outward in chastity, the inward emotion from which in chastity springs, any bad desire.

Covetousness, literally 'having more': desire for more than our share. The definite article raises this sin into special prominence: and this is increased by the comment which follows.

Which (or better 'which sort of thing') is idolatry: it belongs to a class of things all which are idolatry. Covetousness is worship of material good. And it presupposes that our well-being depends upon having the good things of earth, and that therefore created objects around are arbiters of our happiness. To suppose this, is to put the creature in the place of the Creator, and to put man under the dominion of the accidents of life. Thus (1 Timothy 6:10) 'love of money is a root of all the evils.' That this apparently casual assertion is repeated in Ephesians 5:5, reveals its firm hold of the thought of Paul. This double warning is the more needful because the great evil of covetousness is not at once apparent. Both covetousness and sensuality are exact contraries, in different directions, to seeking the things at God's right hand.

Notice here, as in Romans 1:29, 31; 1 Corinthians 6:9, Galatians 5:20, a catalogue of sins. This marked feature of Paul's writings reveals a familiar student of fallen human nature. Also that, after bidding us put to death the members of our body, Paul mentions first sins directly connected with the body.

This list of sins is placed in grammatical apposition to 'the members which are upon the earth' as something which we must 'put to death.' Practically

it is an explanation of the foregoing metaphor. Paul really wishes us to kill the various sins which once used our bodily powers as instruments of evil. This simple explanation accounts fully for the arrangement of the verse. Paul does not say that these sins are members of our bodies, nor does he ever use such a metaphor. But, looking upon the bodies of the unsaved as organs of sin, as animated by a power hostile to us, he bids us put them to death and then explains his meaning by saying that what he wishes us to kill is sin in its various forms. Thus this verse is a natural development of the teaching of Romans 6:12-19.

**Ver. 6.** Solemn assertion of the inseparable connection of sin and punishment. A frequent conclusion to Paul's lists of sins: Ephesians 5:6; Galatians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 6:10. He was accustomed thus to guard from abuse the doctrine of Justification through Faith. This solemn assertion greatly strengthens the foregoing exhortation.

Anger of God: Romans 1:18; 5:9: His determination to punish. It 'comes' 'in the day of anger and of revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' Romans 2:5. The certainty of future punishment makes it to Paul's thought a present reality, as though retribution were already on the way: cp. 1 Thessalonians 1:10. It 'comes' down from heaven 'upon' the wicked.

Disobedience: same word in Romans 11:30, 32; Ephesians 2:2; 5:6; Hebrews 4:6, 11. It is practical unbelief.

Sons of disobedience: Ephesians 2:2; 5:6: as though the abstract principle were the source of their immoral nature. In each sinner the abstract principle of unbelief has given birth to a child. Similarly John 17:12, 'son of destruction;' 1 John 3:10, 'children of the devil;' Ephesians 5:8, 'children of light;' Luke 20:36, 'sons of the resurrection.' It is a Hebrew phrase: 1 Samuel 2:12, 'sons of Belial;' 20:31, 'a son of death is he.' The phrase suggests how completely disobedience is a part of the nature of sinners. On the correct reading of this verse see Introd. iii. 2.

**Ver. 7.** If in Colossians 3:6 we omit 'upon the sons of disobedience,' we must render here 'in which things ye walked:' cp. Ephesians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 4:2; Romans 6:4. This would imply that when the Colossians 'lived in these things' they 'walked in' them. Now, when used of sinners, the word 'live' can mean only the outward manner of life. Touching the

inner reality, their state is not life, but death. In this sense none but believers can be said to live and to have vital surroundings: e.g. Galatians 2:20, 'live in faith.' And, if the word 'live' means here only the outward manner of life, it is practically the same as the word 'walk.' Consequently, if we omit the doubtful words in Colossians 3:6, the latter part of Colossians 3:7 becomes an empty tautology. This confirms the testimony of almost all the ancient documents that these words are genuine; and suggests that this is one more of the many cases in which the Vatican MS. omits genuine words.

If we accept these words as genuine, we must render 'among whom also ye walked.' Cp. Ephesians 2:3, 'among whom also we had our manner of life formerly in the desires of our flesh.' They travelled in company with other sons of disobedience. All walked along the same broad way.

Lived in these things: close parallel in Romans 6:2, 'live in it,' i.e. in sin. Somewhat different is Colossians 2:20, 'living in the world.' Formerly Paul's readers lived in the sins mentioned above: they then went along a path trodden by those whose character is derived from, and determined by, the principle of rebellion against God. This justifies the exhortation of Colossians 3:5, and prepares a way for that of Colossians 3:8.

**Ver.** 8-9. But now: Paul's frequent contrast of past and present: so Colossians 1:22, 26; Ephesians 2:13; Romans 6:22; 7:6. It introduces here, in contrast to the readers' past life just described, a repetition in plain language of the metaphorical exhortation of Colossians 3:5.

Put-away: as in Ephesians 4:22, 25; Romans 13:12.

Also ye; joins the Colossian Christians in present duty with all believers, just as the same words in Colossians 3:7 joined them with 'the sons of disobedience.'

All things: including the list in Colossians 3:5, the further list now added, and every kind of sin. It gives to Paul's prohibition the widest universality.

Anger: a disposition which prompts to inflict pain or injury: see under Romans 1:18.

**Fury:** a bursting forth of this disposition. Same words in same order in Romans 2:8, describing God's determination to punish sin. Converse order in Ephesians 4:31. That they are here classed among sins, reminds us how easily anger oversteps the line and becomes evil.

**Badness:** general worthlessness, in contrast to excellence: same word in Romans 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:8; 14:20; Ephesians 4:31.

**Railing:** the Greek original of our own word 'blasphemy.' It denotes any hurtful or evil speaking against God or against man. See under Romans 2:24; 3:8.

**Shameful speaking:** foul-mouthed language of any kind. These two forms of improper speech are closely associated. For language hurtful to our neighbor easily becomes coarse abuse. And both are a frequent expression of 'anger' and 'fury.'

**Out of your mouth;** adds to the prohibition graphic definiteness. 'Put out of your mouth, as unworthy to be in it, every form of bad speech.' To take these words merely as describing the bodily organ of speech, (cp. Ephesians 4:29,) would make them almost meaningless.

**Lie not:** another kind of prohibited language.

**One to another;** recalls their close mutual relation, as (Ephesians 4:25) 'members one of another.' This separate prohibition of falsehood reminds us of its unique wickedness: cp. Revelation 21:8.

**Ver. 9b-10.** Reasons, negative and positive, supporting the prohibitions of Colossians 3:8, 9a.

**Put-off:** as one takes off and lays aside clothing. Same word in Colossians 2:15, where see note.

**The old man:** same words in Romans 6:6. So complete is the change that the man himself as he formerly was is spoken of as an 'old' garment laid aside, as though personality itself were changed. So 2 Corinthians 5:17, 'the old things have gone by.'

**Actions:** same word as in Romans 8:13, 12:4. The various activities of the old life are supposed to have been laid aside together with their one personal source: 'the old man with his actions.'

Put-on: as one puts on clothes or weapons, the exact counterpart of 'put-off.' Same word in Matthew 6:25; 2 Corinthians 5:3; and in Romans 13:12, 14; Galatians 3:27, where we have close parallels.

The new man: in marked contrast to 'the old man.' So complete is the change, and so distinct from ourselves is the new life, that Paul speaks of it as a new personality put on as we put on clothing. This implies an inner and neutral and unchangeable personality which puts off and on, and another personality with moral qualities which is 'put off' and 'on.'

New: recent in time: same word in 1 Corinthians 5:7; Matthew 9:17, etc.; a cognate word in Ephesians 4:23. It recalls the shortness of time since the change. The word rendered 'renewed' comes from another root found in Ephesians 2:15; 4:24; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 5:17, and denoting that which is new in quality.

Which-is-being-renewed: a gradual renovation day by day of the new character which has once for all been 'put on.' The old character, now put off, was day by day undergoing corruption: Ephesians 4:22. Thus the new life is represented as one definite assumption of a character which henceforth is gradually progressing. The word 'renewed' does not necessarily mean restoration to a former state. For 'the New Covenant' is by no means a restoration of the Old Covenant to its original form: and the 'New Earth and Heaven' will differ greatly from the present ones. But it involves the removal of all defects. The renewal will not be complete until every trace of the damage done by sin is erased.

Knowledge, or 'full-knowledge': same word as in Colossians 1:9, 10; 2:2. It notes the direction and aim of this renewal, as designed to bring us 'into full-knowledge.' As the Christian life progresses we know more and more of that which is best worth knowing.

Image: an outward manifestation of the inward reality of God. It is the nature of God as set before the eyes of men.

Him that created: the Father, as always; Romans 1:25; Ephesians 3:9. This is confirmed by Colossians 1:16, where Christ is not the Author, but the Agent, of creation.

According to the image, etc.; recalls at once the same words in Genesis 1:26, 27. Cp. James 3:9. The story of creation teaches that the Creator is Himself the Archetype of His intelligent creatures. Now the Creator knows perfectly whatever He has made. And Paul says that this divine knowledge is a pattern of the knowledge which this renewal aims to impart to men: 'for knowledge according to' the 'image of Him that created him:' viz. 'the new man,' the chief matter of this verse. Consequently, the word 'created' must refer to the moral re-creation. This use of a word originally used of the old creation implies that the old and new are analogous. So are all God's works in harmony one with another, and in proportion to the similarity of their occasion. Whether the words 'according to the image', etc. be joined to 'knowledge' or to 'being-renewed,' is unimportant and was perhaps not definite to the writer's mind. For 'knowledge' is an aim of the renewal, and the Creator is its pattern: therefore the knowledge aimed at must be a human counterpart of the Creator's infinite knowledge. As the renewal makes progress, we shall in greater measure share God's knowledge of all that He has made and done. In other words, spiritual growth is growth in intelligence.

This mention of knowledge as an aim of renewal is in close harmony with Colossians 1:9, 28; 2:2, and with the general scope of this Epistle.

[Grammatically, the aorist participles 'having-put-off' and 'having-put-on' denote only actions preceding, in act or thought, the laying aside of sin to which in Colossians 3:8 Paul exhorts; and do not say whether the putting off be something still to be done and therefore a part of the exhortation, or something already done and therefore a reason for it. Each of these expositions is in harmony with Paul's thought elsewhere: cp. Galatians 3:27 for the latter, and Romans 13:14 for the former. The practical difference is very slight. Perhaps it is best to understand Paul to mean that by joining the company of the followers of Christ the Christians at Colossae had already formally stripped off from themselves and laid aside their former life and character and had put on a new life; and that he appeals to this profession as a reason for now laying aside all sin. Similar appeal in Romans 6:2. This latter exposition may be embodied in translation by rendering, 'inasmuch as ye have put off, etc.']



**Ver. 11.** A comment on the new life just described as a new man undergoing further renewal.

Where there is, etc.: the new life looked upon as a locality in which the old distinctions are no longer found. Paul cannot repress a thought very familiar to him, the great distinctions of 'Greek and Jew,' of 'bond' and 'free;' and these distinctions overshadowed and set aside by 'Christ.' Close parallels in Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 12:13. The similarities and differences of these unexpected allusions to the same human distinctions as set aside in Christ reveal the hand not of a copyist but of one original author.

Greek and Jew: in this order only here; contrast even 1 Corinthians 1:22. These words embrace all mankind from the point of view of Jewish nationality: the words 'circumcision and uncircumcision' do so from the point of view of Jewish ritual. The preposition 'and' puts, in each pair, the two counterparts in conspicuous contrast and combination.

Barbarian, Scythian: no longer an inclusive description. The word 'Greek,' which to a Jew included usually all nations other than his own, seemed to Paul not sufficiently inclusive. He therefore adds the word 'Barbarian,' a frequent and all-inclusive contrast to 'Greek:' and to make his description still more specific he mentions by name one of the most barbarous of the barbarian nations. Cp. Josephus, 'Against Apion' bk. ii. 38, "The Scythians differ little from wild beasts." As not containing an inclusive description of mankind, these two last words are added without a connecting conjunction. And in the same loose way the words 'bond, free,' are added, the reader being left to observe that they include the whole race. As in 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27, Paul declares that in the new life these wide distinctions do not exist.

But Christ, etc.: a positive truth, of which Colossians 3:11a is but a negative counterpart.

All things in all persons: see under 1 Corinthians 15:28, where 'God is all things in all.' To have 'Christ,' is to have 'all things:' for He is Himself all that His servants need. 'And in all' His servants, as Himself all things to them, 'Christ is.' In the slave Christ is, as his liberty; in the Scythian, as his civilisation and culture. And since Christ includes in Himself the whole

world of man's need, and dwells in all His servants, all human distinctions which are but embodiments of human defects, have in the new life passed utterly away. National and social barriers there cannot be where Christ is.

In DIV. 3 Paul dealt with the specific matter of this Epistle, viz. certain errors prevalent at Colossae, errors derogatory to the dignity of Christ. For his refutation of these errors, he prepared a way in DIV. 2 by expounding the nature and work of the Eternal Son. In DIV. 4 this refutation of specific doctrinal error is followed by the general principles of Christian morality. And this moral teaching is directly based upon the specific and exalted Christian doctrine with which DIV. 3 concludes. For with Paul morality is always based upon doctrine: and doctrine is always brought to bear upon morality.

First comes, in 11, negative moral teaching. And every line reveals the peculiar thought of Paul. The various members of the body, taken as a whole, are in his thought almost identical with various sins, of which he gives a list beginning with sins specially related to the body. All these, the members of the body metaphorically, the specific sins actually, Paul bids his readers kill. He calls special attention to the worship of material good implied in the everywhere prevalent greed for wealth; and then points to the anger of God which will fall upon those whose character is molded by rejection of His word. After a direct exhortation to cast away everything of this sort, Paul continues his list by mentioning sins of inward passion and of its outward expression in word, noting specially among sins of the tongue the unique sin of falsehood. He strengthens his exhortation by an ideal picture of conversion which he describes as a laying aside of the old personality and its various activities as one lays aside an old garment, and as a putting on of a new personality marked by progressive renovation tending towards perfect knowledge-like that by which the Creator knows all that He has made. This ideal Christian life, Paul cannot mention without remembering the national, theocratic, and social barriers which separate men, but which are completely broken down by Christ, who dwells in all His people as the full supply of all their need.

## SECTION 12

### GENERAL MORAL TEACHING: POSITIVE

#### CHAPTER 3:12-17

*Put on then, as chosen ones of God, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other if any one against any have complaint. According as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye. And upon all this put on love, which is the bond of maturity. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, for which also ye were called in one body: and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and instructing yourselves with psalms, hymns, spiritual songs; with grace singing to God in your hearts. And whatever ye do in word or deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, the Father, through Him.*

**Ver. 12.** Practical consequence of Colossians 3:10. Just as the negative participial clause, ‘having put off’, etc., is introduced as a reason for the foregoing exhortation to put away all sins, of which a list is given, so now the positive participial clause, ‘having put on the new man’, etc., is made the ground of an exhortation to put on all Christian virtues. In each case the ideal Christian life already accepted is made the foundation of an appeal to realize that ideal in the practical details of Christian character. If so, Colossians 3:11 is a mental parenthesis. Paul interrupts for a moment his line of thought to give expression to other thoughts deeply interwoven into the tissue of his mind and ever ready, when occasion is given, to come to the surface.

Chosen ones of God: same words in Romans 8:33; see my ‘Romans,’ p. 277. These were men whom, in the sense there expounded, God had selected from the rest of mankind to be specially His own.

Holy: men whom, through the death of Christ and the preached Gospel, God has claimed to stand in peculiar relation to Himself. See under

Romans 1:8. The words 'holy' and 'beloved' take up and develop ideas already suggested by 'chosen ones of God.' Because chosen by Him before the foundation of the world, they are now sacred persons devoted to His service: and they cannot forget that the divine choice sprang from the love of God which now embraces them. These titles are inserted as a motive for putting on all Christian virtues.

Heart: same word as in 2 Corinthians 6:12, where see note.

Heart of compassion; suggests that compassion, i.e. kindness towards the needy and helpless, is fitting to man, having its seat in his natural constitution.

Kindness: as in 1 Corinthians 13:4. It is that which makes intercourse with others pleasant.

Lowliness-of-mind: Philippians 2:3: a mind which does not form lofty plans for its own aggrandisement. Cp. Matthew 11:29.

Meekness: see under 1 Corinthians 4:21: absence of self-assertion.

Long-suffering: see under 1 Corinthians 13:4. It is a mind which does not quickly yield to unfavorable influences. Notice here a list of virtues following a list of sins; a close coincidence with Galatians 5:22. Paul reminds his readers that they are God's chosen ones, separated from others to be specially His, and objects of His special love; and bids them, in view of this their relation to God, to clothe themselves with compassion for the helpless and kindness toward all, with a lowly estimate of themselves, avoiding self-assertion, and refraining from anger.

**Ver. 13.** A participial clause expounding the last word of Colossians 3:12 by showing what 'long-suffering' sometimes involves, and supporting it by the example of Christ.

Forbearing: to refrain from laying our hands on others in order either to free ourselves from annoyance or to vindicate our rights. Compare a cognate word in Romans 3:25. It gives definiteness to the word 'long-suffering' by suggesting a probable occasion for it, viz. the unpleasant action of others.

Forgiving each other; adds still further definiteness by suggesting a special kind of 'forbearance,' viz. towards those who have done us wrong.

Each other: literally 'yourselves:' as though the whole Church were one person, as it is actually the one Body of Christ, so that forbearance towards a fellow-Christian is forbearance towards ourselves. Same word and idea in Colossians 3:16. Since the whole Church has one interest, each member gains by every good act to another. Indeed, only when forbearance is a benefit to the whole, is it really good. And only to such forgiveness do Paul's words refer.

Forgiving: same word as Colossians 2:13; 2 Corinthians 12:13; 2:7, 10; 1 Corinthians 2:12; Romans 8:32: it is forgiveness looked upon as an act of grace or favor.

According as, etc.: Christ's forgiveness to us the model, and therefore the motive, of our forgiveness of others. Notice that Paul assumes, as in Colossians 2:13, that his readers know that they are forgiven. This forgiveness is here attributed probably to 'the Lord,' i.e. to Christ: in Ephesians 4:32, a close parallel to 'God in Christ.' The distinction is unimportant; for 'the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son:' John 5:22. Consequently, the Father's forgiveness is through the Son: or, leaving out of sight the ultimate source of forgiveness in the Father, we may think only, as here, of its immediate source in the Son.

So also do ye: i.e. forgiving each other. The whole verse is a participial clause expounding 'long-suffering' in Colossians 3:12.

**Ver. 14.** Grand completion of the list of Christian virtues.

Upon all these: as an outer garment over all the underclothing.

Love: to our fellows, as always when not otherwise defined: see under 1 Corinthians 13:1, 3. Literally 'the love,' the article making this virtue conspicuous, like 'the covetousness in Colossians 3:5.

Bond: same word in Colossians 2:19; 4:3; Acts 8:23. 'Love' is a virtue which binds into one harmonious whole the various virtues mentioned above.

Maturity or 'perfection': cognate to the word in 1 Corinthians 2:6, where see note. Perhaps it is best to understand this uniting bond as being an essential element of Christian 'maturity.' Already from 1 Corinthians 13:1ff we have learnt that where love is there are all the virtues mentioned in Colossians 3:12. Love may therefore be called an overgarment enclosing all others, as a bond uniting them into one whole. And, since love is an infallible measure of Christian manhood, it may be called a 'bond of maturity.'

The practical and positive exhortation of 12 retains the metaphor of clothing assumed in Colossians 3:9, 10. Paul prefaces the exhortation by referring to God's eternal choice of the objects of salvation, to the sacredness of their position, and to the love with which God regards them. 'The new man,' which like a garment his readers are bidden to put on, is one of many colors, comprising many virtues, especially that of mutual forbearance and forgiveness, the latter being represented as kindness to ourselves, made binding upon us by the forgiveness we have received from Christ. These various virtues must be bound into one harmonious whole by the all-encompassing virtue of love, a uniting bond never absent from Christian manhood.

**Ver. 15.** The peace of Christ: cp. John 14:27. Practically the same as the 'peace of God' in Philippians 4:7: a close parallel. This profound rest of spirit, like all else in the Kingdom of God, is from the Father through the Son; and is therefore 'the peace' of God and 'of Christ.'

**Rule:** literally 'award-the-prize:' same word in Wisdom x. 12, and cognate to the word 'prize' in 1 Corinthians 9:24; Philippians 3:14. In later Greek it is frequently used in the sense of 'rule:' for a conspicuous part of a ruler's work is to pronounce decision in matters open to question. This general sense of 'rule' or 'arbitrate' is all that we can attach to the word here: for nothing in the context suggests a definite prize to be awarded. In all details of life the inward rest which Christ gives is to be the principle determining what we are to be and to do.

In your hearts: the home and throne and ward of the peace of God: Philippians 4:7.

To which ye were also called: the peace of Christ enjoyed by all who believe is an integral part of the purpose for which the Gospel call is proclaimed to men.

In one body: the Church, as in Colossians 1:18, 24. This is the locality in which is to be enjoyed the peace to which God has summoned us. This reminds us that the profound inward rest which Christ gives is a sure source of harmony with our fellow-Christians, and is impossible without such harmony.

Be thankful: cp. Philippians 4:7. Gratitude to God is a fertile source of 'peace.' Acknowledgment of what He has done for us removes all fear that He will forsake us in the future.

Notice two sides of the Christian life. Paul bids us put on all Christian virtues in our dealings with others; and desires that divinely-given peace be the ruling principle within us, nourishing, and itself nourished by, gratitude to God.

**Ver.** 16. The word of Christ: the Gospel proclaimed by Christ. So 2 Thessalonians 3:1, 'the word of the Lord;' and John 5:24, 'My word.'

Dwell: same word in Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 2 Timothy 1:5, 14.

In you: i.e. either 'within' or 'among.' Which of these was in the writer's thought, must be determined by the context. Probably the latter chiefly: for the word 'teaching' shows that Paul thinks of 'the word of Christ' as spoken by one to others. But, as the spoken word must come from the speaker's heart, the former sense, which is also suggested by the Greek word rendered 'dwell,' is not altogether absent.

Richly; suggests abundance and enrichment. Paul desires the spoken word of Christ to have a permanent and abundant place in the Church at Colossae, and in the lips and thoughts of its members, thus making them truly rich.

In all wisdom: to be joined probably to the words following as specifying the manner of 'teaching,' rather than to those foregoing which have already a modal adverb, 'richly.'

Teaching, admonishing: as in Colossians 1:28. Teaching is here put first, because the phrase ‘word of Christ’ suggests first the actual impartation of knowledge.

Yourselves: same word in Colossians 3:13. It describes a reflex action of the Church upon itself, building up itself by teaching the word of Christ. That this self-edification may be effective, the teaching must be ‘in all wisdom.’ So Colossians 1:28; Cp. Colossians 4:5: contrast 2 Corinthians 1:12. It must be accompanied, as its surrounding element, by knowledge of that which is best worth knowing, and by all sorts of such knowledge.

Psalms: as in 1 Corinthians 14:15, sacred poems like those of the Book of ‘Psalms.’

Hymns: an English form of the not uncommon Greek word here used, which denotes apparently a short poetical composition in praise to God.

Songs: literally ‘odes:’ apparently a wider term denoting any kind of poetry to be sung. Hence it was needful to add the word ‘spiritual:’ i.e. prompted and permeated by the Spirit of God. The three Greek words are fairly represented by their English equivalents; the ‘psalms’ recalling the sacred songs of the Old Testament, the ‘hymns’ any song of praise to God, and the ‘spiritual songs’ including any song prompted by the Holy Spirit.

With grace singing: a second participial clause, expounding the cognate word ‘song’ in the foregoing clause.

With grace: literally ‘in grace:’ cp. 2 Corinthians 1:12, ‘in the grace of God.’ We are to sing in the sunshine of the smile and favor of God, our songs prompted by His smile.

In your hearts: the melody of the lips coming from, and filling, the heart.

To God: the Object and Auditor of these songs. And whatever goes up to God must first fill the heart.

In all ages, songs of praise to God have been an important element of worship. So Philo, vol. ii. 484: “Then some one rising up sings a hymn made in honor of God, either himself having made it new or an old hymn of the poets of former days,... all others listening except when it is needful to



sing the responses: then all, both men and women, sing.” Cp. p. 485, where we have a long account of Jewish sacred singing. Of Christian song, even Pliny, in his letter to the Emperor Trajan, bears witness: “They were wont on a certain day to sing a hymn to Christ as God.” Paul speaks here of sacred song as a means of Christian instruction. And in all ages popular songs, sacred and secular, have been the most effective teachers.

**Ver. 17.** An all-embracing exhortation concluding the general moral teaching.

Whatever, or literally ‘everything whatever’; looks upon the entirety of man’s conduct as one whole. This is then distinguished into ‘word’ and ‘deed,’ the two great factors of human life. And these are summed up, and the idea of entirety is again expressed, the repetition giving it great emphasis, in the word ‘all-things.’

The name of the Lord Jesus: the outward expression of the sovereignty of Christ. Paul bids us do all things as His professed servants. It is practically the same as 2 Thessalonians 1:12, ‘that the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified in you.’

Giving thanks to God: as an accompaniment of their entire activity. A close coincidence in thought and expression with Colossians 2:7; 4:2, Ephesians 5:4, 20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Abiding gratitude is a constant mark of the thought of Paul.

To God, the Father: of Christ as of us. So closely related are these two aspects of the fatherhood of God, that we can not determine which of them held the first place in Paul’s thought here. Gratitude reminds us that God is our Father. And the foregoing mention of Christ reminds us that He is also the Father of Christ.

After, in 11, bidding his readers lay aside every form of sin as unworthy of those who have stripped off as an old garment their former self and have put on a new self which is daily growing in likeness to God, Paul now proceeds to urge them in detail to put on the virtues belonging to this new life. Thus a negative warning is followed by a description of positive Christian excellence. And rightly: for mere negations never satisfy. He prepares a way for this positive exhortation by pointing to the choice of God which has consecrated all Christians to His service and selected them

as objects of His special love. They must therefore act to each other with kindness and forbearance, even where injury has been received. As the crown of all virtues, giving to them unity and ripeness, there must be Christian love. And Paul prays that in their hearts may reign as an arbiter, pronouncing judgment in every doubtful point, the peace which Christ gives. He also desires that in the Church at Colossae the good word spoken by Christ may ever be abundantly re-echoed in words of instruction and in sacred song. This outline of Christian excellence, necessarily scanty, yet rich, is concluded by an exhortation touching everything in life, viz. that it be done by them as bearers of the one Name which is above every name; with thanks to God, presented through the Master whose name they bear.

The prominence here given to gentleness and forbearance prompted by the love of God and by the example of Christ is worthy of special attention. Mere uprightness, although absolutely essential, can never reveal the full beauty of the Christian character.

## SECTION 13

### *DIRECTIONS TO SPECIFIC CLASSES OF PERSONS*

#### CHAPTER 3:18-4:1

*Wives, be in subjection to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter towards them.*

*Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing in the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children, that they be not discouraged.*

*Servants, obey in all things your lords according to flesh, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever ye do, work from the heart as for the Lord and not for men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance. The Lord Christ, ye serve. For he that acts unjustly will receive the injustice he has done: and there is no respect of persons. Masters, the just thing and equality render to your servants, knowing that ye have a Master in heaven.*

After putting before his readers in 12 virtues appropriate to, and binding upon, all Christians alike, Paul remembers that many of his readers bear one to another special relations, involving special and mutual obligations. Of these mutual relations of certain classes of his readers, he now speaks: viz. of wives and husbands in Colossians 3:18, 19; of children and fathers, in Colossians 3:20, 21; of servants and masters, in Colossians 3:22-4:1. In each pair of relations, the subordinate member is put first as being under a more conspicuous obligation.

**Ver. 18-19.** Literally, Women, be in subjection to the men: for the Greek language has no distinctive terms corresponding to our words ‘wife, husband.’ But the reference to married persons is unmistakable.

Be-in-subjection: not worse in quality but lower in position. Same word in Luke 2:51; 1 Corinthians 15:28, the divine pattern of subordination; and in

Titus 2:5, 9; 1 Corinthians 14:34; Romans 13:1, 5, etc. It suggests arrangement and order.

Fitting in the Lord: such subordination being an appropriate acceptance on their part of the position given by Christ to women. A fuller account of this suitability is given in Ephesians 5:22-24.

Literally, as above, Men, love the women.

Bitter: contrasted in James 3:11 with 'sweet.' Cognate word in Revelation 8:11; 10:9, 10. Similar words in all languages denote acute unpleasantness of word, demeanour, or thought. The stronger party, having nothing to fear from the weaker, is frequently in danger of acting or speaking harshly. To refrain from such harshness, even towards those we love, is sometimes, amid the irritations of life, no easy task. But it is binding upon the Christian.

Col3.19

**Ver.** 20-21. Obey: literally, 'listen from below,' i.e. listen to, and obey, their commands. The wife must place herself in a lower position as compared with her husband: children must pay attention to their parents' bidding.

In all things; cannot include sinful commands: for even a parent's command cannot excuse sin, although it may mitigate the blame attaching to the child. Sometimes, but very seldom, a command evidently unwise is not binding on a child. But such cases are abnormal and do not come within the horizon of Paul's thought. The universality here asserted embraces the entire activity of the child in all ordinary cases. A sinful command lays no obligation upon wife, child, or servant. This exception reveals the imperfection of all verbal precepts. They must be interpreted, not always according to the letter, but in the light of the inborn moral sense. This is specially true of positive commands.

Well-pleasing: without any limitation as to the person pleased. (So Titus 2:9.) Obedience is beautiful in itself and therefore pleasant to God and man.

In the Lord: as in Colossians 3:18. The child's obedience to his parents must have Christ for its encompassing and permeating element. See further under Ephesians 6:1.

Then follows the corresponding obligation to 'the fathers.' These only are mentioned, as being the chief depositaries of parental authority.

Provoke: conduct calculated to arouse either action or emotion. In the former and in a good sense, in 2 Corinthians 9:2: here in the latter and in a bad sense. Paul forbids irritating commands or action. Close parallel with the injunction in Colossians 3:19. It notes in each case a frequent fault of the stronger party.

That they be not discouraged: motive for the foregoing. Irritating commands cause little ones to lose heart: and than this nothing is more fatal to their moral development.

Such are the duties involved in the tender relations of life. Wives must take a lower place, and children must listen to their parents' commands. And in each case this must be in the Lord, i.e. as part of their service of Christ. Such conduct befits the wife's actual position, and is beautiful in the child. It is, to both wives and children, the real place of honor. But they to whom this submission is due are themselves bound by corresponding obligations. They must pay the debt of love; and must refrain from making their superior strength a means of gratifying a vexatious spirit, and thus causing pain.

**Ver. 22.** From relations implying social equality, Paul now passes to a most important social relation implying inferiority; a relation already treated casually but forcibly in 1 Corinthians 7:21f.

Servants, or 'slaves': see under Romans 1:1.

Obeys: a duty binding alike on children and slaves.

In all things: same words and compass and limitation as in Colossians 3:20.

Lords: ordinary Greek term for 'masters.' Cp. Galatians 4:1; 1 Peter 3:6. It is the exact correlative to 'servants.' The one works at the bidding and for the profit of the other. See under Romans 1:1. This common use of the word 'Lord' gives definiteness to it when applied to Christ. He is the

Master whose word we obey and whose work we are doing. See especially Colossians 4:1.

Lords according to flesh: their domain being determined and limited by the outward bodily life. Same phrase in Romans 9:3, 5; 1 Corinthians 10:18. This limitation suggests that there is another department of the slave's life not controlled by an earthly master.

Not with, etc.: description, negative and positive, of the kind of service to be rendered.

Eye-service: found only here and Ephesians 6:6. It is work done only to please the master's eye. All such servants look upon themselves as 'men-pleasers.' To please men, is their aim: and therefore naturally their work is only such as falls within the range of human observation. Such merely external service is utterly unworthy of the Christian. For it brings him down to the level of those whose well-being depends on the smile of their fellows. A close parallel from the pen of Paul in Galatians 1:10.

Singleness of heart: exact opposite of 'eye-service,' which is a hollow deception and does not come from the 'heart.'

Fearing the Lord: i.e. Christ, 'the' One 'Master.' Where true reverence of the Master is, there is 'singleness of heart:' for His eye searches the heart. Where the all-seeing Master is forgotten, we seek as our highest good the favor of men: and our service sinks down to the external forms which alone lie open to the eye of man. Thus fear of the Supreme Lord saves even the slave from degrading bondage to man.

**Ver. 23.** Another exhortation, without connecting particle, expounding and supporting the exhortation of Colossians 3:22.

Whatever ye do, or 'be doing': emphatic assertion of a universal obligation.

From the heart: literally 'from' the 'soul,' i.e. the seat of life. Same phrase in Ephesians 6:6; Mark 12:30; Deuteronomy 6:5. That which we work with our hands must not be mechanical but must flow from the animating principle within.

As for the Lord: the worker's view of his own work, in contrast to a lower view of the same, 'as men-pleasers.' Our work must be done to please

‘the’ One ‘Master,’ and ‘not men,’ each of whom is but one among many. [The negative **οὐκ**, where we might expect **μή**, embeds in an exhortation a virtual assertion. ‘The work ye do is not for men.’]

**Ver. 24.** Knowing that, etc.: a favorite phrase of Paul, e.g. Romans 5:3; 1 Corinthians 15:58. It introduces a reason for the foregoing, based on known reality.

From the Lord ye shall receive: counterpart to ‘for the Lord.’

The inheritance: eternal life, looked upon as awaiting the slave in virtue of his filial relation to God. So Romans 8:17. And inasmuch as the blessings of eternal life are in proportion (2 Corinthians 5:10) to the faithfulness of his service of Christ, they are spoken of as ‘the recompense of the inheritance.’ This will come ‘from the’ one ‘Master.’ ‘Knowing’ this, and doing all our work for Him, we do it ‘from the heart.’

Ye-serve or ‘serve-ye’ the Lord Christ: either an emphatic reassertion of an objective truth underlying Colossians 3:22-24, or an exhortation to make this truth subjectively the principle of our own life. The former exposition tells the slave his privilege: the latter bids him claim it; cp. 1 Corinthians 7:23. As Colossians 3:24a is a statement of known fact, perhaps the former exposition is better: but the practical difference is slight.

**Ver. 25.** He that acts-unjustly; seems to refer specially to unjust masters, although it would include slaves. The same word in Philemon 18 refers to a slave’s dishonesty. But that Paul refers here to the master’s injustice, is made likely by the fact that this assertion of just recompense is given to support the foregoing assertion that Christian slaves are servants of Christ: ‘for he that, etc.’ That they are such, is more easily understood if they remember that even their master, at whose caprice they sometimes seem to be, ‘will’ himself ‘receive’ exact retribution for whatever ‘injustice he has done.’ A very close coincidence of thought and phrase in 2 Corinthians 5:10. This chief reference to the master is also supported by the word ‘respect-of persons:’ same word in same connection in Romans 2:11. For the master has very much more of the outward aspect which might seem to claim exemption from just retribution than has the slave. Moreover, a reference to masters is a convenient stepping stone to Colossians 4:1, where we learn that even slaves have claims upon their masters’ justice.

**Ver. 1.** The corresponding duties of ‘masters,’ already suggested in Colossians 3:25.

The just-thing; recognises rights between master and slave. Similarly, in Matthew 18:23-34 we have commercial transactions between a master and his slaves. The specific application to the slave of the essential principles of justice, Paul leaves to the master’s own sense of right.

The equality: a word frequent in Greek for even-handed justice, almost in the sense of our word ‘equity.’ And this is probably its meaning here. Not only ‘the just thing,’ viz. that which law demands, but ‘also equity,’ that even-handed dealing which can never be absolutely prescribed by law. It has been suggested that Paul here bids masters treat their slaves as equally with themselves members of the family of God: so Philemon 16. But this would need a more definite indication than we have here, whereas the exposition adopted above is suggested naturally; by the foregoing word ‘just.’ We may therefore accept it as the. more likely.

Knowing that, etc.: cp. Colossians 3:24. The action of the master, as of the slave, must rest upon the same basis of intelligent apprehension of objective reality. As in Colossians 3:22, so here, we have a contrast between ‘the’ many ‘lords’ and the One ‘Lord.’ This must influence both slaves and masters.

The longer space given to slaves than to masters is easily accounted for by their greater number in the Church. The fuller treatment of the case of slaves as compared with that of the relations mentioned in Colossians 3:18-21 is explained by the greater difficulty of the subject. Possibly it was suggested to Paul by the conversion and return of Onesimus, a runaway slave. But, apart from this, the immense importance of the bearing of Christianity upon the position and duty of slaves justifies abundantly this careful treatment of the subject.

It is easy to apply to the relation of employers and hired servants, domestic and commercial, Paul’s teaching about a relation which has now happily in this country passed away. For morality rests, not upon exact prescription, but upon broad principles. The worth of specific prescriptions is in the principles they involve. This gives to moral teaching a practical application far wider than the actual words used. Modern



masters and workpeople who think only of the money each can make from the other sin against both spirit and letter of the teaching of this section.

Paul has now dealt specifically with the more conspicuous and important social relations, and has shown how the Gospel bears upon each. Those in subordinate relations must accept their position as a part of their relation to Christ; as must those who occupy superior positions. Even slaves must remember that their hard lot is in a real sense sacred. In that lot they are serving, not men, but Christ. Moreover, their service is not vain. As recompense, they will receive in the kingdom of God the inheritance which belongs to His sons. Paul bids them live up to this glorious position, to look upon themselves as servants of Christ, and to render to Him with joyful hearts such service as His piercing eye will approve. On the other hand, masters must remember that they owe to their slaves not merely what the law demands but even-handed fairness.

## SECTION 14

### SUNDRY GENERAL DIRECTIONS

#### CHAPTER 4:2-6

*Continually devote yourselves to prayer; watching therein with thanksgiving; at the same time praying also about us, that God may open to us a door of the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, because of which also I am bound; in order that I may make it manifest, as I must needs speak.*

*Walk in wisdom towards those outside, buying up the opportunity.*

*Let your word be always with grace, seasoned with salt, to know how ye must needs answer each one.*

Continuously-devote-yourselfes to prayer, or ‘persevere in prayer’: same words and sense in Romans 12:12; Acts 1:14. They suggest a continuance which requires effort.

Watching: same word in 1 Corinthians 16:13. It is the opposite of sleep: Matthew 26:40; 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 10. In our persistent prayers, our spiritual faculties must be in active exercise. We must, while we pray, be keenly alive to our own needs and dangers and to the promises of God.

With (or ‘in’) thanksgiving: appropriate accompaniment, or surrounding element, of these watchful prayers. Close coincidence with Colossians 3:17, 15; 2:7. Ceaseless prayer combined with ceaseless praise was the atmosphere of Paul’s spiritual life.

**Ver.** 3-4. Beside prayer in general, to which in Colossians 4:2 Paul exhorts, he now places specific prayer for himself and his companions: ‘at the same time praying also about us.’ He includes doubtless Timothy and other companions who share Paul’s toil and need.

That God may open, etc.: precise object for which Paul would have his readers pray.

A door of the word: a door for the Gospel to go through, i.e. an opportunity of preaching it. Cp. Acts 14:27. Such opportunity has already been given to Paul at Ephesus and Corinth: 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12, He desires it now. His request implies that the events of life, on which such opportunities depend, are under the control of 'God.'

To speak, etc.: purpose of the desired opportunity. It expounds the 'door of the word.'

The mystery of Christ: as in Ephesians 3:4; cp. Colossians 1:27; 2:2. It is the secret which pertains to Christ, and lies hidden in Him, a secret known only to those to whom God reveals it. That this secret has been committed to Paul and that therefore he is able to 'speak the mystery of Christ,' makes him eager for an opportunity of doing so.

Because of which I am also bound, or 'lie bound': the hostility of the Jews, which caused his arrest. having been aroused by his faithful proclamation of salvation for all men. Paul remembers the price he has paid for the privilege of preaching the Gospel.

Make-manifest: set publicly and conspicuously before the eyes of men: see under Romans 1:19. It is the correlative of 'mystery:' Colossians 1:26; Romans 16:25. Another slightly different correlative is 'reveal:' Ephesians 3:5; Romans 16:25. Paul desired so 'to speak' as to set before all men the Gospel in which lies hidden, ready to be revealed to those who receive the word in faith, the great secrets which to know is eternal life. For this end he desires 'that God may open for him a door of the word.'

As I must needs speak: not obligation but absolute necessity. Same word in same sense in Colossians 4:6, and in Ephesians 6:20; Romans 1:27; 8:26; 1 Corinthians 8:2. The needs of the world and the grandeur of the Gospel were to Paul an imperative necessity leaving him no choice but compelling him as if by main force to preach the word wherever he could and at all cost. This felt necessity forces from him now this cry for the help of his readers' prayers.

Notice here a marked characteristic of Paul, viz. constant desire for the prayers of Christians. So Romans 15:30; 2 Corinthians 1:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Ephesians 6:19. This desire is the strongest possible proof of his confidence in the power of prayer.

The open door for which Paul begs his readers to pray must have included the opening of his prison door: for in prison he could not preach the Gospel as the world's need demanded. But the progress of the Gospel, not personal liberty, was the real object of his desire. Indeed, personal liberty was to him of value chiefly as a means of preaching the word.

**Ver. 5.** Preaching the word reminds Paul of those outside the Church, and of the influence upon them of everything done by members of the Church.

In wisdom: as in Colossians 1:28; 3:16.

Those outside: as in 1 Corinthians 5:12. In our various relations to these, we must choose our steps in the light of knowledge of the eternal realities.

The opportunity or 'season': the fit time for action: same word in Galatians 4:10; 6:9, 10. Paul thinks either of life as an opportunity of advancing the Kingdom of God, or of any opportunity which may from time to time arise. Since life is made up of opportunities, and from these derives its worth, the practical difference between these expositions is hardly perceptible.

Buy-up: same word as 'redeem' in Galatians 3:13; 4:5. By using well an opportunity we make it our abiding enrichment: and the effort required in doing so is the price paid for the enrichment. The greatness and value of the possibilities of life, the opportunities it affords for influencing the unsaved, and the difficulty of seizing them as they pass, demand that every step be taken with wisdom.

This verse closely resembles Ephesians 5:15, 16.

**Ver. 6.** Your word: especially to 'those outside,' as is suggested by the end of the verse.

With grace: same words as in Colossians 3:16. But here apparently we have the frequent classic sense of 'gracefulness.' Same word in this sense in Ecclesiastes 10:12, 'The words of a wise man's mouth are grace;' and Psalm 45:2, 'Grace is poured in thy lips.' The discourse of Christians should ever be clothed with moral attractiveness. (The common associations of the word 'grace' remind us that this attractiveness is by the undeserved favor of God.)

Seasoned, i.e. made pleasant to the taste, with salt: same words together in Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34. To the idea of attractiveness to the eye suggested by the word 'grace,' these words add that of piquancy to the intellectual taste.

To know how, etc.: further account of the discourse Paul desires in his readers.

To answer each one: either objecting, or asking information.

Must needs answer: to Paul's thought a good answer is an absolute necessity. He desires his readers 'to know how' to give an answer which in 'each' case will meet this necessity. The same necessity rests upon all who advocate the Gospel among those who professedly reject it. Cp. 1 Peter 3:15.

DIVISION 4 shows how the doctrinal teaching of Christ bears on morals and quickens into beauty even the common and little things of life. Christ requires from His servants a complete separation from all evil, and bids them put on a new life marked especially by kindness and forbearance. The Gospel, which places all men on one spiritual level as children of God, does not obliterate social distinctions; but makes each of them an opportunity of serving Christ. Even the great Apostle begs for his readers' prayers that he may have opportunity to speak the word as it needs to be spoken. And he remembers that in their words to others they need wisdom and the ornament of a Christian spirit

## DIVISION V

### PERSONAL MATTERS

#### CHAPTER 4:7-18

### SECTION 15

#### *TYCHICUS AND ONESIMUS*

#### CHAPTER 4:7-9

*All the matters referring to me, Tychicus will make known to you, a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord; whom I have sent to you for this very thing, that ye may know the things about us and that he may encourage your hearts, with Onesimus our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. All the things here, they will make known to you.*

**Ver. 7.** The matters referring to me: same words in same sense in Philippians 1:12. All matters personal to Paul, Tychicus will tell the Colossian Christians. It is therefore needless for Paul to say more about his condition or surroundings.

Minister: see under Romans 12:8. The same word denotes the office of a ‘deacon’ in Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8, 12; and possibly Romans 16:1. But its various uses make it unlikely that standing here alone it has this technical sense. This would require further specification, as in Romans 16:1. Nor is it probable that the word alone would bear the sense of ‘minister of the Gospel’ or ‘of Christ;’ as in Colossians 1:7, 23, 25. It is easiest to suppose that ‘Tychicus’ was Paul’s minister or assistant; according to the simplest meaning of the word, e.g. Matthew 20:26; 23:11, and the corresponding verb in Philemon 13; Romans 15:25; Hebrews 6:10. In this sense Mark was ‘useful’ to Paul ‘for ministry’: 2 Timothy 4:11.

That Tychicus belonged to a band of helpers surrounding Paul, is made likely by the fact that Paul sent him, as here stated, to Colossae, also (Ephesians 6:22; 2 Timothy 4:12) to Ephesus twice; and had thoughts of sending him (Titus 3:12) on another mission. An important coincidence with all this occurs in Acts 20:4, where Tychicus is one of a small band of companions travelling with Paul. In this last passage he is said to be a native of Asia, of which Roman province Ephesus was the capital: another important coincidence. The above references are our only sources of information about Tychicus. But he was 'a beloved brother and trustworthy helper.' While speaking of him thus, Paul remembers that both himself and Tychicus are servants of one divine Master; and therefore calls him a 'fellow-servant:' same word in Colossians 1:7. Similar transition of thought in Philippians 2:22.

In the Lord: embracing probably the entire description of Tychicus: same words in Philippians 1:14; Ephesians 4:1; 6:21. The one Master was the surrounding element of the whole brotherhood, of the assistance to Paul, and of the joint service.

**Ver. 8.** Whom I have sent: so Paul frequently sent to various Churches his trusted helpers: 1 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Corinthians 9:3; Philippians 2:19, 23, 25, 28; 1 Thessalonians 3:2, 5. In this mission, the matters referring to himself were Paul's first thought: Colossians 4:8. But, remembering that others share his perils and toils and the interest and affection of the Christians at Colossae, he passes from the singular in Colossians 4:7, 'touching me,' to the plural here: 'that ye may know the things concerning us.'

Encourage your hearts: as in Colossians 2:2. Thus Tychicus had a double errand, to take information about Paul and his companions and to cheer and stimulate the Colossian Christians.

**Ver. 9.** Onesimus: only here and Philemon 10. This passing mention of him receives light from, and casts light upon, the Epistle to Philemon. See *Intro. v.*

Faithful or 'trustworthy': specially suitable as a commendation of a runaway slave.

One of you; implies that in some way Onesimus came from Colossae, either as a native or as a former inhabitant.

All the things here; marks the completion of the matter opened by similar words at the beginning of Colossians 4:7.

The mention of Tychicus in Colossians 4:7 and of Onesimus in Colossians 4:9 links this Epistle closely with those to the Ephesians and to Philemon. The references to Tychicus here and in Ephesians 6:22 are valuable comments on the character of a good man about whom we know very little. Thus this casual insertion of these two names both helps us to reproduce in thought the surroundings of the Apostle, and affords some confirmation of the genuineness of the Epistles which bear his name and of the historic truthfulness of the Book of Acts.



## SECTION 16

### SUNDRY GREETINGS

#### CHAPTER 4:10-18

*There greets you Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner; and Mark the cousin of Barnabas, about whom ye have received commands, if he come to you receive him; and Jesus who is called Justus. Of those who are of the circumcision, these only are fellow-workers for the kingdom of God, men who have become a help to me.*

*There greets you Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, always wrestling on your behalf in his prayers, that ye may stand mature and fully assured in every will of God. For I bear him witness that he has much labor on behalf of you and of those in Laodicea and those in Hierapolis.*

*There greets you Luke, the beloved physician; and Demas.*

*Greet ye the brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the Church in their house. And when the letter has been read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that ye read the letter from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.*

*The greeting of me Paul by my own hand Remember my bonds. Grace be with you.*

**Ver.** 10-11a. Aristarchus: another companion of Paul, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. He was with Paul in the tumult at Ephesus, and on the return journey from Corinth through Macedonia to Jerusalem, and on his voyage as prisoner to Rome: Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2. He sends a greeting to Philemon: Philemon 24. He is here called a ‘fellow-prisoner,’ a title given in Philemon 23 to Epaphras, while Aristarchus is called only a

fellow-worker. Similarly in Romans 16:7 two kinsmen of Paul are called his fellow-prisoners. The word thus used means accurately a prisoner of war. (Cp. Philippians 2:25, 'fellow-worker and fellow-soldier.') Its precise significance here would be explained by Tychicus: but it is unknown to us. The transference of the title from Aristarchus to Epaphras is specially puzzling, the more so as the letters seem to have been written at the same time. Whether these men voluntarily shared in turn the discomfort of Paul's prison, or through loyalty to him were themselves actually imprisoned, we have no means of knowing. But in any case this term is a title of high honor. Little did these faithful friends of Paul dream that their imprisonment, of whatever kind it was, would be to them on the imperishable page of Holy Scripture a title of honor as wide as the world and more lasting than time. This cursory mention of Aristarchus reminds us of the great multitude, not thus recorded, whose record is with God.

Mark: Philemon 24: another link connecting the Epistles. Evidently the same man as in 2 Timothy 4:1, where he has a commendation similar to that in Colossians 4:11. There is no reason to doubt that he was the man referred to by Peter (1 Peter 5:13) as 'Mark, my son.' Apparently he was 'John, surnamed Mark' in Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37, who in 15:39 is called, as here, simply 'Mark.' The mother of this last had a house at Jerusalem to which Peter went when released from prison Acts 12:12. And the Mark here mentioned was (Colossians 4:11) a joy to Paul. This identification is confirmed by the explanation it affords of Barnabas' strong wish to keep him as his companion after he had once proved faithless: Acts 15:37-39. For in that case they were cousins. And the references to Mark here and in 2 Timothy 4:11 are pleasant proofs how completely the timid one had regained the friendship and approval of Paul.

Eusebius ('Church History' bk. ii. 15) says that the Mark to whom Peter refers was the author of the Second Gospel; and (bk. iii. 39) quotes Papias, a writer of the second century, to the same effect, Similarly Irenaeus (bk. iii. 10. 6) quotes the beginning and end of the Second Gospel as written by 'Mark, the interpreter and follower of Peter.' Eusebius says also (bk. ii. 16) that he founded the Church at Alexandria.

Cousin: the constant sense, except in very late Greek where it has the sense of 'nephew,' of the common Greek word here used. So in Numbers

36:11 (LXX.) it is used as a rendering of 'their uncle's sons.' And Eusebius ('Ch. Hist.' iii. 11) speaks of Simeon, second bishop of Jerusalem, as said to be 'cousin' of Christ, on the ground that his father Clopas was brother to Joseph.

Barnabas: the last mention in the N.T. of this valued friend of Paul.

About whom: i.e. Mark, the chief person in Paul's thought now.

Received commands: already conveyed, as is implied in the past tense. Whether by messenger, or by a lost letter, we do not know. The plural number, 'commands,' in view of the frequent rise of the word in the singular, e.g. Ephesians 6:2; Romans 7:8-13, suggests that Paul's will was conveyed in more ways than one. Notice the apostolic authority implied in this word, The tenour of these commands is evidently given in the words following.

If he come to you; suggests that Mark had been sent on a mission, and that Paul was uncertain whether in discharging it he would visit Colossae. Very similar injunction in 1 Corinthians 16:10, 'if Timothy come, see that', etc.

Receive him, welcome him in whatever aspect he presents himself, whether as Paul's delegate or simply as a brother Christian. Same word in same sense in 2 Corinthians 7:15; 11:16; Galatians 4:14.

Jesus: the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, and used for the ancient leader in the LXX. constantly, and in Acts 7:45; Hebrews 4:8. The same name is also found in the genealogy of Christ: Luke 3:29. Its use here as a designation of an obscure Jewish Christian proves that the Eternal Son bore on earth, not merely a human name, but a name given to ordinary men.

Justis: a Latin name meaning 'fit' or 'righteous,' and common as a Jewish surname. It is the name given by Eusebius ('Ch. Hist.' iii. 35) to the third bishop of Jerusalem, a Jew. Same name in Acts 1:23, undoubtedly of a Jew; and in Colossians 18:7 of a proselyte.

**Ver.** 11b. The words 'who are of' the 'circumcision' are joined by A.V. and R.V. to the foregoing. This punctuation makes the words following an absolute assertion, and excludes even Epaphras from the number of Paul's helpers. But this is plainly contradicted by Colossians 4:12 and Colossians

1:7. The words above must therefore be joined to those following, as nominative absolute, limiting the assertion therein contained. Evidently, Paul means that these three men were Jews, and were the only Jews who by joining with him in work for the Kingdom of God, had been a comfort to him. This meaning is best reproduced by rendering 'Of those who are of' the 'circumcision, these only, etc.'

Of the circumcision: same phrase in Romans 4:12; Galatians 2:12; Titus 1:10; Acts 10:45; 11:2. It describes their origin by pointing to the visible sign of the Covenant which of old God made with their race.

These only; reminds us of the wide-spread hostility of the Jews to Paul. Cp. Titus 1:10.

Fellow-workers: as in Philippians 2:25; 4:3: cp. 2 Corinthians 8:23, "fellow-worker" for you.' They labored together each with each and all with Paul, 'for' the advancement of 'the Kingdom of God;' i.e. for the eternal kingdom, over which God will reign for ever, and of which His servants, rescued from the grave to die no more, will be citizens, every citizen sharing its glory and blessedness. For that kingdom Paul and his companions toiled, by drawing men to Christ and thus making them even on earth citizens of this heavenly kingdom, and by teaching each citizen to labor for the same object. They were thus 'fellow-workers,' co-operating harmoniously. Since the work of God needs the co-operation of many workers, a chief Christian excellence is that spirit of harmony which enables one to work well with others. It is the willing subordination of the individual to the general good. Absence of this spirit of brotherhood has frequently hindered the usefulness of able men.

Men who, etc.: a larger class to which these three, and of Jews these 'only,' belonged; viz. those 'who were,' or 'became, a comfort' or encouragement to Paul.

Such were Paul's three Jewish friends at Rome: Aristarchus from Thessalonica, in some way a sharer of his imprisonment; Mark from Jerusalem, himself once a deserter and a cause of contention between Paul and his old friend Barnabas, but now a valued helper; and a brother unknown to us but bearing the sacred name. All these joined with Paul in his toil for the Kingdom of God; and each was to the Apostle, amid the

hardships of that toil, a joy in sorrow and a stimulus to exertion. Mark was soon to leave him, and would possibly visit Colossae. But about him Paul had already sent directions that he receive a worthy welcome.

**Ver. 12.** Another greeting, from Epaphras, the founder of the Church at Colossae: see under Colossians 1:7.

Who is one of you: same words and sense as in Colossians 4:9. Like Onesimus, Epaphras came from Colossae either as a native or as a former inhabitant.

Servant of Jesus Christ: a title of highest honor, though shared by all Christians. For the faithfulness of our service of Christ is the measure of our spiritual stature.

Always, etc.: further description of Epaphras.

Wrestling: same word as 'contend' in Colossians 1:29.

Wrestle in prayers: same words in Romans 15:30. The effort of Epaphras' prayers was like the intense effort of a Greek athlete contending for a prize. The appropriateness of this phrase is felt by all to whom prayer is a reality. And to Epaphras this intense effort was ceaseless: 'always wrestling.' He thus exemplified the exhortation in Colossians 4:2.

Stand: maintain our position and erectness in spite of enemies or burdens threatening to drive us back or crush us. So Ephesians 6:1, 13, 14; Romans 5:2; 11:20, etc. That the Colossian Christians might thus maintain their position in spite of the snares of false doctrine and the hostility of open enemies, was the definite purpose of the earnest prayers of Epaphras.

Mature or 'full grown': as in 2 Corinthians 2:6, where see note.

Fully-assured: same word and sense as in Romans 4:21; 14:5. A cognate word in Colossians 2:2; Hebrews 6:11; 10:22. While praying that the Christians at Colossae may firmly hold their own, Epaphras remembered that only full-grown men in Christ can do this, and that of this Christian maturity assured faith in Christ is an essential condition.

In every will of God: in everything God desires us to do and to be, this looked upon as the spiritual locality of Christian firmness, maturity, and confidence. Epaphras prayed that his converts might know without doubt

whatever God would have them do and be, that every element of His will might be realized in their spiritual growth, and that thus they might maintain their spiritual position.

**Ver. 13.** Confirmation of the foregoing by Paul's direct testimony.

Much labor; confirms and strengthens the most conspicuous point in Colossians 4:12, viz. that the prayers of Epaphras involved intense effort.

Laodicea and Hierapolis: other cities of the valley of the Lycus: see Introd. iv. This statement suggests that in these cities also the Gospel was first preached by Epaphras. And the nearness of the cities, and the main road passing through all three, would make it easy to carry the good news of salvation from one to the others.

**Ver. 14.** A third greeting.

Luke: mentioned by name only here, and Philemon 24 where he and 'Demas' are called Paul's fellow-workers, and 2 Timothy 4:11. Probably he wrote the Third Gospel: see my 'Corinthians' p. 493. Now Colossians 4:11 implies that he was a Gentile: Perhaps he was the only Gentile N.T. writer. Notice that, of the four Evangelists, Mark and Luke were with Paul at Rome. Only here do we learn that Luke was a 'physician.' Possibly this term was added merely for definiteness, or more likely in remembrance of medical help kindly rendered by Luke to Paul. Luke was with Paul on his second and third missionary journeys and on his voyage to Rome, as we learn from the first person 'we' and 'us' in Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; Acts 27:1-28:16. That they are together now at Rome, and again (2 Timothy 4:11) during Paul's second imprisonment there, is a coincidence worthy of note. Luke seems to have been his almost inseparable companion. Hence the affection expressed here: 'Luke, the physician, the beloved one.'

The absence of any commendation of 'Demas' here is an unfortunate, though perhaps undesigned, coincidence with his later desertion of Paul recorded in 2 Timothy 4:10. There was nothing to move Paul to say anything about him, even when speaking in warm terms of 'Luke.' But in Philemon 24 he is counted, with Mark, Aristarchus, Luke, among Paul's fellow-workers.

**Ver. 15.** After three greetings to the Christians at Colossae, now follows a greeting to a neighboring Church.

Laodicea: the nearer of the two other Churches for which (Colossians 4:13) Epaphras prayed so earnestly.

Nymphas: evidently a member of the Church at Laodicea. For, had he been at Colossae, in the Church to which this letter was sent, this greeting to him could hardly have been put after that to brethren twelve miles away. Paul's reason for singling him out of the Church at Laodicea, in this special way, is probably to be found in the words following.

The Church in their house: same words in Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19, where see notes. Cp. Philemon 2. That 'Nymphas' opened his 'house' for worship, accounts for his special mention here.

The Sinai. Alex., and Ephraim copies read 'in their house.' So R.V. text. The Vatican MS. reads 'her house.' So R.V. margin. Some later uncials and most cursives read 'his house.' The first reading has best documentary support. If genuine, it might easily have been altered by a copyist who could not understand a plural pronoun after the one name 'Nymphas.' And, if so, the substituted pronoun might be of either gender: for the Greek name may be either masculine 'Nymphas,' or feminine 'Nympha.' Thus the better attested reading 'their' would account for both the others. We may therefore accept it as the more likely. Paul wrote 'their house' probably because in entertaining the Church others, perhaps his wife and family, were associated with Nymphas. So was Prisca with Aquila: Romans 16:5.

**Ver. 16.** This injunction suggests that the same errors were prevalent both at Colossae and Laodicea.

The Epistle: that now concluding, as in Romans 16:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:27.

That from Laodicea: not written from Laodicea. For it was to be read by the Christians at Colossae as well as by others: 'also ye read.' And these others must have been the Christians at Laodicea. It could only be a letter to the Church there; to be sent 'from Laodicea' and read at Colossae. And, if so, this injunction suggests very strongly that it was written by Paul.

Doubtless the letter was to be left at Laodicea by Tychicus as he passed through on his way to Colossae; and if so it would be at Laodicea, when this letter reached Colossae. Paul bids that each letter be sent to, and read in, the other of the two Churches.

What was this letter of Paul to the Church at Laodicea? Two suppositions are possible. It may have been lost; sharing the fate which, under 1 Corinthians 5:9, we saw reason to believe had overtaken an epistle to the Corinthian Church. If we had no epistle meeting the conditions of the case, we might accept this suggestion with some confidence. But another explanation is at hand. We shall see, under Ephesians 1:1, that the Epistle to the Ephesians, although sent expressly to the Church at Ephesus, the metropolis of the Roman province of Asia which included Laodicea and Colossae, was probably designed also for other Churches in the same province. If so, it is quite conceivable that Paul gave orders to Tychicus to leave at Laodicea, for the Church there, a copy of the Epistle to the Ephesians. And this copy would be the letter 'from Laodicea' which Paul wished the Colossians to 'read.' This wish we can well understand. For the two Epistles, though closely related in thought and phraseology, are yet quite distinct. Each supports the other. The letter to Ephesus deals chiefly with the Church: that to Colossae expounds the dignity and work of Christ, and rebuts certain special errors. This suggestion is so free from objection, and meets so well all the facts of the case, that with our scanty information we may accept it as probable. It has also an advantage over the former suggestion in not requiring us to believe that Paul wrote at the same time and sent by the same messenger to the same province four epistles.

**Ver. 17.** Archippus: mentioned elsewhere only Philemon 2, where see note. The word 'say-ye' suggests that he was close at hand to hear what was said; and was therefore probably a member of the Church at Colossae. Indeed it is most unlikely that a warning to a member of another Church would be thus sent. And this agrees with his apparent relation to Philemon, who also seems to have been a Colossian. That this word to Archippus is put after a direction about Laodicea, is very small presumption that he was a Laodicean. For, apart from locality, Paul may have thought fit to reserve this warning to be the last of his injunctions. That Archippus is called in Philemon 2 a fellow-soldier of Paul, suggests



that he had shared with the Apostle the peril of Christian work. And this agrees with the work in the Lord referred to here.

The ministry which thou hast received; may be the office of a deacon, as in Romans 12:7, where it is distinguished from prophecy and teaching but is joined with them as requiring each a special gift. Or, it may have been some other permanent position in the Church, as when Paul in Colossians 1:23 calls himself a minister of the Gospel. Or, some temporary work committed by the Church to Archippus, like ‘the ministry’ fulfilled’ by Paul and Barnabas (Acts 12:25) when they took a contribution in money from Antioch to Jerusalem. Between these alternatives we have nothing to guide us. This warning is no presumption of unfaithfulness on the part of Archippus. For it may be that his work was specially important, or had been lately entrusted to him. Indeed this last is rather suggested by the words ‘which thou hast received.’ It is remarkable that this warning was sent to Archippus through the Church as a whole: ‘say ye to Archippus.’ Perhaps Paul thought thus to inspire in him a sense of responsibility to the whole Church.

In the Lord: as in Colossians 4:7; Philippians 2:29, etc. This work for the Church was a part of his service of Christ.

Fulfil it: as in Acts 12:25: ‘fill up by actual and faithful service the outline of work sketched out by this Commission.’

**Ver.** 18. The greeting by the hand of me, Paul: word for word as in 1 Corinthians 16:21; 2 Thessalonians 3:17. At this point the chained hand of the prisoner takes the pen from the friend who was writing for him, whose name probably we should know, and adds as a mark of genuineness the few words which follow. And the chained hand bids us ‘remember the bonds’ of him who writes. This reference to himself claims for the warnings he now sends the loving and grateful respect due to the prisoner in the Lord.

Grace: the undeserved favor of God through Christ. Paul desires that this divine smile be his readers’ companion: be ‘with you.’

The personal details of DIVISION 5 link the doctrinal and practical teaching of the Epistle with the actual life of Paul. They remind us that the Gospel is not mere abstract truth but touches the everyday life of actual

men. This historic setting of the Gospel, which we find in many casual notices in Paul's Epistles and in the narratives of the Book of Acts, by affording matter for historical criticism, furnishes proof of the historic truth of the statements on which the Gospel rests. It also helps us, by reproducing the surroundings and the inner and outer life of the Apostle, to understand and better appreciate the thought embodied in the doctrinal parts of his Epistles. Time spent in bringing together, and endeavoring to interpret, these scanty notices will bear abundant fruit in a clearer conception of his inner thought and of the Gospel which permeated and molded and ennobled his entire inner and outer life

### **THE ERRORS AT COLOSSAE**

Since this Epistle was professedly (Colossians 2:4) written to guard the readers against error, it can be fully understood only by reproducing in some measure the errors it was designed to counteract. To do this, is no easy task. For the errors combated are not formally stated. Paul endeavors to meet them not so much by direct disproof as by asserting and enforcing positive and contrary truth. This method leaves us in considerable doubt about the nature of the errors refuted. But it has the immense advantage of making exact knowledge of them a matter of secondary importance. For we can understand and appreciate the positive teaching of the Epistle, even while somewhat uncertain about the precise nature of the specific errors against which this positive teaching was adduced. At the same time whatever knowledge we can gain about the error combated will shed light upon the argument and thought of the Apostle. We will therefore gather together all the indications the Epistle affords of the nature of these errors; and then compare them with similar teaching in the rest of the New Testament and in other early literature.

Our thoughts go back at once to another letter written by Paul to counteract serious and definite error, the Epistle to the Galatians. The points of comparison and contrast in the two Epistles will help us to understand, after our study in a previous volume of the errors in Galatia, those with which Paul is now dealing.

We notice at once the entirely different tone of the two Epistles. The news from Galatia was altogether bad. Paul's one thought about the Christians there was wonder at their early desertion of the truth. But the news about Colossae evokes gratitude to God. And with this gratitude no sorrow is mingled. This does not prove that the errors at Colossae were in themselves less deadly than those in Galatia. But it proves clearly that the peril was not so near. In Galatia the defection was (Galatians 1:6) already going on: in Colossae Paul hopes to ward off what at present is only a danger. Moreover the stronger language of the earlier letter may have been prompted by Paul's closer relation to the Churches addressed, and to the fact that his authority as an Apostle had been directly attacked by the false teachers. On the other hand whereas the Churches of Galatia had been founded by Paul himself and the news of their defection reached him years afterwards, the news of the danger among the Colossians was brought by the man who first told him the story of their conversion. This would naturally soften the language of the Epistle before us.

Both in Galatia and at Colossae one element of error was observance of the sacred seasons of the Law of Moses: Galatians 4:10; Colossians 2:16. With this were associated at Colossae, and doubtless in Galatia, restrictions of food. And at Colossae as at Rome (Romans 14:3) some were ready to 'judge' others according as they observed or neglected these restrictions. The false teachers in Galatia strenuously asserted the abiding obligation of circumcision: Galatians 5:3; 6:12. And the references to circumcision in Colossians 2:11; leave little or no doubt that the rite was insisted upon by the false teachers at Colossae. Here then we have an element common to the two cases, viz. the continued validity of the ancient law. In other words, both errors were of Jewish origin. But the whole tone of both Epistles proves that the false teachers were members of the Church. Jews who rejected Christ would have no common ground of approach to the Gentile Christians of Asia Minor. We must therefore suppose that in both cases the false teachers were Jewish converts who maintained that all Christians were bound to keep the whole Law of Moses. Possibly, the false teachers here referred to were not members of the Church at Colossae but Jewish Christians moving about in Asia Minor and exerting an evil influence.

Amid these errors already familiar to us there appears at Colossae, as disproved by Paul, other teaching of which we find no trace in the Epistle to the Galatians.

Except to Nazarites and priests ministering at the altar, the Law of Moses laid no restrictions on drink. But in Colossians 2:16 we find men who made both eating and drinking a standard of judgment about their fellow-Christians. Similar persons seem to be referred to in Romans 14:21. The words of the false teachers quoted in Colossians 2:21 prove that these prohibitions of food and drink were very stringent. And from Colossians 2:22 we learn that they were of merely human origin. All this proves that the teachers in question added to the Divinely commanded restrictions of the Law of Moses other restrictions of their own. With the refusal to eat certain kinds of food stands in close connection the general description in Colossians 2:23 of such needless and useless abstinence as 'hard treatment' of 'the body.' We may safely say that in the error feared at Colossae an ascetic element, going far beyond the Mosaic prohibitions, occupied a conspicuous place.

It is also worthy of note that, whereas to the Galatians Paul speaks of the advocates of circumcision as seeking to be justified by works of law and rebuts their error by proclaiming justification through a faith like that of Abraham, his disproof of the errors at Colossae makes no reference to justification, but is prefaced by a profound exposition of the dignity of the Son of God and of His relation to the created universe, to the Church, and to the work of salvation. This different method of reply suggests that the error at Colossae differed from that in Galatia as being specially derogatory to the unique dignity of the Son of God as the Creator and Ruler of the universe and as the one sufficient Savior of men. We notice also that the restrictions referred to in Colossians 2:21 are over turned by reference to the original purpose of the food needlessly forbidden.

Other elements are easily detected. With asceticism is ever associated professed 'humility.' And in the warnings to the Church at Colossae 'worship of the angels' is a marked feature. This accounts probably for the mention in Colossians 1:16 of the different ranks of angels as created by the Son, and in Colossians 2:15 as being led in triumph by Him. Now angels have their place of honor in the Old Testament; and are mentioned

by Paul and by Christ. But nothing in the Bible affords ground for offering them worship. Such worship, therefore implies fuller information: and this could be obtained only by visions of the unseen world and its mysterious and glorious inhabitants. We therefore are not surprised to find that the false teacher claimed to have had such visions, and pretended (Colossians 2:18) to 'investigate what he had seen.'

Such were some of the outward forms of the religion practiced by the teachers in question. We may conceive them asserting the abiding validity of the Law of Moses, going beyond its restrictions by ascetic prohibitions of merely human origin which refused to the body its rightful nourishment, performing a ritual of angel-worship, and doing all this on the ground of supposed revelations of the unseen world.

Under these outward forms of religion lay other elements. The worshippers claimed to be philosophers. Their philosophy must have been, like that of Greece, an attempt to reach the realities underlying the phenomena around. That the attempt was complete failure, Paul declares by calling their philosophy 'empty error.' Like the prohibitions of food and drink, this teaching consisted, as did much ancient philosophy, of unproved assertions, true or false, passed on from one to another. It had therefore for its source and standard only 'the tradition of men.' And since these purely human additions to the Divine revelations of the Old Testament could not rise above their source, they were shaped by the 'rudiments of' teaching common to 'the' whole 'world.' It cannot be doubted that this theoretical teaching was the foundation both of the ascetic restriction of food and drink and of the worship of angels. For philosophy without visible embodiment would have little attraction for the comparatively uneducated Christians at Colossae; and we are told by Paul that self-imposed worship and neglect of the body had 'repute of wisdom.'

The absence throughout the Epistle of any mention of righteousness or justification—a very marked contrast to the Epistle to the Galatians—suggests that these prohibitions of certain kinds of food, this worship of angels, and philosophy, were not proposed as a means of obtaining the favor of God. And that they were proposed as a means of attaining a higher Christian life, is suggested by Paul's frequently

expressed desire that his readers attain true knowledge and wisdom, and by his assertion that all such knowledge dwells in Christ, and that 'in Him' His people 'are complete:' Colossians 1:9, 28; 2:2, 3; 3:10, 16; 4:5. We may conceive these teachers admitting that confessed faith in Christ is the one means of obtaining the favor of God, and yet professing a deeper philosophy and practicing a stricter regimen of life and additional modes of worship as means of attaining a spiritual elevation beyond that of the Church in general. In other words, the teaching which Paul opposes was a counsel of perfection for a select few.

Traces of similar error, further developed, are found in Paul's later Epistles. In another letter to the province of Asia (1 Timothy 4:3) we notice a prohibition of certain kinds of food, a prohibition set aside by a development of the argument in Colossians 2:21. With this is coupled prohibition of marriage: and the whole is said to be a teaching of demons. Of empty Jewish error under the guise of philosophy, we find abundant traces in the Pastoral Epistles; and of the disputes to which naturally it gave rise. So, in Titus 1:14, We have 'Jewish myths and commands of men.' And that these commands were connected with needless prohibitions, probably of food, we learn from Titus 1:15: 'All things are pure to the pure; but to the polluted and unbelieving nothing is pure.' In 1 Timothy 1:4, 8 we read of 'myths and endless genealogies' connected with unlawful use of the Law. Other similar references in 1 Timothy 6:4, 2 Timothy 2:23, Titus 3:9. The darker description in these Epistles as compared with that to the Colossians suggests that during the interval the evil seed had taken root and born hurtful fruit.

From all this we infer that at Colossae were professed Christians who not only taught the abiding validity of the Law but added to it further prohibitions of merely human origin, professing thus to point out a way to loftier purity; that with this ascetic element was associated theoretical teaching vainly attempting to explain the phenomena around, teaching based upon supposed visions of the unseen world; that the would-be philosophers practiced a ritual in honor of the heavenly beings whom they professed to have seen; and that all this was prompted, not by humility, as was pretended, but by an inflated self-estimate which was in reality a form of self-indulgence. The argument of the Epistle before us proves plainly

that this teaching was derogatory to the unique dignity of Christ and inconsistent with the full salvation to be obtained by union with Him.

## THE Gnostics

The above-noted scanty indications of the errors combated in this Epistle recall at once a very conspicuous feature of Church life in the second century, the chaos of beliefs and sects known as Gnosticism. These later beliefs will help us to understand both the meaning and the importance of Paul's argument in the Epistle before us.

This strange medley of opinions is well known to us from early Christian writings, the sole records of beliefs which otherwise would long ago have been forgotten. The great work of Irenaeus quoted in my 'Romans' (Intro. ii.) contains a full account of the various forms of Gnostic teaching, with elaborate disproof. Clement of Alexandria refers to the same frequently and by name. The longest work of Tertullian is 'Against Marcion,' a conspicuous Gnostic. We have another account of Gnosticism, anonymous but probably by Hippolytus, a later contemporary of Tertullian. The earnestness of these refutations proves how wide-spread and how serious in the eyes of conspicuous members of the early Church were the errors refuted.

The name 'Gnostic,' or knowing-one, a curious contrast to the modern name 'Agnostic,' i.e. one who does not know, marks out the Gnostics as claiming superior knowledge. And that they adopted this as their name, suggests that they looked upon knowledge as man's highest good. This recalls the warning in 1 Timothy 6:20. Indeed this warning is embodied in the title of Irenaeus' great work: 'Refutation of the knowledge falsely so called.'

The rise of this intellectual movement is not difficult to understand. Before Christ came, even outside the sacred nation, men had sought to grasp the realities underlying the phenomena around them, and thus to explain the origin of these phenomena. In their search, two great questions had claimed their attention: Whence came the world? Whence came evil? The first of these questions was discussed by the early Greek philosophers. Their answers are clearly embodied in abundant writings which have come down

to us. Of these, the 'Timaeus' of Plato is a good representative. A favorite belief was that the world was made by subordinate but superhuman beings created by the Supreme God and acting more or less under His direction. The second question received from the Greeks, who carefully discussed morals from a practical point of view, only scanty and indefinite answers. Put the answers given to it in Persia and in India reveal the large place it occupied in the thought of those nations. In Persia, the followers of Zoroaster, a somewhat mythical person who lived possibly in the days of the early Persian kings, taught that good and evil are alike eternal, and have their source in two eternal persons, from whom respectively come all things good and bad. This teaching is embodied in the sacred books of Persia, of which the oldest, the 'Avesta,' dates perhaps from the third century after Christ, and certainly preserves still earlier traditions. The Indian answer is that matter is essentially evil, and unreal, and opposed to mind; that the world has come into being by successive emanations from the Supreme, each lower and worse with increasing distance from its origin.

An important element common to the Persian and Indian answers is the all-pervading sense of duality and opposition, viz. of good and bad, and of spirit and matter.

The above answers to these great questions were widely disseminated far beyond the limits of the nations which seem to have given them birth. Especially were the philosophies of Greece stimulated and molded by the speculations of the East.

At the time of Christ Jewish thought was greatly influenced by the Gentile thought around. The influence of Greek writers is very conspicuous in the writings of Philo, an Egyptian Jew contemporary with Christ, who under the form of an allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament introduces very much of the teaching of Plato. On the other hand, the Essenes, a brotherhood said by Philo to be in his day 4, 000 strong and described by Josephus as one of the three sects or 'philosophies' of the Jews, (the others being the Pharisees and the Sadducees,) taught that pleasure is evil, and that sin must be overcome by ascetic refusal of pleasure; ideas conspicuously Oriental. In agreement with this belief, they not only obeyed most rigorously the prescriptions of the Law but added to them prescriptions of merely human origin. They despised wealth; and lived



together with a common purse and common table in the utmost simplicity. They forbade or discountenanced marriage, recruiting their numbers from the children of others. They believed firmly in an immortal life beyond death; but did not expect a resurrection of the body, looking upon material clothing as a bondage to the spirit. The Essenes had secret doctrine and sacred books of their own: and they paid a certain adoration to the sun; and had secret teaching about, and reverence for, the angels. They gained respect by their strict morality, their simplicity of life, and mutual concord. Many of them were reputed to have the gift of predicting future events: a gift implying special intercourse with the unseen world. All this we learn from contemporary descriptions of them by Philo, especially (vol. ii. 457-459) 'The good man always free' 12, 13; and by Josephus, especially 'Jewish War' bk. ii. 8. 2-13.

These two forms of Jewish belief present, as the reader will notice, many points of contact with the errors at Colossae. And we can easily believe that, even where there were no Essenes and no one familiar with the writings of Philo, these modes of thought would exert an influence co-extensive with Jewish nationality.

Into the Jewish nation thus influenced by Gentile thought, Christ was born; and from Jerusalem, carried by Jews, went forth the good news of salvation for all mankind. The Gospel must needs come into contact with, and take up a definite relation to, the religious thought then prevalent. And inasmuch as the Gospel itself professed to explain in some measure the mystery of being and of the world around, it must necessarily, according to the disposition of each who felt its influence, either supplement or correct or displace this earlier teaching, or be itself molded by it. Gnosticism was a reaction of the existing religious thought of the world, in part Greek but chiefly Oriental, upon the new truth proclaimed by Christ.

The Gnostics were divided into many sects known by various names, for the more part those of their leaders, and each presenting a distinct type of teaching. The sects grouped themselves according to their affinities. But all had conspicuous elements in common. All Gnostic schools agree to give honor to Christ as the Teacher and Savior of men. But along with this great truth, all teach two great errors, viz. that matter is essentially or practically evil; and that the Creator of the world, who is also the Lawgiver of Sinai, is

distinct from, and inferior to, the Supreme God who sent His Son to save the world. The Gnostics favorable to Judaism represent the God of Israel as a deity subordinate to the Supreme, and the Old Testament as imperfect only because preparatory to the New. On the other hand, the anti-Jewish Gnostics represented the God of Sinai as essentially hostile to the God who revealed Himself in Christ.

Of the Jewish Gnostics, Cerinthus is a good example. His date is fixed by a statement of Irenaeus (bk. iii. 3. 4) that in his own day there were some who had heard Polycarp say that once the Apostle John, going to a bath, saw Cerinthus within, and fled from the bath in fear lest it should fall. Whatever this story be worth, it is complete proof that Cerinthus lived long before Irenaeus, and affords a fair presumption that he was a contemporary of the Apostle John. In his teaching therefore we have a form of Gnosticism almost or quite as early as the days of the Apostles. It is thus described by Irenaeus, bk. i. 26. 1: "A certain Cerinthus in Asia taught that the world was made, not by the Supreme literally, the First) God, but by a certain power altogether separated and distinct from that Supreme Power which is over the universe, and ignorant of Him who is God over all things. He represented Jesus, not as born from a maiden-for this seemed to him impossible-but as a son of Joseph and Mary like all other men, and as being much greater than others in justice and prudence and wisdom. He taught that after Baptism Christ descended into him, from that Supreme Power which is over all things, in the figure of a dove; and that then he announced the unknown Father, and wrought miracles; and that at last Christ flew back from Jesus, that Jesus suffered and rose but that Christ continued without suffering, a spiritual being." Epiphanius ('Against Heresies' xxviii.) says that Cerinthus taught that the Law and the Prophets were inspired by angels, and that the giver of the Law was one of the angels who made the world."

An extreme example of Anti-Jewish Gnostics is found in the Ophites, or followers of the serpent; who taught that the Creator of the world was evil, and that therefore the so-called fall of man was really emancipation from the rule of evil, and the tempter a benefactor of mankind.

Another Gnostic, Saturninus, from Antioch in Syria, taught (Irenaeus bk. i. 24. 1, 2) that there is "one Father unknown to all, who made angels,

archangels, powers, authorities; that the world and all things in it were made by certain seven angels; that man is a work of angels.... He taught that the Savior was without birth and without body and without form, a man only in appearance. He said that the God of the Jews was one of the angels; and that, because the Father wished to destroy all His princes, Christ came for destruction of the God of the Jews and for the salvation of those who believe him.... He said that there are two races of men formed by angels, one bad and the other good; and that because the demons helped the bad, the Savior came for destruction of bad men and demons and for salvation of the good. They say that marriage and procreation are from Satan. Hence also the more part of them abstain from animal food; by this assumed self-control leading away some into their own error.”

More fully developed Gnostic systems, and somewhat later than the above, were those of Basilides, Valentinus, and Marcion. All these flourished in the former half of the second century.

The moral influence of Gnosticism took two opposite directions. On the ground that matter is evil, many Gnostics taught that all pleasure derived from matter is also evil, and that only by refusing such pleasure can men rise above bondage to evil. Of this ascetic side of Gnosticism, the Encratites are an example: Irenaeus bk. i. 28. 1. Others, looking upon matter as worthless, taught that man's relation to it is of no moment, and that the spirit within, as being essentially superior to matter, is not soiled by any bodily sin. In this way Gnosticism gave rise to wildest immorality. Of this immoral direction, the Carpocratians are an example: Irenaeus bk. i. 25.

Another practical outworking of Gnosticism was that inasmuch as matter was in their view essentially evil, the Son of God could not have entered into any real relation to a material body. All Gnostics therefore taught either, with Saturninus and the Docetae, that His body was a mere appearance; or, with Cerinthus as quoted above, that the Son of God was united only for a time to the personality of the man Jesus.

The above extracts and descriptions may give some slight conception of the infinite chaos of strange beliefs, held by countless sects which began to assume definite form at the close of the first century and reached its full development about the middle of the second.

It is at once evident that these strange perversions of the Gospel stand in some real relation to the Epistle to the Colossians . The points of contact are too many and too close to be accidental. Evidently the Epistle is a foregoing protest against the teaching common to all the Gnostics and especially against the early form of Gnosticism which was favorable to Judaism. The statement in DIV. 2 that the universe, including the successive ranks of angels, was created by the agency of the Son meets beforehand the Gnostic teaching that creation and salvation had different, and in some measure antagonistic, sources. And the warnings in DIV. 3 against mere human prohibitions, and against empty forms of worship based on fancied revelations of the unseen world, might have been written to guard against the practical and ritual sides of Gnosticism. In deed the warning in Colossians 2:8 is a correct description of the Gnostic teaching of the second century.

All this has been made an argument against the genuineness of the Epistle. Some have said that the letter itself implies the existence of Gnosticism in a form which did not exist till the second century. But we have seen that Cerinthus, whose teaching comes nearest to that of the errors rebuked here, was probably a contemporary of the Apostle John. It is also worthy of note that the Fathers with one consent trace Gnosticism to Simon Magus whom Peter rebuked in Samaria apparently before the conversion of Paul: so Irenaeus bk. i. 22. 1, 2. This tradition proves the very early date of the errors in question. Moreover, a system of belief so widespread and so various as Gnosticism reveals a deep-seated cause, one existing long before its various known manifestations. In the speculative teaching of Philo and in the asceticism of the Essenes we have already found, in the time of Christ, a soil ready for such a growth as the errors combated in this Epistle. All this makes very precarious any argument based on the unlikelihood of these opinions existing during the lifetime of Paul; and makes such argument utterly worthless when opposed to the abundant evidence internal and external (see Introd. ii.) that the Epistle is genuine. Moreover, the references to Gnosticism, sufficient as they are for identification, are far from definite. Had this letter been written in the second century, the references would almost certainly have been more precise.

It is not difficult to suggest an explanation of the indisputable connection between this letter written by Paul in the first century and the errors so prevalent a few years later. We can easily conceive that, soon after the first preaching of the Gospel, as men began to ponder the new teaching and to compare it with their previous beliefs, these last would tend unconsciously to appropriate, or rather to modify so as to harmonize with earlier teaching, the new truth learnt from Christ. Specially would this be the case with those who boasted more profound knowledge, and were therefore not satisfied with teaching given even to the most ignorant. This innate tendency of human nature was the real source of Gnosticism, and may easily even in the days of Paul have revealed itself in early forms sadly prophetic of a fuller subsequent development. These germs of evil so serious would naturally attract the attention of the weary Apostle. It is not unlikely that they were specially prominent at Colossae. For Phrygia, to which in the popular geography Colossae belonged, is spoken of by Hippolytus (bk. v. 7-9) as a cradle of Gnostic teaching. The quotations above from the Pastoral Epistles show that the incipient peril was, a few years later, present to the Apostle's anxious thought. The simplest explanation of the whole case is that when the Gospel was first preached there were in the minds of many, Jews and Gentiles, elements of thought which must either be transformed by the Gospel or must themselves mould and pervert it; that this latter possibility soon became in some cases actuality; and that this defection and the peril of further similar defection evoked the warnings contained in the Epistle before us.

## REVIEW OF THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

The occasion and purpose of the Epistle were somewhat as follows. Epaphras, a member of the Church at Colossae, came to Rome. That he remained at Rome after this letter was sent to Colossae, suggests that he had other business there besides the conveyance of news to Paul. He tells the imprisoned Apostle the story of the success of the Gospel in the valley of the Lycus. That Gospel had been first preached at Colossae by Epaphras himself. This implies that he had heard and embraced it elsewhere. Success had followed the preached word: and in the heart of Asia Minor a new Church had sprung into life. There was then probably no Church at Laodicea or Hierapolis. For, had there been such, one man would hardly have been the channel through which the Gospel would reach a place so near as Colossae. And the great interest of Epaphras in the Churches of those two cities suggests that he had had a share in founding them. This good news filled Paul with delight.

Other information was less pleasant. In the valley of the Lycus were Jewish Christians who not only asserted the abiding obligation of the many prescriptions of the Law but added to them prohibitions of merely human origin which branded as evil things which God has created for man's nourishment and pleasure. As a basis of these prohibitions, the same teachers propounded a philosophy professing to explain the origin of the universe, claiming to be derived from revelations of the unseen world, and accompanied by a worship invented by man and directed to the honor of the supposed angelic authors of the vaunted revelations. They promised that this more recondite teaching and stricter rule of life and extra ritual would lead their disciples to a higher development of the Christian life.

The chief features of this false teaching were familiar to Paul. Already in his own nation a very conspicuous place in the creation of the world had been given to angels. And a well-known Jewish brotherhood had claimed fuller knowledge about the angelic powers, and had sought, by strict regimen of life, for nearer approach to God. But he saw in it at once incipient and great peril. The angelic powers to whom these would-be

teachers ascribed the creation of the universe obscured the unique dignity of the Son of God as Himself the Creator and Ruler of whatever exists. And, by prescribing abstinence from good things made by God, as a means of attaining a richer spiritual life, they were misrepresenting the nature and aim of material good and were leading men away from the full salvation proclaimed by Christ for all who believe. Such teaching would rob those who accepted it of the prize offered to them in the Gospel.

Epaphras was, for reasons unknown to us, remaining at Rome. But one of his companions, Tychicus, was going to the province of Asia and to Colossae. And Paul resolves to write a letter to the young converts whose early Christian history was in some respects so hopeful and yet so full of danger.

The first words from the prisoner at Rome were gratitude for the faith and love of the Christians at Colossae, revealing as these did a blessed future awaiting them. He reminds them that similar results had followed the Gospel wherever preached throughout the world; thus raising their thoughts above their own narrow surroundings to the universal Church. He prays that they may obtain, in abundant measure, the highest knowledge, a knowledge bearing fruit in their whole life. In view of false teaching derogatory to the honor of Christ as the one Creator and Savior, Paul writes his greatest exposition of the dignity of the Son of God, of His relation to God, to the universe, to the Church universal, and finally to the Church at Colossae. This leads him to speak of his own relation to the Church and of his deep interest in the Churches of the Lycus. This doctrinal exposition he concludes by again pointing to Christ as Himself the treasure-house of all wisdom.

After erecting the best possible bulwark against error by plain statement of opposite truth, Paul comes in DIV. 3 to the specific danger at Colossae. He first says generally-that such danger exists, and begs his readers to make Christ whom they have received the pervading element of their whole life. He then describes somewhat more definitely the errors he fears, and shows them to be inconsistent with their Christian profession and with the aim of the death of Christ. Lastly, he states in plain words the specific outward forms in which these errors assail his readers, and

concludes his reference to them by pointing them to the Risen Savior, and to the new life flowing from spiritual contact with Him.

Having thus dealt with the specific occasion of the letter, Paul uses his reference to the Risen Lord as a starting point for moral teaching, first in general terms negative and positive, and then in special reference to the various classes of his readers.

News about himself; he leaves to Tychicus and his companion Onesimus. He then adds greetings from friends at Rome, including Epaphras; and concludes his letter with the usual Apostolic autograph.

The statement in Colossians 1:16 that all things were created by the agency of the Son, conspicuous for its emphatic repetition and as being the only place in the Epistles of Paul where this statement is made, has a remarkable counterpart in the emphatic and repeated assertion of John 1:3, the only passage in the Gospels where similar teaching is found. It is thus a link between the two great theologians of the New Testament. Moreover, the prominent place in the Gnostic systems held by the creation of the world, this being attributed to angels or to a subordinate deity, and the evidence that this teaching was prevalent before the death of John, suggests strongly that John 1:3 was prompted by incipient Gnosticism. And it is worthy of note that a unanimous tradition connects the last years of the Apostle John with Ephesus, in the same Roman province as Colossae. Similar teaching is found in Hebrews 1:2, in an Epistle bearing abundant traces of the theological and theosophic speculation so prevalent among the Jews of Alexandria. That the language of Paul resembles so closely language prompted either by Gnostic error or by the modes of thought from which it sprang, somewhat confirms our inference that similar teaching at Colossae suggested parts of the Epistle before us.

As we now close the Epistle, we are conscious that, in spite of much we cannot understand, it has, even as compared with the earlier Epistles of Paul, greatly widened our vision of things Divine. At the beginning of it, he reminded his readers that the Gospel which saved them had saved others throughout the world, thus suggesting that it must be looked upon in its relation, not to one city, but to the whole human race. Lower down he brought into our view successive ranks of intelligent beings beyond the range of the human eye. Reviewing these and the entire universe seen and



unseen, he took us back to the time when it had not yet begun to be; and linked together the whole as created by, and for, the Son of God. The Creator of the universe is also the Head of the Church. And the blood shed on His cross is designed to produce results as wide as the universe. Throughout DIV. 1 and DIV. 2 this wider view is kept before us. And the clearer light thus derived is focused on the Son of God, to whom Paul points as Himself the mystery in which lies hid, or rather lies open to the eyes of those who believe in Him, all that which is best worth knowing.

Thus within the narrow limits of the damp walls of the dungeon at Rome there opened to the prisoner's eye a vision of the eternal and infinite realities and of the Son of God, Himself the center and circumference of all reality, wider and deeper and more glorious than had been possible in the years of his unfettered activity. The Epistle we now close is a mirror in which this glorious vision is reflected to the ends of the world that in all ages it may be a light and joy to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the things which happened to Paul 'have come to be for the advance of the Gospel.'

# EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE

## TO PHILEMON

### SECTION 1

#### PAUL'S GREETING TO PHILEMON

#### VERSES 1-3

*Paul a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy, our brother, to Philemon, our beloved one and fellow-worker, and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the Church in thy house; grace to you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Ver.** 1. Prisoner: same word in Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:8, Matthew 27:15, 16; Acts 16:25, 27.

Of Christ: not necessarily that He has put Paul in prison, but that in his captivity, and as a captive, the prisoner at Rome stands in special relation to Christ and belongs to Him. Writing a private letter to a friend and asking a favor, Paul refrains from all mention of his apostolic authority. And, while begging mercy for a bondman, he points to his own bonds. This silent plea is urged again in Philemon 9, 10, 13. That Timothy is, as in Colossians 1:1, joint-author of the letter, gives weight to it as touching a matter in which another besides Paul feels interest.

PHILEMON: a not uncommon Greek name. Of this Philemon we know nothing except from this Epistle. He was certainly a Christian and almost certainly (cp. Philemon 19) converted by Paul. That Onesimus was (cp. Colossians 4:9) a native or former inhabitant of Colossae and was also Philemon's slave, and that, when this letter was written, he was going back to Philemon and also (Colossians 4:9) about to visit Colossae, suggests that Philemon was an inhabitant of that city. But although he was a 'fellow-worker' of Paul and Timothy, he is not mentioned in Colossians

1:7 as taking part with Epaphras in founding the Church there. He must therefore have been converted elsewhere: for Paul had never visited Colossae. Possibly he came to live there already a Christian, or was converted by Paul elsewhere, after the Church had been founded by Epaphras. That Philemon had a slave and had apparently (Phm 18) been robbed by him, suggests that he was a man of social position; one of the few implied in 1 Corinthians 1:26.

Our fellow-worker; suggests that Philemon had joined with both Paul and Timothy in Christian toil and thus gained their special 'love.' Contrast Romans 16:9, where the same terms 'beloved' and 'fellow-worker' are used, but to different men; and the pronoun is changed from plural to singular.

**Ver. 2.** Apphia: a woman's name found on several inscriptions in the country around Colossae, and therefore probably of native origin. There is no reason to identify it with the Roman name Appia. The connection suggests strongly that she was Philemon's wife. And this is the more likely because the letter deals with a domestic matter. On behalf of a runaway slave Paul appeals both to master and mistress. Thus both the Phrygian name and Apphia's mention here are notes of genuineness.

Our sister: implies that she was a Christian and therefore under Christian obligations.

If Apphia be Philemon's wife, the immediate mention of Archippus in a letter touching only a domestic matter suggests that he also was a member of the same family, and probably Philemon's son. This agrees with Colossians 4:17, which seems to imply that he was an officer of the Church at Colossae. If Archippus was son of Philemon, the latter must have been elderly, not much if any younger than Paul.

Fellow-soldier: as in Philippians 2:25. It is perhaps not safe to infer from this title that Archippus had in some special conflict stood bravely by Paul. For the whole Christian life, especially in those days of storm, was a conflict. And if, as we inferred from Colossians 4:17, Archippus held official rank in the Church, this description would be the more appropriate. Paul recognises both Philemon and Archippus as comrades,

the one in toil, the other in the ranks of battle. Doubtless, for reasons unknown to us, this distribution of titles was appropriate.

The Church in thy house: a smaller gathering within the Church at Colossae, like that at Laodicea (Colossians 4:15) in the house of Nymphas. The singular number, thy, pays honor to Philemon in his own family as head of the household. This greeting seeks to interest in the case of Onesimus the company accustomed to gather for worship in the house of Philemon. The greeting of 'grace and peace' (see under Philippians 1:2) is sent to each member of the family and to the Church meeting in their home.

## SECTION 2

### *PAUL'S JOY AT PHILEMON'S CHRISTIAN LOVE*

#### VERSES 4-7

*I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers, hearing of thy love and the faith which thou hast towards the Lord and for all the saints, in order that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual, in knowledge of every good thing that is in you, for Christ. For I had much joy and encouragement at thy love; because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother.*

**Ver. 4.** As in Philippians 1:3, Romans 1:8, Paul's first words after a Christian greeting are his own personal thanks to his own God. And, as in 1 Corinthians 1:4, Ephesians 1:16, these thanks are ceaseless: I thank my God always.

Making mention of you in my prayers: as in Romans 1:9. These constant thanks for Philemon are offered in the course of Paul's regular devotions.

**Ver. 5.** Hearing: day by day, perhaps from frequent references to Philemon by Epaphras and Onesimus. This continual 'hearing' prompted continual 'thanks.' Contrast 'having heard' in Colossians 1:4, referring to one definite recital.

The faith which thou hast: parallel to 'thy love:' so Colossians 1:4. Nowhere else do we read of 'faith... towards all the saints;' except probably in Ephesians 1:15. And there is, before 'the Lord Jesus,' probably (for the reading is doubtful) a preposition not elsewhere used in this connection. That 'love' is put before 'faith,' is also remarkable. It has been suggested that the order of words is inverted, and that Paul really meant 'love towards all the saints and faith towards the Lord Jesus.' But such inversion is not elsewhere found in the Bible. [And it seems to be forbidden by the relative singular 'which thou hast,' which connects with 'faith' all the words following.] Another suggestion is that whereas 'the

Lord Jesus' is the immediate object of faith, the saints are in some way a more distant object in the sense that Philemon's faith took practical form in kindness towards them. But such use of [εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους] the words rendered 'towards all the saints' is altogether without example. Open to least objection is the exposition of the great grammarians Meyer and Winer, viz. that the word 'faith' has here the sense of 'faithfulness,' as undoubtedly in Romans 3:3, 'the faith (or faithfulness) of God,' in Galatians 5:22, where it is placed among Christian virtues, in Titus 2:10; Matthew 23:23, and frequently in classic Greek. The corresponding Greek adjective has frequently this sense: Colossians 1:7; 4:7. The English word 'faith' has both senses. The sense suggested here by Meyer has given us the common adjective 'faithful.' Although unusual in the N.T. but common in profane Greek, it seems to be demanded by the impossibility of giving to the word its ordinary sense. And it would explain the position of 'love' before 'faith' and the unusual preposition following it. It is also the easiest explanation of Ephesians 1:15. This less usual sense is closely connected with the more common one. They who believe firmly the promises of God are themselves objects of confidence to others, both in their relation to God and to man. Paul has heard of Philemon's Christian love; and of his trustworthiness in things pertaining to the great Master and in his relations to all Christians. Of all this, he hears frequently from the Colossians with him: and it moves him to constant praise to God.

**Ver. 6.** Purpose of the prayer which in Paul's mind is always associated with thanks to God. So, very clearly, in Ephesians 1:17. For good things already received do but reveal the need for further blessings.

Fellowship: see under Philippians 1:5: the spirit of brotherhood, that which prompts us to share with others our joys and their burdens.

Of thy faith, or 'faithfulness': brotherliness springing from, and thus belonging to, his loyalty to Christ and to all Christians. Paul prays that Philemon's good-fellowship 'may become effective,' i.e. may produce results.

In the knowledge: or rather 'full perception and recognition.'

Every good thing: every form of Christian excellence or spiritual enrichment: cp. Hebrews 9:11; 10:1.

In you, or 'in us': (the reading is quite uncertain:) in Philemon and the Christians around, or in Christians generally including Paul.

For Christ: to advance His purpose and kingdom. Paul desires that the spirit of brotherhood which belongs to Philemon's faithfulness may produce results, and these so abundant and various as to evoke, as their surrounding element, a recognition by others of every excellence which dwells in Christians, and thus tend to the glory of Christ; or, in other words, that Philemon's loyalty to Christ may assume form in a manifestation of Christian brotherhood, and thus secure recognition of all the excellences with which Christ has enriched His people. The special form of brotherliness here in view, we shall learn in 3. If Paul's request be not granted, one form of Christian excellence will not be recognised. And the closing words of this verse remind us that in this full recognition the honor of Christ is involved.

**Ver. 7.** Reason, primarily for Paul's thanks, and then for the prayer naturally following those thanks. His gratitude is prompted by 'joy... and encouragement' (as in Philippians 2:1) caused by Philemon's action.

I had: when Paul heard about Philemon's 'love.' Then follow proofs of it.

Hearts: same word in Philippians 1:8; 2:1; Colossians 3:12. It denotes always the seat of the emotions, where influences from without evoke feelings within. Here the emotion was that of being 'refreshed:' same word in 1 Corinthians 16:18; 2 Corinthians 7:13; Matthew 11:28. [The Greek perfect denotes the abiding result of this act of kindness.] Paul refers to matters of fact, viz. acts of kindness by Philemon to Christians. These facts were narrated to him doubtless by Epaphras and Onesimus. They moved him to thanksgiving, and to prayer that the disposition thus manifested might reveal itself still further and thus secure recognition of the excellence of Christianity. This remembrance of Philemon's brotherliness elicits the endearing title, 'brother.'

## SECTION 3

### THE REQUEST ABOUT ONESIMUS

#### VERSES 8-21

*For which cause, having much boldness in Christ to command thee that which is fitting, because of this love I rather exhort, being such a one as Paul, an old man, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus; I exhort thee about my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, “who formerly was to thee unprofitable but now profitable to thee and to me, whom I have sent back to thee himself that is, my own heart, whom I was minded to keep with me that on thy behalf he might minister to me in the bonds of the Gospel. But without thy mind I was not willing to do anything, that thy good thing may be, not of necessity, but of free will. For perhaps because of this he was separated for a time that for ever thou mightest hold him; no longer as a servant but more than a servant, a brother beloved, especially so to me, but how much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If then thou hast me as a partner, receive him as me. Moreover, any injustice he has done thee, or is in debt, reckon this to me. I, Paul have written with my own hand, I will repay; in order that I may not say to thee that also thyself to me thou owest besides. Yes, brother, I would have help of thee in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. Trusting to thy obedience I have written to thee knowing that also beyond the things which I write thou wilt do.*

Special matter of this letter. We have an appeal, Philemon 8, 9: a request, Philemon 10-17: a detail pertaining to it, Philemon 18, 19: a further appeal, Philemon 20, 21.

**Ver.** 8-9a. For-which-cause: because of thy kindness to the saints.

Boldness in Christ: confidence of unrestrained speech arising from Paul's relation to Christ.



To command: as if by superior authority: same word in Luke 4:36; 8:25.

That which is fitting: action agreeing with the position and circumstances of the actor. Same word in Ephesians 5:4; Colossians 3:18. It suggests slightly that the request following is what Philemon ought to do.

Because of thy love, or 'for love's sake': literally 'because of the love.' The definite article refers either to Philemon's love mentioned in Philemon 7 or to the well-known Christian virtue of love. In view of the express mention (Phm 5) of 'thy love,' and of the introductory particle 'for-which-cause,' of which these words seem to be an exposition, the former reference seems the more likely. The two expositions are closely allied. By allowing himself to be influenced by Philemon's love, Paul was paying deference to the central Christian virtue of which this was a concrete example.

Exhort: as in Philippians 4:2. Instead of speaking to Philemon with authority as from above, Paul speaks to him as a brother by his side using language calculated to encourage to action.

**Ver. 9b.** Two points about Paul, his age and his bonds, strengthening the request which he makes when he might have used words of command. Since this Epistle was probably (see Introd. v.) written about A.D. 64 and Paul's conversion took place apparently (see my 'Galatians' p. 193) about A.D. 35, it is quite possible that a man who in Acts 7:58 is spoken of as young at the stoning of Stephen may here have spoken of himself as 'old.' For life is reckoned by deeds rather than by years. After thirty years of hardship and toil for Christ, and this preceded by hard work of another kind, a man of sixty might well seem to himself to have already lived a long life. And the weakness of advancing years gave him a claim upon Philemon, his son in Christ.

Prisoner of Christ Jesus: as in Philemon 1. It is here added to old age as a second plea. Paul stands in special relation to Christ, his relation to Him is that of one who for His sake has been put in prison, and the prisoner is old. Such is the man who now forbears to use his indisputable authority and merely makes a request.

[Some commentators separate 'such-a-one' from the words following and make it refer to Philemon 8, where Paul suggests his right to command. But

this back-reference is not grammatically necessary: and it is unlikely that Paul would lay stress upon his authority by thus referring to it twice. It is best to take together ‘such a one as,’ these words introducing and picturing old men as a class to which the writer belongs. And the mention of Paul’s old age at once recalls his hard surroundings.]

**Ver. 10.** The matter of the Epistle, viz. Onesimus: see note under Philemon 21.

I exhort; takes up the same word in Philemon 9a, and adds the object of Paul’s exhortations.

My own child: close harmony with Philippians 2:22; 1 Corinthians 4:17, where Timothy is so called. These words are at once expounded and amplified by those following,

whom I have begotten, etc.: a close parallel to 1 Corinthians 4:15. They prove that Onesimus was converted by Paul. So apparently was Timothy.

In my bonds, or ‘in’ these ‘bonds’: the dark surroundings of a father’s Joy. Thus for the third time Philemon is made to hear the clanking of the prisoner’s chain. And it pleads irresistibly for Paul and for Onesimus.

**Ver. 11.** Details about Onesimus. Note the double contrast: ‘formerly... profitless... to thee; but now... profitable... to thee and to me.’ There is here probably a play upon the name Onesimus, which is a not uncommon Greek word meaning useful or helpful, and which, though different in form, has practically the same sense as the word here rendered ‘profitable.’ Formerly the character of Onesimus contradicted his name: ‘but now,’ in reference both to Philemon and to Paul, the name describes the man. The words ‘profitless to thee’ are explained by Philemon 18 which suggests or implies that Onesimus had robbed Philemon. And in any case a runaway slave would be, from his master’s point of view, ‘profitless.’

Profitable to thee and to me: explained by Philemon 10, 16. In Onesimus Philemon had gained a brother in Christ: and Paul another son in the Gospel. Therefore, to each of them he was an enrichment.

**Ver. 12.** Another detail about Onesimus.

Whom I have sent back: evidently as bearer of this letter. Thus the runaway but now returning slave comes to Philemon with a character certified by Paul.

Himself: laying stress upon the personal return of Onesimus. So strongly did Paul's affection cling to him that to send him away was to tear out and send to Philemon his 'own heart:' same word as in Philemon 7.

**Ver. 13.** Another detail.

Was-minded: mere inclination. Paul's contrary resolution and action are stated in Philemon 14.

I: emphatic, giving prominence to the personal inclination which Paul refused to gratify.

To keep with me: literally 'to bold fast by myself.' These words emphasise still further Paul's personal feeling in this matter.

On thy behalf: assuming that assistance rendered by Onesimus to Paul would be looked upon by Philemon as service done for himself. Paul thus delicately recognises Philemon's great care for him. [This simple exposition of the preposition **υπερ** removes all need to give to it the sense of 'instead of,' which it never has in N.T. or in classic Greek.]

Minister: render friendly service of any kind: see under Romans 15:25. This wish of Paul suggests that Onesimus had already shown kindness to him in prison. Possibly such kindness explains the epithet 'beloved brother' applied to Onesimus in Philemon 16 and Colossians 4:9. Then follows a fourth mention of Paul's imprisonment. His bonds made more needful to him the help of Onesimus. And they were caused by his endeavor to maintain and spread the Gospel. Indeed his arrest at Jerusalem was occasioned by his outspoken proclamation at all hazards of the unalloyed Gospel of salvation through faith. That Paul's captivity stood in this close relation to the Gospel, gave him a special claim to the help of Onesimus, even though his help to Paul might occasion some inconvenience to Philemon. And his bonds explain and justify his wish to retain Onesimus.

**Ver. 14.** In contrast to his inclination, Paul now states his actual resolve; and a reason for it, this last in the form of a purpose.

Without thy mind: same word in 1 Corinthians 7:25, 40. Not having Philemon's judgment about his retaining Onesimus, Paul resolved not to retain him. For, had he done so, the service rendered to Paul by Philemon's slave would have been, so far as he was concerned, done 'by way of necessity.'

Thy good thing: any act of kindness by Philemon, including the help to Paul in prison. Rendered by Philemon's slave, this help would have been a 'good thing' from Philemon to Paul: but it would have been done 'by way of necessity,' Philemon having no choice in it. Paul desired that it should be 'by way of freewill,' i.e. of his own free choice.

**Ver.** 15-16. A reason for this refusal to act without Philemon's consent, viz. that 'perhaps' God had another purpose about Onesimus. And Paul wishes to act in harmony with this Divine plan.

Perhaps: introduces this reason timidly, by way of suggestion.

For this cause: explained by 'in order that for ever, etc.'

He was separated: a gentle way of describing the flight of Onesimus.

For a time: literally 'for an hour.' It does not imply that Onesimus had left Philemon very lately. For, contrasted with an 'eternal' possession, a separation otherwise long would seem short.

Thou mightest have, or 'hold for thy own': explained in Philemon 16.

No longer as a servant, or 'slave': according to the common use of the word; see under Romans 1:1. This implies clearly that Onesimus had been a slave of Philemon. Not as such does God intend him to be 'for ever,' but as something much more than or 'beyond a slave,' viz. 'a beloved brother' in Christ. Paul 'suggests' that perhaps God permitted Philemon, through the flight of Onesimus, to lose a slave in order that, through his conversion at Rome, the runaway slave might become to him a beloved brother in Christ and thus an 'eternal' possession. So would a small and temporary loss become a great and abiding enrichment.

Especially to me: added by Paul because already, as his child in the Gospel, Onesimus was dearer to him than to any one else. Yet Paul foresees and suggests an endearment stronger even than this superlative

endearment: ‘how much more to thee?’ Philemon’s closer relation in days gone by to Onesimus should make so much the greater his joy now at the conversion of his once worthless slave. And this in two relations: ‘in flesh and in’ the ‘Lord.’ Paul assumes that the returning runaway will remain with Philemon, and thus be his in outward bodily life; and be his also as a fellow-servant of the one ‘Lord.’ Therefore in this double relation Onesimus will be dear to Philemon; and through this closer relation dearer to him than even to Paul, to whom he is so specially dear.

That both here and in Colossians 4:9 Onesimus is described by the same word ‘beloved,’ and the warm affection expressed in Philemon 12, suggest that he was specially amiable. This may have shown itself in the kind attention (Phm 13) which Paul would like to have retained.

**Ver. 17.** A final appeal, summing up all that precedes; followed by a full and definite request about Onesimus which has been delayed till now that it may come with the accumulated force of the foregoing appeals.

A partner: companion in the service of Christ and in the blessings of the New Covenant. Same word and sense in 2 Corinthians 1:7; 8:23. A similar appeal in Philippians 2:1, ‘if any partnership of the Spirit.’

Receive him; implies that Onesimus was returning to Philemon in order to seek his favor, and apparently to remain with him. But the words ‘him as me’ show that Paul is not asking him to receive back Onesimus as a slave. Rather Paul begs for him a Christian welcome, leaving undetermined all future relationships, ‘If you look upon me as a comrade, welcome Onesimus whom I love so much as you would welcome me. For whatever you do to him you do to me.’

**Ver. 18-19.** Another matter about Onesimus which might seem to stand in the way of the welcome just asked for.

Done thee any injustice: same word in the same sense in Colossians 3:25; Galatians 4:12. The kind of ‘injustice’ is indicated by the words following: or-is-in-debt. This makes almost certain that Onesimus had been dishonest, either by direct robbery or by unfaithful use of money committed to his charge. For, had not Paul had strong reason to suspect this, he could not have used these words. Probably the hypothetical form of the sentence was only a slight veil thrown over what Paul knew to be

fact. If so, he could not ask Philemon to receive back the runaway without referring to this worst feature of the case. The words reckon this to me suggest that Onesimus was unable to pay back the stolen money. For, had he been able, Paul would certainly have required him to do so.

I Paul: see under Colossians 1:23.

I have written with my own hand: same words in Galatians 6:11. Cp. 1 Corinthians 16:21; 2 Thessalonians 3:17. Whether the whole Epistle was thus written, or at this point Paul took up the pen, we do not know. He binds himself by his own hand to 'pay back' what Onesimus owes to Philemon.

Thou owest me besides: another debt owing in addition to that which Paul promises to pay back. In other words, even if Philemon remits the debt, he will still owe himself to Paul. But this Paul does not wish to 'say' to Philemon, and to avoid saying it prefers to bind himself to pay what Onesimus owes.

Owe thyself: cp. Luke 9:25. This can only mean that Paul led Philemon to Christ. Thus while binding himself to pay, he reminds Philemon of a debt on the other side which cannot be paid.

Ver. 20-21. Concluding appeals.

Yes, brother: expression of brotherly confidence.

Would-have-help, or 'let-me-have-help': a verb cognate to the adjective 'Onesimus' or 'helpful:' see under Philemon 10. It is common in classic Greek in the sense of 'receive-help' or 'pleasure;' but is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. This suggests that Paul selected it as a play upon the name Onesimus; as though he said to Philemon, be thou an Onesimus to me.

I... of thee: both words emphatic. Paul makes the case of Onesimus his own; and begs pleasure or help for himself from Philemon by his acquiescence in the request of this letter.

In the Lord: the joy for which Paul begged would be an outflow of Christian life, and therefore to him a means of spiritual good. Cp.

Philippians 1:14, where confidence evoked by Paul's bonds is called 'confidence in the word.'

Refresh my heart: same words as in Philemon 7, with emphasis on the word 'my.' Paul begs for himself what Philemon has already done for 'the saints.' The word 'heart' is added to suggest that Onesimus was so near to the heart of Paul that forgiveness to the slave will be relief and refreshment to the Apostle. This second request, which is a repetition of the first, receiving emphasis from the repetition, belongs as does the first request to the Christian life: it is 'in Christ.'

Trusting to thy obedience; silently assumes Paul's right to command, a right already suggested in Philemon 10 and one which Philemon could not but recognise. Similar obedience to an apostolic command 2 Corinthians 7:15.

Beyond the things which I say: viz. the request to receive Onesimus, in spite of his fraud. Paul is sure that Philemon will do more than this. How much more, he is left himself to judge. To us these words suggest, as probably they did to Philemon, the manumission of the converted slave, who though still beyond his master's reach was about to return to him. But for this Paul does not ask. It was left for Philemon's generosity.

That ONESIMUS had been a slave of Philemon, is made quite certain by Philemon 16: 'no longer a slave.' Since he is said in Colossians 4:9 to belong in some sense to Colossae, and to be then going back there, we infer that the home of Philemon in which Onesimus formerly lived as a slave was at Colossae. Evidently the slave had first defrauded, and then run away from, his master. Probably, like many fugitives from many lands, he had found his way to the great metropolis in order to hide there among others like himself. At Rome he came under the influence of the imprisoned Apostle, heard the Gospel from his lips, and found in it a liberty which mere escape from earthly bondage cannot give. A complete change took place. The dishonest runaway is now a 'faithful brother:' Colossians 4:9. And he is now, possibly through some special amiability of character, an object of Paul's marked affection. This amiability he seems to have shown by attentive help rendered to Paul in prison. This kind attention of the slave recalls to the prisoner pleasant memories of his master's kindness to many Christians and kindly feeling towards himself.

He would like to have had this help still longer: but other considerations determine otherwise. Onesimus has not only run away from Philemon but has robbed him. It would seem that he was so poor as to be unable to repay what he had taken. But the debt must be recognised. Paul bids the fugitive, whom he would much like to retain, to return to his master at Colossae. A favorable opportunity of doing so presents itself. Tychicus is going there with a letter of congratulation and warning to the Church prompted by the varied news brought by Epaphras.

It is decided that Onesimus shall go with Tychicus. Going thus at Paul's bidding, in company with a well-known and trusted helper of the Apostle, he will receive a better welcome from those who perhaps knew him as a runaway thief. And he takes with him a recommendation even better than this, the letter before us.

Paul reminds Philemon that as all apostle of Christ (cp. 1 Thessalonians 2:6) he might give commands as a superior. But Christian love moves him to make request as an equal. His age and chain must plead for him. He is writing about a child in the Gospel whose conversation has gladdened the hardships of his prison, for a man whose name is now, from the point of view both of Philemon and of Paul, as appropriate as it was once from Philemon's point of view inappropriate. So great is Paul's love for his convert that to send him back is to rend his own heart. But this he has done; not wishing to take from the hands of Philemon, by retaining his slave, a kindness he has not opportunity to refuse. There must be a Divine purpose in the flight of Onesimus. God designs the master and slave to be united in bonds which will survive all human relationships. In harmony with this Divine purpose Paul has sent back the fugitive, whom he begs Philemon to receive as he would receive the Apostle himself.

Another point demands mention. Probably the runaway had told Paul that he had in some way robbed his master. This debt, moreover, the slave cannot repay. But Paul promises himself to repay it; and reminds Philemon of a debt on the other side which cannot be paid. Again, the prisoner begs acquiescence; and concludes the matter of Onesimus with confidence that Philemon will not only grant his request but will go beyond it.



This story of Onesimus is wonderfully characteristic of Christianity. No other religion can reach and save and raise the dregs of society. A less hopeful case than a runaway thief hiding himself among the outcasts at Rome, there could not be. But the Gospel both found and transformed him; and made one proved to be untrustworthy into a beloved and trusted brother. The rescue and complete restoration of Onesimus, as attested by this letter, reveals the power of the Gospel and thus gives hope for the outcasts around us. Like Paul (1 Timothy 1:16) the fugitive from Colossae is a pattern of what Christ will do for all who receive Him. As a pedestal on which stands, within sight of all men, this monument of the mercy and power of God, this Epistle is of priceless worth.

## SECTION 4

### CONCLUSION

#### VERSES 22-25

*At the same time also prepare me a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.*

*Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets thee: as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers.*

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.*

**Ver. 22.** At the same time; suggests that Paul may be expected soon after the arrival of Onesimus.

A lodging: either at an inn or in a private house. All details are left to Philemon's hospitality. This intimation adds force to the main request of the letter. For if Paul comes to Colossae he will see for himself whether it has been complied with.

For I hope, etc.: to be released from prison, as implied in the foregoing request.

Through your prayers: a close and important coincidence with Romans 15:30; 2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:1. This confidence in his readers' prayers, even for bodily preservation, is a marked feature of Paul's thought.

Granted, or 'given-as-a-mark-of-favor': same word as in Philippians 1:29; Romans 8:32; a favorite with Paul.

Granted to you: if, through the favor of God he is set free, this will be a joy and enrichment to those who have prayed for him.

This purpose to visit Philemon is in harmony with the deep interest in the Churches at Colossae and Laodicea expressed in Colossians 2:1. On what rested Paul's hope of speedy liberation, we do not know. No trace of it is

found in the companion Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians. On the other hand, Colossians 4:3 and Ephesians 6:19 suggest very strongly that he had then no fear that his imprisonment would end in death.

Ver. 23-24. Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner: see under Colossians 4:10. The significant addition, 'in Christ Jesus,' keeps before us the truth, ever present to the mind of Paul, that this imprisonment stood in special relation to Christ.

Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke: as in Colossians 4:10, 14. All these joined in the greeting to the Church at Colossae. The only name found there and, for reasons unknown to us, absent here, is Jesus Justus. And all these, like Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus Justus in Colossians 4:10, 11 are here called 'fellow-workers.'

Ver. 25. Almost word for word as in Philippians 4:23; Galatians 6:18.

## **CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY**

It is worthy of note that in this Epistle Paul does not require or ask Philemon to liberate Onesimus. Moreover, while Onesimus was still a slave in the house of Philemon, the latter was apparently a recognised Christian and a beloved friend of Paul. This, together with the silence of the rest of the New Testament, implies that the Apostles did not forbid their converts to hold slaves. Yet, not only has the Gospel put an end to slavery wherever throughout the world it has gained power, but it is the only religious system which has done anything effective in this direction.

The reason of this apparent tolerance of slavery is not far to seek. By asserting the fatherhood of God, the Gospel proclaims the brotherhood of man; and thus asserts a principle utterly inconsistent with one man treating another as his property. On the other hand, had Christ and His Apostles forbidden the holding of slaves, they would have arrayed against the Gospel all those interested in maintaining the existing order of society, and thus have needlessly placed in its way most serious obstacles. And, worse still, by raising a standard of revolt against a social injustice, they would have rallied around themselves multitudes anxious only for relief from a social grievance. An appeal to such classes would have utterly

misrepresented Christianity. And their help would have ruined it. Christ therefore offered to men only a spiritual liberation. But this carried with it the living germ of every kind of freedom.

For these reasons the Apostles tolerated slavery. We have no trace of fault found for holding Onesimus as a slave. It does not even lessen Paul's warm recognition of Philemon's excellence. And, even if Onesimus resume his former position, Paul will gladly be Philemon's guest. Yet, while refusing to claim for the slaves a liberty for which they were not yet prepared, and which would have loosened the very framework of Society, Paul taught that in Christ the distinction of bond and free no longer exists, and that a believing slave is already virtually free: Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 7:21. And in Colossians 4:1 he teaches that slaves have just claims upon their masters, claims recognised by a Master in heaven. Such teaching at once improved the lot of the slave, and prepared gradually a way for the emancipation which our day has seen.

From the example of the Apostles in the matter of slavery we may learn an important lesson. There are many things contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel which it is inexpedient at once to forbid by civil or ecclesiastical law. In some few cases such prohibition would appeal to unworthy motives. And verbal prohibition can be effective only when supported by the public conscience. The Gospel works always from within, shedding light upon broad principles of right and wrong, light which ultimately reaches and illumines all the details of practical life. But, for this inner illumination, time is often needful. Legislation is effective only when it registers an inward growth of the moral sentiment.

The result of this letter is unknown. But from 1 Timothy 1:3 we infer that after his imprisonment at Rome Paul again visited Ephesus; though perhaps, as his directions to Timothy suggest, only for a short time. If so, it is not unlikely that Paul's wish to visit Colossae was gratified; and that, under the roof of Philemon, the master, the liberated slave, and the Apostle enjoyed sweet fellowship in Christ.



## **PUBLISHERS NOTES**

### **CONTACTING AGES SOFTWARE**

For more information regarding the AGES Digital Library, whether it be about pricing structure, trades for labor or books, current listings, policies — or if you wish to offer suggestions — please write us at...

AGES SOFTWARE • PO BOX 1926 • ALBANY OR 97321-0509

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE DIGITAL LIBRARY?**

The Library consists of books and other literature of enduring value to the Christian community. Our goal since the beginning has been to “make the words of the wise available to all —inexpensively.” We have had in mind the student, teacher, pastor, missionary, evangelist and church worker who needs a high quality reference library, one that is portable, practical and low in cost.

### **ON WHAT BASIS WERE THEY SELECTED?**

Volumes in the Library have been added based on several criteria: usefulness, user request, breadth of content or reputation. This has meant that the collection is eclectic and may include works that contain positions with which we at AGES Software do not agree. This paradox is consistent with our design, however: any useful library consists of books on a wide variety of subjects and sometimes includes information for reference purposes only. The AGES Digital Library hopefully will reflect — as its components are released — the necessary breadth and depth for a solid personal library.

### **HOW WERE THESE VOLUMES PREPARED?**

Most of the books and documents have been scanned or typed from works that have entered the public domain. Some have been reproduced by special arrangement with the current publisher or holder of the copyright. They have been put in a format that can be readily used by computer users everywhere.

### **ARE THESE EXACT COPIES OF THE ORIGINAL WORKS?**

Usually not. In the process of preparing the Library, we at AGES Software have taken the liberty to make certain edits to the text. As we discovered errors in spelling, certain archaic forms, typographical mistakes or omissions in the original we have done our best to correct them. Our intention has been to remove anything that might obscure the meaning or otherwise detract from the usefulness of a book for the modern reader. We

have, however, attempted to retain the essential content and thoughts of the original — even when we found ourselves in disagreement.

### **WHY IS THE DIGITAL LIBRARY COPYRIGHTED?**

While much of the content is in the public domain, the transcription, form and edits of these works took many people many hours to accomplish. We ask each purchaser to respect this labor and refrain from giving away copies of this or any volume of the Library without written permission from AGES Software. Our policy, however, is to work with each individual or organization to see that the price of Digital Library volumes not be a hindrance in their reaching the hands of those who need them. If price is an obstacle, please contact us at the address above and present your situation.